

# Supporting success in the curriculum – the contribution of Learning Resources Services in 2006 – 2007

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## **1. Introduction:**

This report documents the findings of an analysis of the effect of the Learning Resources Services (LRS) on student achievement and retention at GCC, using MIS data for 2006-07.

Information was taken from Heritage, the Library management system, and the Computer Zone database of computer members to identify details of all learners who used LRS in 2006-07. This information was sent to MIS to be analysed against college enrolment data.

The impact of the LRS across different student cohorts within the college was examined. Each of the following sections states any salient findings, with accompanying action points where appropriate. This will form the basis of the LRS SAR and development plan for 2008-09.

To set the context of this report it needs to be stated that the number of enrolments for the college in 2006-2007 dropped to 11,844 from 14,854 in the previous 2005-2006 year. This is a 20% drop in enrolments. Consequently although comparisons with the 05/06 year are sometimes useful we need to view the results of this report in the context of the declining admissions and a complex student body and so any comparisons on the previous year need to be viewed with caution.

### **1.2 Executive Summary:**

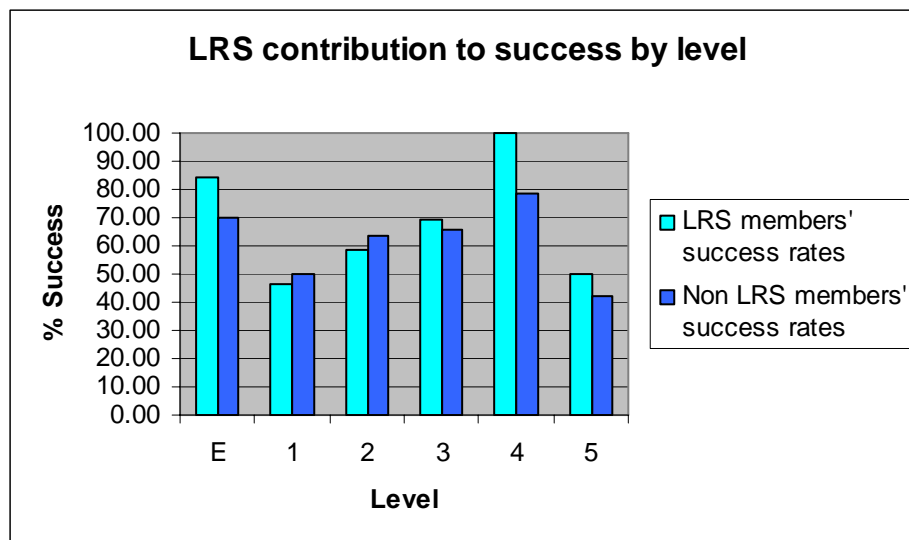
- The LRS contributes to the success and retention rates most in the Social Sciences (SSA 11) student cohort with success at 28% higher and 26% higher retention amongst LRS members to non members.
- The above corresponds interestingly with the highest LRS membership across all SSAs with 92% membership.
- The LRS contributes more highly to success at the higher levels i.e. from level 3 upwards.
- The higher the LRS membership to any student cohort, the higher the success and retention rate for that group.
- LRS contributes to success across all age groups.

- There is a 22% higher success rate for LRS members to non members at GCSE.
- There is a 100% success and retention rate for LRS members at level 4 to non members.
- The department of Academic Programmes has the highest success rates of LRS members to non members by 21%, the highest retention rate by 16% to non members (shared with the EAL department), and the highest membership to LRS by department by 76% membership.
- Success rates are highest for LRS to non LRS members in the Asian or Asian British – Indian ethnic group with a 9% higher success rate to any other ethnic group.
- Overall membership of the LRS has increased from 41% in the preceding year to 47% in 2006-07. This is in spite of decreasing overall college enrolments of 20% as stated in the introduction.

