

# *Otero Junior College*

## *Case Study Report – Data as of May 2013*

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# **RUTGERS**

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2011, Colorado received a \$17.3 million Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The project funded by this grant—the Colorado Online Energy Training Consortium (COETC)—has two principal purposes: 1) enhance the state’s energy-related programming by transforming curricula into more accessible formats via technology and mobile learning labs, and 2) develop and implement a redesign of the state’s developmental education (DE) program. More specifically, the COETC project focuses on 1) increasing access to employment opportunities in the state’s energy sector by expanding and providing online and hybrid delivery of energy certificates and degrees, and 2) redesigning DE curricula to accelerate students’ passage of gatekeeper courses.

The COETC project involves the thirteen colleges in the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) and two local district colleges, Aims Community College (Aims CC) and Colorado Mountain College (CMC).

CCCS contracted with Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations (“Rutgers”) to be the COETC third-party evaluator. In this role, the Rutgers team created and implemented a multi-faceted research assessment design that includes quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

A major component of Rutgers’ COETC evaluation is a cohort study that compares the educational outcomes for students enrolled in traditional courses to those for students enrolled in COETC developed and funded courses. In particular, this research focuses on the COETC’s second goal as described above. The study’s objective is to assess the success of DE courses restructured under the guidelines of the Colorado State Task Force on Developmental Education Redesigns (State Task Force). Specifically, it will evaluate the impact of factors such as demographics, Accuplacer scores, course registrations, student grades, employment, status, and wages on rates of retention, program completion, and employment after graduation. The methodology consists of quantitative analyses of data from Fall 2011 through Spring 2014 along with qualitative analyses of student experiences.

Toward the end of the Spring 2013 semester, Rutgers distributed four reports covering the study data collected to date from individual colleges and the consortium as a whole: “Integrated Year End Report,” Career Coach Caseloads Analysis,” “Redesigned Course Outcomes,” and “Master Course List.” This case study provides an interim report, based on data provided in these reports, on the progress to date of Otero Junior College (OJC) under the COETC grant.

The sections that follow 1) outline the overall study methodology and data sources, 2) provide background information on CCA and its student population, 3) summarize the goals and primary elements of OJC’s COETC program, 4) describe the redesigned DE courses (math and English/reading) and present data on enrollment and outcomes, 5) assess the success of the

career coaching program instituted by OJC as part of its COETC program, and 6) conclude with recommendations for OJC specifically and for the consortium colleges in general with regard to their COETC-funded programs.

## **METHODOLOGY/DATA SOURCES**

### *Quantitative Analysis*

During the first project year, Rutgers worked closely with CCCS to refine the quarterly reports required from each of the system's participating colleges. Rutgers has used data from these reports to track progress and to provide the foundation for other data collection. In collaboration with CCCS, the district colleges, and college career coaches, Rutgers' developed and revised an Electronic Student Case File (ESCF) to capture data relating to the COETC career coaches' work with grant-eligible students. (ESCFs record demographic and academic information and track the issues and goals coaches and students work on and any referrals made.) In addition, Rutgers designed a pre-course survey to collect information on student expectations about course work and career goals. Beginning Fall 2012, the colleges have administered the survey to students in traditional and redesigned DE courses.

The Rutgers team has also been working closely with CCCS and the district colleges to access the Banner student system (and CMC's data system) to track student progress and achievement and to collect and analyze data for the cohort study.

### *Qualitative Analysis*

Rutgers' qualitative evaluation focuses on COETC process issues and the experiences of project team members and participating students, faculty, and staff at the 15 colleges in the COETC consortium.

As part of this analysis, team members reviewed relevant documents, text answers from quarterly reports, ESCFs, pre-course survey results, and materials and websites developed by the State Task Force, CCCS, and/or individual colleges. Rutgers team members have conducted phone and in-person interviews with project leads, faculty involved in the restructuring and/or teaching of DE and energy courses, instructional designers, data coordinators, senior college administrators, and, whenever possible, students. Onsite interviews were conducted at OJC on January 29-30, 2013. The team members have analyzed transcriptions of phone and in-person interviews to identify program achievements to date, best practices, and critical issues for follow-up. Some of the responses from these interviews are quoted in this report.

