Final Report of *ISU Undergraduate Education Survey 2000:*

A Comparison of Learning Community Participants and Non-participants

Mary Huba, Doug Epperson, Michelle McFadden

Executive Summary

At the beginning of fall semester 2000, learning community and control group students were more similar than they were different. They were looking forward to the same experiences and worried about the same concerns. For the most part, they expected to spend about the same amount of time in classes and labs; studying alone; participating in recreational, social, and leadership activities; and talking with instructors outside class. They gave about the same importance rating to a variety of factors that promote learning and contribute to persistence in college.

There were some initial differences between the groups that indicated a greater predisposition to the academic experience among learning community students. Learning community students had somewhat higher ACT scores than control group students. Compared to control students, they gave more importance to having professors with high expectations, interacting closely with faculty, and participating in clubs, organizations, or government. Learning community students planned to spend more time in college studying with other students, talking with their advisor, and participating in community service/volunteer work. Control group students planned to spend more time working for pay.

By the end of the semester, the two groups were different in many ways. As control group students had anticipated, they spent more time in paid work. As learning community students had anticipated, they spent more time studying in groups, talking with their advisor, and participating in community service/volunteer work.

But learning community students also spent more time talking with instructors outside class and participating in leadership activities. Compared to control group students, they were more likely to report earning high grades, having professors with high expectations, understanding the nature of their anticipated major, having experiences that helped them reach their goals, and receiving prompt feedback about their progress. They were also more satisfied with their opportunities to interact closely with faculty; receive support and advice from faculty; participate in clubs, organizations, and government; participate in study groups; work collaboratively with other students on projects; practice their skills; and apply learning to real world problems. Learning community students reported greater satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction they received, the overall quality of their classmates, and their overall experience at ISU. Finally, based on their own estimates of ability, learning community students experienced more growth than control group students did in oral communication/ leadership and critical thinking/problem solving.

Participants were asked about the greatest successes and difficulties they experienced during the semester. The greatest successes experienced by both learning community and control students were doing well in classes and earning high grades, but learning community students also included among their successes intrinsic benefits such as learning a great deal and learning about their major. In terms of difficulties, both groups experienced difficult classes and poor instructional experiences. However, unlike control group students, learning community students did *not* cite difficulties with developing good study habits.

When asked to rate their learning community experience itself, learning community students on average were satisfied. The most satisfying aspects of their learning communities were interpersonal interactions leading to study partners, new friends, and groups with whom to share interests and

social experiences. Students were also satisfied with their peer mentors' availability, helpfulness, knowledge, and concern.

Overall, however, the learning community experience did not provide more opportunities to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. Students' increased opportunities to make new friends also did not lead to more time spent in recreational/social activities. It did lead, however, to more time studying in groups.

The interpersonal connections made by learning community students did not extend to other types of connections that might have been expected from the learning community experience. Learning community students were *not* more likely than control group students to see connections among classes or connections between personal experiences and class learning. Although learning community students reported spending more time than control group students talking with their advisors, they did not rate their advisors' helpfulness or availability more highly.

Recommendations

1. Continue the components of learning communities that focus on interpersonal interaction, collaboration, and active learning.

2. Strengthen the ties between linked learning community courses so that students are aware of the linkages and can experience their curricular benefits.

3. Study the rate of participation of minority students in learning communities and the effect of learning community diversity on all students.

4. Design a new approach to survey administration to increase control group response rates.[1]

[1] In fall 2001, the ISU Undergraduate Education Survey was administered in the residence halls by Resident Assistants and Community Advisors under the supervision of Hall Directors. The control group's return rate was much improved.

Report of 2000 *ISU Undergraduate Education Survey*: A Comparison of Learning Community Participants and Non-participants

Mary Huba, Michelle McFadden, Doug Epperson

In summer 2000, the Learning Community Assessment Subcommittee developed the *ISU Undergraduate Education Survey* to assess students' perceptions of their first semester at ISU.[2] All 3563 ISU students living on campus who were first-time full-time freshmen were surveyed in order to allow a comparison between students who participated in learning communities and those who did not participate. The survey replaced the *Academic Environment Survey* which was designed in 1998 to evaluate students' awareness of university resources and requirements, as well as selected academic experiences. The *ISU Undergraduate Education Survey* was administered at the beginning (pretest) and end (posttest) of fall semester 2000.

The *ISU Undergraduate Education Survey* items addressed student perceptions in areas such as knowledge and abilities, allocation of time, values regarding the college experience, and satisfaction with various aspects of the learning environment. The knowledge and abilities section assessed many of the common intended learning outcomes of the 32 first-year learning communities on campus.

