

PREPARED for SUCCESS

A Study of College Preparatory Students
in Post Secondary College Programs



*Literacy & Basic Skills
College Sector Committee*

Prepared by:
Bainbridge & Associates Ltd.
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Foreword

The Literacy and Basic Skills College Sector Committee and the Project Consultants, Bainbridge & Associates Ltd., would like to thank the National Literacy Secretariat and the Workplace Preparation Branch of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for providing the funding which made this research possible.

We would like to thank the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario (ACAATO) for their support and advice throughout the project. We would particularly like to express our appreciation for the opportunities to make presentations to the Committee of Presidents in November 1999 and at the ACAATO conference in February 2000.

We would also like to acknowledge the considerable commitment made by the preparatory Program Managers and the Registrars of the colleges who participated in the data collection: Boreal, Cambrian, Canadore, Conestoga, Durham, Loyalist, Mohawk, Niagara, Sheridan and St. Clair.

All of the charts have been included as appendices in order to facilitate the production of overheads that Program Managers might find of assistance in making presentations within the college or the community. It is hoped this report provides important information that all colleges can use to inform stakeholders of the value of college preparatory programming.

Literacy and Basic Skills College Sector Committee

Bainbridge & Associates Ltd.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The primary objective of this project was to demonstrate the effectiveness of preparatory programs in preparing students for post secondary studies and to highlight the supports identified by learners that colleges provide to enhance student success.

The major focus of this project was:

- to track the success of students who went on to post-secondary programs from September 1995 to January 2000.
- to identify the specific academic and self-management skills acquired in upgrading programs that contributed to this success.

Data was gathered from community colleges province-wide.

There were five steps to the project:

1. Identification of data to be collected and design of collection process
2. Collection of preparatory program student data (Phase One)
3. Collection of comparative non-preparatory post-secondary student data (Phase Two)
4. Telephone survey and focus groups to collect anecdotal information (Phase Three)
5. Analysis of data and final report

Potential impact of project findings

This information demonstrates that mature students do benefit from participating in an up wading program prior to entering post secondary programming. It can also serve to inform the Ontario College System and referring agencies such as Ontario Works, Workers Safety and Insurance Board, Employment Insurance and Apprenticeship of the significant role that preparatory programs play.

The findings provide important insights relating to the characteristics and experiences of literacy students in college programs, as well as to the supports colleges provide which enhance their learning.

Project Scope

In October 1999 all 25 Ontario community colleges were offered the opportunity to participate in this research. The response was most favourable.

Although numerous colleges responded to the request, the selection criteria narrowed the group to 13 colleges, including one francophone college. The number of participating colleges was further reduced to ten, as three colleges could not readily provide the required Phase One data. All four regions within the Ontario College community were represented.

Phase 1

Methodology

The community college LBS managers who agreed to participate in Phase One were asked to supply the following data in order to assess student success:

- Age
- Gender
- Year entered preparatory programs
- Length of time in preparatory programs secondary programs
- Post-secondary programs selected
- Year of graduation from postsecondary programs
- semester of withdraw / failure
- reasons for withdraw
- program changes while in post-secondary programs
- grades per semester while in post-secondary programs

Summary findings

The data collected in Phase One was readily available from the LBS Program Managers and Registrars' offices of all ten participating colleges. Conclusive data confirmed student success.

- One thousand and fifty-eight preparatory students were tracked moving on to 1274 post secondary programs.
- The database of student participants by gender reflects 52% female: 48% male.
- The majority, 38%, of the preparatory learners were 30 - 39 years of age; 26% were between 40 - 49; 18% between 25 - 29; 13% were less than 25; 5% were over 50.
- The most commonly selected term for preparatory student post-secondary enrolment was a two-year program at 45%. Three-year programs represented 22 % enrolment, while one year or less represented 33 % enrolment.

- Courses selected by preparatory students were grouped into six categories Business Administration, Technology, Trades, Health Sciences, General Arts & Science and Other.
- The two most common categories selected by preparatory students were Health Sciences at 22% and Technology at 22%. Within the Health Sciences program, preparatory students had 30 courses to select from. Nursing registration represented 39% all of Health Sciences courses. This was the largest course registration within any of the six categories. Grade point average for the Nursing program was 3.67 versus 3.45 for other Health Sciences programs. This also represents the highest grade point average for any of the programs tracked.
- Sixty percent of preparatory students tracked have graduated, or they are still enrolled in post-secondary programs.
- Twenty-three percent withdrew from their programs. The main reason these students withdrew was financial. The most vulnerable semester for withdraw is the first semester at 63% of the total withdraws.
- Students were tracked from first semester of studies to graduation, withdrawal or failure. Eighty-three percent of the preparatory students graduated versus 72% of the non-preparatory students (Phase Two).

Phase 2

Methodology

In Phase Two, the ten participating colleges were asked to provide data on post-secondary students who had not begun their college studies in a preparatory program. Only one college agreed to participate, though their involvement was somewhat limited since the required information had to be extracted manually.

Unfortunately, the participating college was only able to provide the following data:

- gender
- registration by program
- graduation by program

This was not sufficient to prepare a conclusive report comparing preparatory student success with that of other non-preparatory post-secondary students.

The following two factors stalled the momentum of Phase Two:

1. Colleges gather data on student success on an individual basis as required to meet institutional needs. However, there is no common system used to collect and track data from college to college. Therefore, the only way to create a database for this project would have been through extensive manual tracking, which many of the participating colleges were not in a position to support as an option.

2. Many Registrars' offices were concerned over confidentiality, as well as the extra demand on resources that would result from the need to provide this information.

As a result, a greater focus was placed on direct contact with the preparatory student phase of this project (Phase Three).

Summary findings

The participating college through manual effort created a database of 5888 post-secondary students. Given that the range of data collected was narrower than that which was originally requested, conclusive comparative data was not available.

Phase 3

Methodology

Nine colleges were provided with approximately 90 student ill numbers and asked to confirm student availability to participate in focus group discussions and telephone interviews. Six colleges assisted in organizing 61 successful preparatory students who agreed to participate. The responses from both direct contact formats were similar and therefore combined for ease of reporting. Nine colleges were also provided with 93 student ill numbers for preparatory students who were not successful in post-secondary studies. Five colleges assisted in organizing 15 students to participate in the calls. In sharp contrast to the successful students, approximately 59% of the unsuccessful students had changed phone numbers or their phones were not in service.

Summary findings

The overall response to preparatory programming is extremely favorable. All respondents expressed themselves freely, comfortably and honestly. The fact that these adults are seeking adult education and literacy development is testimony to their recognition of the growing need to improve their quality of life and meet the knowledge and skills demanded in the new information age.

Of the successful respondents:

- Forty seven percent have already graduated from post secondary studies with the remaining 53% currently in active studies. Thirty-nine percent of those who graduate did so with honours. If this trend was consistent to the entire preparatory student database, this success rate is most impressive.
- Average preparatory program length was 11 months.
- Forty one percent of those who graduated are employed at present. The remainder were extremely optimistic about their job prospects.

- Ninety five percent of respondents indicated the intake assessment process at their college was excellent. Many favorable comments were expressed about the support and encouragement that students received from college staff.
- One hundred percent of respondents indicated that prior to preparatory programming they lacked self-esteem, self-confidence and felt they were too old to compete in the workforce.

The following are extracts of specific student comments:

"Preparatory programs turned my life around. I can compete in the job market with my new skills"

"I can't say enough about the program. I was well prepared for post secondary studies. My grade point average confirms this"

"Preparatory studies was my stepping stone to where I am now and where I want to go"

"It's excellent and it works"

"I have learned time management, stress management, goal setting and more"

"Thank goodness I saw the flyer in my building, otherwise I would still be fumbling around in my life"

Preparatory staff and teachers were rated as excellent and credited with providing support and encouragement. All students would go to these advisors to obtain help as needed.

These students felt they have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities and previous education. With preparatory programs they can better express themselves and share their wisdom and experiences.

Two preparatory students went on to receive the highest academic distinction at their college for their graduating year.

