

Counseling 10

An Introduction to College Course with Lasting Impact

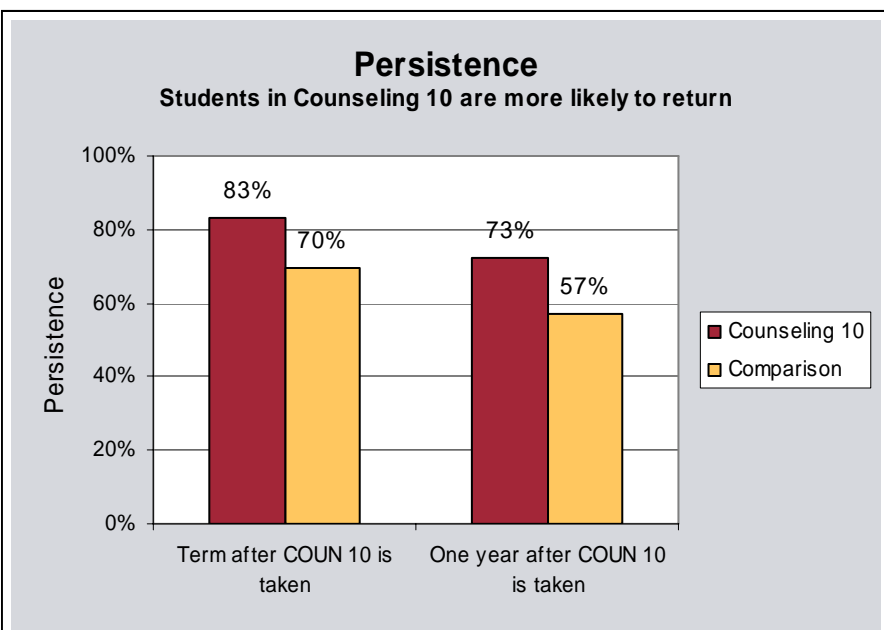
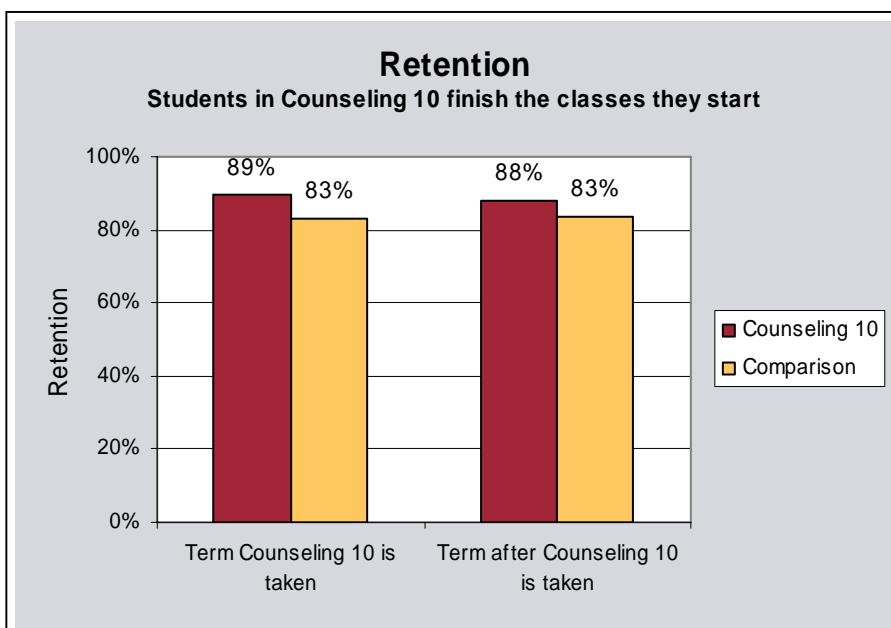
Counseling 10 is a one unit course which provides a basic introduction to college. Students learn about the different types of colleges, the steps involved in getting a degree, and the resources and services available on campus. In addition, each student develops a personal educational plan. This is not a required class. Students take the class, usually in their first term at PCC, because they chose to do so.

This research looks at first time college students who took Counseling 10 from Fall '02 through Spring '04. A comparison group of first time students who did not take Counseling 10 was created which was matched on gender, age, ethnicity, and high school GPA. There were 382 students in each group. These groups were analyzed regarding the students' tendency to continue their studies at PCC, as shown by not withdrawing from classes (retention), and by returning to enroll in subsequent terms (persistence). Their grades were also analyzed, as measured by successful course completion and grade point average. Only enrollments in Fall or Spring terms were included in the analyses.

Staying Here: Retention and Persistence

Retention:

Students who take Counseling 10 are more likely to finish the classes in which they enroll. In other words, they are less likely to withdraw from classes. This is true for both the term the student takes Counseling 10 (89% retention) as well as for the following term (88%). The comparison group of first time students showed a lower retention rate (83%) which was unchanged between these students' first and second terms at PCC.



Persistence:

Students who take Counseling 10 are much more likely to continue their studies by returning and enrolling in subsequent terms. They are 13 percentage points more likely to persist to the next term (83% vs. 70%), and an even larger 16 percentage points more likely to persist to the same term a year later (73% vs. 57%). Indeed, this effect is large enough that the Counseling 10 students' one year persistence rate (73%) is higher than the comparison group's one term persistence rate (70%).

