

Utilizing Evaluation to Determine the Appropriateness of Learning Communities  
for English as a Second Language (ESL) Developmental Students:  
A Case Study

Andrea S.D. Hazzard  
College of the Marshall Islands  
Majuro, Marshall Islands

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**Abstract**

This project evaluated a pilot learning communities program at the College of the Marshall Islands to determine the appropriateness of this education model for ESL developmental students, a subgroup on which there is a dearth of learning community studies. The findings show that the learning community students experienced positive outcomes typically associated with learning communities such as an overall more positive college experience and the ability to apply their learning to other situations. The findings for greater retention and a higher degree of academic success were less marked but were present in the learning community students' subsequent semester of study, especially for those students who had passed their level one class. These findings suggest that the learning communities model is an appropriate model for ESL developmental students at the College of the Marshall Islands and possibly at other institutions.

## **Introduction of the Study**

### **Background**

The College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) is located in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, which is situated approximately 5,000 miles west of Hawaii. This densely populated developing country is home to approximately 60,000 people. The official language of the country is Marshallese, with English serving as a secondary language. Although English is taught in both elementary and high school, most new college students come to CMI fluent in their native tongue but underprepared in their English academic language proficiency.

CMI is recognized as the national college of the Marshall Islands and is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and College (College of the Marshall Islands, 2014). The college's terminal degree is an associate's degree in liberal arts, education, or nursing. Similar to most community colleges, CMI offers both credit level and developmental courses. The developmental education program is housed in two separate departments. Developmental English is comprised of the Developmental Education Department, which also includes the First Year Experience Program. Developmental math is part of the STEM Department. Both developmental English and developmental math have a three-tiered program, with the most basic developmental classes denoted as level one and the highest developmental classes denoted as level three.

To enter CMI, prospective students complete an application and take a mandatory placement test. This placement test includes the ESL ACCUPLACER test to assess English and math skills, along with an institution-designed writing assessment to further assess English competency. Students can place into any of the three developmental levels, as well as credit level English or math; placement for English and math are independent of each other. At CMI,

the majority of new students place into level one English and level one Math. In fall 2013, 47% of the entering class placed into level one English, and 59% placed into level one math (College of the Marshall Islands, 2014). In contrast, 7% placed directly into credit level English, and 4% placed into credit level math. Historically, only a small percentage of level one students successfully pass both courses and continue on at the College. From fall 2004 to 2012, the English level one completion rate ranged from a low of 51% in 2005 to a high of 74% in 2008, with an average complete rate of 67%; the math completion rates ranged from a low of 51% in 2008 to a high of 74% in 2005, with an average completion rate of 63% (College of the Marshall Islands, 2014). The academic success rate of level one students, who comprise the greatest proportion on matriculated students, was a concern for the College. Critical discussions took place between faculty and administrators on how to improve the situation. One proposed idea was to implement a learning communities program for level one students. The learning communities program would build upon the existing level one program, which already included a cohort structure, an early alert system, mandatory study halls, and periodic meetings between faculty to discuss student progress, course content, and opportunities for integrated projects.

The learning communities program at CMI was designed in spring 2012 and implemented in fall 2013. Utilizing the already established cohort model of the level one program, four cohorts were identified to be part of the learning community (LC) program, while the remaining four remained part of the “traditional” level one program, and for the purposes of this paper will be referred to as the non-learning community (non-LC) program. The learning community program built upon the established level one program and included additional elements to create a learning community experience for the students and to address the goals of the program (details on the learning community program’s mission, vision, and learning

outcomes can be found in Appendix A). To meet the learning communities' program learning outcomes, a curricular theme-based approach was chosen. The program was structured around the three majors offered at the college, with a connection to the theme of career exploration. The learning community program was comprised of four cohorts based on the college's majors: a liberal arts cohort, a nursing cohort, and an education cohort. The fourth cohort was a mixed major cohort specifically designed for learning community students who lived at the residence hall. This particular cohort was similar to the living-learning learning communities where students who reside together study together as a means of enriching both their academic and residential experience. The decision was made to focus on the college major's since it can take a level one developmental student almost two years before they begin taking courses in their major. Additionally, most new students do not have a great deal of knowledge with regard to choosing their major. The purpose of the learning community program's curricular theme was to expose students to topics in their selected major, educate them about possible careers, and assist them in confirming or changing their major accordingly. In terms of assisting students to connect more deeply to their college experience and to feel a part of the college community, programmatic elements were incorporated into the learning community to bring together the four LC cohorts to eat, socialize, and spend time together. When it was not possible to gather all four cohorts together, the LC faculty were encouraged to pursue extracurricular opportunities with their cohorts, both on and off-campus, such as attending Students Services' workshops or attending the local art exhibition. In terms of academics, the faculty spent approximately one week at the end of the spring 2013 semester to plan integrated projects and discuss the overall learning community approach for the fall 2013 semester. The integrated projects had elements which applied to the three courses in which the students were enrolled: English, math, and

computers. The faculty met two days at the beginning of the fall 2013 semester to review and refine their planning. During the fall 2013 semester, each LC faculty team met weekly to discuss student progress and content integration.

### **Problem**

A great deal of time and resources had been put forth to create the learning communities program. In fact, the learning communities program comes on the heels of other initiatives to strengthen the traditional level one program, such as a dedicated level one coordinator, a mandatory study hall, faculty meetings across disciplines, and an early alert system. The problem to be addressed is to what extent learning communities program will yield the results hoped for in terms of its mission, goals and objectives and in promoting a higher rate of success for level one students than the traditional level one program. Accordingly, given the success of learning communities with college students in the United States, would ESL developmental students in the Marshall Islands experience positive outcomes typically associated with learning community programs such as increased retention, academic achievement, and a more positive college experience? To ascertain this information, the learning communities program at CMI needed to be evaluated. The types of information included in the evaluation of new pilot learning communities program drew from the program's goals and objectives, as well as the literature on learning communities and developmental education program evaluation.

### **Literature Review**

How best to promote the success of developmental students has reached national attention in the United States. The research ranges from studies showing that developmental education is not working to studies highlighting the success of developmental education programs (for a review, see Schnee's literature review, 2014). However, some researchers have

paused the debate to focus attention on the developmental education student and the diversity within this student population (Malnarich, 2005; Schnee, 2014). The developmental student ranges in ethnicity, first language, socioeconomic status, and age, to name a few demographic markers (Boylan, Bonham & Bliss, 1994). At the community college level, a significant portion of the students are first-generation, immigrants, and from a lower socioeconomic status (Boswell, 2004; Jehangir, 2009). One particular community college subgroup is the developmental student for whom English is a second language. Kurzet (1997) states:

It is . . . those with limited English skills that will likely challenge community colleges most in the coming decades. Taken together, students with limited English skills provide greater diversity of student backgrounds, need, and goals than any previous group the community college has educated. (p. 53)