Two open-ended responses were included on the pretest: "What are you most looking forward to this semester?" and "What most worries you about your first semester?" On the posttest, students were asked, "What was your greatest success or positive academic experience this semester?" and "What was your greatest difficulty or negative academic experience this semester?"

On the posttest, learning community students were also asked to respond to items about their satisfaction with the learning community experience and the effectiveness of their community's peer mentor(s). Two additional open-ended responses were included: "What was the most satisfying aspect of your learning community?" and "What was the most disappointing aspect of your learning community?"

The surveys are included in the Appendix. Both groups received the same survey for the pretest. Because the learning community students had additional questions to complete on the posttest, the form they received was entitled, *ISU Learning Community Survey*. The posttest for the control group was entitled, *ISU First-Year Student Survey*.

Method

Participants. Almost 1500 learning community participants (n = 1487) and 2076 nonparticipating control group students received surveys. All students were first-time full-time freshmen. Table 1 shows that the return rate for learning community students was over 80% on the pretest, about 55% on the posttest, and 49% for both. The responses rates for control group students were much lower, with about 14% returning either a pretest or posttest and only 6% (n=123) returning both. The low response rates for the control groups were a concern and indicated the need for a different method of survey administration.

Table 1: Response Rates

Group	Pretest Returned	Posttest Returned	Pretest and Posttest Returned
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Learning Community	1207 (81.2%)	817 (54.9%)	725 (48.8%)

[2] Members of the Learning Community Assessment Subcommittee are: Bob Bergmann, Ann Coppernoll Farni, Laura Doering, Shari Ellertson, Doug Epperson, Kevan Flaming, Kari Henson, Mary Huba, Michelle McFadden, Carolyn Nading, Tom Polito, Mack Shelley, Elizabeth Wardle, and Don Whalen.

Control	297 (14.3%)	282 (13.6%)	123 (05.9%)

The average ACT composite score of responding learning community students was about 26, and that of responding control group students was about 24.25. (Figures change slightly depending on whether they were computed for the groups returning pretests, the groups returning posttests, or the group returning both.)

Procedures. Surveys were administered to learning community students in their learning communities by their coordinators who returned them to the Assessment Subcommittee graduate assistant. Surveys were mailed through campus mail to students who were not in learning communities. The pretest took place during the first three weeks of the semester. The posttest took place after Thanksgiving.

Analysis. Frequencies were run on all items. T-tests comparing learning community and control students were conducted on items that addressed values about and satisfaction with various aspects of the freshman learning environment, as well as those assessing anticipated and retrospectively-estimated time allocation. Responses to open-ended questions were categorized by themes. If a response was provided by more than 50 learning community students or 20 control group students, it was included in the analysis.

In order to identify underlying dimensions of the set of 28 knowledge and ability items, pretest and posttest item data were factor analyzed separately using a promax solution with pairwise deletion of missing data. Scree plot data and judgmental analysis were used to identify the number of useful factors. Scales were formed by summing items that loaded above .4 on a factor, and the reliability of each scale score was assessed.

For each scale, a 2 (learning community/control) x 2 (pretest/posttest) analysis of variance was conducted with data from those students who completed both a pretest and posttest. Interactions were examined to assess whether learning community students reported learning more during the semester than nonparticipating students. (Analyses of covariance were also run to factor out the statistical effect of ACT composite scores. Results did not change, and thus, these analyses are not reported.)

Results

Students' Initial Perspectives. As shown in Figure 1, at the beginning of fall semester 2000, learning community and control students were looking forward to the same experiences and worried about the same concerns. More than anything else, both groups were looking forward to meeting people and making friends. They were also looking forward to learning new things and doing well academically, living on their own and having new experiences, and participating in social activities. Their worries centered on achieving academic success, managing their time, and meeting people and making friends.

Learning community and control students also expected to spend about the same amount of time in classes and labs, studying alone, participating in recreational, social, and leadership activities, and talking with instructors outside of class. Control group students expected to spend slightly more time working for pay than learning community students did, and the learning community students expected to spend more time studying in groups, talking with their advisor, and participating in community service/volunteer work.

Figure 1

Most Frequent Responses by Group to Open-Ended Questions on the Pretest Survey

Question	Learning Community	Control
What are you most looking forward to this semester?	• Meeting people/making friends • Learning and trying new things • Get good grades/doing well in classes • Learning about my major • Having Fun/social activities/parties • Being involved in activities, clubs, and organizations • Classes • College life • Living on my own/freedom from parents/independence • Getting comfortable with ISU and my new environment	• Meeting people/making friends • Good grades/doing my best in classes • Having fun/social activities/parties • Classes • College life • Being involved in activities, clubs, and organizations • Independent/living on my own • Learning new things • Learning about my major • Being in and adjusting to a new environment • New experiences
What most worries you about your first semester?	• Grades • Classes • Studying • The work load (demands, due dates, keeping up, falling behind) • Tests/first tests • Time management • Making friends/meeting people • Flunking out of college/not doing well/failing classes • Finding enough time to do everything I want/need to do	• Grades • Classes • Tests • Studying (studying enough and studying the correct material/good study habits) • Time management • Keeping up with classes/not procrastinating • Meeting people/making friends • Failing a class/or test/flunking out

Students were asked to rate the importance of 15 factors in the college environment that have been shown to promote learning and persistence in college (items 29-43 on the pretest). All factors were rated as important in that the average importance ratings ranged from between 6 and 8 on a 9 point scale where 1 was Not Important at All and 9 was Very Important.