Parents reported that, as a result of their participation in preparatory programming they spend more time with their children talking about school, helping with homework and other activities. Clearly, preparatory studies stimulate a greater interest on the part of parents to become involved with the education of their children. This situation is prevalent whether the preparatory student goes on to post-secondary studies or not.

Of the respondents who had left post secondary prior to graduation:

- Average preparatory program length was 17 months.

- Sixty percent of the respondents went to post-secondary studies although eventually 100% withdrew. Primary reason for withdraw was financial (60%), while 30% were unmotivated to continue their studies. Learning disabilities also seemed to be a minor theme for withdraw rates.

Similar to the successful respondent, these students indicated intake assessment support was most favourable.

Action Items

Based on the analysis and student feedback, the following recommendations emerged:

- 1) This report be used as a preliminary step in unravelling the information barriers that currently exist in tracking preparatory students who have enrolled in post-secondary programming especially after the first semester. This is to suggest that the college sector forge linkages and partnerships to take on this immense challenge.
- 2) All colleges collect and share first semester post secondary data based on the categories identified in this project. This data should be requested from Registrars' offices as soon after the end of the fall semester as possible. This data should be forwarded to the College Sector Committee for compilation and the production of a report.
- 3) All colleges use the data and presentation materials provided with this report to inform the appropriate groups within their college and community regarding the effectiveness of college preparatory programming. These groups might include senior administration, Boards of Governors, Literacy Services Planning Committees, referring agencies and Local Training and Adjustment Boards. The inclusion of students in this presentation as was done in the Facts and Faces presentation at the ACAA TO conference is recommended.
- 4) Further effort be applied to enhance student information systems and the tracking of success through routine collection of data on indicators of students' or programs' achievements.
- 5) A more comprehensive approach be taken in communities to increase awareness of Literacy and Basic Skills programs.
- 6) Focus groups and round table discussions with all stakeholders be organized. These may provide some policy, practice and marketing nhan . outcomes to e ce programmg.
- 7) More exposure and training during preparatory studies with computer programs delivered. Most learners suggested computer literacy at an intermediate level is preferred and required for post-secondary studies and the work place.

8) Math programs should be provided at a more advanced level.

9) Testing for learning disability should be initiated during intake assessments. Two suggestions emerged from this point: 1) Individuals would be more aware of the impact of their learning disabilities, and 2) Educators may be able to assist with special needs training.

10) More teachers or support staff be made available to provide students with additional assistance. The unsuccessful learners would have preferred more structured one on one counselling while in preparatory studies.

11) More homework be assigned to students during preparatory studies.

12) The value of preparatory programs be recognized. Communities of better educated adults who are workers, citizens and parents attract better paying jobs into the community. This in turn provides a higher tax base. Adult education and preparatory programs are poised to become "high growth" with the power to reach not only adults but, through the intergenerational transfer of attitudes and knowledge, to reach children too. Colleges that promote preparatory programming in their perspective community play an integral role in mobilizing a smart community. Any efforts to reduce funding or eliminate preparatory programming will have a rippling affect on adult learners. This will result in the growth of families with uneducated adults.

Literacy and Basic Skills Student Research Project

Background

College preparatory programming has been part of the college delivery system since the inception of the colleges. Currently the primary funder is the Ministry of Training-Colleges and Universities (MTCU) through the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program. At many colleges, there are also students participating on a fee-paying basis some of whom are funded by various sources including the Workers' Safety and Insurance Board or through the Ontario Student Bursary Program. This study was not limited to students funded through LBS but included all non post secondary preparatory students.

MTCU provides for and supports the development of literacy training for adults in Ontario. It provides funding for programs and ensures through its written policies and procedures that programs operate within the Ministry's literacy framework.

The Literacy and Basic Skills program serves a population who:

- lack the academic skills to find or keep a job, or to enrol in post-secondary studies,
- are 19 years of age or more, and
- are out of school.

In certain cases, these adult learners also have had some association with social programs or have suffered a life-changing injury.

Community colleges were given the mandate to deliver structured programs serving these individuals. This was instituted to ensure that adult learners have the opportunity to develop the academic and self-management skills needed to enhance their academic and career potential.

Rationale for Collecting Data on Preparatory Programs

It is clear that participation in adult education is an investment that yields returns on the job, at home, in the community and at school. Therefore, preparatory programs in the Ontario provincial college system deliver a vital service. Many of the preparatory learners in this research have had their eyes opened to the demands for education and literacy in the wake of massive technological and organizational changes, as well as personal health setbacks.

The positive societal impact of preparatory programs was corroborated at the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts & Technology of Ontario (ACAATO) conference in February 2000. As part of the "Facts and Faces" presentation, four preparatory students offered their support by way of powerfully moving testimonials.

It was abundantly clear from the testimonials that preparatory programs have had a significant impact on the learners, from the assessment stage all the way through to their experiences in post-secondary studies. Moreover, the impact on these individuals has been positive not only from an academic standpoint but also from a personal one, by increasing the learners' self esteem and personal growth.

The outline for this project was presented to the Committee of Presidents in November 1999. Their interest in the outcome was most supportive.

Project Objectives

The primary objective of this project was to demonstrate the effectiveness of academic upgrading programs in preparing students to succeed in post secondary programs and to highlight the supports Colleges provide that enhance student success.

Two important components of this project were:

- to track the success of students who went on to post secondary programs, particularly in the first semester and
- to identify the specific academic and self-management skills acquired in upgrading programs that contributed to this success.

Work on this project commenced in November 1999 on behalf of the Literacy and Basic Skills College Sector Committee. Data was gathered from community colleges province-wide, including one francophone college.

There were five steps to the project:

- 1) Identification of data to be collected and design of collection process.
- 2) Collection of preparatory program student data (Phase One).
- 3) Collection of comparative non-preparatory post secondary student data (Phase Two).
- 4) Telephone survey and focus groups to collect anecdotal information (Phase Three).
- 5) Analysis of data and final reporting.

Potential Impact of Findings

This information is valuable in demonstrating that mature students do benefit from an opportunity to upgrade their academic skills prior to entry into a post secondary

program. It can also serve to inform the Ontario College System of the significant role preparatory students play in these institutions.

Project Scope

In October 1999 all 25 Ontario community colleges were offered the opportunity to participate in this research. The response was most favourable.

Although numerous colleges responded to the request, the selection criteria narrowed the group to 13 colleges, including one francophone college.

The criteria for college participation in the project was based on:

- Willingness to participate in the research
- Historical preparatory information systems in place dating back to September 1995
- Success with preparatory programs
- Availability and access to post-secondary student information

The number of participating colleges was further reduced to ten based on the criteria.

All four regions within the Ontario college community were represented:

East: Durham College, Loyalist College

Central: Sheridan College

West: Conestoga College, Niagara College, St. Clair College, Mohawk College

North: Cambrian College, Canadore College, College Boreal

Detailed Methodology and Findings

- Phase One - *Preparatory Student Success in Post -Secondary Programs*

Methodology

In Phase One the participating colleges were asked to provide data on college preparatory students who had enrolled in a post-secondary program. Managers who agreed to participate in Phase One were asked to supply the following data in order to assess student success:

- age
- gender
- year entered preparatory programs
- length of time in preparatory programs
- post-secondary programs selected
- year of graduation from post-secondary programs
- semester of withdraw /failure
- reasons for withdraw
- program changes while in post-secondary studies
- grades per semester while in post-secondary studies

Findings

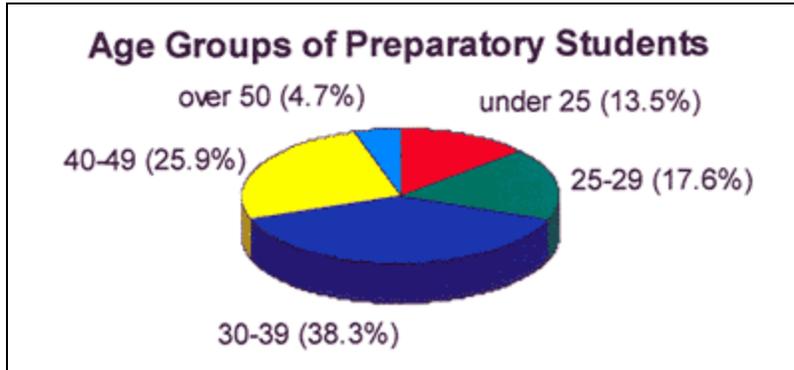
The data collected in Phase One was readily available from the Preparatory Program Managers of the ten participating colleges albeit some colleges had to prepare data manually and/or extract data from operating systems which were unfamiliar to the preparatory department staff. Conclusive data confirmed student success.