## **2.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by level:**

- LRS use contributes more to student success at the lowest and higher level courses ie. at entry level and then from level 3 upwards.
- Success at entry level is 14% higher for LRS members to non members. In addition, the overall success rate for LRS members has increased by 17% on the success rates of LRS members last year. The number of college enrolments in this level declined by 28% from the previous year but in spite of dropping college numbers the membership of LRS increased from 35% last year to 46% this year.
- Success rates at level 1 for LRS members to non members is lower for LRS members by 3% in spite of LRS membership increasing from 33% to 57% from last year. This needs to be examined and is identified as an action point below in Action point **2.2.1** below.
- At level 2 success rates have increased for LRS members from 52% last year to 59% this year. Whilst this is positive, success rates have also increased for non LRS members. The fact that the number of college enrolments is comparable for both years in this cohort, LRS membership over the two years is comparable, and success is increasing for both members and non members, indicates that there may be other factors at play in influencing how learners use the LRS at level 2. This group needs further examination and is identified as an action point in Action Point **2.2.2** below.

- Success for level 3 LRS members is 3% higher to non members and there is a 55% LRS membership (comparable to last year) but retention rates are lower for LRS members by 4% to non members.
- At level 4, although a small student cohort of 43 LRS members compared to 33 non members, there is a 100% success and a 100% retention rate for LRS members. This cohort also has the highest LRS membership across all levels at 57%.
- Level 5 is also a small student cohort and success rates for LRS members to non LRS are 8% higher for members.
- Retention rates for LRS members has increased across all levels compared to last year with the exception of level 1 and two.