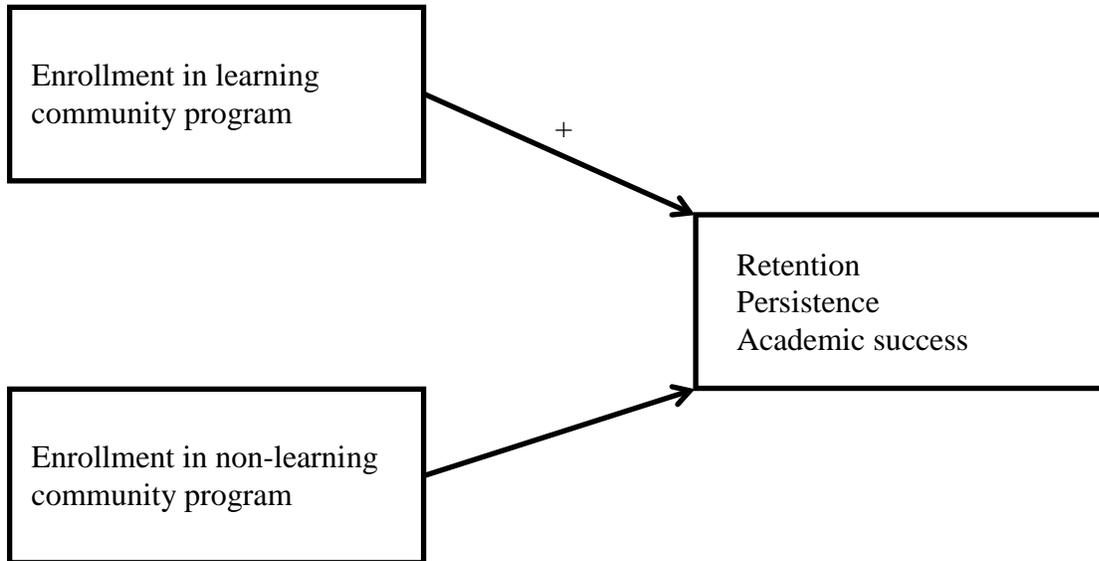
Accordingly, it is incumbent on community colleges and developmental education programs to provide the most responsive educational approach toward meeting the needs of English as a second language students in higher education. One promising approach appears to be learning communities (Boylan, 2002; Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Kuh, 2008).

Learning communities have a 100-year history and came into existence in the search for a more meaningful college experience (Smith, MacGregor, Mathews, & Gabelnick, 2004). Specifically, there was the concern for a stronger connection between students' college learning and an application of that learning to the society in which they lived. The earliest learning communities organized learning so that civic engagement and connections between learners, content, and faculty, were part of the overall experience (Smith, et al.). Since their foundational years, learning communities have evolved, with some programs adhering to the earlier commitment to civic engagement and others emphasizing different characteristics. What has

remained constant, however, is the belief that learning communities should lead to more meaningful educational experiences. A notable proponent of the learning communities model has been Vincent Tinto and his theory of persistence, retention, and academic success.

Tinto (1997) has long asserted that if institutions of higher education want to promote learning, they would recognize the value of shared learning experiences and the restructuring of discrete courses into linked or themed courses (i.e., learning communities). And while learning communities differ in their structure and course content, research on learning communities supports the contention that students experience positive outcomes such as increased retention, persistence, and academic achievement (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Kuh, 2008; Popiolek, Fine, & Eilman, 2013; Taylor, Moore, MacGregor, & Linblad, 2003). Tinto (2000) explains that learning communities promote connections among students, as well as between students and course content. Because students are more engaged academically and socially, they persist at a higher rate than their counterparts enrolled in traditional discrete courses. Tinto believes that students will be retained and persist if they feel academically and socially connected. Furthermore, Tinto (1997) contends that students actually learn more because of the shared learning experiences that learning communities offer. In 2000, Tinto expanded his theory to acknowledge the classroom as the primary location of academic and social engagement for students, as well as the place where faculty shaped that engagement through their pedagogical choices. In closing his discussion on the role of faculty and the classroom, Tinto argued it is models such as learning communities which offer students the ability to connect their academic and social experiences from the classroom outwards toward to the larger college community so that they are more retained and more likely to persist and experience academic success. Figure 1

illustrates Tinto's theory of retention, persistence and academic success as it relates to learning communities.



*Figure 1.* Tinto's theoretical model of the impact of learning communities.

While learning communities have been a successful model for credit level university students, learning communities have been also been identified as a best practice for developmental college students (Boylan, 2002) and recognized as a high-impact practice beneficial to underprepared college students (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Kuh, 2008). There is, in fact, a growing body of research that suggests learning communities positively impact community college students, including developmental students (for a comprehensive review, see Popiolek, Fine, & Eilman, 2013). With a focus on why learning communities are advantageous for developmental students, Malnarich (2005) explains the overarching definition of learning communities:

Learning communities intentionally restructure students' time, credit, and learning experiences to build community among students and faculty and build curricular connections across disciplines . . . learning communities create the kind of learning

environments that *engage* [emphasis added] students in the hard, persistent, and challenging work associated with academic success. (p. 52)

Nakamaru's (2012) cites a high level of engagement as one of the critical factors that allowed ESL developmental students to successfully exit remediation. A high degree of engagement with academic work and the building of community between students and faculty appear to be hallmarks of a learning community. Smith (2010) expands upon these characteristics and notes that learning communities assists ESL students in reducing their self-consciousness while increasing their intellectual confidence. Accordingly, learning communities which encourage the application of what is learned in the classroom to experiences out of the classroom and vice versa can assist students in negotiating their identity and understanding how they might impact their society. Butler and Christofili (2014) describe this kind of societal engagement in their study of a problem-based learning community. Learning communities which promote societal engagement and application of learning would likely be helpful to first-generation ESL developmental students who might struggle with a disconnect between their home and academic lives. Jehangir's (2008) study of low-income first generation students, many of whom were immigrants, found that learning communities with a multicultural focus assisted students in experiencing a sense of belonging and in bridging their social and academic lives. Similarly, Lorch (2013) found that learning communities assisted Latina/o developmental students in identifying and exploring their personal and academic goals, while offsetting environmental "pulls", such as family and work obligations, which can sometimes deter students from their goals. In seeking to understand the impact of learning communities and remedial education from students' perspectives, Schnee (2014) conducted a qualitative longitudinal study. The students in her study reported that their learning community experience challenged them intellectually and

helped them to overcome the stigma they initially felt at being placed into a developmental class. Many students also reported that their developmental courses, which were delivered via a learning communities structure, assisted them in being successful in credit level work. Smith's (2010) quantitative study of 13 community colleges found that learning communities assisted ESL students in feeling supported and more connected to their institution. In terms of learning communities promoting the success of ESL developmental students, she states "curricular arrangements that foster close relationships and feelings of support may foster greater student learning" (p. 280); however, she concludes that more research is needed.

While there is a need for more research on learning communities, research that sheds light on learning community program effectiveness is especially helpful to practitioners. Program evaluation research allows practitioners to contextualize the research findings and examine the extent to which the findings might be applicable to their educational programs; this is of particular interest to practitioners involved in program development and improvement. Boylan (2002) highlights systematic program evaluation as a best practice in developmental education. He states:

Few program components are more important than program evaluation . . . research has shown that developmental programs undertaking regular and systematic program evaluation are more successful than those that either fail to evaluate their activities or evaluate them erratically. (p. 39)

Boylan explains that systematic evaluation happens at an appointed time, is part of an overall plan, is both formative and summative, utilizes different sources of information, and is disseminated to a larger audience. Boylan highlights that there are three levels of evaluation. The first level involves data collection on the number of courses, students, and tutoring. The

second level involves data collection on course completion, course grades and semester-to-semester retention. The third level involves data collection on overall grade point averages, long-term retention, and graduation rates. In discussing the elements that comprise program evaluation, Boylan and Bonham (n.d.) list specific quantitative and qualitative criteria which can be considered an “industry standard” in developmental education. These criteria are similar to those of Boylan, Bonham, White, and George (2000) as cited in Boylan (2002) and include the following:

- completion rates for developmental courses,
- grades in developmental courses,
- grades obtained in postdevelopmental education curriculum courses in the same subject area,
- retention rates for developmental students,
- grades in courses for which developmental students are tutored,
- student satisfaction with courses and services,
- faculty satisfaction with the skills of students who participated in developmental courses and services, and
- graduation rates for developmental students

(p. 40)

In summarizing the literature, it appears that learning communities have much to offer college students in terms of increased retention rates, greater academic achievement, and an overall more positive college experience. However, like all programs, especially those designed for developmental students, learning communities programs must be evaluated to understand the extent to which they meet the needs of specific population of students in a particular context. It

is with this in mind that the purpose of this project is discussed and is the focus of the next section.