The participating colleges supplied data on a total of 1058 preparatory students. Of these 1058 learners, 214 registered in more than one program; thus a total of 1274 post-secondary programs are represented. The information came from records of their academic achievements in post-secondary programs dating back to September 1995. Following is the breakdown of findings:

Demographic data

- The database of student participants by gender reflects 52 % female: 48 % male.
- In terms of age, 38% were 30 - 39; 26% are 40 - 49; 18% were between 25 - 29; 13% were less than 25; 5% were over 50 (Table II Appendix A).

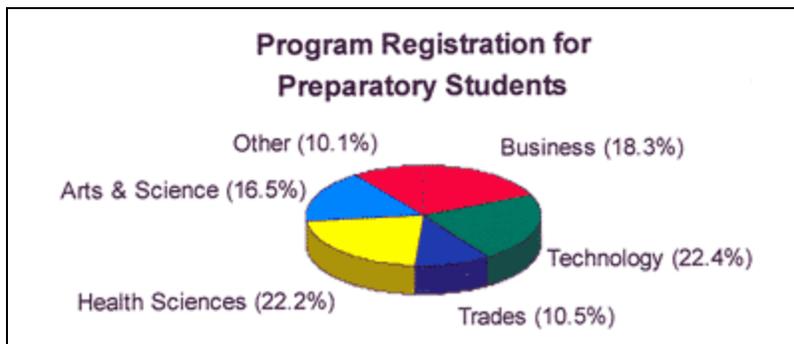
[Table 1]: Age Group



Selection of Post-Secondary Programs

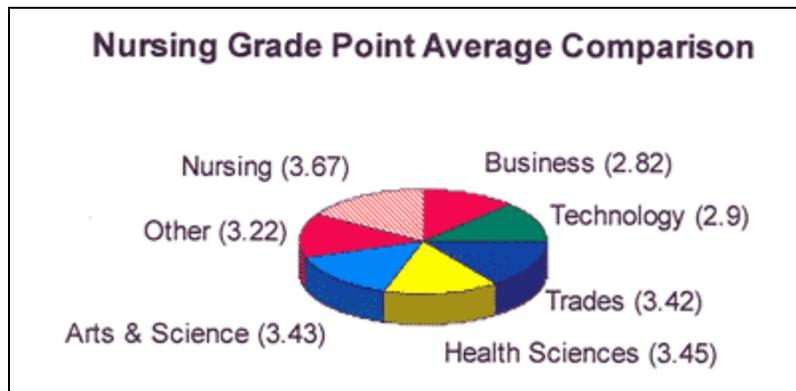
- The most commonly selected term for post-secondary enrolment was a two-year program at 45%. Three-year programs represent 22% enrolment with one year or less representing 33%.
- The majority of preparatory students enrolled in post-secondary studies within one year of graduation from their preparatory program.
- Due to the large number of programs tracked it was decided to consolidate the programs into six basic categories: Business Administration, Technology, Trades, Health Sciences, Arts & Science and Other.
- The two most commonly selected post-secondary programs by preparatory students were Health Sciences at 22% and Technology at 22% (Table 2/ Appendix B).

[Table 2]: Program Registration for Preparatory Students



- Within the Health Sciences category, the preparatory students selected 30 courses. Nursing registration represented 39% of all Health Sciences courses. This is the largest course registration within any of the six categories. The grade point average for the Nursing program was 3.67 versus 3.45 for other Health Sciences programs. This also represents the highest grade point average for any of the programs tracked (Table 3/ Appendix C).

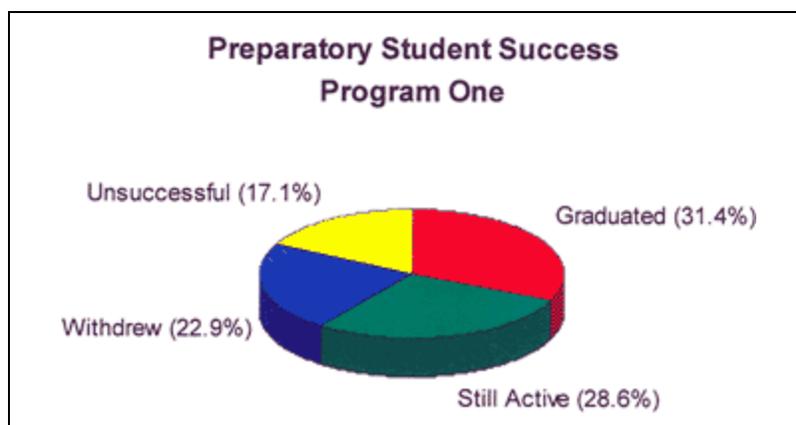
[Table 3]: Grade Point Average Comparison



Completion of Post-Secondary Programs

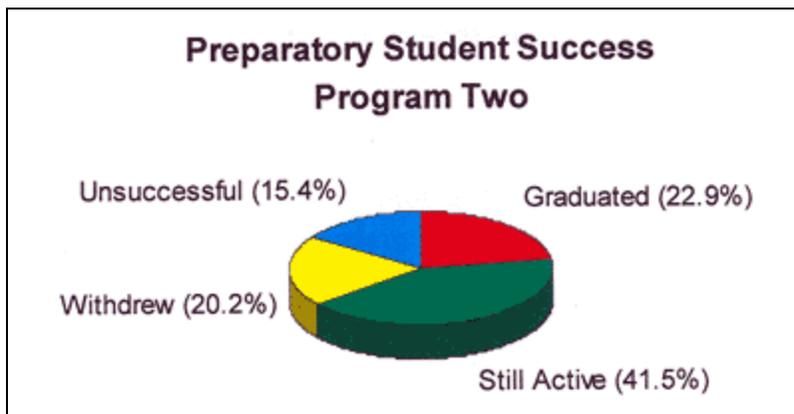
- Sixty percent of preparatory students tracked have graduated or are still enrolled in post-secondary programs (Table 4/ Appendix D).

[Table 4]: Program One

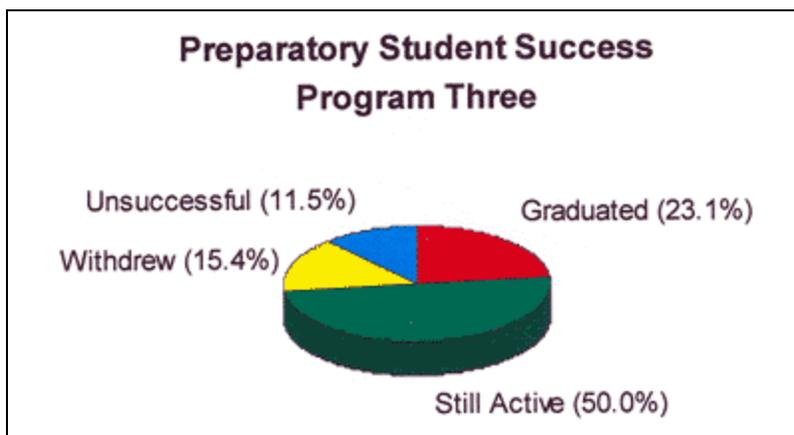


- Two hundred and forty or 23 % of the preparatory student database withdrew from their program. Seventy of those students went on to a second or third post-secondary program. Forty-eight of the seventy students withdrew from their second program and four withdrew from their third program. Of the remaining 18, 15 are still active with three graduated. The main reason students withdrew was financial.
- Of the 214 preparatory students who enrolled in a second and or third program, 109 or 51 % graduated from their first program and went on to enrol in a second or third program. Seventy of the original 214 withdrew from their first program to enter a second program (Table 5, 6/ Appendix E, F).

