

Supporting success in the curriculum – the contribution of Learning Resources Services in 2005 – 2006

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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 2005-06. The analysis was based on all enrolment data and not just LSC funded courses or qualification courses.

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 2005-06. This information was sent to MIS to be analysed against college enrolment data.

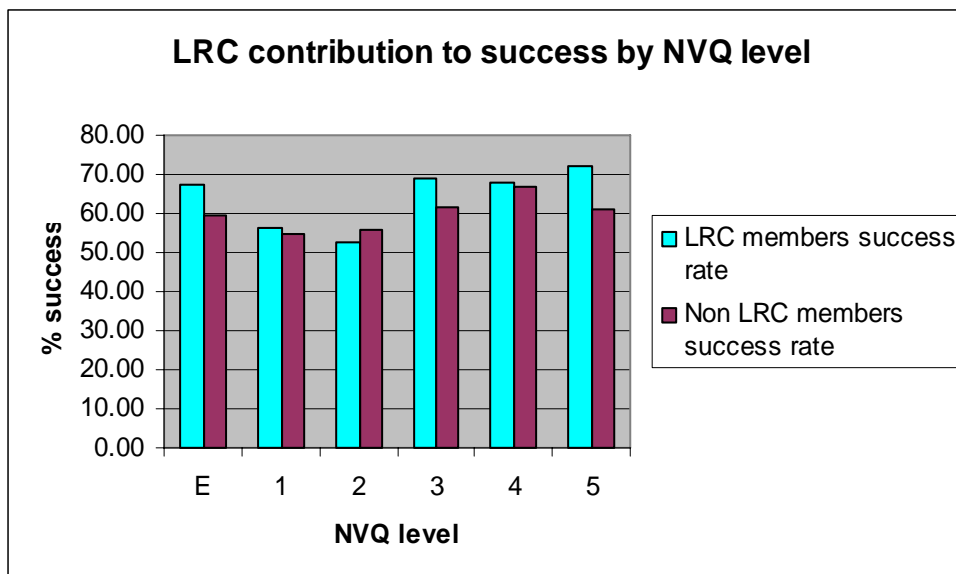
The impact of the LRS across different student cohorts within the college was examined. Each of the following sections states any salient findings, with accompanying action points where appropriate. This will form the basis of the LRS SAR and development plan for 2007-08.

1.2 Executive Summary:

- The LRS contributes to the success and retention rates most in the Access student cohort with success at 21% higher and 10% higher retention amongst LRS members to non members.
- The highest LRS membership is within GPlus with 95% membership, which corresponds with very high success for LRS members.
- The LRS contributes more highly to success at the higher NVQ levels i.e. from NVQ 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 significant success rate for A2/AS level students attaining grades A – E (71% - 63%) compared to non LRS members.
- The largest ethnic group of LRS members are Black African and out of all ethnic groups the LRS contributes to their success the most.
- Generally, the LRS has contributed to increased retention rates across all departments compared to LRS non members. The highest retention rate is in GPlus at 39%.

2.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by NVQ level:

- LRS use contributes more to student success at the higher NVQ levels.
- Success rates at levels 1 and 2 for LRS members to non members are comparable but there is an increase in LRS contribution to success at levels 3, 4 and 5. This is particularly apparent at level 3 with a 7% increase in success for LRS members to non members.
- Membership of the LRS tends to be higher at the higher levels of NVQ. There are smaller proportions of students joining the LRS at levels 1 and 2. Only one third of students at level 1 are members, and there are 43% members at level 2. This is in comparison to 57% membership at level 3. The contrast in membership numbers between levels 1 and 3 may be due to the nature of the courses delivered at both levels.
- There is only a direct link between LRS use and successful retention at levels 1 and 3.