### **Purpose**

This project investigates the extent to which the learning communities pilot program implemented in fall 2013 at the College of the Marshall Islands would yield the positive student results typically associated with learning community programs, including improved student success in terms increased retention rates, greater academic achievement, and an overall more positive college experience. Using program evaluation a means to determine effectiveness, this project seeks to understand the extent to which the learning community model is appropriate for developmental students in the Marshall Islands, for whom English is a second language. Accordingly, this study hopes to contribute to the learning community literature for a specific population of students, namely, the ESL developmental student.

### **Statement of Goals and Objectives**

The overarching goal of this project is to evaluate the learning communities pilot program by examining the educational experience, achievement, and retention of the learning communities students as compared to the students in the non-learning community program. Additionally, this project sought to shed light on the extent to which students in the LC program deepened their understanding of their intended major and associated careers so as to determine the efficacy of the curricular theme on which the LC program was structured.

There were four specific goals guiding this project:

1. To investigate the extent to which students in the learning communities program reported a more positive educational experience, including a sense of connection to the college, than their counterparts in the traditional program.

2. To explore the extent to which students in the learning communities program had an increased understanding about their academic major and related career options.
3. To determine the extent to which the students in the learning communities program were more academically successful in their level one courses than their peers in the traditional program.
4. To examine the extent to which students in the learning communities program had a greater retention rate than their counterparts in the traditional program.

In order to meet the above project goals, the following four objectives were developed:

***Objective #1.*** Develop and distribute a survey to gather end of semester feedback from the students, focusing on their experience at the college and the degree to which they have gained knowledge about their major and career interest.

***Objective #2.*** Obtain baseline data on pass rates and retention rates of level one students for the past two to three fall semesters (depending on what data is available); this data will be used as a point of comparison for data that will be collected at the end of fall 2013.

***Objective #3.*** Obtain fall 2013 grades, pass rates, and retention rates for LC and non-LC program. Compare these rates to each other and to previous fall semesters.

***Objective #4.*** Determine if learning communities' students show greater semester-to-semester retention by examining the spring 2014 enrollment to see how many students from the learning communities program as compared to the traditional program are enrolled in at least one course.

### **Limits**

The two main limitations affecting this project were differential selection and faculty variance. As with many educational studies involving classes or programs, the students self-

selected their courses. For this project, the students' self-selected into either the learning community or the non-learning community program. This type of threat to internal validity is known as differential selection and occurs in multigroup designs when random assignment cannot be not utilized (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). It is possible that that the students who chose to be in the learning community program might have differed in some way from those who did not elect to be in the program. This differential selection threat has been noted by other researchers who have studied learning communities. Brownell and Swaner (2010) reviewed various studies on learning communities and noted that that positive outcomes in academic achievement and persistence were still obtained when demographics and engagement levels were controlled for (see Engstrom & Tinto, 2008b), as well as when precollege performance and attitudinal and motivation factors were controlled for (see Zheng, Saunders, Shelley, & Whalen, 2002).

The second limitation of this study was faculty variation. This limitation had the potential to impact the study's validity by serving as a third variable. Johnson and Christensen (2014) explain that a third variable is a confounding extraneous variable that influences or relates the two variables of interest, namely, the dependent and independent variables. In this study, it is possible that faculty variation and experience might have affected the dependent variables retention and academic success. Since most of the courses in the learning community program and the non-learning community program were taught by different instructors it is possible that differences in retention and academic success might have been influenced by the faculty member and not be based on the students' enrollment in the learning or non-learning communities. Potential problems could also arise from differences in faculty members' grading process, their status at the college, or their hope for their students. For example, faculty members might differ

in their attendance policy, which could affect whether or not a student is withdrawn from a class. For example, a stricter attendance policy might have a direct impact on course completion and possible ramifications for semester-to-semester retention if a student decides not to return to college. Accordingly, a faculty member who might be deemed an “easy grader” would have different academic success rates than a faculty member deemed a “hard grader”. A similar differential impact on academic success could occur if a new faculty member who unfamiliar with how to best assess the students is compared to a more experienced faculty member who is familiar with the student population and most appropriate means of assessing students’ learning. And finally, it is possible that faculty members teaching in the learning communities program might be influenced by being part of the treatment group and could potentially give higher grades or more chances to students to remain in their course than they might outside the scope of the program. This type of threat is known as reactivity. Johnson and Christensen (2014) explain that reactivity is the altering of one’s performance because of the awareness that an individual is participating in a study. In fact, Johnson and Christensen caution that reactivity can threaten both the internal and external validity of a study. The way in which this study attempted to limit the impact of possible reactivity was by including more than one faculty member per group in the study. For the learning community program, data was obtained from seven faculty members teaching in the learning community program. For the non-learning community program data was obtained from five faculty members, two of whom taught two sections. The intention was that by increasing the number of faculty members, the impact of reactivity and other faculty variance limitations would be lessened.

### **Population**

The Marshall Islands is considered a developing country. As such, the majority of the students come from low socio-economic families and many are the first in their family to go to

College. Added to this, English is the second language almost all of the students. Unfortunately, the current K-12 public education is struggling with how best to teach English as a second language; therefore, many students come to CMI underprepared for college with low skills in English and Math. Table 1 provides demographic information on the college's new student population for the fall 2013, as well as the previous two fall semesters (College of the Marshall Islands, 2014).

Table 1

*New Students' Characteristics as a Percentage for Fall Semesters*

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Fall 2013 (n = 269)</b>	<b>Fall 2012 (n = 347)</b>	<b>Fall 2011 (n = 243)</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	49.1	50.4	45.3
Male	50.9	49.6	54.7
<b>Age</b>			
21 and younger	88.1	88.2	86.4
22 - 29	8.5	10.0	11.4
30 - 37	2.6	0.6	0.8
38 and older	0.4	0.6	1.2
<b>Nativity or Ethnicity</b>			
Republic of the Marshall Islands	97.8	96.0	98.4
Federated States of Micronesia	1.1	0.0	0.0
Asian	0.7	1.7	0.5
Kiribati	0.4	1.2	0.3
White	0.0	0.6	0.8
Fiji	0.0	0.3	0.0
Papua New Guinea	0.0	0.3	0.0

For fall 2013's entering class, with regard to English placement, 46% placed into developmental level one, 26% placed in to developmental level two, 10% placed into developmental level three, and 7% placed directly into credit; ten percent were not able to be placed due to very low placement scores (College of the Marshall Islands, 2014).

This study focused on level one students in both the learning community pilot program and the non-learning community, i.e., traditional level one, program. There were eight total cohorts: four LC cohorts and four non LC cohorts. A total of 67 students were in the LC program and a total of 62 students were in the non-LC program. Students self-selected into the learning communities program during fall registration. Information about the learning communities program was included in the students' orientation folder. The student ambassadors who served as orientation leaders were given a face-to-face overview of the learning communities program before orientation so that they could answer new students' question in a peer-to-peer manner. The Learning Communities Coordinator along with the LC faculty also gave a presentation to the new students during orientation. At the end of orientation, new students were given the opportunity to enroll in the learning communities program if they were interested. Students who preferred to enroll in the traditional level one program were asked to return the next day during regular registration since both registration processes could not be accommodated on the same day. This decision was made in consultation with the Dean of Academic Affairs who oversaw the registration process and the Dean of Student Services who oversaw new student orientation.