[Table 5]: Program Two

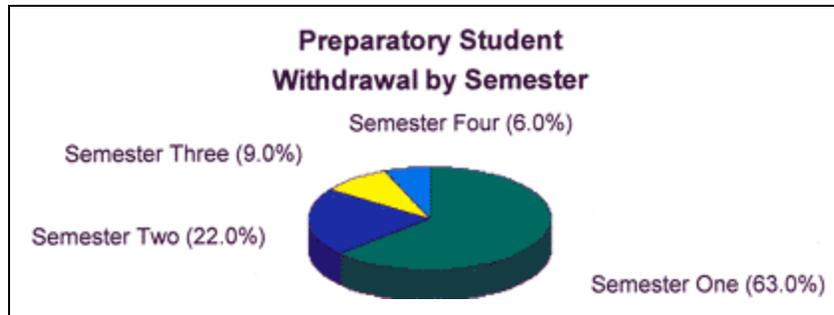


[Table 6]: Program Three



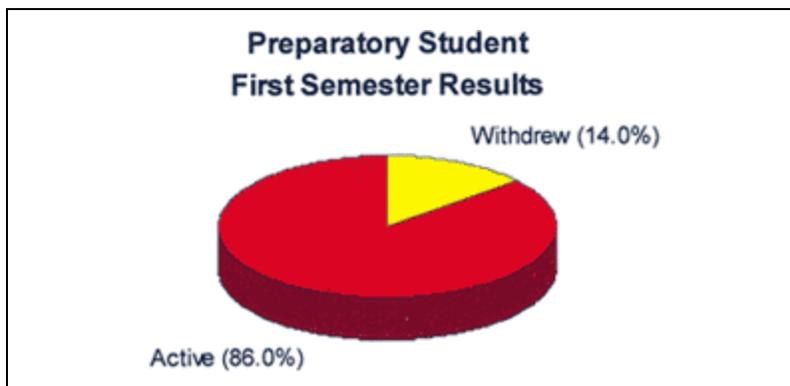
- The most vulnerable semester for program withdrawal is semester one at 63% of the total withdraws. Semester two rate of withdraw was 22%, while semester three and four decline to 9% and 6% respectively (Table 7/ Appendix G).

[Table 7]: Withdraw Rate by Semester



- Despite the high withdrawal rates in the first semester, of the 1058 preparatory students in the database, 907 or 86 % remain active after the first semester (Table 8/ Appendix H).

[Table 8]: First Semester Results



- Typically, students who do not achieve passing grades in their first program do not achieve passing grades if they move to a second or third program. Only 171 or 17% of students did not achieve a passing grade in their first program. Thirty-five went on to a second or third program although 33 did not achieve passing grades. Two students remain active (Table 9/ Appendix I).

- Of the 402 preparatory students who went on to their final semester, 83% graduated. This is most favourable compared to the non-preparatory students graduation rate of 72%.

[Table 9]: Grade Point Average of 1058 students for 1272 programs

<u>Course</u>	<u>Program 1</u>	<u>Program 2</u>	<u>Program 3</u>
Business	2.82	3.22	N/ A
Technology	2.90	2.80	2.20
Trades	3.42	3.21	N/ A
Health Sciences	3.45	3.30	3.5
Arts & Science	3.43	3.60	N/ A
Other	3.22	2.80	N/ A

The grade point average is cumulative over all semesters in each program. The results of each program are averaged. Although many colleges have different grading systems, the results were translated for ease of reporting. The following chart describes the grading translation (Table 10/ Appendix J).

[Table 10]: Grading Translation

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Percentage Range
A+	5	90-100
A	4	80-89
B+	3.5	75-79
B	3	70-74
C+	2.5	65-69
C	2	60-64
D+	1.5	55-59
D-	1	50-54
F	0	Below 50

- Phase Two -
Non-Preparatory Students in Post -Secondary Programs

Methodology

In Phase Two, the ten participating colleges were asked to provide data on post-secondary students who had not begun their college studies in a preparatory program. Only one college agreed to participate, though their involvement was somewhat limited since the required information had to be extracted manually.

The information requested was as follows:

- age of student at enrolment
- gender
- year entered post-secondary studies
- programs selected
- program length
- grades per semester
- year of graduation, withdraw or fail
- program changes while in post- secondary studies

Unfortunately, the participating college was only able to provide the following data:

- gender
- registration by program
- graduation by program

This was not sufficient to prepare a conclusive report comparing preparatory student success with that of other non-preparatory post-secondary students.

The following two factors stalled the momentum of Phase Two:

1) Colleges gather data on student success on an individual basis as required to meet institutional needs. However, there is no common system used to collect and track data from college to college.

Therefore, the only way to create a database for this project would have been through extensive manual tracking, which many of the participating colleges were not in a position to support as an option.

2) Many Registrars' offices were concerned over confidentiality, as well as the extra demand on resources that would result from the need to provide this information.

As a result, a greater focus was placed on direct contact with the preparatory student phase of this project (Phase Three).

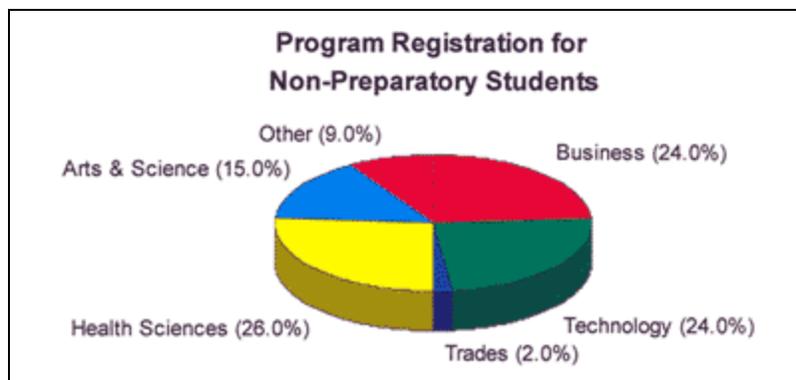
Findings

The participating college through manual effort created a database of 5888 post-secondary students. Given that the range of data collected was narrower than that which was originally requested, conclusive comparative data was not available. Following is the breakdown of findings.

Demographic Data

- The database of students by gender reflects 50% female and 50% male.
- The most commonly selected programs were Health Sciences at 26% with Business and Technology at 24%. This is consistent with the data results of Phase One (Table 11/ Appendix K).

[Table 11]: Non-Preparatory Student Program Registration



Completion of Post-Secondary Program

- Approximately 27% of non-preparatory students did not graduate. The data to determine the percentage of program withdrawals or failures rates was not available.
- Of non-preparatory students who registered in the final semester of a program, 72% percent graduated.

- Phase Three -
Focus Groups and Telephone Interviews

Methodology

In Phase Three, two methods of direct contact were used to obtain anecdotal information from preparatory students:

- 1) One focus group discussion with 6 participating learners.
- 2) Telephone interviews with 38 individuals.

Participants in the telephone and focus group discussions fell into two groups: preparatory students who made the successful transition to post-secondary studies, and those who did not make the transition to post-secondary studies. The finding for each of these two groups is reported separately. .

Colleges provide a wide range of supports to students including the following:

- assistance with special needs
- computer and Internet access
- peer tutoring
- employment counselling
- personal counselling
- library access
- athletics facilities
- health services
- student organizations
- on site day care

The students interviewed identified the preparatory staff as their primary support. Regardless of their academic achievements, 100% of the participants spoke highly of the preparatory programs and staff of their respective colleges.