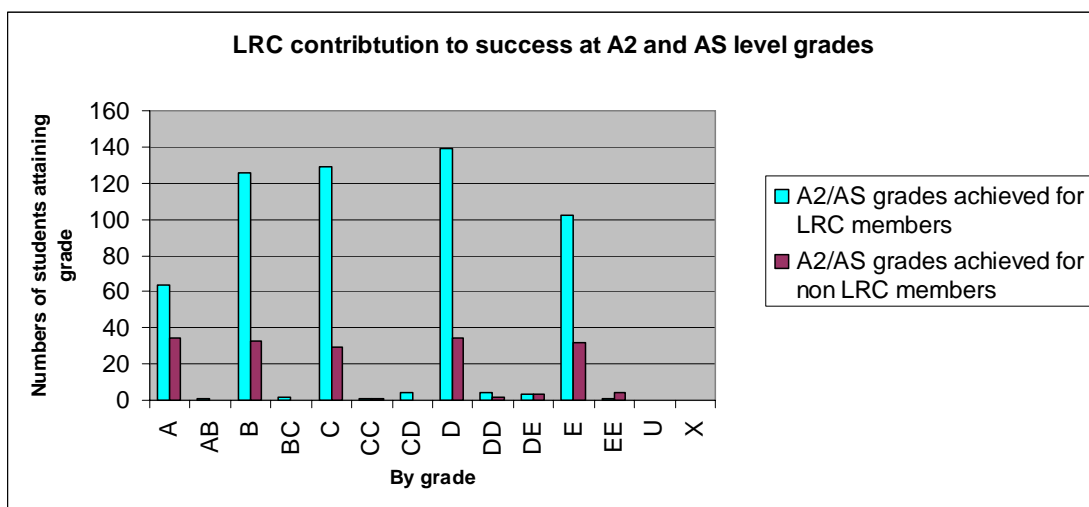


2.2 Action points:

- To target students on NVQ level 1 courses to become members.
- The LRS will need to promote itself to NVQ level 2 students and will need to work more closely with level 2 courses to improve success rates.