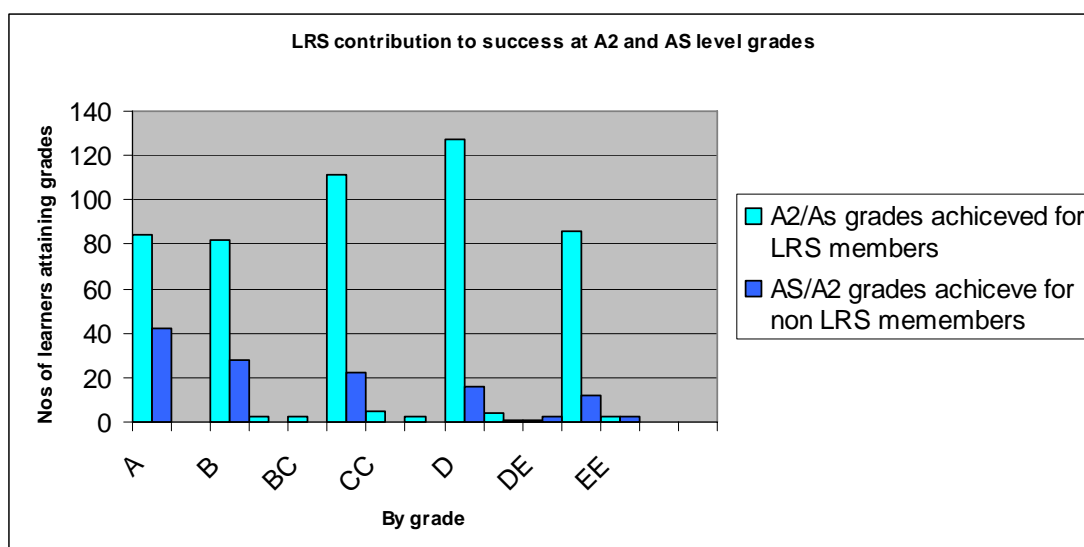


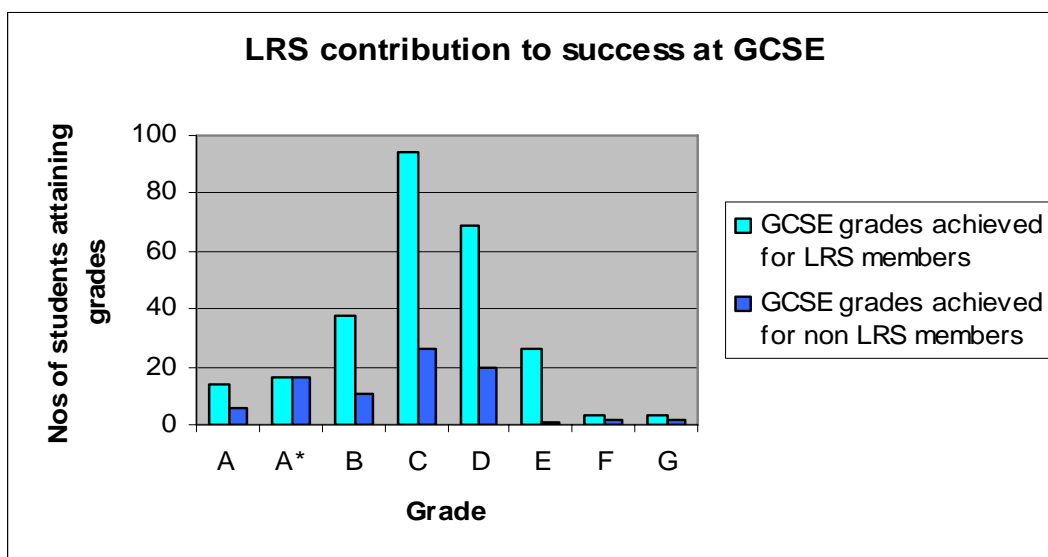
## 2.2 Action points:

- 2.2.1 The success of increasing the numbers of LRS members at Entry and level 1 in the context of declining overall college enrolments at these levels is a success that needs to be built upon. There needs however to be further investigation as to why success rates for level one for non members are higher than for LRS members.
- 2.2.2 Membership at level 2 is 40% and so learners' reasons for not joining the LRS need to be investigated as well as the differing factors affecting LRS use by level 2 learners.

### 3.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by A2 and A/S levels and at GCSE:

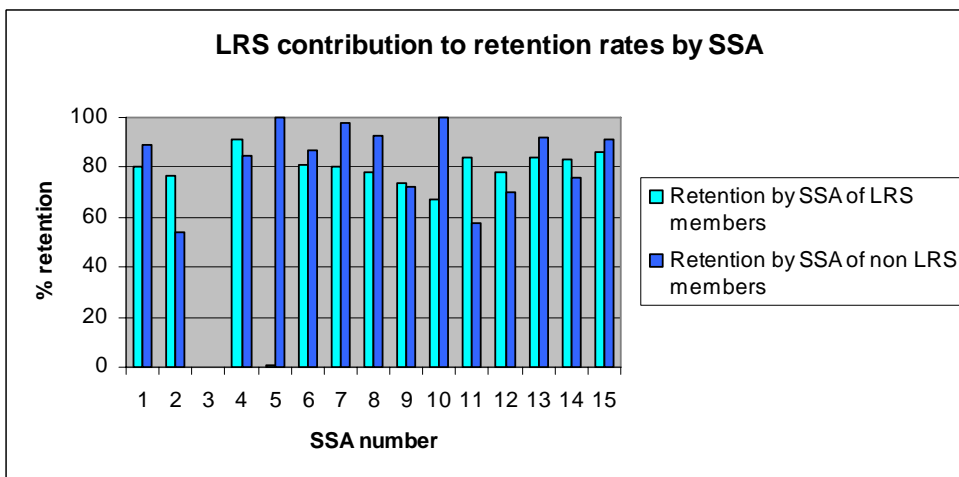
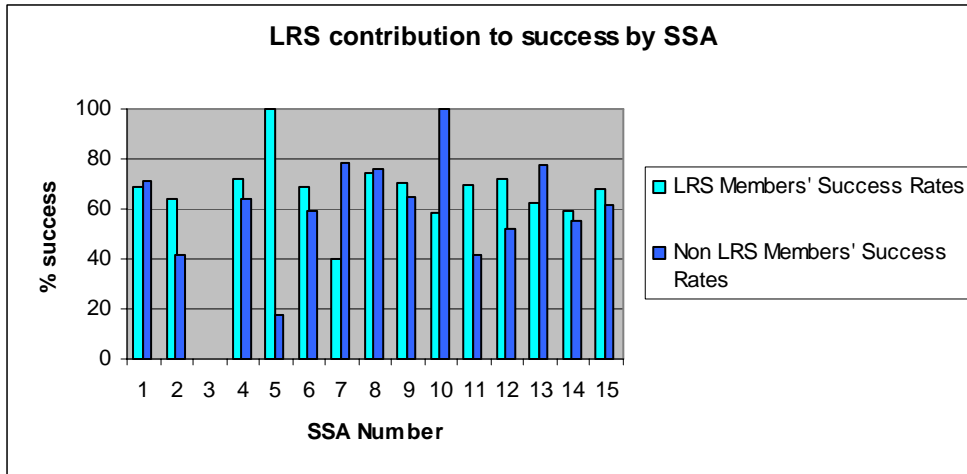
- Overall LRS members' success rates have stayed at 71% while non members have also achieved a similar success rate. However the key feature to be acknowledged is that the total number of starts for A2/AS has declined by 19% for the college in the last year and the fact that 80% are LRS members may indicate that those learners using the LRS may not be as successful as those A2/AS learners of previous years.
- 77% of LRS members achieved a grade A-C compared to only 23% of non LRS members.
- There are significant differences in the high grades (A-C) attained between LRS members and non members. See graph below.
- The drop out rate is worse for those learners not using the LRS by 3%.
- There is a 22% higher success rate for LRS members to non members at GCSE.
- 10% more LRS members achieve Grades A – C than non members at GCSE.
- There is a 17% higher retention rate for members to non members for GCSE learners.
- Membership of LRS is at 68% for GCSE learners.