### **Importance of the Study**

This study will assist CMI in making more informed decisions about its level one program. Specifically, because of the evaluation nature of this study, the college will be able to determine if the investment of time and resources into the learning community program is worthwhile. As such, the college can decide if it will continue the program as is or what changes are needed for improvement, including the scope of the current program. Specifically, the results from this project will assist members of the college in determining whether or not the learning

community model is appropriate for our ESL context and our level one developmental student population. This could impact the college's decision to keep the learning community model as is it, i.e., alongside our traditional program, or to expand learning communities program to include more level one cohorts. Accordingly, should the college decide to continue the learning communities pilot program for a second semester, evaluating the learning communities program will have generated feedback and/or lead to discussion on how to improve the existing learning communities program with various stakeholders. This will allow the college to create a stronger more responsive learning communities program for the spring 2014 semester. Furthermore, if the learning communities model is deemed appropriate for our level one students, then the evaluation results will also assist us in the training of new faculty who want to teach in the existing program or propose their own learning communities model for linking other courses at the college. "Lessons learned" from the pilot program will hopefully assist others in avoiding certain pitfalls and in laying the foundation for creating effective learning communities. And finally, if the results of this practicum project are shared beyond my college, then other institutions who work with predominantly ESL developmental students might benefit from what CMI has learned about the appropriateness of the learning communities model for ESL developmental students.

### **Procedure of the Study**

Before the fall 2013 learning community pilot program could be evaluated, the faculty, tutors, and students had to be recruited. As the Level One Coordinator and the Learning Community Coordinator, I recruited and trained the faculty and tutors during the spring 2012 semester. The instructional team included four English faculty, two math faculty, and one computer faculty member. The program also included two tutors who monitored and offered

academic support during our program's mandatory study hall sessions, which met for three contact hours weekly. The non-LC faculty were appointed by the department chairs of the Developmental Education and STEM departments. The non-LC program also a mandatory study hall sessions with the same tutors who assisted in the LC program.

As mentioned previously, the learning community students were recruited during new student orientation, while the non-learning community students registered one day later for their courses. For comparative purposes, both groups of students took the same three courses, namely, *English for Basic English Communication*, *Pre-Algebra*, and *Introduction to Computer Applications*. As part of the regular level one program, all level one developmental students have a mandatory three-hour per week study hall. The learning community students had an additional two hours of study hall for a total of five hours per week. However, for the purposes of the study, two groups were comparable in terms of coursework with a slight difference in their study hall hours.

In order to investigate the differences between the LC students' and the non-LC students' experiences, I developed a survey entitled *Level One End of Semester Survey* (see Appendix B). The survey was designed to capture program evaluation elements, such as student satisfaction with their educational experience in their courses and services (Boylan, 2002), as well as the extent to which the learning community program learning outcomes were met. Furthermore, particular attention was paid to elicit feedback that would assist in determining if the LC students experienced positive outcomes typically associated with the learning community experience. To ensure that the survey solicited this information, I reviewed learning community surveys from other colleges, including the Iowa State University, Pace University, Oklahoma City Community College. I also visited the website of the National Resource Center for Learning Communities

administered by the Washing Center at The Evergreen State College and reviewed their information on survey results. After I obtained a better understanding of the components of a learning community survey, I approached my faculty to ask what elements they felt were important to include in our learning community survey based on what we set out to accomplish in our program. The faculty's contribution to the survey development allowed me to benefit from my colleagues' expertise and insights and was indicative of the collaborative way in which we worked throughout the semester. Accordingly, I also involved the tutors, who were recent CMI graduates, since I felt their insights into the program were crucial. Their contributions were particularly helpful since they shared the same language and cultural background of the majority of the students. One tutor, in particular, assisted with piloting the survey and gave helpful feedback on question content and comprehensibility. In addition to the survey's content, I was also attentive to the survey's format. Given that taking a survey was a new experience for many of our students, I wanted to ensure that the survey's length was appropriate to the students' skills and level of comprehension. To assist in making sure our ESL developmental students understood the survey questions and that their English language comprehension did not interfere with the results, I enlisted the help of colleagues to translate the survey to Marshallese (see Appendix C for the Marshallese version), which was the first language of the majority of the students. During the survey administration, the students were offered both the English and the Marshallese versions of the survey so that the Marshallese version could be viewed when needed. The individuals administering the survey were bilingual and could also clarify any questions raised during the survey administration. The surveys were completed anonymously and were administered during the students' study hall sessions. In terms of survey response

rates, 58 LC students completed the survey, which was 86.5% response rate; 58 non-LC students completed the survey, which as 93.5% response rate.

In addition to the survey, I worked with our Director of Institutional Research to obtain data on past student pass rates and retention rates, as well as fall 2013 pass rates and spring 2014 enrollment rates. Specifically, I examined semester-to-semester retention as defined by enrollment in at least one course in spring 2014. In consultation with the Director of Institutional research, and given the breadth of data available for three courses, we made the decision to focus on pass rates for the level one English course since this was a six-credit hour course and comprised half of the student's course load. Obtaining the fall 2013 course completion rates, grades in the fall 2013 courses for which tutoring was available, as well as the semester retention rates assisted me in meeting the criteria identified by Boylan (2002) as part of the industry standard for program evaluation of developmental programs.

### **Results of the Study**

This project was structured around four main objectives. This section of the paper restates each of the four objectives. Following each objective is an explanation of how each objective was met, along with the results for that objective.

*Objective #1: Develop and distribute a survey to gather end of semester feedback from the students, focusing on their experience at the college and the degree to which they have gained knowledge about their major and career interest.*

The survey was developed and distributed to the level one students prior to the end of the fall 2013 semester. The survey obtained specific feedback on the students' experience at the college during their first semester as well as the degree to which they gained knowledge about their major and career interest. In terms of their experience at the college, the survey elicited

data in three areas typically assessed in learning community programs: quality and extent of peer relationships, ability to apply learning beyond the course where information was learned, and satisfaction with college experience. In terms of the theme-based learning community and the program learning outcomes, I sought to elicit feedback on the extent to which the students gained knowledge about their majors and careers associated with their majors. Figure 1 shows the students' responses with respect to the quality of their peer relationships as defined by how well they got along with their classmates and how comfortable they were in asking their classmates for help.

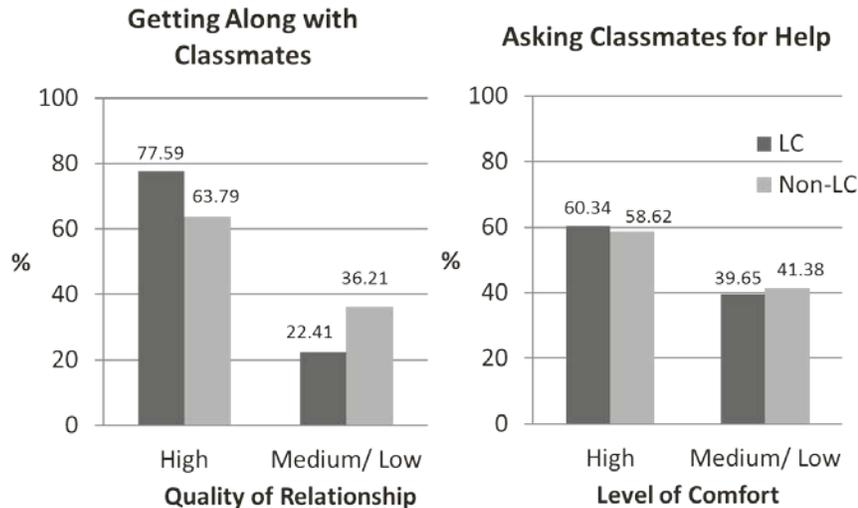


Figure 2. Peer relationships survey results.