Findings

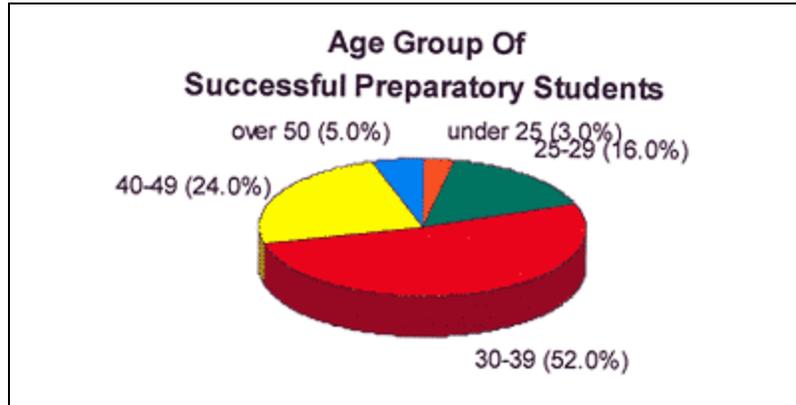
Part 1: Successful Preparatory Students

Six of ten students participated in the focus group. Thirty-eight of 61 students were reached by telephone after five attempts. The following is the breakdown of findings:

Demographic Data

- Seventy-six percent of participants were female.
- In terms of age, the majority, 52% were 30 - 39 years of age. Three percent were less than 25 years of age; 16% were between 25 - 29 years of age; 24% were between 40 - 49 years of age and 5% were over 50 years of age (Table 12/ Appendix L)

[Table 12]: Successful Preparatory Student - Age Grouping



- Secondary school results indicated:
 - 5% of participants had less than grade nine education
 - 16% completed grade nine
 - 24 % completed grade ten, 8 % completed grade eleven
 - 37% grade twelve
 - 10% grade thirteen
 - 48% of these students had been out of formal education for over 21 years
- Reasons for taking preparatory programming varied:
 - 42% enrolled to achieve their post-secondary certificate
 - 26 % enrolled in order to continue workers compensation or other income benefits
 - 18% enrolled for reasons related to their quality of life
 - 11 % enrolled to improve their English
 - 3 % enrolled for other reasons
- Over 38% of the successful preparatory students learned about the program from a friend or family member who had taken the program.
- The average length of preparatory training before entering post-secondary programming was 11 months.

Selection of Post-Secondary Programs

- The breakdown among programs for those who went on to postsecondary studies is as follows: 21 % percent who proceeded to postsecondary studies enrolled in Business Administration; 32% Health Sciences; 16% Technology; 5% Arts and Science; 15% enrolled in Trades and 11% in Other.
- Seventy-six percent enrolled in programs that would take longer than two years to complete.

Completion of Post-Secondary Programs

- Forty-seven percent of respondents have already graduated from postsecondary, with the remaining 53% still in active studies. Thirty-nine percent of those who graduated did so with honours.

Additional Qualitative Data

- Forty-one percent of those who graduated are employed at a job of their choice. The remainder are extremely optimistic about their job prospects.
- Eighty-seven percent of the respondents attribute their total success to preparatory programs.
- Two successful preparatory students interviewed had just graduated from the Nursing program at their colleges. Both attained the highest academic awards from their respective colleges.
- All college staff in preparatory programming were complimented as good teachers providing wonderful support and essential encouragement.
- All respondents acquired time and stress management skills and were able to set goals and complete tasks within required time frames.
- Twenty-one percent of the successful preparatory students required day care for their children and could not have gone on to post-secondary had this facility and expense coverage not been available. Similarly 16% required funds for transportation cost to and from preparatory studies. Had this not been available they would not have been able to enrol in preparatory studies.

All respondents indicated that prior to preparatory programs they lacked self-esteem and self-confidence. They also feared trying to obtain better employment, as they considered themselves too old to compete in the workforce. This is supported by some quotes from the interviews:

"Preparatory programs turned my life around. I can compete in the job market with my new skills"

"I can't say enough about the program. I was well prepared for post secondary studies. My grade point average confirms this"

"Preparatory studies were my stepping stone to where I am now and where I want to go"

"It's excellent and it works"

"I have learned time management, stress management, goal setting and more"

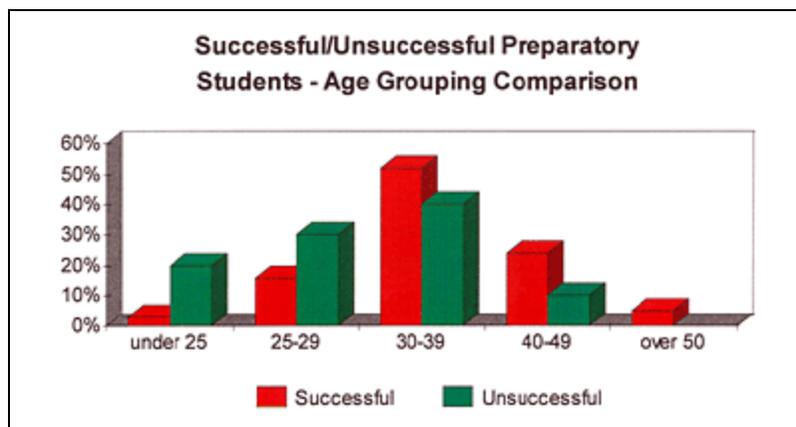
"Thank goodness I saw the flyer in my building, otherwise I would still be fumbling around in my life"

Part II: Unsuccessful Post-Secondary Students

After five attempts, 10 of 15 preparatory students were reached by telephone. The following data was collected:

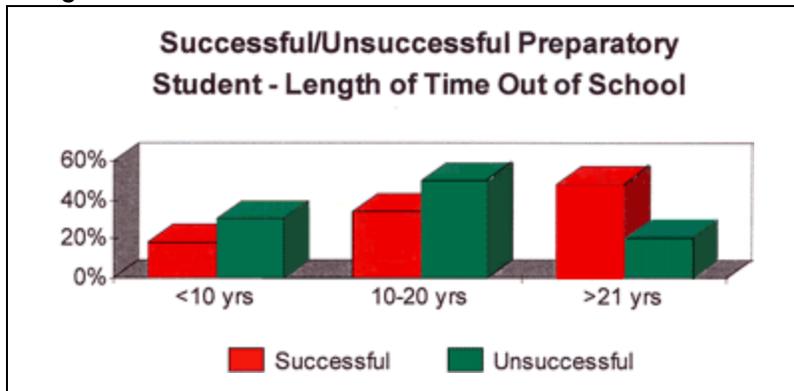
- In terms of age, the majority, 40%, were ages 30 - 39 years old; 20% were under 25 years of age; 30% were 25 - 29 years of age; 10% were 40 - 49 years of age and none were over the age of 50 (Table 13/ Appendix M).

[Table 13]: Successful and Unsuccessful Preparatory Student - Age Grouping



- In terms of previous success in secondary school: 20% of participants completed grade nine, 20% completed grade ten, 10% grade eleven, and 50% grade twelve.
- Before beginning preparatory programs, 30% of respondents had been out of school for less than 10 years. Fifty percent had been out of school between 10 and 20 years, while 20% had been out of school for over 21 years. This is a sharp contrast to successful preparatory students with 48 % of the group out of school for over 21 years (Table 14/ Appendix N).

[Table 14]: Successful and Unsuccessful Preparatory Student - Length of Time Out of School



- Seventy percent of respondents enrolled in preparatory programming in order to proceed to college. Ten percent enrolled to secure a better job. The remaining 20% enrolled for personal reasons.
- Sixty percent of the respondents did in fact continue into post-secondary studies, but eventually they dropped out.
- One hundred percent of these students withdrew from post-secondary studies due to financial or personal reasons.
- Of the students who went on to post-secondary studies, 84 % did not find the transition difficult while 16% found the transition overwhelming due to the amount of homework and assignments. This is a sharp contrast to the successful preparatory student where over 70% of them found the transition difficult and managed to handle the transition with the assistance of preparatory program staff.
- The average length of time taken to complete the preparatory program was 17 months.
- Sixty percent of the respondents are employed at present.