#### 4.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by SSA (Sector Subject Areas):

- The largest SSA groups within the college are: 01 (Health , Public Services and Health Care), 08 (Leisure, travel and tourism) and 14 (Preparation for Life and Work – including ESOL and Skills for Life) and the highlights of findings for these groups are stated below:
- **01.** This year 41% are members compared to 33% last year but success rates have gone down slightly (73% in 05-06 - 69% in 06-07) and retention has gone down but this may be due to the nature of the courses learners are taking.
- **08:** 90% of learners are not members of the LRS. Success is roughly comparable and retention is -17% lower amongst LRS members to non members. Low membership continues to due to lack of learning resources facilities at Charlton Valley for this student cohort. This will hopefully be addressed by the new Eltham centre.
- **14:** Following an earlier point made in 2.1 re: entry level learners relating to patterns showing a decline in overall college enrolments but an increasing proportion of entry level learners joining the LRS, there is a 4% difference in success favouring LRS members and retention is 7% higher for LRS members to non members. Membership is at 57%.
- Learners on courses with higher numbers of LRS members generally demonstrate a positive correlation between membership of the LRS and higher success rates. 02 and 11 (Science and Maths, and Social Sciences) are examples.



**SSA names:** 01 – Health, Public Services and Care. 02 – Science and Mathematics. 03 – Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care. 04 – Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies. 05 – Construction, Planning and the Built Environment. 06 – Information and Communication Technology. 07 – Retail and Commercial Enterprise. 08 – Leisure, Travel and Tourism, 09 – Arts, Media and Publishing. 10 – History, Philosophy and Theology. 11 – Social Sciences. 12 – Languages, Literature and Culture. 13 – Education and Training. 14 – Preparation for Life and Work. 15 – Business, Administration and Law.

**4.2 Action points:**

- I will be meeting the heads of each SSA to discuss the findings of this report.

**5.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by Departments:**

- Although MIS data is based on SSAs these often do not correspond with the departments within the college. Therefore, MIS data for success and retention has also been analysed by departments.

Generally, there is a positive correlation between high LRS membership and success and retention rates. Below is a quantitative breakdown of results per department and please note that the departmental titles below are those from before the college restructure in September 2007:

**APG:**

- Success is 21% higher comparing members to non members. Retention is also higher with 16% more members to non members completing their courses. Membership of the LRS is at 76% of all learners taking this programme. Compared with other departments success, retention and membership levels are the highest of all departments.

**CEU:**

- Success amongst LRS members is 17% lower to non LRS members, with retention at 6% lower and membership at 24%. This can be accounted for as a consequence of these courses being delivered at a disparate set of locations in the community where there is no permanent physical LRS provision.

**EAL:**

- Success amongst LRS members is 15% higher to non LRS members with an increased retention of 16%. Membership is at 51%. Given that these courses are primarily aimed at those wishing to acquire English language skills use of the LRS is likely to facilitate this task.

