

THE IMPACT OF PARTICIPATION IN A CURRICULAR LEARNING  
COMMUNITY ON ACADEMIC SUCCESS, ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION,  
INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT, AND PERSISTENCE OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS AT  
MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative study of 471 first-semester students was to explore the impact of participation in a curricular learning community (CLC) on the academic success, academic and social integration, institutional commitment, and persistence of first-year students at Missouri State University (MSU), a Midwest, public, four-year university.

The researcher utilized a modified version of Pascarella and Terenzini's (1980) *Institutional Integration Scale* (IIS) to measure constructs associated with increased academic success, such as (a) peer group interactions, (b) interactions with faculty, (c) faculty concerns for student development and teaching, (d) academic and intellectual development, and (e) institutional and goal commitment.

The findings of the study revealed no significant differences between the CLC and non-CLC groups on any subscales measured by the IIS. Moreover, no significant differences were found between the CLC and non-CLC groups in demographic measures, suggesting the two groups were indeed similar.

Implications for practice suggest a need for additional professional development for participating faculty members. Additionally, efforts should focus on greater integration of curricular and co-curricular content within the CLCs. Recommendations for further research include a mixed-method, longitudinal design to obtain a better understanding of the subtleties of students' experiences in the CLCs.