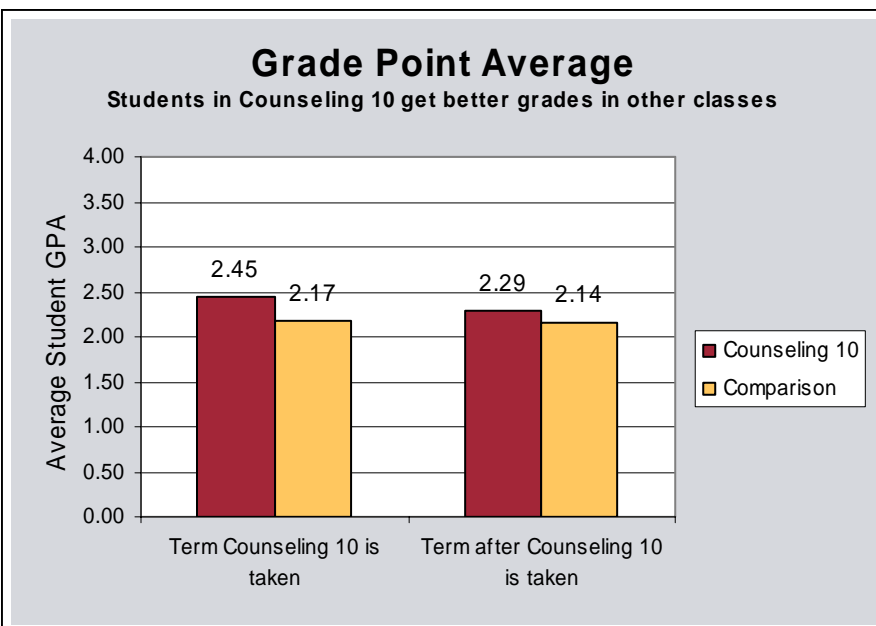
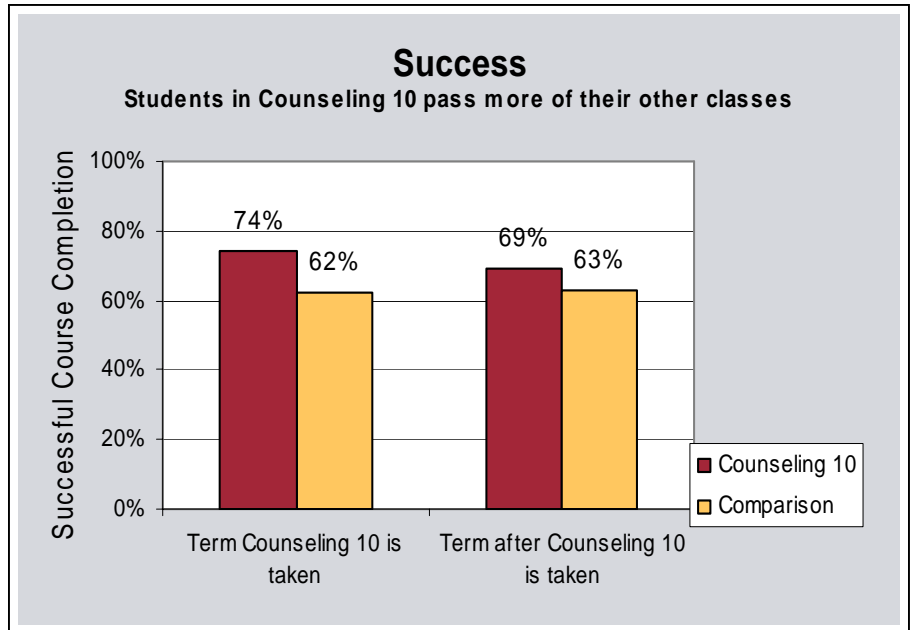
Note: In this analysis one term persistence means Fall to Spring or Spring to Fall. One year persistence means Fall to the next Fall, or Spring to the next Spring.

Making the Grade: Successful Course Completion and GPA

Successful Course Completion Rate:

Students who take Counseling 10 are more likely to succeed in their other classes. The success rate is defined as the percentage of students who receive an A, B, C, or Credit. Counseling 10 students have a 12 percentage point higher successful course completion rate than the comparison group in the term they take Counseling 10 (74% vs. 62%). The next term this drops to a 6 percentage point advantage for the Counseling 10 students (69% vs. 63%).

Note: In this analysis and the grade point average analysis below, the grade in Counseling 10 was excluded so that the grade in Counseling 10, which was taken by students in only one of the groups, did not influence the results.



GPA:

Grade point averages show the same pattern as the success rates. Students who take Counseling 10 have a higher GPA in their other classes. This is most pronounced the term Counseling 10 is taken, when there is a .28 GPA difference (2.45 vs. 2.17) between the groups. The term after Counseling 10 there is still a .15 difference (2.29 vs. 2.14).

Note: The number reported here is the average *student* GPA. Thus, each student is included only once in the average no matter how many classes that student took.

Demographic variation:

The positive impact of Counseling 10 holds across most demographic characteristics for which there are enough students in the

sample to permit reliable analysis. The demographics which could be examined are gender, Asians, Hispanics, and the two age groupings of 18–19 and 20–24. As noted above, there is generally a positive impact on grades, which is larger the term Counseling 10 is taken, and reduces somewhat the following term. But for two demographic groups, 18–19 year olds and Hispanics, the positive impact is only present the first term. By the second term there is no meaningful difference in grades between those who took Counseling 10 and those who did not.

To check the possibility that some other student characteristic is causing the observed differences, further analyses were run. No meaningful differences were found between the Counseling 10 students and the comparison group in the number of athletes or the number of participants in the support programs of EOPS and CARE. There remains the possibility that students who self-select to take Counseling 10 are different in some other manner, such as their level of motivation.

Summary:

Counseling 10 is a one unit course which introduces students to PCC. The students who voluntarily take it their first term at PCC have higher academic performance that term, and, usually, the term following. These students are also less likely to drop classes, and more likely to return to PCC in later terms. In light of the positive findings, it may be worth finding ways to have more students take the course.