Rutgers team members have also participated in and "observed" conference calls with project leads and career coaches and joined in webinars. In addition, they have observed and participated in forums sponsored by CCCS, such as sessions on DE redesigns.

## **COLLEGE DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW OF STUDENT POPULATION**

OJC is a single-campus residential college located in La Junta, a small town in the Arkansas Valley of southeastern Colorado. OJC administers a well-known nursing program and law enforcement academy.<sup>1</sup> The town, which sits at one of the major junctions of the historic Santa Fe Trail, has a current population of 7,046 (2012 census).<sup>2</sup> The region's long-term economic base has been farming and ranching, along with some light industry. More recently a number of retirement communities have been developed in the area.

Established in 1941, OJC is a two-year community college within the CCCS. Its campus resides on an attractive 40 acres and includes a historic stone building along with modern buildings set into a rolling hillside.

OJC grants associate of arts and science degrees in agriculture, elementary education, and pre-chiropractic medicine that prepare students for transfer to four-year degree colleges. OJC also offers an array of career and technical education certificate programs. Among these, the nursing, automotive, and law enforcement programs stand out.

In Fall 2012, OJC had 1,214 students enrolled in one or more of its certificate and/or degree programs. Most of OJC students commute, but the college also provides residence halls for about 300 students who come from a distance. Of the enrolled population, 52 percent are part-time students and 37 percent have identified themselves as belonging to a minority (Fall 2011). Approximately 40 percent of OJC students are nontraditional students over age 25. An estimated 50 percent of international students are competitive athletes.

On its website, OJC states that 97 percent of its graduates are employed at the time of graduation or have transferred to four-year degree granting programs.

## **OJC'S COETC GOAL AND PRIMARY PROGRAM ELEMENTS**

OJC's COETC project aims principally to increase retention and reduce the time it takes students to complete academic and career goals. The specific targets involve improving the percentage of students who complete entry-level college-level math and English courses within the first two consecutive academic years. This percentage is currently between 55 and 65 percent. Approximately 60 percent of OJC's entering first-year students test into at least one DE class. As a result, the college has a sizable DE population. OJC would like at least 70 percent of these students to be served by the new restructured DE courses. It also wants to expand its academic and support services. To this end, a career coach is now working with students in the DE redesigned courses, as well as students who are eligible for teaching adjustment assistance (TAA)

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ci.la-junta.co.us/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=PEP\\_2012\\_PEPANRES](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=PEP_2012_PEPANRES)

(or TAA-like), unemployed, and/or displaced homemakers. The target for OJC's coach is to serve at least 115 students over the course of the grant.

In addition, as part of the COETC consortium, OJC seeks to provide students within its service area with the foundational skills necessary to pursue energy studies and to increase student access to energy degree and certificate programs at community colleges inside and outside of Colorado.

## **OJC'S REDESIGNED DE PROGRAM**

To achieve its goals, OJC has restructured its DE sequences in English, reading, and math in accordance with the State Task Force guidelines. The redesign also includes expanding the number of courses, employing online technology, and providing professional development training to faculty.

### ***ENGLISH/READING REDESIGN***

Historically, OJC students who placed into a DE reading course could delay their DE enrollment until their second semester or even their second year of study. Many students enrolled in subject area courses that did not require demonstrated college-level proficiency in English and reading and/or math. In addition, OJC did not require a DE reading course for graduation, and students who took the class could still graduate with a D or F as a grade.

From their review of developmental education, OJC faculty observed that many students could have achieved better course experiences and grades overall from having more solid foundational skills at the start. Completing DE reading early in their educational course would have improved these skills. In response, OJC now requires students who place into developmental reading to take it in their first semester.

In addition, OJC redesigned five English and reading courses as the first phase of its drive to achieve these specific DE goals: expanding DE course delivery, reducing DE sequence completion time, increasing the effectiveness of foundational skill set teaching, and making course schedules and academic support resources more flexible.

The following section identifies some of the innovative models and practices OJC instituted to improve student skills and accelerate their progress in English and reading developmental courses. (Note that some of courses discussed below were revised or the sequence restructured after the State Task Force issued its guidelines. As of Fall 2013, all OJC DE offerings conform to these standards.)

## English/Reading Redesign: Innovative Models and Practices

*Paired Reading Courses:* To foster the application of reading skills to college-level work, OJC paired developmental reading with other humanities courses. For instance, DE students can take the required DE reading course in conjunction with a college-level mythology course, with one course scheduled to immediately follow the other. OJC faculty have observed that this pairing is popular option with their DE students. Initially, however, some students faced scheduling problems and only took one or the other course.

This situation provided an unplanned opportunity to compare course outcomes. As might be expected, students enrolled in the reading class and not the mythology section had a lower rate of success than those enrolled in both courses. This confirms the efficacy of pairing DE-level work with college-level courses. Thus, organizing paired courses that allow students to apply their DE reading skills training directly better addresses student needs. Under the new DE pathways, OJC will continue making this direct application of reading skills available by using studios and labs concurrent with college-level courses in the humanities and other disciplines at the 091 to 093 levels.

As of Spring 2013, OJC had resolved the scheduling issue. Now all students enrolled in the reading class are also enrolled in a linked English course such as mythology. OJC has observed that having a full-time English faculty member who can teach a specialty area and remedial content facilitates this model.

*Reading Lab:* OJC has implemented a reading lab option for completing the developmental reading requirement. Some ESL and CTE students have struggled with course content in mythology or were simply not interested in the subject. These students have especially benefitted from the reading lab, where they can participate in workshops and receive individual instruction. Studio D and the 091 to 093 sections within the new DE sequence will continue this integration of cross-disciplinary college-level reading into DE courses below 094.

*Embedded Tutor:* To further assist students in completing their reading and English requirements, OJC embedded a classroom tutor. The tutor also manages the reading labs and has become well-known to students, which makes their seeking help less stressful. As a result, the number of students making use of her services within and outside the traditional classroom has increased.

In addition to her assistance to students, the tutor also supports faculty members. As a former nontraditional student, the tutor has insights to share with faculty that help them in lesson planning and in pacing classes. For example, the tutor has observed that many students are easily distracted or overwhelmed when responding to multiple tasks. She therefore suggested that faculty members limit the handouts and assignments they distribute in each class session.

*Soft Landing:* In Summer 2013, the embedded tutor ran a two-week boot camp for students who tested below 060 on the Accuplacer. The participants took a three-hour class, focusing on reading comprehension and vocabulary. At the end of boot camp, these students sat for the Accuplacer and 70 percent were able to test into the CRC 092 class. The others have continued working with the tutor this fall to increase their reading comprehension. They will retake the Accuplacer for enrollment placement this coming spring.

### English/Reading Redesign: Challenges

OJC's faculty and staff have reported several challenges under the COETC grant. Some of these were identified in OJC's original proposal, and others have emerged during the restructuring of the DE English and reading courses.

From the start, the college's administration and faculty have been concerned that, as a small college, OJC lacked the capacity to engage in course curriculum redesign and provide opportunities for faculty development such as reviews of new course content, pedagogy, and technology use.

*Curriculum Development and Faculty Development:* Many of OJC's full-time English and reading faculty wear multiple hats. They generally do not have time to analyze past experiences and develop new course designs. Limited funds to pay for release time have also constrained this ability. In that regard, OJC also has found it difficult to identify, within its geographic region, qualified individuals to substitute for full-time faculty. Larger schools and more urban colleges, in contrast, have a larger pool of potential adjuncts. While the summer salaries provided under COETC have helped the time issue, in general the opportunities for faculty development over the course of the grant have still been limited.

*Course Schedules:* As indicated above, scheduling the paired reading and mythology courses back to back has been difficult given the faculty's other course assignments. This limited flexibility has made it a challenge to offer multiple sections of paired courses.

*Specific Population Needs:* OJC enjoys a diverse student body that includes traditional and nontraditional students, ESL students, and student athletes. Each of these populations creates special challenges in achieving the required reading and English proficiency. Athletes often miss classes because of road trips. Nontraditional students may have problems balancing work, family, and studies. Students who are not fluent in English may be better served by opportunities to practice their English as opposed to remedial reading and English courses. OJC is working to identify the most effective strategies to meet the needs of each of these populations.

## ***MATH REDESIGN***

During the 2011-12 academic year, 60.1 percent (46,913) of students enrolled in DE courses across Colorado were enrolled in a math course compared to 25.9 percent (20,243) in English and 13.1 percent (10,877) in reading.<sup>3</sup> It has been a challenge for colleges to serve the high volume of students requiring one or more developmental math courses and to identify methods to encourage successful progress through the developmental pathway.

The State Task Force determined that liberal arts and algebra pathways require different levels of math proficiency. Consequently, it separated developmental math into two pathways: one for students interested in pursuing degrees and careers requiring higher-level math proficiency and one for students interested in degrees or fields where algebra or calculus are not as involved.

The following section identifies some of the innovative models and practices OJC instituted to improve student skills and accelerate their progress in math developmental courses. (Note that prior to receiving the State Task Force guidelines on math, OJC had already combined several courses, for example, creating a Math 045 out of 030 and 060. It also developed strategies to help students successfully complete their math requirements.)

### Math Redesign: Innovative Models and Practices

*Group Tutoring “Plus Sessions”:* OJC created these sessions for students at the 099 level. Faculty chose the name “plus sessions” to reduce the negative stigma many students experience with regard to seeking tutoring services. Participation in the plus sessions helps some students move rapidly through 099 and directly on to credit-bearing college math courses, which reduces the time needed to complete college requirements.

*Use of Pretests:* As part of OJC’s efforts to accelerate DE course completion, students can take online modules in math in a lab. Before starting a new chapter or module, students take a pretest. If they achieve a grade of 90 percent or higher, they can skip to the next math chapter and module. This allows students to move quickly through math levels over a semester. Given the multiple course work levels, however, they have to pay for extra credit hours.

As mentioned above, the State Task Force has determined that liberal arts and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) pathways require different math proficiency levels. As such they separated developmental math into two pathways as described earlier. Under this new structure, OJC launched four restructured math courses in Fall 2013. For STEM pathway students, OJC offers two DE courses—Introductory Algebra and Intermediate Algebra, which are akin to 090 and 099, respectively—and one college-level course, College Algebra: MA1,

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<sup>3</sup> See CCCS (2010). Academic Year 2011-12 Remedial Enrollment and Course Completion Rates.  
3 <http://www.cccs.edu/Docs/Research/AY2012RemedialEnrollmentandCompletion.pdf>

which is akin to 121. For non-STEM students, OJC created a pre-algebra course akin to 060. Students interested in transferring to a **bachelor's degree** program must take the STEM pathway rather than the quantitative literacy or liberal arts pathway.

The majority of OJC students pursue associate of arts degrees. Faculty members therefore expect most students testing into DE to register for the quantitative literacy course and then move into the college-level Math 120. The teachers anticipate the new math sequence option for non-STEM and non-transfer students will facilitate these students completing OJC's college math requirements successfully and more rapidly.

*Soft Landing:* Anticipating the new math DE sequence, OJC offered summer boot camps to help students who did poorly on Accuplacer meet the cutoff score for enrolling in Math 050 or 055. However, only 40 percent of the boot camp students made the cutoff. Some students who were close were allowed into 050 on the condition that they also take a math lab.

### Math Redesign: Challenges

As it restructures its math program, OJC has also reviewed its use of faculty. The review identified these challenges:

- OJC has two instructors who have historically taught at the 060 level, which no longer exists in the new curriculum sequence. These individuals will have to be retrained before teaching one or more of the new courses. As noted above regarding the DE English/reading sequence, staff development resources have been very limited.
- The implementation of the new math pathways raises the importance of advising students with respect to fulfilling their DE and/or college-level math requirements (120 for non-STEM, non-transfer students and 121 for transfer students and/or STEM careers). The choice of pathways is important for students to make early and requires students to receive advisement before their first semester at OJC. For the new curriculum sequences to work, OJC's academic advisers need to be trained on these options and staff assignments revised to accommodate pre-enrollment advising.
- Historically, most OJC developmental math courses were taught by adjunct faculty and college-level courses by full-time faculty. However, OJC faculty members have noted that adjunct faculty are often not involved in the school's evolving culture and have very limited time outside of the classroom. This limits the support they can provide to DE students who frequently need additional academic help. OJC recognizes that giving students the best foundation possible in math can make a real difference in their academic trajectory. For these reasons, the college decided to reverse faculty assignments. Going forward, full-time faculty will teach foundation-level courses and part-time faculty will teach higher-level courses. This will require faculty schedule changes, which pose a major challenge when the number of faculty members is limited.

- Faculty development is an ongoing need with respect to the new curriculum and the lack of motivation and/or academic discipline of some DE students. Faculty members need guidance and training on the most effective teaching and support strategies for students testing in at the lower level of developmental education.

*Redesigned Course Outcomes*

OJC offered nine unique courses (26 sections) between Fall 2012 and Spring 2013. Approximately 23 percent of these courses and sections were in Spring 2013. Table 1 displays the rollout of these courses by term and the number and percentage of total students (548) served.

<b>Term and Year</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Redesigned DE Population (All Subjects)</b>	<b>Number of Students (Redesigned DE Population)</b>
Spring 2012	13.9	76
Fall 2012	60.7	333
Spring 2013	25.4	139
Total	100.0	548

In terms of overall student retention, 82.3 percent (451) of students registered for redesigned DE classes persisted in the course, 8.4 percent (46) dropped the course during the add/drop period, and 9.3 percent (51) withdrew after the term started.

Table 2 presents the number of students enrolled in redesigned course offerings by subject. At OJC, just over half of students served by redesigned DE course were enrolled in English (53.3 percent), followed by Math Contextualized (21.4 percent), Reading (16.2 percent), and Math (9.1 percent).

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Redesigned DE Population (All Terms)</b>	<b>Number of Students (Redesigned DE Population)</b>
English	53.3	292
Reading	16.2	89
Math	9.1	50
Math Contextualized <sup>4</sup>	21.4	117
Total	100.0	548

Tables 3 shows the number of students at OJC enrolled in redesigned DE by course title.

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Redesigned DE Population (All Terms)</b>	<b>Number of Students (Redesigned DE Population)</b>
Basic Composition	21.9	120
College Algebra: MA1	4.0	22
Introductory Algebra	5.2	28
College Preparatory Reading	15.3	84
College Reading	0.9	5
English Composition I: CO1	18.2	100
Humanities: Modern World GT-AH2	9.1	50
World Mythology: GT-AH2	12.2	67
Writing Fundamentals	13.2	72
Total	100.0	548

Table 4 presents the mean of grades for each individual DE redesigned course. In the months ahead, the Rutgers team will do compare section means to departmental means.

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<sup>4</sup> Math contextualized courses are defined as those courses identified by the Project Leads as redesigned DE but have a course number >99. These are typically paired with 090 level courses. These were separated out to illustrate that difference.

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Course Mean Grade (All Terms and Redesigned Sections Combined)</b>
Basic Composition	2.2336
College Algebra: MA1	2.7619
Introductory Algebra	2.0000
College Preparatory Reading	2.0909
College Reading	3.8000
English Composition I: CO1	2.3200
Humanities: Modern World GT-AH2	1.9429
World Mythology: GT-AH2	2.6552
Writing Fundamentals	1.9661

### **OJC'S CAREER COACH PROGRAM**

Across the COETC consortium, the career coach position was established to facilitate students' access to careers in the energy sector and to assist students with any non-academic issues that inhibit their progress or ability to successfully complete a course of study. Coach functions were envisioned to include career counseling and referrals, academic advising as it related to career choices, and counseling and referrals for a wide range of social and financial support services. To conform to the intent of COETC, eligibility for career coach services requires that a student meet one or more of the following characteristics: participation in a redesigned DE course or a TAACCCT-supported energy course/program, being TAA-eligible or TAA-like, being unemployed, and/or being eligible for other U.S. Department of Labor programs.

OJC was one of the first of the COETC colleges to employ a career coach, hiring the coach in February 2012. Over the past 18 months, the career coach has worked with students on their academic needs and career paths, as well as any personal, academic, or financial barriers that might impede their successful completion of educational goals.

Initially, OJC's career coach recruited a case load through presentations in all DE classes. This was not the most effective approach, however. Consequently, DE English instructors required their students to meet with the career coach as part of a writing assignment that involves interviewing the coach. If they fail to interview the coach, they cannot complete the assignment. This change significantly increased the number of students seeking assistance from the coach.

The coach also helps students develop career goals by providing information on their chosen career and options for continuing education in a four-year bachelor program. To this end, the coach also lets students know when recruiters from four-year colleges and universities will visit the OJC campus.

We note here that OJC does not have its own renewable energy program and the region has few jobs in renewable energy. As a result, few students have expressed an interest in renewable

energy careers and fewer still are interested in or able to relocate. Nonetheless, the career coach provides information to students about existing renewable energy programs and has helped link some to Aims and CMC. However, given that these programs are not yet fully online or hybrid, there has been little follow-through with the exception of a student interested in solar energy referred by OJC's coach to CMC's coach. CMC's career coach in turn spoke to the instructor about the student's interest and his inability to relocate. The instructor waived some of the hands-on time required for training in solar installation. The instructor also stated that he would try to find housing for the student when the student needed to be physically in Rifle. Unfortunately, the student was unable to change his schedule to enable his participation.

Given the COETC's focus on energy careers, OJC's career coach has expressed concern about the relatively limited time she devotes to helping students with careers in energy. However, she recognizes the time it takes to establish more online and hybrid programs, as well as the fact that different regions of Colorado have different markets and demands for energy jobs.

In terms of her relationships with students, the coach has observed that trust takes time to build. When she first meets with students, she does some "intake" work that helps the student get to know her and the services she can provide. By doing this, she hopes to foster the students' sense of comfort and confidence in sharing personal issues.

To assist students academically, the career coach has initiated an innovative service that assesses specific learning styles. After students complete this assessment, she works with them to develop study skills that maximize their strengths and conform to their learning style. In Spring 2013, the coach added classroom presentations that describe learning styles and encourage awareness of how recognizing and taking advantage of such styles can greatly benefit student academic work. Anecdotally, students and faculty members acknowledge that the coach's work in this area has made a real difference in students' learning experience and academic success.

OJC's career coach brings a wealth of knowledge and professional connections with local services within the Arkansas Valley to her work. As a result, she has successfully referred students to a range of community resources. For example, she has referred students concerned with domestic violence to the Resource Center in La Junta that deals with such issues. She has also referred students with transportation issues to the Catholic Charities for assistance.

In sum, the career coach position has helped fill a void at OJC. The counselor who generally deals with student services issues is male. Both faculty and staff report that having an additional counselor at OJC who is female has helped the college better serve the needs of its female students, who often are more comfortable speaking to a woman than a man.

### *OJC Electronic Student Case Files (ESCF)*

As mentioned above, ESCFs help career coaches track student progress with goals. Rutgers hoped that PPCC's ESCF data would help it better understand student challenges and best intervention practices, as well as the impact of coaching services on student retention and completion rates.

Career coaches initiate an ESCF the first time they meet with a student and then add information as appropriate after subsequent visits and interactions. Of the students registered by OJC's career coach, 65.7 percent (71) have an active ESCF. As of May 23, 2013, the remaining 34.3 percent (37) did not have an active ESCF.<sup>5</sup>

### *OJC Career Coaching Target Performance*

At OJC, the target number of students to be served by the career coach under the grant is 115. Thus far, the coach has registered 108 students, which is approximately 94 percent of the number expected to be served under the grant.<sup>6</sup>

### *Career Coaching Eligibility Distribution*

As stated above, students are eligible for coaching services if they are enrolled in a restructured DE and/or energy program supported by the COETC grant, are eligible for TAACCCT assistance, or are unemployed or underemployed. Table 5 shows the distribution of OJC students seen by the coach as of spring 2013. The majority of these students are enrolled in restructured DE courses (62 percent), reflecting the effectiveness of the mandate set by some DE faculty that requires students to meet at least once with the coach.

Of the students the coach has met, 12 percent were TAA-eligible or TAA-like and 16.7 percent were in DE redesign courses and TAA-eligible. This suggests that a relatively small pool of TAA students (29 percent) is using coaching services. If all the students whose eligibility has not been validated were confirmed as TAA-eligible or TAA-like, the number would total only 37 percent of all students seen by the coach. In the months ahead, it will be important to compare these percentages with OJC's entire student population to be sure that as many TAA-eligible students as possible are receiving career coaching services.

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<sup>5</sup> Rutgers defines an active ESCF file as a "response in progress" in which student information has been entered into the ESCF but not submitted to the record. Career coaches can return to and update information in active ESCFs. An ESCF that has been closed or submitted to the system by the career coach is considered inactive.

<sup>6</sup> Students registered by the career coach may not have an active ESCF file. In order for the student to be considered registered, the career coach has to fill in basic information such as ID number and name but does not have to initiate an ESCF file. Alternatively, a student in this count may have been served by the career coach and the student's ESCF submitted. Such ESCFs are considered inactive.

<b>Table 5. Summary of Student Eligibility in OJC's Career Coach Case Load</b>		
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>	<b>Percent of Total Students in Case Load</b>	<b>Number of Students (Case Load Population)</b>
DE Redesigned	62	67
TAA + DE	16.7	18
TAA-Like	12	13
Unknown	9.3	10
Total	100	108

## **SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES**

In addition, to the achievements discussed above, OJC has identified a number of insights or lessons learned, as well as some promising practices. For example, **OJC's** intense focus on DE over the past two years has increased the attention of Colorado's DE faculty to the range of strengths and skill gaps students bring to college. As a result, Colorado has seen a shift from more general "one size fits all" curriculum and pathways to pathways and services that provide more opportunities for individualized student learning.

OJC faculty anticipates that the new STEM/non-STEM pathways will help many of its DE students. They remain concerned, however, about students who enter with lower-end Accuplacer scores.

Math faculty members are shifting course assignments of full and part-time faculty to ensure students have access to faculty with the most experience and training and to provide sufficient capacity to help students beyond the classroom.

OJC's use of an embedded tutor has been extremely helpful to faculty and students. The tutor has facilitated continuity of instruction and provided effective support in the classroom and lab.

Faculty members have found that paired courses facilitate and improve student learning through immediate application of new skills in college-level courses. They therefore anticipate that using college-level readings across the disciplines in the 090 series will foster greater student success in taking those introductory courses, which to date have not required completion of the DE sequence.

Humanities faculty who teach paired courses with DE courses such as 090 have reported anecdotally that using the same faculty member to teach linked courses seems to facilitate student learning. It also allows for better engagement and support than unlinked courses or using two different faculty members. The degree to which this practice will continue under the new DE CRC sequence is unknown. This is therefore an area for further exploration.

The career coach's focus on student learning styles, which includes working with students to identify the best study practice related to their style, has facilitated student progress and achievement.

## **SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES**

Despite OJC's achievements in exceeding its DE enrollment target and nearing its career coaching target, the college has encountered several problems that need to be examined and resolved in the months ahead:

- First, faculty are anxious about the additional time (a 25 to 30 percent increase) it takes to coordinate and teach paired courses. They wonder how curriculum development and redesign work will be compensated (release time and/or additional pay?). They want to know what resources will be available. Faculty have also suggested that the Advisory Board retroactively provide some professional development support or release time in recognition of faculty work in developing and piloting new courses.
- Textbooks are becoming more expensive each year. Unless they are on financial aid, most students do not buy them and are therefore not doing course readings.
- Faculty members have commented that attestation—proving that the community college course has the needed rigor and academic integrity—often means using a textbook chosen by the four-year college. This impedes their choice of text and their ability to restructure curriculum content as appropriate. As one teacher commented, “To include a textbook just because it satisfies a potential four-year school is not (helpful) – you don’t want the textbook to drive the class.”
- OJC has an ongoing problem recruiting qualified adjunct teachers in and outside the Arkansas Valley region. This makes it difficult to give release time to full-time faculty for curriculum redesign. This is especially a problem regarding new part-time math faculty.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OJC**

- Resources for faculty development need to be identified.
- More attention needs to be paid to preparing full and part-time faculty to teach the new restructured courses.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSORTIUM COLLEGES**

- Tracking learning style patterns among DE students might be helpful in developing course materials and teaching strategies. It also might be an area to explore via a

comparative cohort study. The coach's assessment of learning styles seems to be a helpful strategy for students and should be shared with other coaches.

- The efficacy of using adjuncts in DE and foundation-level courses needs to be explored further.
- The use of embedded tutors is an area for consideration by other TAA colleges and for exploration by the evaluation team.