**EAT:**

- Success amongst LRS members is 2% higher to non members and retention is -8% for members to non members. Only a quarter of learners are members according to MIS enrolment data. It should be noted however that approximately 100 EAT students are employed as Teaching Assistants and do not study at the college as they are work based students only. In addition, many students enrolled on initial teaching training certificate courses are existing GCC teaching staff. Therefore, figures regarding membership numbers have to be seen within the above context.

**HSC:**

- Success rates are the same for members to non members but with an 8% lower retention rate. However 69% of learners are members of LRS.

**INT:**

- Success and retention for LRS members is 12% higher in each area with 100% retention for LRS members.

**SFL:**

- A 3% higher success rate and a 9% higher retention rate for LRS members compared with non members. Membership of LRS stands at 71%.

**SLT:**

- Success is 8% higher for LRS members compared to non-members, however retention rates are 5% lower for the same groups. Only 26% of learners are LRS members. This may be due to lack of learning resources provision at Charlton Athletic Football Club.

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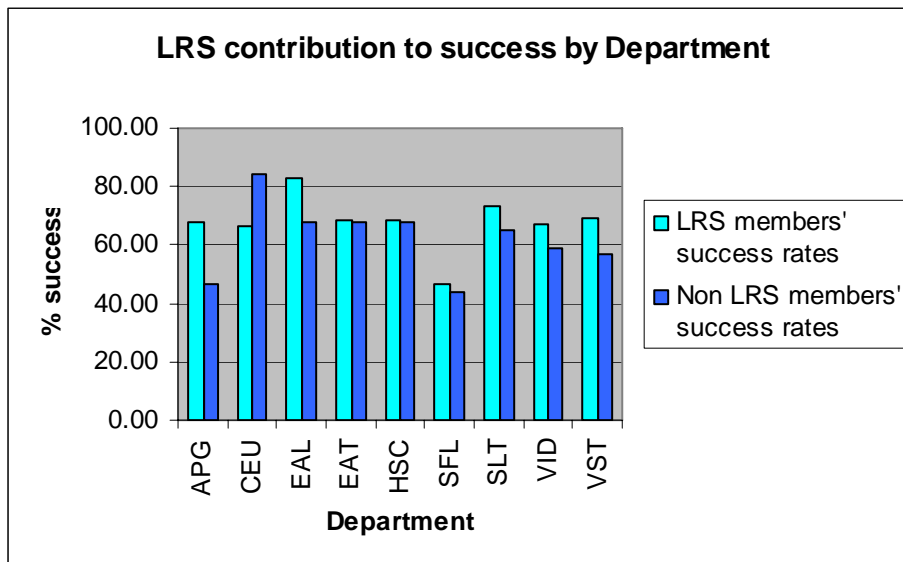
- There was an 8% higher success rate and a 5% higher retention rate for members to non members. Membership is 39%.

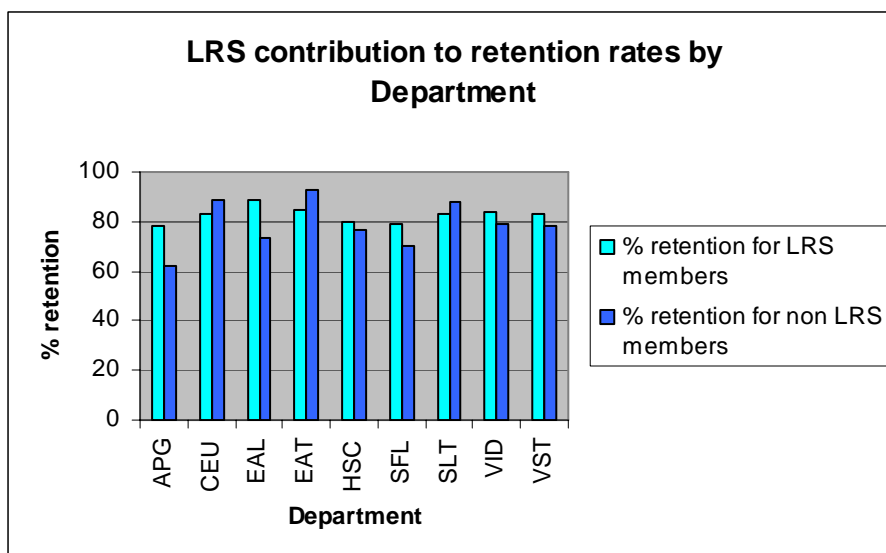
**VST:**

- Success is 12% higher and retention is 5% higher for LRS members against non-members with a 63% membership.