With regard to students' educational experience, some survey questions were designed to inquire the extent to which the learning community students applied their learning between classes, as well as from classes to life outside of the classroom. This application of learning is an educational hallmark of participating in a learning community (Malnarich, 2005; Smith, MacGregor, Mathews, & Gabelnick, 2004). Figure 3 shows the students' responses on the applied learning survey questions.

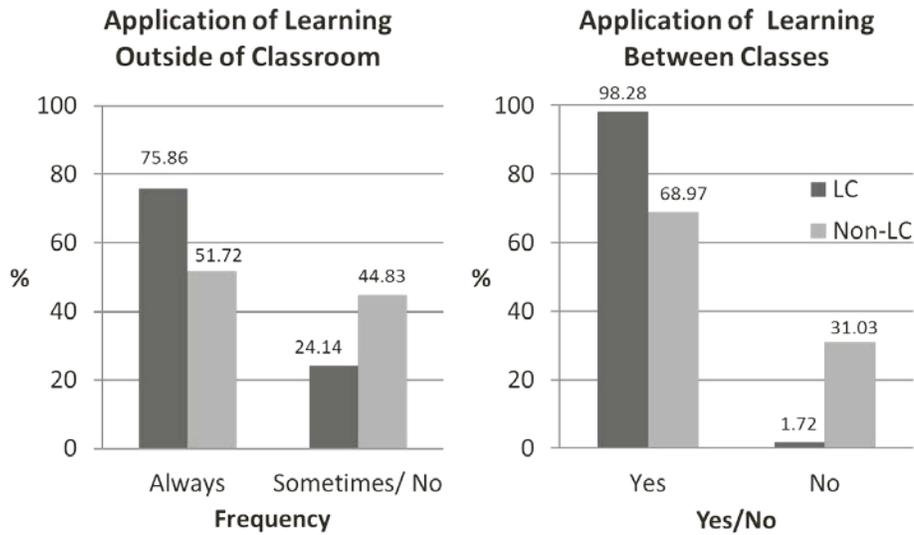


Figure 3. Applied learning survey results.

With regard to students’ overall college experience, the survey focused on the extent to which students felt part of the larger CMI campus community, as well as on their overall semester experience. The learning community literature posits that learning communities assist students in feeling more connected to their college experience and leads to greater retention (Smith, 2000; Tinto, 1997, 2000). Figure 4 shows the students’ responses for the survey questions related to their college experience.

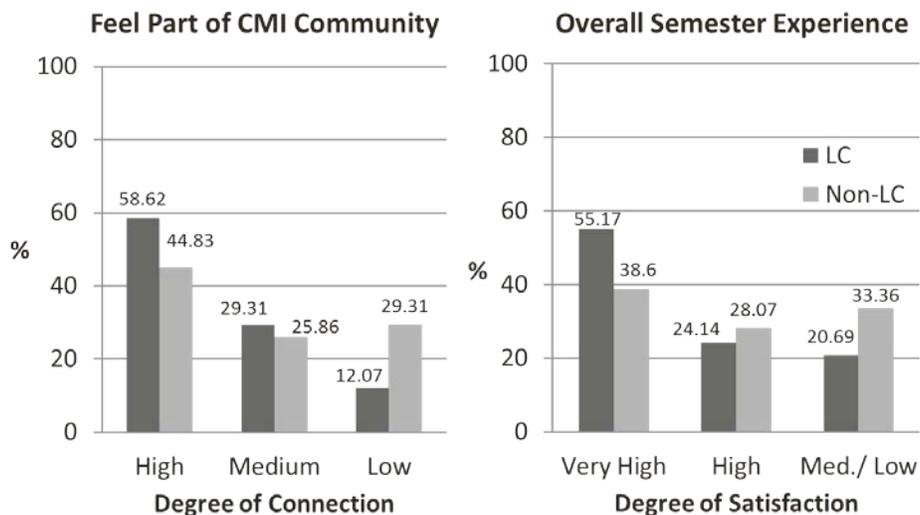


Figure 4. College experience survey results.

With regard to engagement in learning as defined by increased knowledge of the learning community program’s curricular theme of majors, survey questions were constructed to determine if the learning community students would indicate that they had an increased opportunity to learn about their major and the careers associated with their major. This particular area of interest was part of the program’s evaluation process to understand the extent to which this program learning outcome was met, given that it was an integral of the overall curricular-themed learning community approach. That is, would the learning community students show an awareness of having experienced learning activities that shed light on their majors and the careers associated with them. Figure 5 shows the students’ responses with regard to majors and careers.

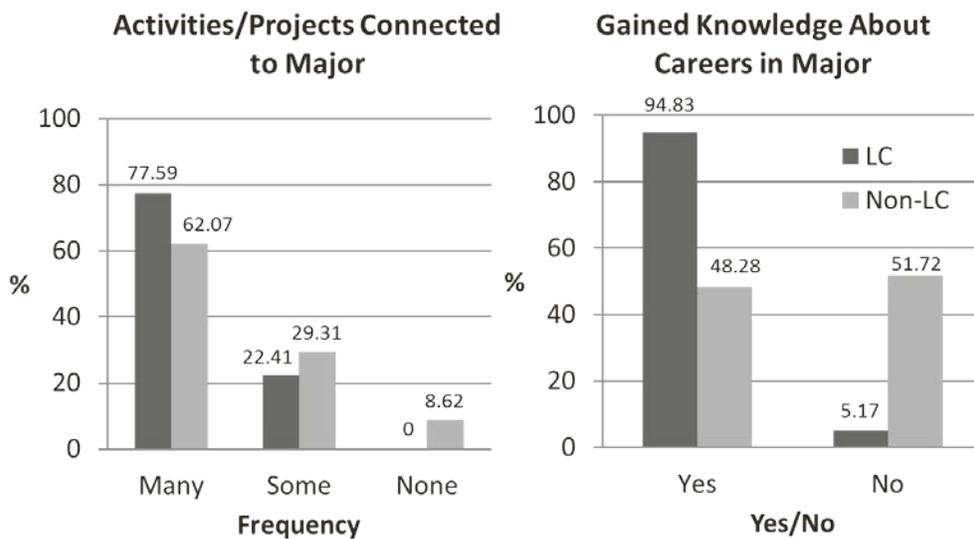


Figure 5. Major and career survey results.

**Objective #2:** Obtain baseline data as it relates to pass rates and retention of level one students for the past two to three fall semesters (depending on what data is available); this data will be used as a point of comparison for data that will be collected at the end of fall 2013.

Baseline data was obtained with the assistance of the Director of Institutional Research at CMI. Data was obtained for fall 2011 and fall 2012 for both pass rates as well as one semester retention. Boylan (2002) asserts that both pass rates and semester-to-semester retention are important data to obtain when evaluating a developmental education program. Table 2 shows the baseline pass rates (as defined by course grades of 70% and higher, i.e., a letter grade C and higher) for level one developmental students for fall 2011 and fall 2012. [Note: While the fall 2011 the course numbers differ from 2012, the course content was level one English. In fact, ENG 066, which was a listening and speaking course, and ENG 068, which was a reading and writing course, were combined to create the integrated skills ENG 068 course; the number of contact hours did not change after the integration.]