There were no differences between learning community and control students on 11 of the 15 items: receiving individual support/advice from faculty, working collaboratively with other students on class projects, applying learning to real world problems, seeing connections among classes, seeing connections between class learning and personal experiences, interacting with people from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds, earning high grades, having experiences that help you understand the nature of your major, having experiences that help you reach your goals, practicing skills, and receiving prompt feedback about progress. The averages of the remaining four items indicated that learning community students gave more importance to interacting closely with faculty members, participating in clubs and organizations, developing study groups with other students, and taking courses from professors who have high expectations.

In sum, at the beginning of fall semester 2000, there were some differences between learning community and control students on factors represented in survey items, with learning community students somewhat more predisposed academic experiences. However, overall, the groups were more similar than they were different.

Students' End-of-Semester Perspectives. Posttest responses indicate that the learning community and control students were more different at the end of the semester than they were at the beginning. This was shown in several different analyses.

In terms of how they reported spending their time (Table 2), the two groups spent about the same amount of time attending classes and labs, studying alone, and participating in recreational and social activities. As they had expected, control group members spent more time on paid work, and learning community members spent more time studying in groups, talking with their advisors, and participating in community service/volunteer work. However, learning community members also spent more time talking with instructors outside of class and participating in leadership activities.

Table 2: Mean Comparisons for Posttest Items Assessing Students' Use of Time[a]

	Learning Community			Control			
Item	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Sig.
Classes and labs	7.26	1.89	787	7.45	1.59	279	ns
Studying alone	4.44	2.37	812	4.50	2.34	279	ns
Studying in groups[b]	2.14	1.63	807	1.57	.94	278	**[d]
Talking with your advisor[b]	1.45	1.36	799	1.10	.56	273	**
Talking with instructors outside of class	1.51	1.43	806	1.12	.46	270	**
Community service/volunteer work[b]	1.75	1.60	793	1.33	1.04	265	**
Recreational/social activities	4.37	2.43	810	4.52	2.56	275	ns
Leadership activities	2.12	1.80	796	1.74	1.47	269	**
Paid work[c]	2.52	2.45	774	3.04	2.71	255	**

[a]Scale: 1 = 1 to 2 hours; 2 = 3 to 4 hours; 3 = 5 to 6 hours; 4 = 7 to 8 hours; 5 = 9 to 10 hours; 6 = 11 to 12 hours, 7 = 13 to 14 hours, 8 = 15 to 16 hours; 9 = 17 or more hours

[b]On the pretest, learning community students expected to spend more time on this activity than control students did.

[c]On the pretest, control group students expected to spend more time on this activity than learning community students.

[d]$p \leq .01$

Tables 3 lists seven activities that promote learning and persistence in college, and the data indicate that by the end of the semester, learning community students reported greater involvement in five of them: earning high grades, having professors with high expectations, understanding the nature of their anticipated major, having experiences that help them reach their goals, and receiving prompt feedback about progress. They were not more likely than control group students to see connections among classes or connections between personal experiences and class learning.

Table 3: Mean Comparisons for Posttest Questions 29-35[a]

	Learning Community			Control			
Item	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Sig.
I was able to see connections among my classes	6.56	1.75	798	6.41	1.87	277	ns
I was able to see connections between personal experiences and class learning	6.49	1.53	797	6.32	1.66	277	ns
I was able to earn high grades in classes	6.39	1.82	805	5.83	1.86	280	**[c]
My professors had high expectations for me[b]	6.64	1.63	802	6.15	1.76	280	**
I better understand the nature of my anticipated major	6.64	1.79	806	5.98	1.95	279	**
I have had experiences this semester that "fit together" in helping me meet my goals as a student	6.51	1.60	803	6.13	1.67	281	**
I have received prompt feedback about my progress in classes	5.88	1.94	804	5.30	1.91	282	**

[a]Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 9 = Strongly Agree

[b]On the pretest, learning community students gave this experience a higher average importance rating than control group students did.

