

Intrusive Educational Planning for Basic Skills Math Students: Does it Help?

In the traditional matriculation process, students take placement tests, meet with counselors and establish educational goals and course plans as they begin their college careers. But even with these counseling services, the vast majority of basic skills students do not progress through the sequence to college-level math. What would happen if counselors came directly to the students in math courses to assist with educational planning (one form of “intrusive counseling”)? Would students be more likely to succeed in the course and to continue in math? That was the goal underlying the counselor intervention in selected Math-12 (Arithmetic) courses, which provided in-class sessions with an academic counselor along with regular math instruction since Spring 2008¹. What happened?

Within-Course Outcomes

Several within-course outcomes were compared for students starting the math sequence in Counselor and No Counselor sections. These included the establishment of an *educational plan*, additional *counseling* received, and *course success and persistence*.² Forty percent of students in the Counselor sections of Math-12 established an educational plan during the same term, compared to 25% of students in sections without the Counselor intervention. Similarly, many more students in intervention sections received other services compared to those in No Counselor sections (24% vs. 2%). Overall, the rates of educational planning and counseling were much higher and statistically significant. However, students in the Counselor sections were only slightly more successful in Math-12 than others and *less* likely to be retained in the class.

Long-Term Outcomes

Long-term academic and math outcomes were also analyzed, including *one- and two-term persistence*, *attempting the next math class*, and *improvement and success through two math courses*. Persistence rates were slightly higher (3-5 percentage points) for the Counselor group. More notable was that passing students in the Counselor group were much more likely to attempt the next math course than others (78% vs. 69%). These successful Math-12 students were also much more likely to pass the next math class (i.e. *Improved*), with 48% passing their second math course compared to 40% in No Counselor sections.

Conclusion

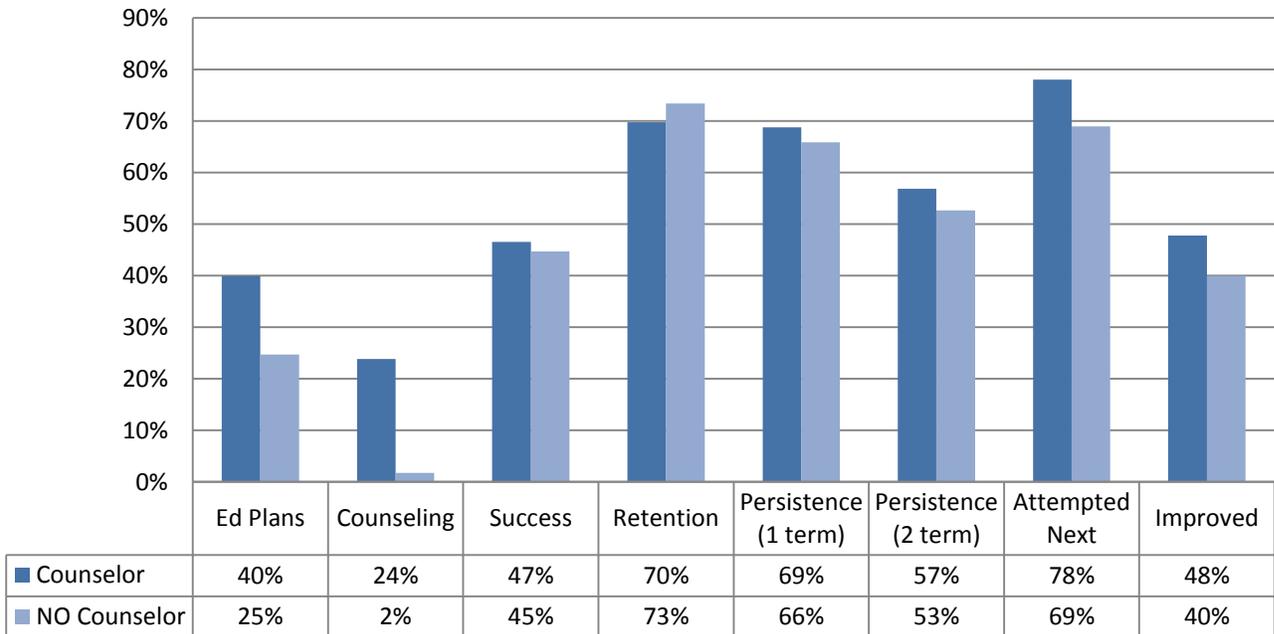
Although the percentage of students passing Math-12 was not much higher in the Counselor sections, students in these sections who passed Math-12 seemed to receive an academic dividend exhibited by higher rates of achievement in the long-term outcomes of math progress, math improvement, and college persistence.

¹ The first Math-12 counselor sections followed a Fall 2007 pilot, which was not included in this study.

² *Success* is defined as the percentage of enrolled students who receive a passing grade in Math-12; *retention* is the percentage who receive any grade (i.e., did not withdraw from Math-12).



Academic Outcomes by Counselor Intervention All Enrolled Students



Academic Outcomes by Counselor Intervention Students Taking Math-12 for the First Time