Action Items

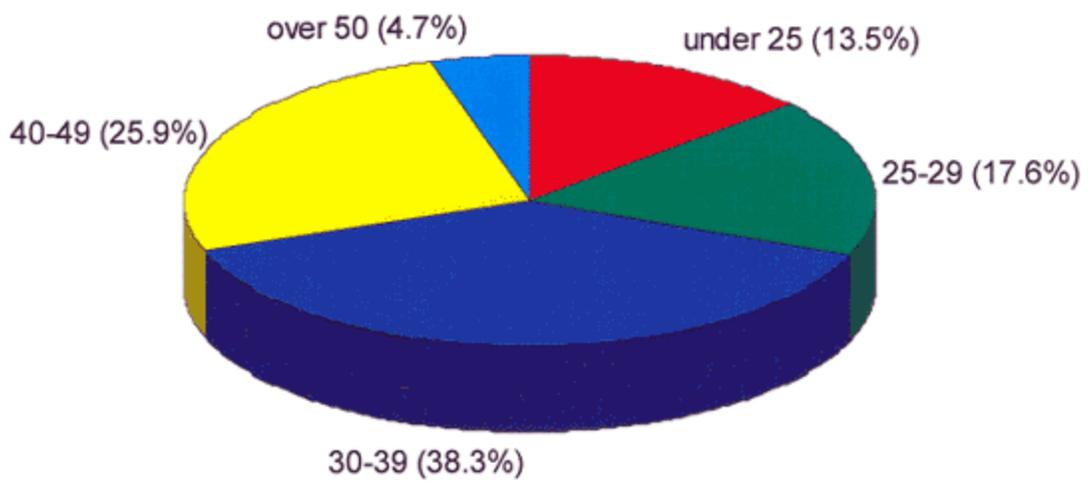
Based on student feedback the following recommendations emerged:

1. This report be used as a preliminary step in unravelling the information barriers that currently exist in tracking preparatory students who have enrolled in post-secondary programming especially after the first semester. This is to suggest that the college sector forge linkages and partnerships to take on this immense challenge.

2. All colleges collect and share first semester postsecondary data based on the categories identified in this project. This data should be requested from Registrars' offices as soon after the end of the fall semester as possible. This data should be forwarded to the College Sector Committee for compilation and the production of a report.
3. All colleges use the data and presentation materials provided with this report to inform the appropriate groups within their college and community regarding the effectiveness of college preparatory programming. These groups might include senior administration, Boards of Governors, Literacy Services Planning Committees, referring agencies and Local Training and Adjustment Boards. The inclusion of students in this presentation as was done in the Facts and Faces presentation at the ACAA TO conference is recommended.
4. Further effort be applied to enhance student information systems and the tracking of success through routine collection of data on indicators of students' or programs' achievements.
5. A more comprehensive approach be taken in communities to increase awareness of Literacy and Basic Skills programs.
6. Focus groups and round table discussions with all stakeholders be organized. These may provide some policy, practice and marketing outcomes to enhance programming.
7. More exposure and training during preparatory studies with computer programs delivered. Most learners suggested computer literacy at an intermediate level is preferred and required for post-secondary studies and the work place.
8. Math programs should be provided at a more advanced level.
9. Testing for learning disability should be initiated during intake assessments. Two suggestions emerged from this point:
 1. Individuals would be more aware of the impact of their learning disabilities, and
 2. Educators may be able to assist with special needs training.
10. More teachers or support staff be made available to provide students with additional assistance. The unsuccessful learners would have preferred more structured one on one counselling while in preparatory studies.
11. More homework be assigned to students during preparatory studies.
12. The value of preparatory programs be recognized. Communities of bettereducated adults who are workers, citizens and parents attract better paying jobs into the community. This in turn provides a higher tax base. Adult education and preparatory programs are poised to become "high growth" with the power to reach not only adults but also, through the intergenerational transfer of attitudes and knowledge, to reach children too. Colleges that promote preparatory programming in their perspective community play an integral role in mobilizing a smart community. Any efforts to reduce funding or eliminate preparatory programming will have a rippling affect on adult learners. This will result in the growth of families with uneducated adults.

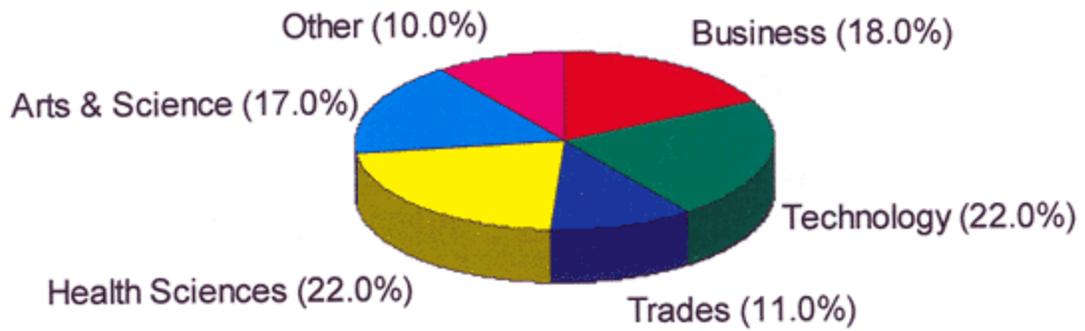
Appendix A: Age Groups for Preparatory Students

Age Groups of Preparatory Students



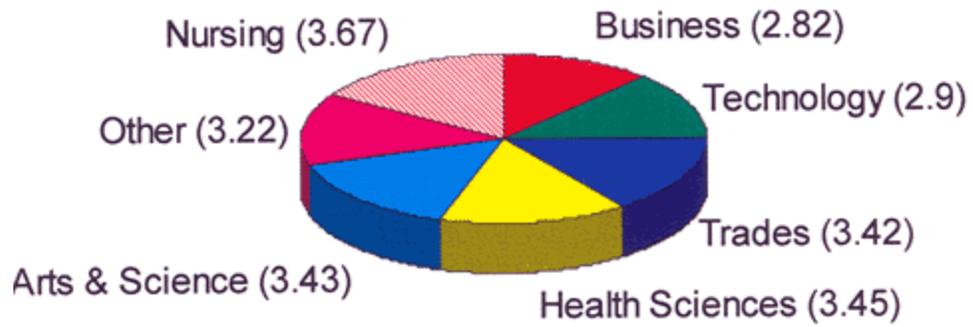
Appendix B: Program Registration for Preparatory Students

Program Registration for Preparatory Students



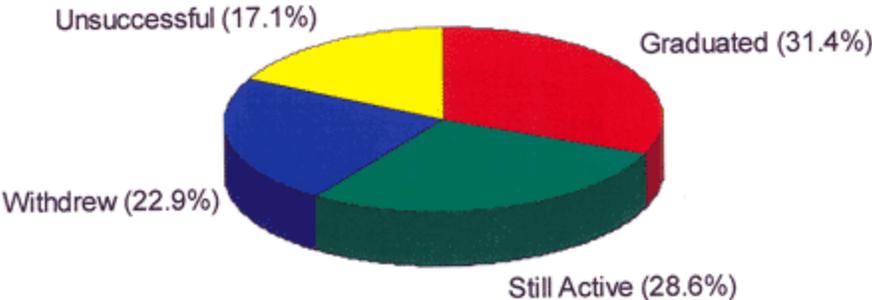
Appendix C: Nursing Grade Point Average Comparison

Nursing Grade Point Average Comparison



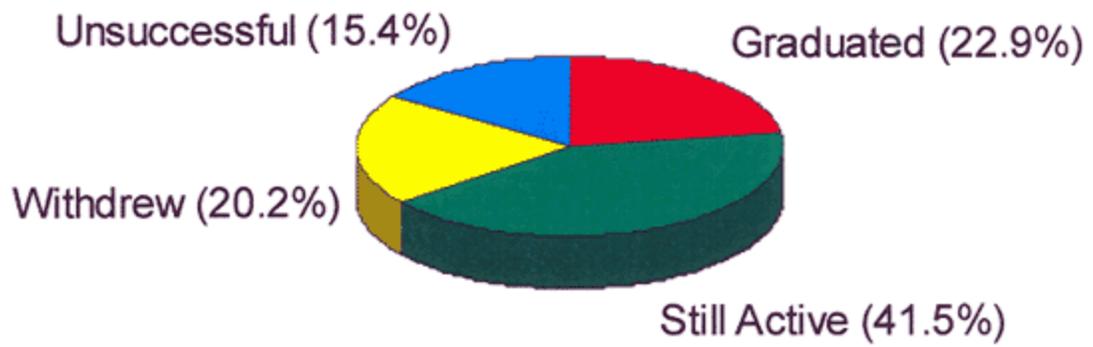
Appendix D: Preparatory Student Success - Program One