[c]$p \leq .01$

Table 4 presents data regarding students' opportunities to participate in eight additional activities that promote learning and persistence at the institution. The data show that learning community students indicated greater satisfaction with seven of the eight opportunities. Learning community students were more satisfied than control group students with their opportunities to interact closely with faculty; receive support, advice and encouragement from faculty; participate in clubs, government, or other organizations; complete class projects in collaboration with other students; participate in study groups; apply learning to real-world problems; and practice skills they were learning. Learning community students also reported greater satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction they received, the overall quality of their classmates, and their overall experience at ISU. Learning community and control group students did not differ in their opportunity to interact with people from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds or in their estimation of the availability and helpfulness of their advisors.

Table 4

Mean Comparison of Groups on Posttest Items 36-48[a]

	Learning Community			Control			
Item	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Sig.
Opportunities to interact closely with faculty[b]	6.08	1.79	806	5.40	1.92	280	**[c]
Level of individual support, encouragement, or advice from faculty members	6.00	1.81	807	5.05	1.87	282	**
Opportunities to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds	6.23	1.75	803	6.03	1.82	279	ns
Opportunities to participate in a department club, residence government, or other organization[b]	6.88	1.66	795	6.46	1.68	276	**
Opportunities to work collaboratively with other students on class projects	6.68	1.61	802	5.95	1.86	279	**
Opportunities to develop or participate in study groups[b]	6.46	1.68	807	5.75	1.81	281	**
Opportunities to apply learning to real world problems	6.25	1.67	809	5.71	1.64	280	**
Opportunities to practice the skills you are learning or have learned	6.29	1.63	811	5.83	1.54	280	**
Overall quality of instruction that you received this semester	6.66	1.58	805	6.35	1.61	281	**
Overall quality of your classmates	6.97	1.42	806	6.54	1.47	282	**
Availability of your academic advisor	6.70	1.89	802	6.61	1.92	277	ns
Helpfulness of your academic advisor	6.68	2.04	791	6.66	1.98	273	ns
Overall experiences at ISU	7.21	1.60	801	6.96	1.60	274	*

[a]Scale: 1 = Strongly Dissatisfied; 9 = Strongly Satisfied

[b]On the pretest, learning community students gave this experience a higher average importance rating than control group students did.

[c]$p \leq .01$

Students estimated the strength of their knowledge and abilities by responding to 28 different items, and these items were factor analyzed. Seven scales emerged from the factor analysis: oral communication/leadership; time management; teamwork; written communication; knowledge of university, discipline, and careers; critical thinking/problem solving; and diversity. See Figure 2 for the items comprising each scale and the reliability of each scale.

Figure 2

Items Comprising Knowledge and Ability Scales and Scale Reliabilities

Oral Communication /Leadership (r=.89)
- Ability to make formal class presentations
- Ability to argue a point of view assertively
- Ability to persuade others to follow your lead
- Ability to inspire others through your leadership
- Ability to bring people with different viewpoints together to cooperate on a project
- Ability to facilitate group interactions

Time Management (r=.90)
- Ability to manage time effectively
- Ability to prioritize tasks to be performed for a project
- Ability to coordinate multiple concurrent tasks or projects
- Ability to study effectively

Teamwork (r=.82)
- Ability to work cooperatively and productively with others
- Ability to effectively listen to others enabling you to clearly understand what is being said and reflect that understanding back to the speaker
- Ability to interact with others and contribute to group discussions
- Ability to put team goals above your own personal goals

Written Communication (r=.82)
- Ability to produce well-written term papers that would receive a grade of "B+" or better
- Ability to write the types of technical, critical, review, or creative papers typical for your discipline with a grade of "B+" or better
- Ability to edit a document or paper for correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling

Knowledge of University, Discipline, and Careers (r=.74)
- Knowledge of university policies and procedures relevant to undergraduate students
- Knowledge of university resources for undergraduate
- Knowledge in your anticipated discipline or field of study
- Knowledge of career choices and options in your anticipated discipline or field of study

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving (r=.83)
- Ability to analyze and evaluate ideas systematically and critically from different perspectives
- Ability to apply academic knowledge and reason to current problems
- Ability to think of different ways to solve problems

Diversity (r=.71)
- Knowledge of other cultures and/or ethnic groups
- Ability to effectively and comfortably interact with people from other cultures or ethnic groups
- Ability to speak up when you see bigotry
- Ability to accept religious differences

Table 5 presents means and standard deviations for the pretest and posttest scales for learning community and control students separately.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations by Group for Knowledge and Ability Scales[a]