Table 2

*Baseline Fall 2011 & 2012 Pass Rates in Level One English*

<b>Semester Year</b>	<b>Level 1 English Course</b>	<b>Among All Level 1 English Students</b>		
		<i>Total Students</i>	<i>Total Passers</i>	<i>Pass Rate</i>
<i>FALL 2011</i>	<i>ENG 066-068</i>	276	194	70%
<i>FALL 2012</i>	<i>ENG 067</i>	240	177	74%

Also in both fall 2011 and fall 2012 a college policy was in place whereby students who did not pass their level one developmental English class were required to sit out for one semester: this policy was no longer in effect for fall 2013. This policy likely affected the overall retention rates for the fall 2011 and 2012 semesters. For this reason, Table 3 shows two different types of one semester retention rates: (a) the retention rate for all level one students, including those who would have been mandated to sit out one semester, thereby lowering the retention rate, and (b)

the retention rate for students who passed their level one English course and could have returned for classes if they so chose, i.e., these students were not mandated to sit out for one semester.

Table 3

*Baseline Fall 2011 & 2012 One Semester Retention for Level One Students*

<b>Semester Year</b>	<b>Level 1 English Course/Program</b>	<b>Among All Level 1 English Students</b>		<b>Among Those Who Passed</b>	
		<i>Total Students</i>	<i>% 1 sem retention</i>	<i>Total Passers</i>	<i>% 1 sem retention</i>
<i>FALL 2011</i>	<i>ENG 066 -068</i>	276	61%	194	86%
<i>FALL 2012</i>	<i>ENG 067</i>	240	58%	177	76%

**Objective #3:** *Obtain fall 2013 grades, pass rates, and retention rates for LC and non-LC program. Compare these rates compare to each other and to previous fall semesters.*

The fall 2013 grades were obtained directly from all the level one instructors and cross-checked with the Director of Institutional Research. From the grades, pass rates were calculated based on the developmental education grading requirements that student receive a C (70%) or higher in order to advance to the next level of coursework. Table 4 shows the pass rates for the fall 2013 students. To show the full picture for all level one students, the “no pass” rates, as well as the “withdrawal” rates are also given. In terms of program evaluation criteria advocated for by Boylan, the data in Table 4 includes (a) a summary of grades in developmental courses, for which there was tutoring, as summarized by pass rates, and (b) completion rates which can be calculated from the data in the table by subtracting withdrawal rates from the total percent. The completion rates are as follows: fall 2013 LC (97%), fall 2013 non-LC (95%), fall 2012 (92%), and fall 2011 (94%). These data are an important aspect of the program’s summative evaluation

and are indicative of the extent to which the program learning outcome which focuses on academic success was met.

Table 4

*Pass Rates for Fall 2013, 2012 & 2011 Level One Students.*

<b>Semester Year</b>	<b>Level 1 English Course/ Program</b>	<i>Passed</i>	<i>No Pass</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>FALL 2013</i>	<i>ENG 067/LC</i>	81%	16%	3%	100%
	<i>ENG 067/Non-LC</i>	90%	5%	5%	100%
<i>FALL 2012</i>	<i>ENG 067</i>	74%	18%	8%	100%
<i>FALL 2011</i>	<i>ENG 066 -068</i>	70%	24%	6%	100%

While it was not possible to obtain the postdevelopmental grades for these students since they have not reached that level of study, I obtained the students' midterm grades in one of the required level two English courses, *Intermediate Listening and Speaking* (ENG 086). Table 5 shows the midterm grades for both fall 2013 LC and non-LC students in the ENG 086 course.

Table 5

*Spring 2014 Midterm Pass Rates for Fall 2013 Level One Students in Level Two English Course.*

<b>Semester Year</b>	<b>Level 1 English Course/ Program</b>	<i>Passed</i>	<i>NP</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>FALL 2013</i>	<i>ENG 067/LC</i>	63%	23%	15%	100%
	<i>ENG 067/Non-LC</i>	59%	31%	10%	100%

**Objective #4:** *Determine if learning communities' students show greater semester-to-semester retention by examining the spring 2014 enrollment to see how many students from the*

*learning communities program as compared to the traditional program are enrolled in at least one course.*

With regard to semester-to-semester retention, a secondary level program evaluation assessment as defined by Boylan (2002), the data was obtained with the assistance of the Director of Institutional Research. Table 6 shows the one semester retention rate, i.e., semester-to-semester retention rate, for (a) all level one students, and (b) for only those who passed their level one classes. One semester retention was defined as enrollment in at least one course in spring 2014. To assist with comparisons to the baseline rates, fall 2012 and 2011 data are also included in the table.

Table 6

*One Semester Retention Rates for Fall 2013, 2012, 2011 Level One Students.*

<b>Semester Year</b>	<b>Level 1 English Course/Program</b>	<b>Among All Level 1 English Students</b>		<b>Among Those Who Passed</b>	
		<i>Total Students</i>	<i>% 1 sem retention</i>	<i>Total Passers</i>	<i>% 1 sem retention</i>
<i>FALL 2013</i>	<i>ENG 067/LC</i>	67	81%	54	89%
	<i>ENG 067/Non- LC</i>	62	84%	56	88%
<i>FALL 2012</i>	<i>ENG 067</i>	240	58%	177	76%
<i>FALL 2011</i>	<i>ENG 066 -068</i>	276	61%	194	86%

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Findings**

Overall, the ESL developmental students at CMI who were part of the learning communities program appeared to (a) experience gains typically associated with learning community programs, and (b) and experienced more positive outcomes than their peers in the

non-learning community program and from previous semesters. With regard to the goals which guided this project, it appears that the LC students did experience a deeper connection to their college experience and more positive overall experience as evidenced by stronger peer relationships, greater satisfaction with their overall semester experience, and a higher degree of feeling part of the CMI community. The study's results show that the LC students were more deeply engaged with course content as evidenced by their ability to apply learning across courses as well as to life outside of the classroom. Furthermore, LC students indicated that they participated in more activities and projects that shed light on their major, as well as increased their knowledge of careers associated with their major. In terms of academic success, the results were somewhat mixed. The LC students did not appear to have greater academic success than the non-LC students for the fall 2013 semester. However, upon further investigation, it appears that one of the non-LC English faculty who taught two of the four non-LC cohorts had grades that were positively skewed when compared to the other non-LC English faculty member who also taught two courses, as well as when compared to the four LC English faculty members. This faculty member was new to the college, and it is possible that this faculty member's grading approach might have been in development as compared to the other faculty, all of whom had been teaching at the college for two or more semesters. While the new faculty member might have influenced the academic success differences between the LC and non-LC groups for fall 2013, two other sources of information show a positive perspective on the academic success of the LC students. First of all, the LC students had a higher pass rate (81%) than the two previous fall semesters; the pass rate for fall 2012 was 74%, while the pass rate for and fall 2011 was 70%. Also, in examining at the performance of the level one students in their level two English course, the LC students had a higher midterm pass rate (63%) than the non-LC students (59%).

In terms of retention, there were two sources of data. In terms of the course completion rate, which is indicative of the students being retained during the semester in which they enrolled, the LC students experienced a slightly higher rate (97%) than the non-LC students (95%). In terms of retention in the subsequent semester, also known as semester-to-semester or one semester retention, this data was also likely influenced by the grading approach of the non-LC faculty member whose grades were skewed positively. It is possible that if students had received lower progress report grades, they may have chosen to withdraw. Subsequently, there was a lower LC semester-to-semester retention rate (81%), as defined by enrollment in one course, as compared to the non-LC rate (84%). However, in looking at the semester-to-semester retention of the passing LC students vs. the passing non-LC students, the passing LC students had a slightly higher semester-to-semester retention rate (89%) as compared to the passing non-LC students' semester-to-semester retention rate (88%).