Preparatory Student Success
Program One

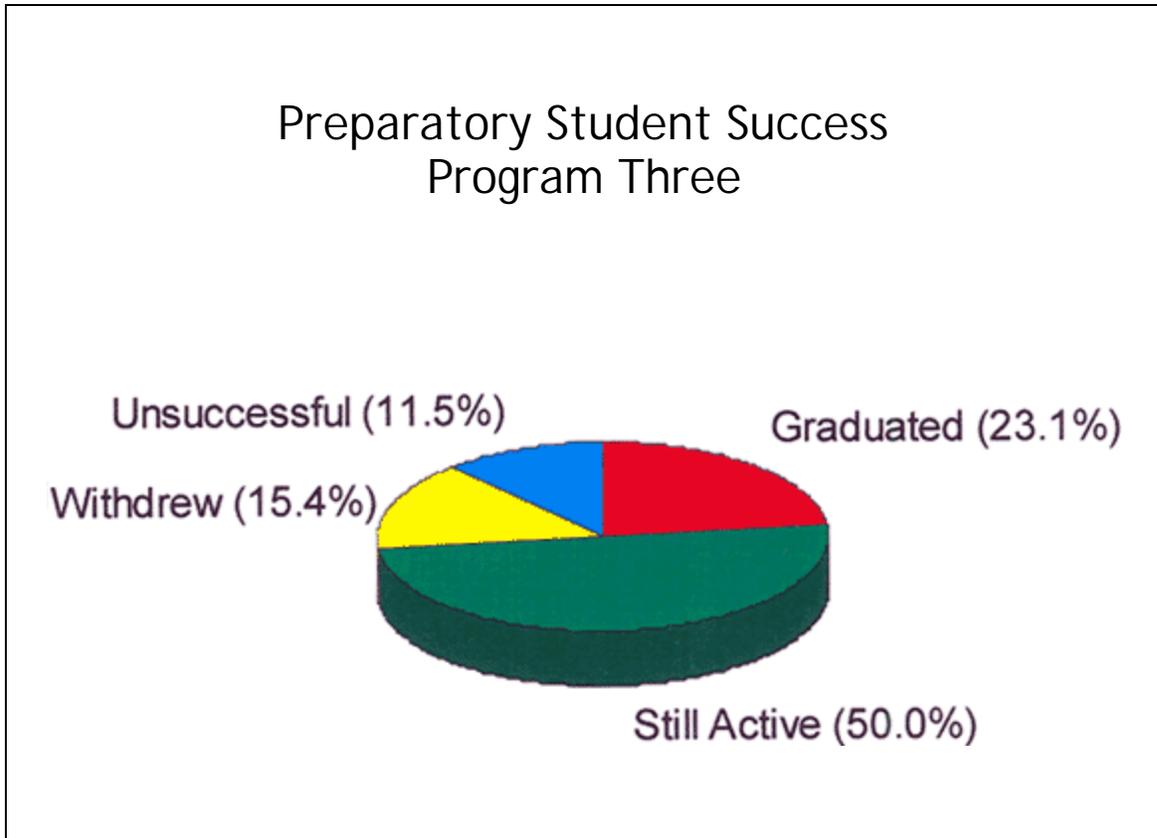


Appendix E: Preparatory Student Success - Program Two

Preparatory Student Success Program Two

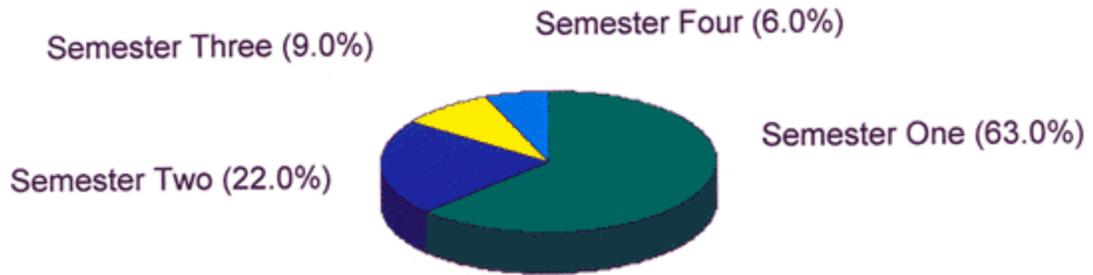


Appendix F: Preparatory Student Success - Program Three

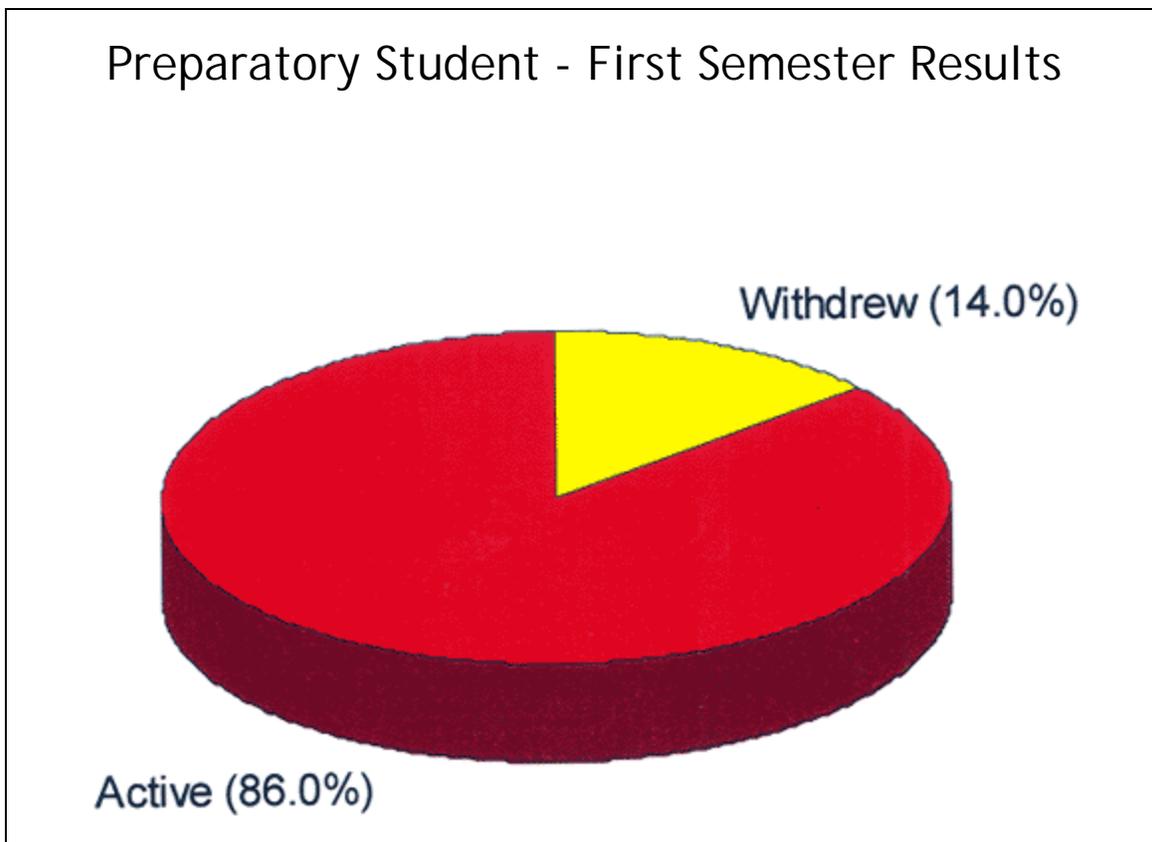


Appendix G: Preparatory Student - Withdrawal by Semester

Preparatory Student Withdrawal by Semester



Appendix H: Preparatory Student - First Semester Results



**Appendix I:
Grade Point Average of 1058 Students representing 1272 Programs**

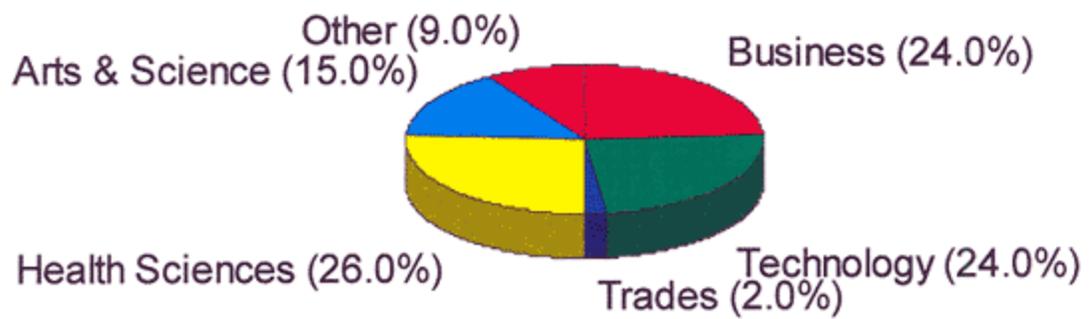
<u>Course</u>	<u>Proqam 1</u>	<u>Proqam 2</u>	<u>Proqam 3</u>
Business	2.82	3.22	N/A
Technology	2.90	2.80	2.20
Trades	3.42	3.21	N/A
Health Sciences	3.45	3.30	3.5
Arts & Science	3.43	3.60	N/A
Other	3.22	2.80	N/A

Appendix J: Grading Translation