	Pretest						Posttest					
	Learning Community			Control			Learning Community			Control		
Scale	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n
Oral Communication /Leadership	6.25	1.30	696	6.35	1.28	120	6.69	1.22	696	6.47	1.21	120
Time Management	6.38	1.49	701	6.52	1.37	120	6.61	1.44	701	6.54	1.33	120
Teamwork	7.00	1.26	693	6.97	1.39	121	7.20	1.12	693	7.30	1.07	121
Written Communication	6.25	1.77	706	6.12	1.54	122	6.71	1.58	706	6.44	1.46	122
Knowledge	5.66	1.32	712	5.26	1.37	123	6.44	1.32	712	5.83	1.37	123
Critical Thinking	6.79	1.26	708	6.75	1.14	123	7.04	1.15	708	6.74	1.13	123
Diversity	6.33	1.36	675	6.17	1.42	117	6.76	1.19	675	6.70	1.29	117

[a]Scale: 1 = Very Weak; 9 = Very Strong

Two (learning community vs. controls) by 2 (pretest vs. posttest) analyses of variance were conducted to ascertain whether learning community students reported learning more in the seven areas during the semester than control group students did. Table 6 indicates which effects were statistically significant.[3]

Table 6

Indication of Statistically Significant Findings from the 2 x 2 Analyses of Variance

Scale	Group (LC vs. Control)	Time (Pre vs. Post)	Group x Time
Knowledge	.000	.000	
Oral Communication/ Leadership		.000	.012
Time Management			
Teamwork		.000	
Written Communication		.000	
Critical Thinking			.056
Diversity		.000	

[3] One main effect of group was statistically significant. Data in Column two (entitled "Group (LC vs. Control)") of Table 6 show that *when pre- and posttest- responses were combined*, learning community students reported more knowledge of university, discipline, and careers than did control students. Five main effects of Time were statistically significant. Data in column three (entitled "Time (Pre vs. Post)") show that *when all students were combined*, there was a significant gain from the beginning to the end of the semester for five of the seven scales: knowledge of university, discipline, and careers; oral communication/ leadership; teamwork; written communication; and diversity. Overall, the combined group of students did not improve on time management and critical thinking/problem solving to a statistically significant degree.

Column four of Table 6 is entitled “Group x Time,” and it addresses the main question of interest: Did learning community students learn more during the semester than control students? As can be seen, there was a significant group by time interaction for learning community students compared to control students on oral communication/leadership, and a similar but marginally significant effect (.056) for critical thinking. In other words, as shown in Figures 3 and 4, learning community students gained more from pretest to posttest in these areas than control students did.

Figure 3

Graph of Statistically Significant Group x Time Interaction for Oral Communication/Leadership

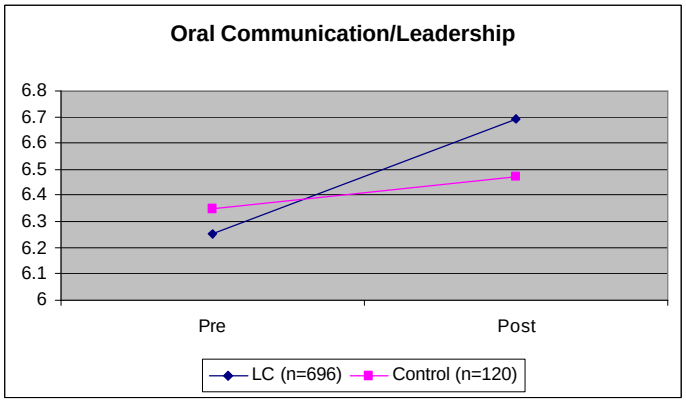

Figure 4

Graph of Marginally Significant Group x Time Interaction for Critical Thinking/Problem Solving

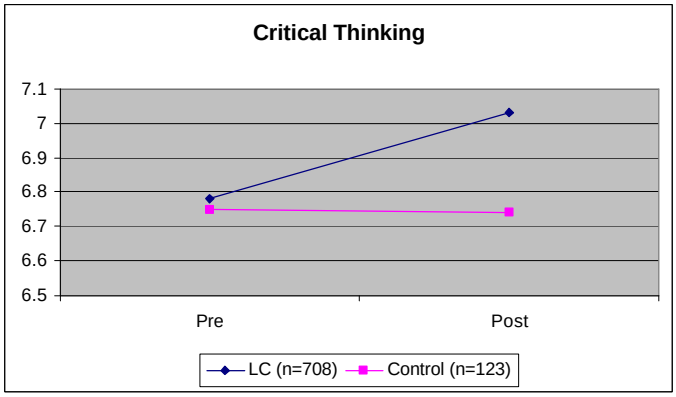

Figure 5 shows the most frequently mentioned responses to the questions asked at the end of the semester: "What was your greatest success or positive academic experience this semester? and "What was your greatest difficulty or negative academic experience this semester?" In terms of successes, both learning community and control group students mentioned doing well in classes and getting good grades. Learning community students also mentioned intrinsically satisfying elements

such as having positive experiences in a class or lab, learning a great deal in a class, and learning about their major.