**ACCESS (Day time):**

- Success amongst LRS members is 7% higher with an increased retention of 7% amongst LRS members to non members. There is an 88% membership of the LRS.





## 5.2 Action point:

- I will be meeting all HODs to discuss action points for their departments and this data will be fed to the curriculum departments for their SARs as evidence of LRC support.

## 6.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by Ethnicity (see Appendix A for categories):

- The White - Any other background ethnic grouping had the highest overall success rate at 76%, followed by the Asian or Asian British – Indian at 74%. The White - Any other background ethnic grouping was comprised of 999 learners.
- The ethnic grouping of LRS members achieving the highest success relative to non members is the Asian or Asian British – Indian category who have a success rate of 74% to 65%. Retention is also higher by 2%. This ethnic grouping has 499 members within the college.
- Success rates for the Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi are higher for non LRS members to LRS members at 60% to 54% and this is repeated with retention rates with 85% of non members being retained compared to 72% of members. Membership of the LRS is the lowest of the Asian groups at 50%. This group comprises 112 learners at GCC.
- The largest ethnic group within GCC apart from White British is the Black or Black British – African category with 2335 learners. This group is the most successful of all of the black ethnic groups with its overall success at 66%. This group had the highest overall percentage of LRS members.

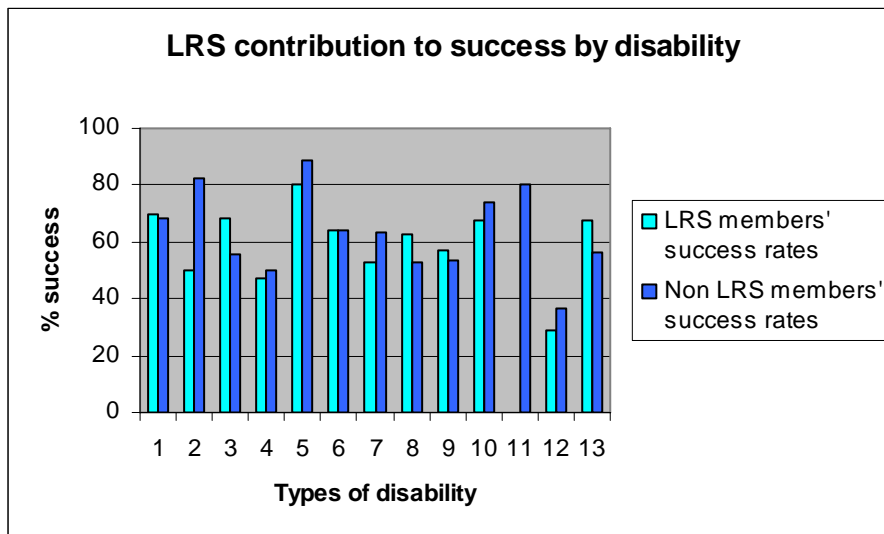
Their success rate is 4% higher for members to non members with retention also being higher by 3%. Their membership level is 68%.

- All categories of black ethnic grouping have a higher success and retention rates amongst LRS users to non members.
- The least likely of the Black groups to join LRS is the Black or Black British – Caribbean category but for those who do they have a higher success rate to non members by 9% and an increased retention rate of 5%.
- Success and retention are lower for LRS members to non members in all of the Mixed categories, the exception being the group in the following statement.
- Of all the ethnic groups the ethnic group least likely to join LRS is the Mixed – White and Black Caribbean group with 30% membership, however those who do join have an 8% increased success rate and a 2% increased retention rate to non members.

