How Alternative Approaches to Student Placement Impact Retention

Jacksonville State University

DR. FALYNN TURLEY
Assistant Professor, Business Statistics

DR. JAN CASE
MCIS Department Head

COURTNEY PEPPERS
Director of Learning Services

MARY REAGAN
Coordinator of Summer Bridge & Placement
How Alternative Approaches to Student Placement Impact Retention

Thanks for joining us! We will begin promptly at 3:00 p.m. ET.

- Use the “Chat” area for group interaction. Tell us where you are from!
- Submit questions to Q/A as they arise
- This webinar will be archived at NROC.org and you will receive a follow-up email with a link to the recording and slides.
- Contribute to the Twitter conversation at #NROCpd.
- For closed captions, click on the Live Transcript (CC) button.
- Do you need help with Zoom? Email memberservices@NROC.org.
MOVING THE
STUDENT SUCCESS
CURVE

- testing only
- building student success
After a student completes EdReady’s Initial Diagnostic assessment, the application builds each student an individualized study path that empowers them to accelerate their mastery of the math or English concepts they need to know.
HOW IT WORKS

1. “placement” → “readiness”
2. put the responsibility on the student
3. focus on strategic interventions
4. use data to inform practice
About JSU and Our Low-Stakes Placement Process

www.jsu.edu/learningservices/placement
• The placement process begins with Gamecock Orientation before classes begin. EdReady reporting features allow JSU to see the students’ progress and the time spent working with the materials. Those students who are not engaged are flagged so that they can be contacted and given assistance.

• If students reach a designated score, they may register for their credit bearing math. If they are unable to complete the review, they may enroll in a developmental course. Knowing that low scores are associated with a lower likelihood to be retained, JSU can be proactive in identifying and assisting students who are at risk of leaving.
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT:

How do we get students to complete the EdReady Placement?

- Communication Plan involving many different departments in the university that begins as soon as the student is accepted.

- We suggest that the student take the diagnostic at least two weeks prior to orientation.

- Series of emails to students.

- Personal contact through individual emails/phone calls if needed.
YOU DON’T “RETAKE THE TEST”

- Students and advisors commonly use the phrase “retake the test.”

- With EdReady, you work the study path to the target score.

- Change the test-retest mindset model to “work your customized study path.”
PRE-PANDEMIC WINS AND LOSSES

- JSU was able to reduce the number of sections of developmental math that are offered by about 80%.

- The reduced number of developmental courses did not result in a loss of credit hour production because more students take credit-bearing math.

- Students who completed their placement study path saved time by enrolling in credit-bearing math in their first semester.

- Students unable to complete their study path took (and paid for) a developmental math course. If still unable to complete the review, they receive tutoring in a no cost / no credit Emporium until they reach mastery. Overall, they saved money from our previous system.

- Our greatest challenge is that the weakest students have the lowest attendance, and we have not been able to find an incentive that is strong enough to overcome their avoidance.
Break for Questions & Comments on JSU Placement Process
Since the pandemic, Admissions Offices have been challenged with redesigning their usual recruitment policies.

**RECRUITMENT & RETENTION**

At JSU, the greater academic needs of newly admitted students have stressed our placement process and altered our course schedules.

We will continue to monitor the progress of our students from admission to placement to retention.
EdReady is used as a low-stakes placement tool at JSU. A “score” is defined as the highest score attained by the students in their independent review.

“Retention” at JSU is defined in this study as first-time, full-time freshmen who return to JSU for their sophomore year.

Data was collected in 2015 - 2020 by JSU’s Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness.

The purpose of the analysis was to identify indicators that are useful in determining the characteristics of students who are most likely to be retained.
For first-time, full-time freshmen enrolled at JSU
What information is given by an indicator?

Indicators are traits that are significantly correlated with a variable of interest, such as retention.

Indicators are useful in creating profiles of students who have the greatest need of intervention in order to experience success.
### EXAMPLES OF FACTORS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH RETENTION AT JSU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (older)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School GPA (higher)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Hours (more)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours Earned at 1 yr (more)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Amount (higher)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship Amount (higher)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math EdReady (higher)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English EdReady (higher)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP English Comp Score (higher)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP English Lit Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP Calc AB Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP stats Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend**
- **More likely to be retained**
- **Less likely to be retained**
- **No impact on Retention**
- **Not Collected/Insufficient Data**
# Examples of Factors That Are Associated with Retention at JSU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Females)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (African American)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 20 &amp; up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Traditional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional Admission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance Learning (online only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incoming Credit (some credit)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athlete?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan Recipient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Scholarship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pell Grant Recipient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EdReady Math Placement (MS 112)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EH 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Comp AP Credit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Lit AP Credit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculus AB AP Credit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXAMPLES OF FACTORS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH RETENTION AT JSU

Indicators that a student is more likely to be retained

• Higher average high school GPA
• Higher average incoming credit hours
• Being Female
• Having AP Credit
• EdReady Placement in MS 112
• Higher average Math EdReady scores
EXAMPLES OF FACTORS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH RETENTION AT JSU

**Indicators that a student is less likely to be retained**

- Being a first-time freshman aged 20 or older
- Receiving a Pell Grant or a Loan
- Being Conditionally Admitted
- Race (some years)
- MS 100 (Developmental Math) Placement (most years)
- Online only students
EXAMPLES OF FACTORS THAT ARE **NOT** ASSOCIATED WITH RETENTION AT JSU

- Work Study Participant
- Loan Amount
DATA ANALYSIS: EdReady Completion Rate

For this analysis, all first-time, full-time freshmen enrolled at JSU were included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>EdReady %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1021</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1294</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1115</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1041</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1448</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1264</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• 73 - 91% Participation Rate in initial EdReady Placement Path

• Those who were placed in MS 112 (PreCalculus) with EdReady Placement were significantly more likely to be retained than those who did not (excluding 2015), at 0.10 level of significance.

• 76 - 84% Retention Rate for those who engaged with EdReady Overall

• Average EdReady score for students who were retained was significantly higher than for those who were not retained, at 0.10 level of significance. This result was true whether students started with the developmental course or the credit bearing math course (Precalculus Algebra).
PANDEMIC IMPACT ON SUPPORT STRATEGIES

• It was challenging to anticipate the effects of removing ACT scores from the admissions process.

• The number of sections of developmental math increased from 7 to 24. The increase in sections was inadequate, but no more could be added because of staffing limitations.

• Despite a tremendous amount of free tutoring and student support, it is surprisingly difficult to convince JSU students to accept it.

• JSU is increasing the staff for academic advising.
Questions & Discussion
Special thanks to our panelists:

Dr. Falynn Turley  
fturley@jsu.edu  
Dr. Jan Case  
jcase@jsu.edu  
Courtney Peppers  
cpeppers@jsu.edu  
Mary Reagan  
mreagan@jsu.edu

Thank you for joining us!

You will receive a link to the recording and presentation assets, also available at NROC.org.