**Problem restated**

The overarching problem addressed in this project is the extent to which learning communities are an appropriate educational approach for ESL developmental students at the College of the Marshall Islands. The problem was addressed by evaluating the learning community pilot program at CMI to determine its efficacy for this particular students population.

**Recommendations**

The findings from this project suggest that overall the learning community students attained more positive outcomes than their peers in the traditional level one, i.e., non-learning community, program. This suggests that the learning communities model is an appropriate educational model ESL developmental students at CMI. It is recommended that the learning community program continues and that systematic program evaluation be a part of the program.

To that end, for this project, systematic program evaluation provided insight on the extent to which the learning community program met its learning outcomes, as well as aligned with a best practice in developmental education (Boylan, 2002). Accordingly, it is recommended that the current parameters of program evaluation which consisted of primary and secondary level data collection, including course completion rates, course grades, and semester-to-semester retention (Boylan, 2002), be extended to tertiary level data collection. Accordingly to Boylan (2002), tertiary data collection provides long-term data and includes grade point averages, long-term retention rates, and graduation rates. Therefore, it is recommended the pilot program's LC and non-LC students be followed longitudinally to monitor their progress to determine if there might be long-term effects from participating in the learning community program. Another way in which the program evaluation process can be extended, would be to supplement the current quantitative data with qualitative data, especially data on students' perspectives similar to other learning community studies (see Jehangir, 2008; Lorch, 2013; Schnee, 2014). Boylan and Bonham (n.d.) highlight both quantitative and qualitative data as part the program evaluation process. Qualitative data can shed light on students' satisfaction with the program, faculty's perception of the program and students, and the impact of the program on the campus as a whole (Boylan & Bonham). Accordingly, while this project focused solely on students' experience in the learning community program, it would also be insightful to gather data from faculty, administrators, and staff on the program itself as well as ideas for program improvement. To that end, more formative evaluation can take place systematically to impact program improvement and supplement the current summative evaluation measures.

To summarize, the ESL developmental learning community students at CMI reported an overall more positive college experience and saw connections between the courses they took and

life outside of the classroom. Smith, MacGregor, Mathews, & Gabelnick (2004) highlighted that the earliest learning communities came into existence for these very reasons. It is interesting to see that students in a non-U.S. context who speak English as a second language reaped similar benefits from the learning communities structure as did U.S. college students who are both credit level and developmental level. In contrast, Tinto's (2000, 1997) theoretical model of the impact of learning communities was not as strongly evidenced for CMI's ESL developmental students when the LC and non-LC student data were compared. However, this could be in part to an already relatively strong traditional level one program which has many components of a learning community program, including a cohort structure with mandatory study hall, an early alert system, regular faculty meetings, as well as some degree of faculty collaboration and course integration. The lack of retention and academic success differences could also be the result of faculty variance in grading, which would directly impact academic grades and pass rates and indirectly affect retention. What is promising, however, is that when the learning community students' data were compared to past fall semesters students, the learning community students did markedly better in terms of both academic success (i.e., pass rates) as well as retention (i.e., completion rates and semester-to-semester retention rates). This indicates that the college is moving in the right direction with its developmental education program development. What is also promising with regard to academic success is that, spring 2014 data shows LC students performing more favorably than the non-LC students in their level two English class. Looked at holistically, the findings from this project suggest that learning communities are an appropriate educational model for ESL developmental students at CMI and should be considered as a viable model for ESL developmental students at other institutions.

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## Appendix A

### College of the Marshall Islands Academic Affairs

#### Learning Communities Program (selected parts)

##### Description

Learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students beyond the classroom. Students will take linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their faculty. The learning communities will explore a common topic or degree major. They will also feature service learning.<sup>1</sup>

##### I. Vision Statement

Learning Communities at CMI will include all levels of students, explore diverse interests and majors through integrative learning, best practices, fully integrated co-curricular activities and collaboration across college units.

##### II. Mission Statement

The purpose of learning communities is to promote quality student-centered education through integrative learning by creating multiple intentional learning environments and co-curricular activities that are sustainable, purposeful, collaborative, relevant and empowering.

##### III. Background Information

Learning Communities at CMI have been conceptualized since the early 2000's, and the practice has been evolving since that time. Early-on, the concept was simply to link the content of two courses, but this lacked proper planning and ultimately, did not succeed.

Cohorts were recognized by the Developmental Program to benefit the students, and in 2007 Developmental Education began cohorting its students through its First Year Experience program, so all students took the same courses in cohorting groups and had co-curricular opportunities which corresponded to class work. As the program became more coordinated, all new students were cohorting their first semester, but what this lacked, in terms of Learning Communities was the advanced planning and coordination of lessons across disciplines.

In 2011, The First Year Residential Experience (FYRE) grew out of a residential vocational carpentry program called Toolbox. The FYRE Learning Community was housed at Arrak, but unable to coordinate the services and courses in a way that made a maximum impact. There also was an isolation issue due to the distance between the two campuses. During the Developmental Education Program Review of May 2011, the Developmental Program made programmatic changes based on the FYRE pilot. Most specifically, the Developmental Program underwent a

course redesign which created the ENG 067 class and included in weekly mandatory study halls and mandatory tutoring.

Spring 2013, discussions began on developing a full Learning Communities Program to be instituted on the Uliga campus in order to serve the entire student population. As part of the pilot, the residential portion will move to the Uliga Campus. The first Learning Communities will be piloted in Developmental Level 1 and centered on the students' chosen course of study/major.

#### **IV. Rationale:**

Extensive research shows that community-college students benefit from being placed in “learning communities (LC)” where they take classes together and give each other support. Learning community students are more likely than non-LC students to report feeling engaged in their studies and are more positive in progressing intellectually. Research also shows that learning communities often lead to better student retention rates, curricular cohesion, integrated, high-quality teaching and learning, and collaborative knowledge-construction. Furthermore, in many learning community models, the skills and knowledge learned in the classroom are transferred to the community at large through service learning or a community-based project.

#### **V. Target Groups**

This program initially will target Level I developmental students. It is expected for this program to expand and to include other developmental levels and credit level students.

#### **VI. Program Learning Outcomes**

Students who complete the Learning Communities Program will:

1. Be successful in academic culture
2. Develop a self-awareness in order to make informed decisions regarding their personal, academic and professional lives
3. Become aware of and personally involved in civic action that benefits the community
4. Demonstrate critical thinking across disciplines

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from High Impact Educational Practices, AAC&U

**Appendix B****Level One End of Semester Survey (FALL 2013) – ENGLISH VERSION**

Hello. To make our Level One program better, please answer the questions below. Do not put your name on this paper. Please ask for help if you do not understand a question.

A. Who is your ENG 067 teacher? \_\_\_\_\_ What time is your ENG 067 class? \_\_\_\_\_

B. What Math class are you taking? *Circle one:* NURSING      EDUCATION      LIBERAL ARTS  
Who is your math teacher? \_\_\_\_\_

C. Who is your CAP 101 teacher? \_\_\_\_\_ What time is your CAP 101 class? \_\_\_\_\_

D. What is your major at CMI?      *Circle one:*      NURSING      EDUCATION      LIBERAL ARTS

1. Did you do any activities or projects in your classes that helped you to learn more about your major?

- (a) Yes, we did many activities.
- (b) Yes, we did some activities.
- (c) No, we didn't really do activities about my major.

2. Did you learn about any careers or jobs in your major?

- (a) Yes, I did.
- (b) No, not really.

