SUMMARY OF PROGRAM SUCCESS FACTORS: PERKINS CASE STUDY
February 2005

The Office of Institutional Research & Assessment at Queensborough Community College (QCC) designed and executed a research study to identify success factors in Perkins (career vocational) programs.

Findings:

I. 60% to 67% of the more than 6,000 program users over the four semester period, F'00 – SP'02, are successful two years after using at least one Perkins program. Success is defined as 'two years after participating in the program, the student is either enrolled in QCC/another college or has graduated from QCC/another college'.

II. Six success factors were identified after finding that certain program characteristics are correlated to a significantly higher level of student success:

1. Focus on particular student outcome
   - Design program to follow very specific goal such as passing an exam, developing entry-level job skills, or tutoring individual students
2. Provide hard-copy materials
   - Develop or up-date workbooks, textbooks, worksheets, and hand-outs that focus on student outcome mentioned above
3. Deliver personal attention
   - Provide academic support to student one-on-one or in small groups (up to 7 students per group)
   - Design specialized workshops (up to 30 students per workshop)
   - In classroom, break into small groups or interact with individual students while class is working on assignment at their desks
4. Run for short-term period
   - Schedule program from 6 to 12 hours over minimum of 2 days to maximum of 4 weeks
5. Train tutors/instructors
   - Train tutors/instructors to help students meet the outcome listed in #1
   - Training topics may include learning styles methodology, use of computer stations in labs, working with special populations, working with specific content areas, and group tutoring
6. Offer voluntary participation*
   - Students choose to use the program or service

* According to the literature, particularly Boylan, Bliss, and Bonham (1997), voluntary programs may not serve the neediest students since those who voluntarily participate in programs tend to be more motivated and more likely to be successful. When placement is mandatory, a higher percentage of academically weaker and less motivated students are included in the program and may contribute to a negative relationship between mandatory placement and student success. Cited in Lumina Report, Paths to Persistence (2005)