



**Reading 051: Basic Reading
Learning Outcomes Assessment Project
Executive Summary
June 2008**

Stage 1: Designing and Proposing a Learning Outcomes Project

The Reading 051 (RDNG 051) Learning Outcomes Assessment (LOA) project was conducted during the Fall 2006 and Fall 2007 semesters on all CCBC campuses. The purpose of the LOA was to assess change in four areas of student performance before and after a prescribed intervention: 1) Attitudes toward reading; 2) Skills in identifying correct meaning and usage of vocabulary; 3) Skills in reading comprehension, such as identifying main ideas and details; and, 4) Reading grade level.

Stage 2: Implementing the Design and Collecting and Analyzing the Data

In Fall 2006, the intervention groups supplemented the reading text with a *minimum of three readings* with the following characteristics: Real-life, autobiographical readings that portray people of diverse ethnicity and backgrounds who overcame significant obstacles in their lives. A significant gap of 14% was shown in course pass rates between African-American/Black students (59%) and Caucasian/White students (73%). The gap was 9% between females, with 70% of Caucasian/White females passing versus 61% of African-American/Black female students passing. However, the gap was more than double in males, with 57% African-American/Black male students passing versus 78% of Caucasian/White males passing; a 21% percent difference.

Students in the intervention sections obtained significantly higher scores on the skills assessment and the Gates-MacGinitie reading comprehension test. In addition, for both the intervention and no-intervention groups, a gap existed on the results of the Gates-MacGinitie test between African-American/Black and Caucasian females on both the pre-test and the post test. However, the 10% gap between African-American/Black and Caucasian/White males *decreased* to 1% in the *intervention* group. As measured by the Gates-MacGinitie reading comprehension test, the African-American/Black males appear to have benefited the most from the intervention. Both intervention and no-intervention groups increased their reading comprehension by one grade level. The results of the Denver Reading Attitude Survey indicate that taking a reading course helps improve students' attitudes about reading. Results of the written summaries showed a decrease in scores from pre- to post assessment.

Stage 3: Redesigning the Course to Improve Student Learning

Based on the results of Fall 2006, which showed that students benefited from the addition of the supplemental readings, all Reading 051 classes supplemented the reading text with a minimum of three autobiographical readings that portrayed people of diverse ethnicity and backgrounds who overcame significant obstacles in their lives for the Fall 2007 semester. In addition, the Common Course Outline for Reading 051 was revised to include an objective of "Organize information using summaries, outlines and maps."

Stage 4: Implementing Course Revisions and Reassessing Student Learning

During Fall 2007, all Reading 051 classes supplemented the reading textbook with stories from *Everyday Heroes*. The skills assessment based on the readings and the Denver reading Attitude Survey were the only assessment methodologies used during this phase of the study; faculty concurred that the results from the Gates-MacGinitie would be comparable in Fall 2007. The gap in course pass rates persisted in 2007 (18%) between African-American/Black students (58%) and Caucasian/White students (76%). The gap between females was *double* the gap of Fall 2006 between females (18%) with 78% of Caucasian/White females passing versus 60% of African-American/Black female students passing. However, the gap for male students was slightly less than Fall 2006 (16%), with 56% African-American/Black male students passing versus 72% of Caucasian/White males passing. Students demonstrated no change in reading skills between the pre and the post test. Students' attitudes about reading and the value of reading improved. As in Fall 2006, the problem of high attrition in Reading 051 courses persisted.

Implications:

As indicated by the results of this LOA project, there are three areas that require focus as the faculty of the Reading Program plans its future. First, the results indicated that the inclusion of readings that portray real-life people and scenarios significantly impacted the performance of students in Reading 051. A concerted effort should be made to include readings that are interesting and relevant to our students' lives and their experiences. In addition to the readings from books like *Everyday Heroes*, Reading faculty can share the following: a) supplemental readings and accompanying activities that are content-based, and b) templates for discussing critical issues and events that are relevant, interesting and contribute to the education of our students. Second, the Reading faculty should explore alternative "structures" for preparing students for college-level coursework. These "structures" could include developing additional Learning Communities for developmental learners; integrating developmental Reading and English into a condensed offering; and, investigating the ALP model for reading. Third, the problem of attrition and the persistent gap in academic performance between African-American/Black and Caucasian/White students supports the need for an *intrusive* advising model for developmental students. The goals of an intrusive advising model would be to: a) prevent potential problems (i.e. developing an academic plan (such as Graduated Learning Plan, or GLP) with students to guide them in selecting appropriate courses to be taken in a sequential manner); b) address problems early in their emergence (i.e. using academic alerts to enable faculty advisors to assist students while they still have the time and options to improve grades); and, c) encourage students to become *engaged* in the collegiate experience (i.e. orienting the student to available resources and activities and establishing an effective advisor-student relationship). Discussion and planning for addressing these three focal areas will be initiated in June 2008 at the Reading Faculty Retreat.