3a. You have almost finished this semester at CMI. Will you keep your major or will you change it?

- (a) I will keep my major.
- (b) I will change my major.
- (c) I don't know yet.

3b. Please explain your answer in Question #3a.

4. How well do your classmates get along with each other?

- (a) We get along really well.
- (b) We get along kind of well (okay).
- (c) We don't really get along well.

5. How comfortable are you asking your classmates for help if you don't understand something?

- (a) I am very comfortable asking them for help.
- (b) I am kind of comfortable asking them for help.
- (c) I am not really comfortable asking them for help.

6. Do you spend time with your classmates outside of class?

- (a) Yes, we spend a lot of time together.
- (b) Sometimes we spend time together.
- (c) No, we really don't spend time together outside of class.

7. How comfortable are you talking to your instructors?
- (a) I am very comfortable talking to most of my instructors.
  - (b) I am kind of comfortable talking to some of my instructors.
  - (c) I am not really comfortable talking to my instructors.
- 8a. Did you have learning activities outside of the classroom (such as in the community or on CMI's campus)?
- (a) Yes
  - (b) No
- 8b. Please explain your answer in Question #8a.
9. Did your instructors help you to connect what you learned in school to your life outside of school?
- (a) Yes, definitely
  - (b) Sometimes
  - (c) No not really
- 10a. Did you do assignments that required you to connect information you learned in English, Math, and/or CAP to your other classes?
- (a) Yes
  - (b) No
- 10b. Please explain your answer in Question #10a.
- 11a. How much do you feel that you are a part of the CMI community?
- (a) I feel like I belong here and am a part of the CMI community.
  - (b) I sometimes feel like I belong here and sometimes not.
  - (c) I still feel like a brand new student and not really part of CMI yet.
- 11b. Please explain your answer in Question #11a.
12. Overall, how was this semester at CMI for you?
- (a) Excellent
  - (b) Very good
  - (c) Okay
  - (d) Not really good
- 12b. Please explain your answer in question #12a.

THANK YOU FOR FILLING IN THIS SURVEY!! If you would like to share anything else about your experience this semester, please put it on the back of this page. Thank you!

### Appendix C

#### Level One End of Semester Survey (Fall 2013) – KAJIN MAJOL (MARSHALLESE VERSION)

lakwe. Nan kakomanmanlok Level Juon Program eo ad, jouj im uwaaki kajjitok kein ilal. Jab likit ak je etam ilo pepa in. Jouj im kajjitok jipan elane kwoj jab melele kon juon iaan kajjitok kein.

A. Etan rikaki in ENG 067 en am? \_\_\_\_\_ Kwoj kilaaj in ENG 067 ilo jete awa? \_\_\_\_\_

B. Math jete ne kwoj boke? *Kelet juon:*      MA66                      MA86                      MA96      EO JUON  
Etan rikaki in Math en am? \_\_\_\_\_

C. Etan rikaki in CAP 101 en am? \_\_\_\_\_ Kwoj kilaaj in CAP 101 ilo jete awa? \_\_\_\_\_

D. Major ta ne am ilo CMI? *Kelet juon:*      NURSING                      EDUCATION                      LIBERAL ARTS

1. Ewor ke activity ak project ilo kilaaj eo am ekar jipan kalaplok jelalokjen eo am ikkijeen major ne am?

- (a) Aet, ellukkuun lon.
- (b) Aet, ikar komman wot jejjo.
- (c) Jaab, ejjelok.

2. Kwar ke ekkatok kon jabdewot jermal ikkijeen major eo am?

- (a) Aet, ikar.
- (b) Jaab, ikar jab.

3a. Kiio mottan jidik ejemlok semester in, kwonaaj ke wonmanlok wot kake major ne am ak kwonaaj ke ukwote?

- (a) Aet, inaj wonmanlok wot kake.
- (b) Jaab, inaj ukwote.
- (c) Ejjanin alikar.

3b. Jouj im kemeleleiki uwaak eo am ikkijeen Kajjitok 3a.

4. Emman ke an ro mottam ilo kilaaj eo am lale doon?

- (a) Ellukkuun emman.
- (b) Ebwe.
- (c) Ejjab lukkuun emman.

5. Kwoj ke eliklik ak mijak in kajjitok jipan ippen ro mottam ilo kilaaj eo am?

- (a) Jaab, ijjab eliklik ak mijak in kajjitok jipan jen er.
- (b) Ejjab lap ao eliklik ak mijak in kajjitok jipan jen er.
- (c) Ij eliklik ak mijak wot.

6. Kwoj ke bwebwenato ippen classmate ro am ak aetol er ne ej jemlok kilaaj?

- (a) Aet, ilukkun kajoor aetol er.
- (b) Jejjo wot iien.
- (c) Jaab, ijjab.

7. Kwoj ke mijak in kenono ippen rikaki eo am ak jaab?

- (a) Ijjab, imaron kenono ippen rikaki eo ao.
- (b) Jidik.
- (c) Ij mijak wot.

8a. Ewor ke activity kwar kommane ilo naborin kilaaj eo am (ilo pelaak in CMI)?

- (a) Aet
- (b) Jaab

8b. Jouj im kemeleleiki uwaak eo am ikkijeen Kajjitok 8a.

9. Ikkijeen katak ko kwaar boki ilo kilaaj, rikaki eo am ekar ke jipan kwe kajerballi ilo mour eo am inabwoj in CMI?

- (a) Aet
- (b) Jet iien
- (c) Jaab

10a. Ewor ke assignment kwar kommani im raar connect ki katak ko am ilo kilaaj (ex. kilaaj in English nan Math, Math nan CAP, English nan CAP, etc . . . )

- (a) Aet.
- (b) Jaab.

10b Jouj im kemeleleiki uwaak eo am ikkijeen Kajjitok 10a.

11a. Ewi jonan am enjake ke kwoj mottan community eo an CMI?

- (a) Ij enjake ke ij lukkun mottan CMI community.
- (b) Ebwe.
- (c) Einwot ij enjake ao ruamejet wot.

11b. Jouj im kemeleleiki uwaak eo am ikkijeen Kajjitok 11a.

12. Ejet am lemnak ak enjake kon experience eo am ilo semester in?

- (a) Elukkun emman
  - (b) Emman
  - (c) Ebwe
  - (d) Ejjab
- emman

12b. Jouj im kemeleleiki uwaak eo am ikkijeen Kajjitok 12a.

KOMMOOL KON AM KAR KANNE SURVEY IN!! Elane ewor kakobaba ikkijeen experience eo am ilo semester in, jouj im jeje kake ilo tulikin page in. Kommoool!

**Impact Letter**



## *College of the Marshall Islands*

*Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges*

P.O. Box 1258  
Majuro  
Marshall Islands, MH 96960

Tel: (692) 625-3394/3291/3236

Fax: (692) 625-7203

E-mail: [cmihess@gmail.com](mailto:cmihess@gmail.com)

Kellogg Institute

March 13, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

Andrea Hazzard has worked diligently to better our Learning Communities and the services they provide to our developmental students. She has conducted research on student persistence and retention which will inform our policy revision and programmatic change. She will be the Learning Communities Coordinator in Fall 2015. Her research will definitely have an impact on our policy, practice and success of our most at risk students.

We are very pleased that Andrea has participated in your program, and look forward to continuing what has proven to be a very rewarding relationship. We eagerly anticipate her resuming a leadership role with the Learning Communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ruth L. Abbott", written over a horizontal line.

Ruth Abbott, Dean of Academic Affairs

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Donald J. Hess", written over a horizontal line.

Donald Hess, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs