

Effects of Learning Communities on Community College Student Outcomes

Thomas Brock
MDRC

Innovations 2012
March 5, 2012



National Center for Postsecondary Research
www.PostsecondaryResearch.org

NCPR PARTNERS:
*Community College Research Center,
Teachers College, Columbia University
MDRC
Curry School of Education,
University of Virginia*

About NCPR

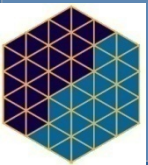
The National Center for Postsecondary Research focuses on measuring the effectiveness of programs designed to help students make the transition to college and master the skills needed to advance to a degree.

- Primary funding from IES of the U.S. Dept. of Education
- Housed at CCRC, Teachers College, Columbia University
- Partners
 - MDRC
 - Curry School of Education, UVa

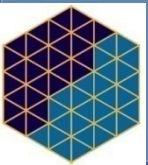
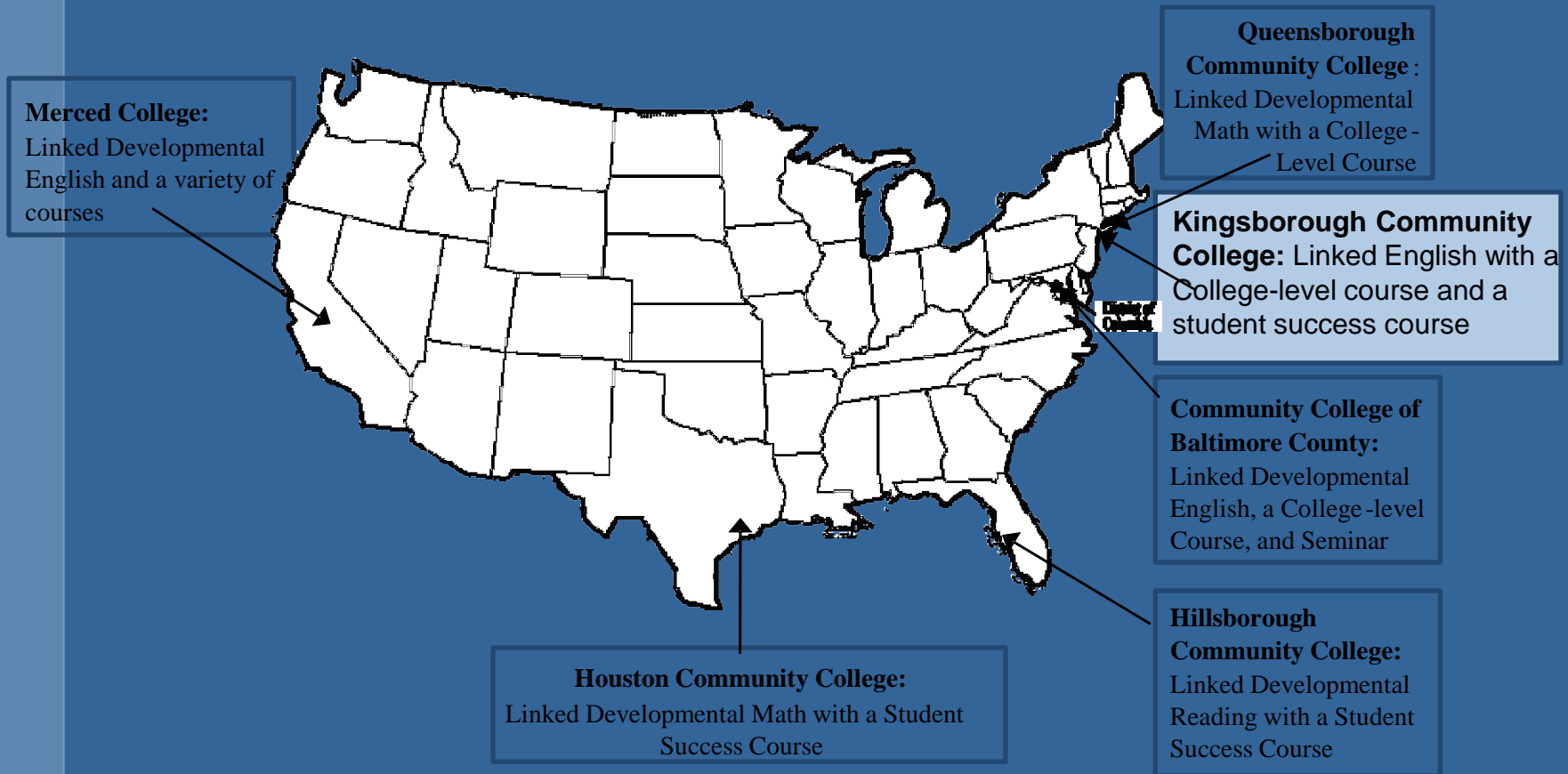
What Are “Learning Communities”?

Popular intervention to improve academic performance among college students. Four features:

- 1) Co-enrollment:** Groups of about 25 students are co-enrolled in two or more courses.
- 2) Instructor Collaboration:** Instructors collaborate on both curriculum and helping struggling students.
- 3) Curricular Integration:** Courses are thematically linked and include joint syllabi and assignments.
- 4) Additional Supports:** Students get enhanced academic support and/or counseling.

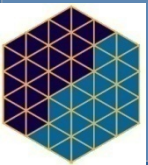


Evaluation Took Place at Six Community Colleges

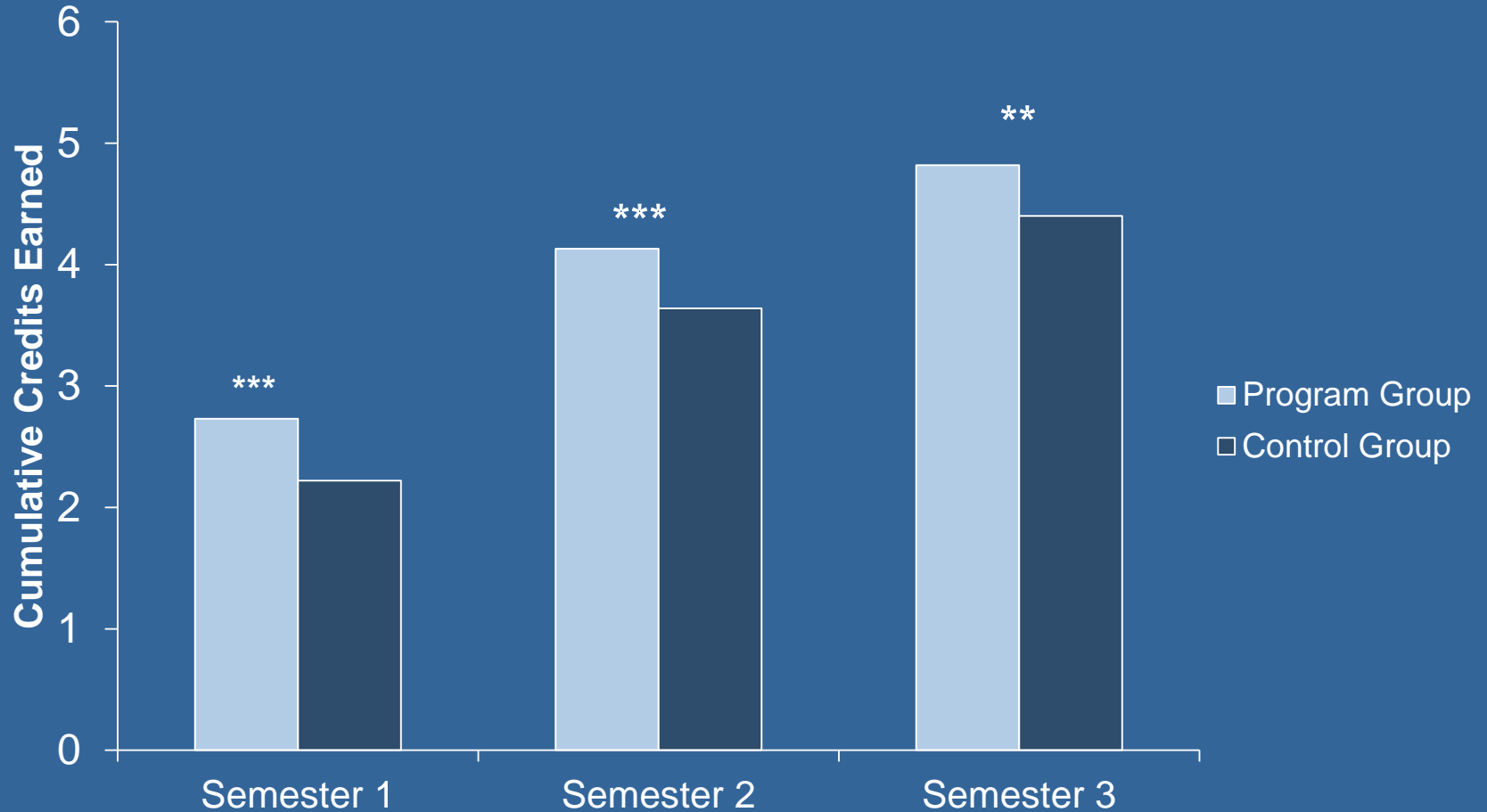


Implementation Findings

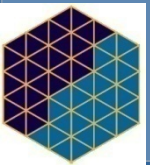
- Models varied by target group and how much each component was emphasized in college's theory of change.
 - Four targeted developmental English
 - Two targeted developmental math
- Models were implemented with reasonable fidelity, although with considerable variation in curricular integration.
 - Variation *within* college more than variation *between* colleges
- Average cost of learning communities was about \$500 per student, above base costs.



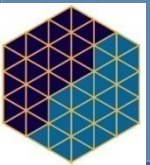
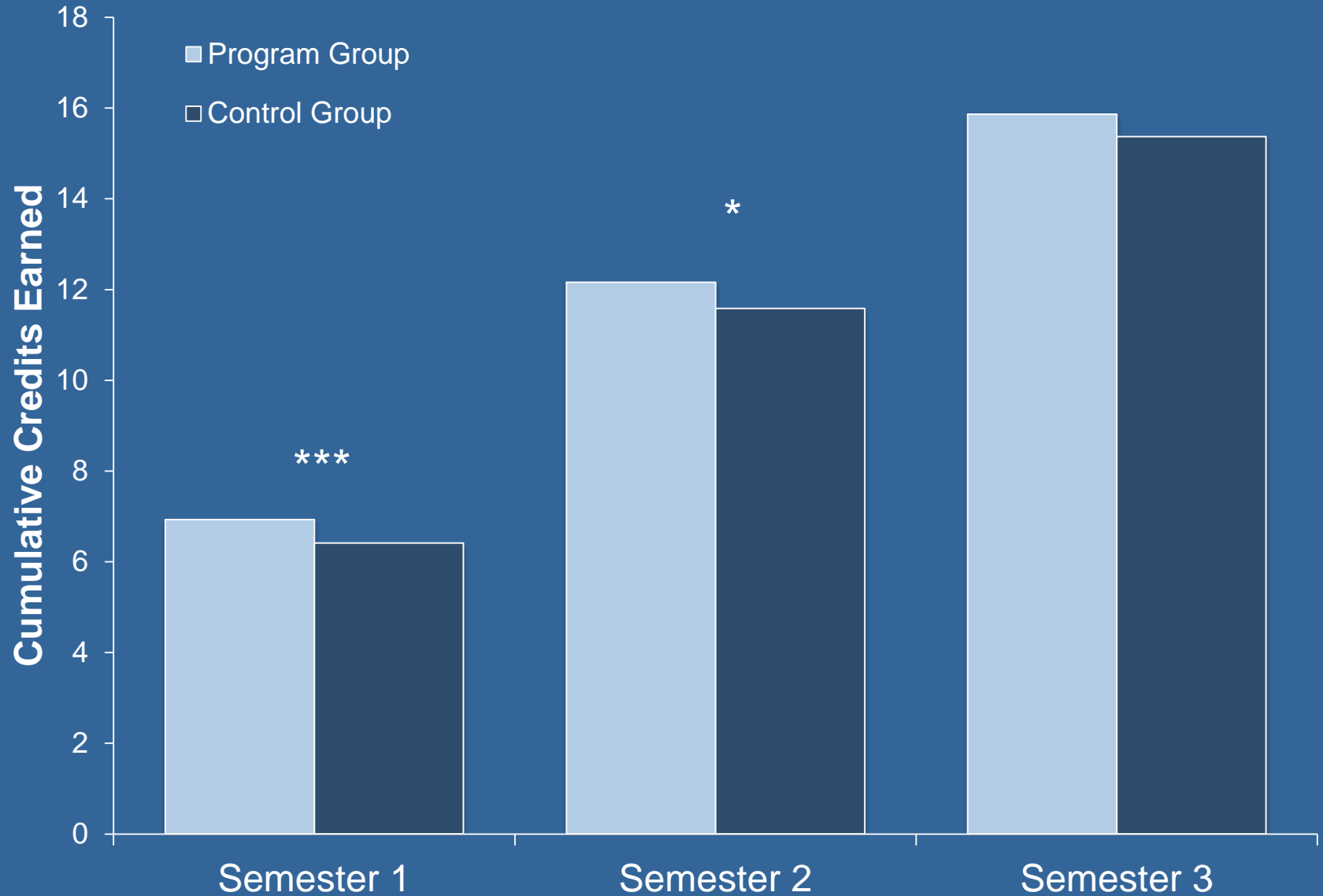
Effects on Passing English or Math Course – Pooled Sample of Dev Ed Students



Research supported by Institute for Education Sciences and others



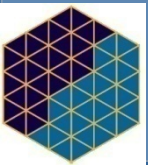
Effects on Cumulative Credits Earned – Pooled Sample of Dev Ed Students



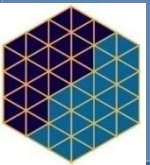
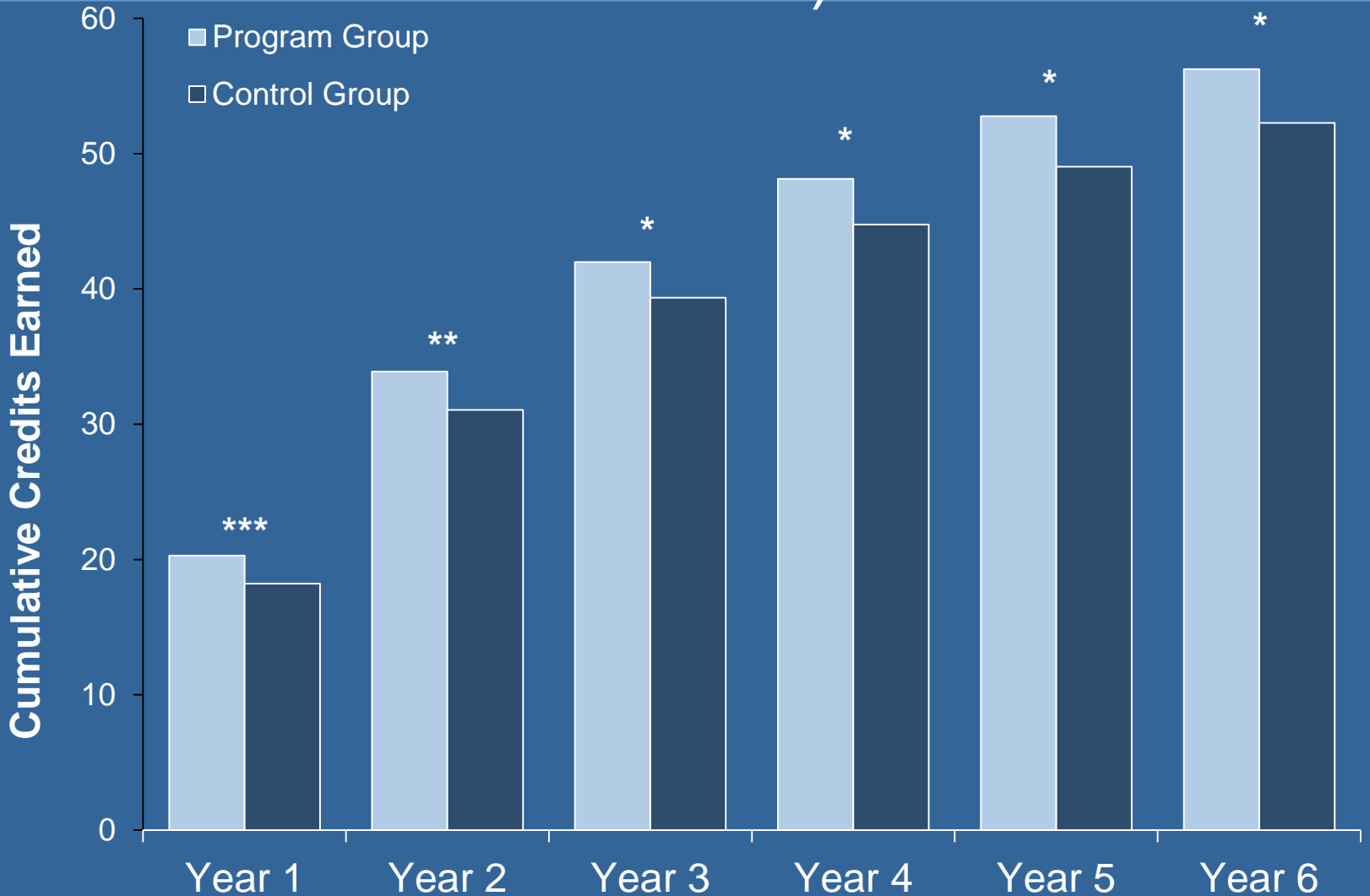
Long-Term Effects of the Kingsborough Opening Doors Program

Six years after entering the study, the program group:

- Earned more credits;
- Was more likely to persist; and
- Was more likely to graduate.



Cumulative Credits Earned by Kingsborough Opening Doors Students (Includes Dev Ed and Non-Dev Ed Students)



What Is Different about the Kingsborough Opening Doors program and setting?

- Targeted both college-ready students and students with developmental needs
- Much stronger support services component
- Early momentum in accumulating credits from 3-course links and inter-sessions
- Unusually strong support of college leaders