### **7.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by Disability:**

- Overall the numbers of learners declaring disability has dropped dramatically over the past year. Last year there were 972 learners starting courses declaring a disability, but only 668 doing so this year. Last year GCC retained 863 of these learners while this year the figure was 519. This also needs to be seen in the context of the large reduction in No Information being provided by learners which fell from 1343 starts to 562 starts.
- The largest group of Disability according to enrolment data is Other Medical Condition ( for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes) with 192 learners, followed by Visual Impairment and Mental Ill Health
- In all categories apart from Hearing impairment and Other physical disability there are fewer LRS members to non members.
- There has been an increase in LRS membership across all disability groups from last year.
- Success is higher for the following groups: disability affecting mobility, hearing impairment, other disability, other medical condition and for visual impairment, for LRS members to non members. Retention is also higher in most of the above groups for LRS members, with the exception of Other Medical condition and Visual Impairment.

- The highest LRS membership is amongst the Temporary Disability after illness at 64%, but success is lower for LRS members by 7%.
- The lowest LRS membership is for emotional/behavioural difficulties and their success is 23% less to non members and retention is lower by 33%.
- The decline in the numbers of learners declaring a disability needs to be addressed to find out whether these learners are not declaring disabilities or the college is not successfully recruiting them.



**Types of disability:** 1 – Disability affecting mobility. 2 – Emotional/behavioural difficulties. 3 – Hearing impairment. 4 – Mental ill health. 5 – Multiple disabilities. 6 – No disability. 7 – Not known/information not provided. 8 – Other. 9 – Other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes). 10 – Other physical disability 11 – Profound complex disabilities 12 – Temporary disability after illness 13 – Visual impairment

**7.2 Action point:**

- A further investigation needs to occur to identify how disabled learners use LRS already but also to find reasons for non use and to attempt to redress this. To work closely with the Head of Learning Support to enable this.

**8.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by Difficulty:**

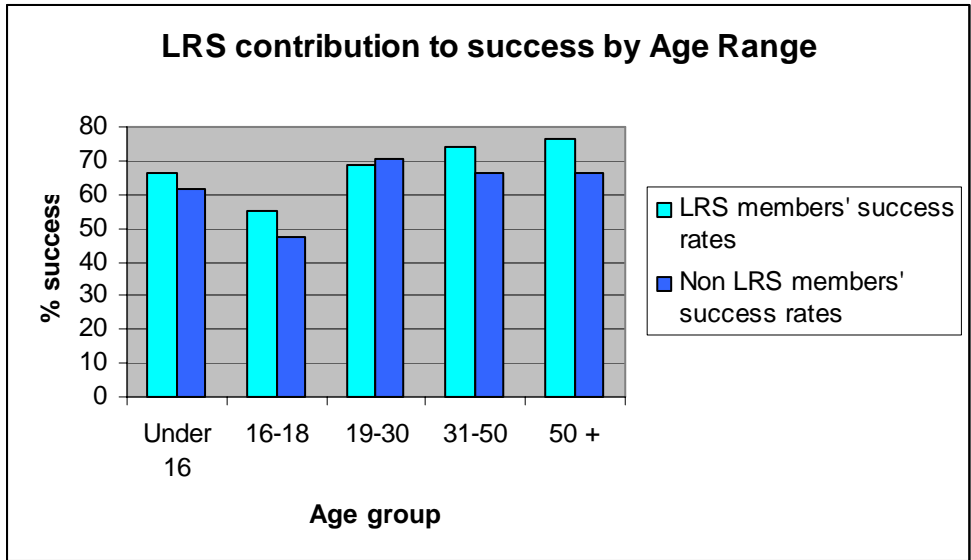
- The highest membership is for those declaring Other specific learning difficulty at 84% but their success rate relative to non LRS members is lower by 6% yet retention is 16% higher.
- Success rates are higher amongst non members to members in all categories of difficulty with the exception of Dyscalculia, Multiple learning difficulties and severe learning difficulty.
- Overall, the highest success rate is for Severe Learning Difficulty with success at 85% for members to 47% for non members. Retention is also greater by 30%.
- The lowest success rate is for LRS members is Moderate Learning Difficulty at 53% compared to 63% for non members but retention is higher by 3%.
- For those with dyslexia there was 8% more success for non LRS members to members and with retention higher for non members by 3%. This may be due to the nature of the disability itself.