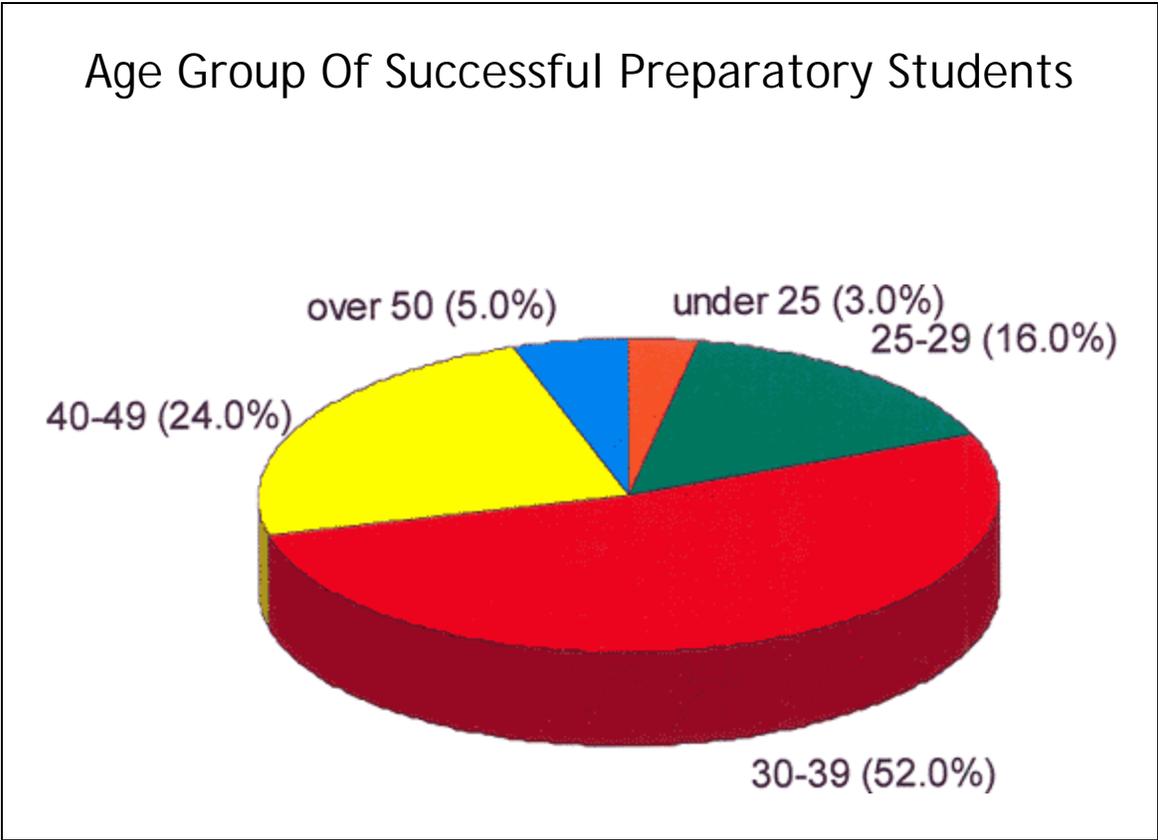
<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Numerical Equivalent</u>	<u>Percentage Ranger</u>
A+	5	90-100
A	4	80-89
B+	3.5	75-79
B	3	70-74
C+	2.5	65-69
C	2	60-64
D+	1.5	55-59
D	1	50-54
F	0	Below 50

Appendix K: Program Registration for Non-Preparatory Students

Program Registration for Non-Preparatory Students



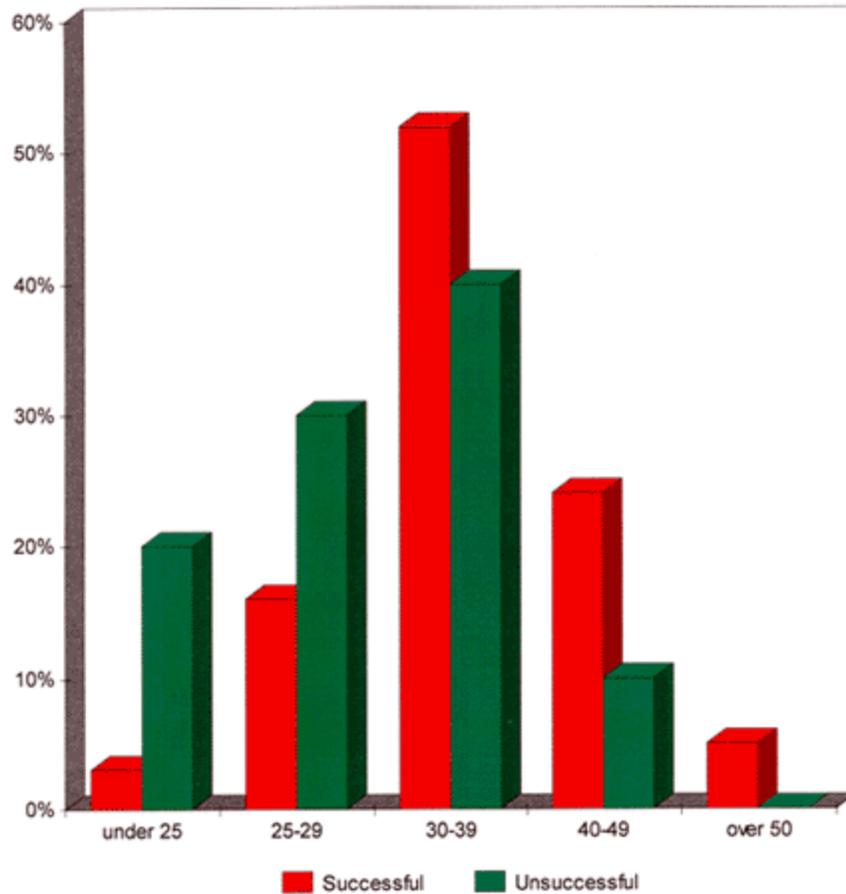
Appendix L: Age Group of Successful Preparatory Students



Appendix M: Successful and Unsuccessful Preparatory Students - Age Grouping Comparison

Successful/Unsuccessful Preparatory Students - Age Grouping Comparison

Successful/Unsuccessful Preparatory Students - Age Grouping Comparison



**Appendix N: Successful and Unsuccessful Preparatory Students-
Length of Time out of School**

Successful/Unsuccessful Preparatory
Students - Length of Time Out of School