Figure 5

Most Frequent Responses by Group to Open-Ended Questions on Posttest Survey

Question	Learning Community Students	Control Students
What was your greatest success or positive academic experience this semester?	• Getting good grades in classes/tests/projects • Good experiences in a class/lab • Learning a lot in a class/learning about my major • Doing well on a paper	• Doing well in classes or tests – got a good grade • Getting an A in a class/top of class
What was your greatest difficulty or negative experience this semester?	• Difficult class/project/tests • Poor experience with an instructor	• Difficult class • Poor experience with an instructor • Developing study habits

In terms of difficulties experienced by students, both groups mentioned difficult classes and poor experiences with an instructor. The control group also mentioned that they had difficulty developing study habits.

Finally, there were some questions asked only of learning community students. Table 7 summarizes students' satisfaction with their overall learning community experience and with several aspects of their interaction with their learning community's peer mentor. As can be seen, the average on all items was about 7 on a 9 point scale where1 represented strongly dissatisfied and 9 represented strongly satisfied.

Table 7

Learning Community Students' Satisfaction with Peer Mentors and Overall Learning Community Experience[a]

	Learning Communities		
Item	Mean	SD	n
Overall learning community experience	6.96	1.78	794
Peer mentor availability	6.96	1.88	668
Peer mentor helpfulness	6.96	1.93	668
Peer mentor knowledge in the discipline	6.97	1.76	667
Peer mentor knowledge of Iowa State University resources	7.19	1.72	667
Level of concern my mentor shows about my academic success	6.94	1.93	645

[a]Scale: 1 = Strongly Dissatisfied; 9 = Strongly Satisfied

Figure 6 summarizes the most frequent responses of learning community students to questions about their most satisfying and most disappointing aspects of their learning community. As can be seen all

of the elements that students were satisfied with had to do with interactions with others--meeting new friends; studying, learning, and socializing with them; and meeting individuals in their major and/or individuals with similar interests. The most frequent response to disappointing aspects of the learning community was, "None." The next most frequent response indicated a desire for even more group activities and social events.

Figure 6

Most Frequent Responses to Open-Ended Questions on the Posttest Survey for Learning Community Students Only

Question	Learning Community Students
What was the most satisfying aspect of your learning community?	• Meeting people/making friends/nice people • Having people to ask questions about classes, helping with their classes and studying in groups • Fun times/social events • Meeting people in my major/meeting people with similar interests
What was the most disappointing aspect of your learning community?	• None • Would like more group activities/social event

Appendix

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISU Undergraduate Education Survey I

Record the information requested below in the spaces provided

Social Security Number:_____ Major (if known): _____

Items 1-28. Listed below are a number of knowledge and ability domains related to your education at Iowa State University. Please rate your current level of skill functioning in each domain using the scale below.

Very Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Very Strong

1. Knowledge of university policies and procedures relevant to undergraduate students
2. Knowledge of university resources for undergraduate students (e.g., Academic Success Center, Student Counseling Center, etc.)
3. Knowledge in your anticipated discipline or field of study
4. Knowledge of career choices and options in your anticipated discipline or field of study
5. Knowledge of other cultures and/or ethnic groups
6. Ability to produce well-written term papers that would receive a grade of "B+" or better
7. Ability to write the types of technical, critical, review, or creative papers typical for your discipline with a grade of "B+" or better
8. Ability to edit a document or paper for correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
9. Ability to analyze and evaluate ideas systematically and critically from different perspectives
10. Ability to apply academic knowledge and reason to current problems
11. Ability to think of different ways to solve problems
12. Ability to work cooperatively and productively with others
13. Ability to effectively listen to others enabling you to clearly understand what is being said and reflect that understanding back to the speaker
14. Ability to interact with others and contribute to group discussions
15. Ability to put team goals above your own personal goals
16. Ability to make formal class presentations
17. Ability to argue a point of view assertively
18. Ability to persuade others to follow your lead
19. Ability to effectively and comfortably interact with people from other cultures or ethnic groups
20. Ability to speak up when you see bigotry
21. Ability to accept religious differences
22. Ability to manage your time effectively
23. Ability to prioritize tasks to be performed for a project

24. Ability to coordinate multiple concurrent tasks or projects
25. Ability to study effectively
26. Ability to inspire others through your leadership
27. Ability to bring people with different viewpoints together to cooperate on a project
28. Ability to facilitate group interactions

Items 29 - 43. How important is it to you that each of the following be part of your college experience?