## **8.2 Action point:**

- A further investigation needs to occur to identify how learners with learning difficulties use LRS already but also to find reasons for non use and to attempt to redress this. To work closely with the Head of Learning Support to enable this

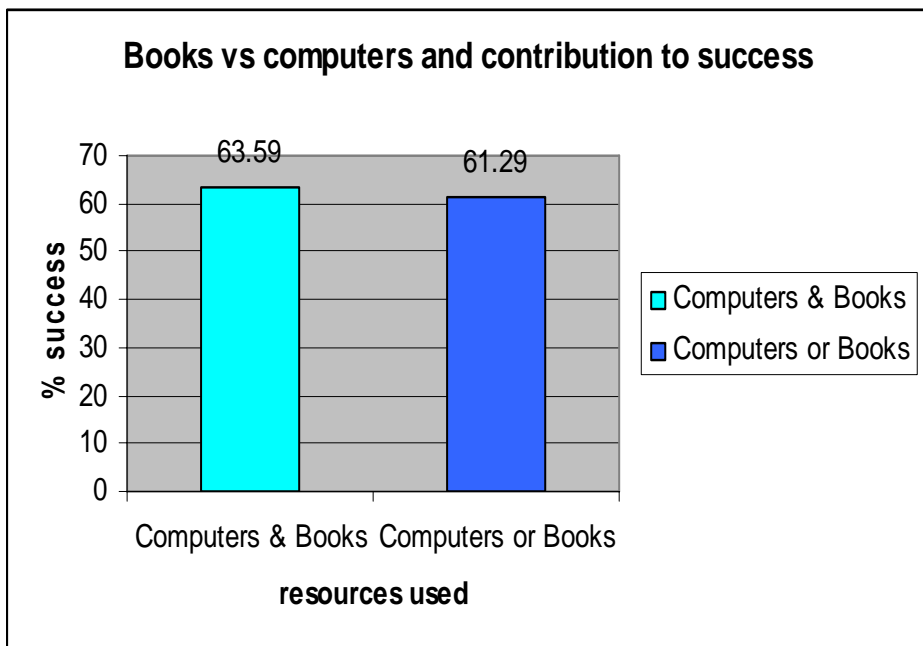
## **9.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by Age range:**

- Data for age range shows that all learners across all age ranges are more likely to succeed and to be retained on their course if they use LRS.
- The highest success rate is for the 31-50 age-band, but there is also a 10% increase in success for those under 16, and a 8% increase in success for the 16-18 student groups.



#### 10.1 LRS members themselves: books vs computers:

- The data available was only on LRS members at Plumstead where there is a blended offer of books and computers but what is interesting is that those who never borrowed books but used computers only, have a lower success rate than those who borrowed books, and when we look at computer use we find that the success rate of those who don't use PCs is higher than those that have, the suggestion being that we should encourage both the use of books and PCs.



## **11.1 Conclusion:**

The success of the LRS has to be seen against the drop in numbers coming to GCC and the reconfiguration of courses that has followed from this. A direct comparison with data from 2005/6 is not useful for this task, rather we need to look at the individual components of the LRS's work to see where further development needs to take place.

Having analysed the data it is possible to conclude that in the 2006-7 academic year, the LRS did contribute to success and retention levels across all student cohorts.

There may be several reasons for this and perhaps those learners using the LRS are generally more motivated but it is apparent that the LRS can make a difference.

This report has identified areas for improvement and these will be addressed in the next academic year.

The LRS will continue to monitor and evaluate the services and facilities offered to ensure that the LRS continues to contribute to learner success and retention.

It also needs to be stated that this report should be read in conjunction with the annual LRC Student Survey with the qualitative data that is included in the survey.

## **Appendix A:**

### **By Ethnicity as stated on EBS:**

- Any other.
- Asian or Asian British – Any other Asian background.
- Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi.
- Asian or Asian British – Indian.
- Asian or Asian British – Pakistani.
- Black or Black British – African.
- Black or Black British – Any other black background.
- Black or Black British – Caribbean.
- Chinese.
- Mixed – any other mixed background.
- Mixed – White and Asian.
- Mixed – White and Black African.
- Mixed – White and Black Caribbean.
- Not known/not provided.
- White – Any other white background.
- White – British.
- White – Irish.