Not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Very Important

29. Interact closely with faculty members
30. Receive individual support, encouragement or advice from faculty members
31. Participate in a department club, residence government, or other organization
32. Work collaboratively with other students on class projects
33. Develop study groups with other students
34. Apply learning to real world problems
35. See connections among classes (e.g., learning in one class supports or augments learning in another class)
36. See connections between personal experiences and class learning
37. Interact with people from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds
38. Earn high grades in classes
39. Take courses from professors who have high expectations for you
40. Have experiences that help you understand the nature of your anticipated major
41. Have experiences that "fit together" in helping you reach your goals as a student
42. Have opportunities to practice the skills you are learning or have learned
43. Receive prompt feedback about your progress

Items 44 - 52. How many hours per week do you expect to spend on the following activities? Respond using the following scale.

1=1 to 2 hours	4=7 to 8 hours	7=13 to 14 hours
2=3 to 4 hours	5=9 to 10 hours	8=15 to 16 hours
3=5 to 6 hours	6=11 to 12 hours	9=17 or more hours

44. Classes and labs
45. Studying alone
46. Studying in groups
47. Talking with your advisor
48. Talking with instructors outside of class
49. Community service/volunteer work
50. Recreational/social activities
51. Leadership activities
52. Paid work

Please complete the written response questions on the back of this booklet.

Please record your written comments for the following questions

A. What are you most looking forward to this semester?

B. What most worries you about your first semester?

Thanks!

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISU Learning Community Survey

Record the information requested below in the spaces provided

Social Security Number:_____ Major (if known): _____

Items 1-28. Listed below are a number of knowledge and ability domains related to your education at Iowa State University. Please rate your current level of skill functioning in each domain using the scale below.

Very Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Very Strong

1. Knowledge of university policies and procedures relevant to undergraduate students
2. Knowledge of university resources for undergraduate students (e.g., Academic Success Center, Student Counseling Center, etc.)
3. Knowledge in your anticipated discipline or field of study
4. Knowledge of career choices and options in your anticipated discipline or field of study
5. Knowledge of other cultures and/or ethnic groups
6. Ability to produce well-written term papers that would receive a grade of "B+" or better
7. Ability to write the types of technical, critical, review, or creative papers typical for your discipline with a grade of "B+" or better
8. Ability to edit a document or paper for correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
9. Ability to analyze and evaluate ideas systematically and critically from different perspectives
10. Ability to apply academic knowledge and reason to current problems
11. Ability to think of different ways to solve problems
12. Ability to work cooperatively and productively with others
13. Ability to effectively listen to others enabling you to clearly understand what is being said and reflect that understanding back to the speaker
14. Ability to interact with others and contribute to group discussions
15. Ability to put team goals above your own personal goals
16. Ability to make formal class presentations
17. Ability to argue a point of view assertively
18. Ability to persuade others to follow your lead
19. Ability to effectively and comfortably interact with people from other cultures or ethnic groups
20. Ability to speak up when you see bigotry
21. Ability to accept religious differences
22. Ability to manage your time effectively
23. Ability to prioritize tasks to be performed for a project

24. Ability to coordinate multiple concurrent tasks or projects
25. Ability to study effectively
26. Ability to inspire others through your leadership
27. Ability to bring people with different viewpoints together to cooperate on a project
28. Ability to facilitate group interactions

Items 29 - 35. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements by using the following rating scale?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Agree

29. I was able to see connections among my classes (e.g., learning in one class supported or augmented learning in another class)
30. I was able to see connections between personal experiences and class learning
31. I was able to earn high grades in classes
32. My professors had high expectations for me
33. I better understand the nature of my anticipated major
34. I have had experiences this semester that "fit together" in helping me meet my goals as a student
35. I have received prompt feedback about my progress in classes

Items 36 - 49. Please indicate your degree of satisfaction this semester on each of the following dimensions.

Strongly Dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Satisfied

36. Opportunities to interact closely with faculty
37. Level of individual support, encouragement, or advice from faculty members
38. Opportunities to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds
39. Opportunities to participate in a department club, residence government, or other organization
40. Opportunities to work collaboratively with other students on class projects
41. Opportunities to develop or participate in study groups
42. Opportunities to apply learning to real world problems
43. Opportunities to practice the skills you are learning or have learned
44. Overall quality of instruction that you received this semester
45. Overall quality of your classmates
46. Availability of your academic advisor
47. Helpfulness of your academic advisor
48. Overall experiences at ISU
49. Overall learning community experience

5.

Items 50 - 58. During the fall semester, how many hours per week did you spend on the following activities?

1=1 to 2 hours	4=7 to 8 hours	7=13 to 14 hours
2=3 to 4 hours	5=9 to 10 hours	8=15 to 16 hours
3=5 to 6 hours	6=11 to 12 hours	9=17 or more hours

50. Classes and labs
51. Studying alone
52. Studying in groups
53. Talking with your advisor
54. Talking with instructors outside of class
55. Community service/volunteer work
56. Recreational/social activities
57. Leadership activities
58. Paid work

If you had one or more peer mentors associated with your learning community, please complete items 59 - 63. If you did not have a peer mentor associated with your learning community, please skip the next section and complete the written response questions on the back of this booklet.

Items 59 - 63. Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with your peer mentor on the following dimensions.

Strongly Dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Satisfied

59. Availability
60. Helpfulness
61. Knowledge in the discipline
62. Knowledge of Iowa State University resources
63. Level of concern my mentor shows about my academic success

Please complete the written response questions on the back of this booklet.

Please record your written comments for the following questions

C. What was your greatest success or positive academic experience this semester?

D. What was your greatest difficulty or negative academic experience this semester?

E. What was the most satisfying aspect of your learning community?

F. What was the most disappointing aspect of your learning community?

Thanks!

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISU First-Year Student Survey

Record the information requested below in the spaces provided

Social Security Number:_____ Major (if known): _____

Items 1-28. Listed below are a number of knowledge and ability domains related to your education at Iowa State University. Please rate your current level of skill functioning in each domain using the scale below.

Very Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Very Strong

1. Knowledge of university policies and procedures relevant to undergraduate students
2. Knowledge of university resources for undergraduate students (e.g., Academic Success Center, Student Counseling Center, etc.)
3. Knowledge in your anticipated discipline or field of study
4. Knowledge of career choices and options in your anticipated discipline or field of study
5. Knowledge of other cultures and/or ethnic groups
6. Ability to produce well-written term papers that would receive a grade of "B+" or better
7. Ability to write the types of technical, critical, review, or creative papers typical for your discipline with a grade of "B+" or better
8. Ability to edit a document or paper for correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
9. Ability to analyze and evaluate ideas systematically and critically from different perspectives
10. Ability to apply academic knowledge and reason to current problems
11. Ability to think of different ways to solve problems
12. Ability to work cooperatively and productively with others
13. Ability to effectively listen to others enabling you to clearly understand what is being said and reflect that understanding back to the speaker
14. Ability to interact with others and contribute to group discussions
15. Ability to put team goals above your own personal goals
16. Ability to make formal class presentations
17. Ability to argue a point of view assertively
18. Ability to persuade others to follow your lead
19. Ability to effectively and comfortably interact with people from other cultures or ethnic groups
20. Ability to speak up when you see bigotry
21. Ability to accept religious differences
22. Ability to manage your time effectively
23. Ability to prioritize tasks to be performed for a project

24. Ability to coordinate multiple concurrent tasks or projects
25. Ability to study effectively
26. Ability to inspire others through your leadership
27. Ability to bring people with different viewpoints together to cooperate on a project
28. Ability to facilitate group interactions

Items 29 - 35. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements by using the following rating scale?

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Agree

29. I was able to see connections among my classes (e.g., learning in one class supported or augmented learning in another class)
30. I was able to see connections between personal experiences and class learning
31. I was able to earn high grades in classes
32. My professors had high expectations for me
33. I better understand the nature of my anticipated major
34. I have had experiences this semester that "fit together" in helping me meet my goals as a student
35. I have received prompt feedback about my progress in classes

Items 36 - 48. Please indicate your degree of satisfaction this semester on each of the following dimensions.

Strongly Dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly Satisfied

36. Opportunities to interact closely with faculty
37. Level of individual support, encouragement, or advice from faculty members
38. Opportunities to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds
39. Opportunities to participate in a department club, residence government, or other organization
40. Opportunities to work collaboratively with other students on class projects
41. Opportunities to develop or participate in study groups
42. Opportunities to apply learning to real world problems
43. Opportunities to practice the skills you are learning or have learned
44. Overall quality of instruction that you received this semester
45. Overall quality of your classmates
46. Availability of your academic advisor
47. Helpfulness of your academic advisor
48. Overall experiences at ISU

Please continue to the back page.

Items 49 - 57. During the fall semester, how many hours per week did you spend on the following activities?

1=1 to 2 hours	4=7 to 8 hours	7=13 to 14 hours
2=3 to 4 hours	5=9 to 10 hours	8=15 to 16 hours
3=5 to 6 hours	6=11 to 12 hours	9=17 or more hours

49. Classes and labs
50. Studying alone
51. Studying in groups
52. Talking with your advisor
53. Talking with instructors outside of class
54. Community service/volunteer work
55. Recreational/social activities
56. Leadership activities
57. Paid work

Please record your written comments for the following questions

G. What was your greatest success or positive academic experience this semester?

H. What was your greatest difficulty or negative academic experience this semester?

Thanks!