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

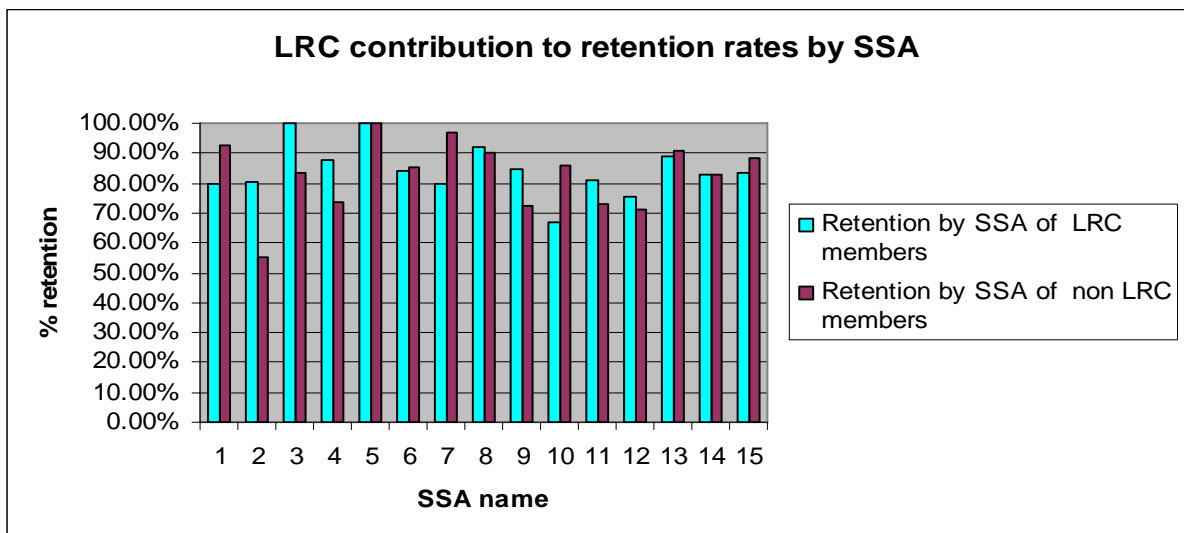
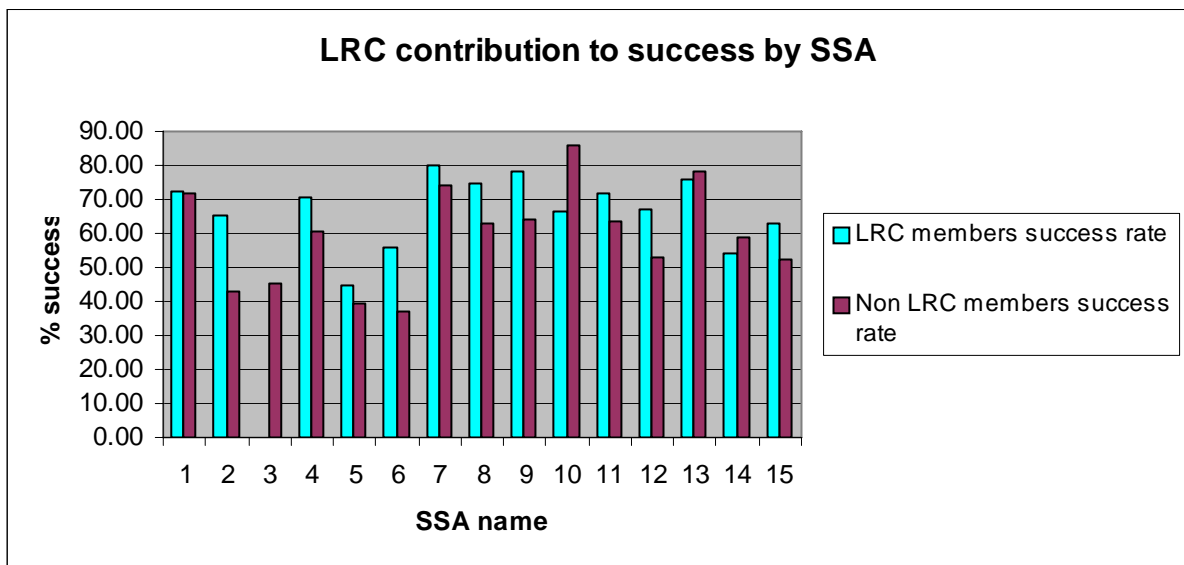
- There is a significant success rate for A2/AS level students attaining grades A – E (71% - 63%) compared to non LRS members.
- There are significant differences in the high grades (A-C) attained between LRS members and non members. See graph below.
- Of non members, nearly a third did not attain a grade of A – E.
- The drop out rate is worse for those students not using the LRS by 5%.



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), 06 (Information and Communication Technology) 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.** Only one third of the students in this group are members of the LRS. While success rates are broadly similar, retention is higher for non LRS members. (93% for non LRS compared to 80% for LRS members).
- **06:** 75% of students are not members of the LRS. However there is a large difference in the success rate for those who do use the LRS (19%+). This therefore may reflect the type of information resource used by ICT students in the LRS. Retention rates are comparable.

- **14:** There is a 5% difference in success favouring non LRS members. Retention is similar. This may reflect the very different courses that are offered under the umbrella of Preparation for Life and Work.
- Students 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.
- Overall, LRS members have better retention rates than non LRS members.



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:

- Increased promotion to the 01 SSA to encourage higher membership.
- Increased promotion to the 06 SSA to encourage higher membership.
- Closer working with the 14 SSA and there needs to be a more vocational emphasis by the LRS.

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:

QBIT:

- Success amongst LRS members is 13% higher to non LRS members with an increased retention of 3%. 69% are members.

QCEU:

- Success amongst LRS members is 32% higher to non LRS members.

QCPA:

- Success amongst LRS members is 16% higher to non LRS membership with an increased retention of 12%.

QEAL:

- Comparable success for LRS members, but a 15% increase in retention rate by LRS members to non members.

QEAT:

- Success amongst LRS members is -5% and retention is -3%. Only a third of students are members.

QEHL:

- Success amongst LRS members is 12% higher to non LRS members with an increased retention of 5%. 66% of students are LRS members.

QGPlus:

- Success amongst LRS members is 19% higher to non LRS members with an increased retention of 39%. 95% membership of the LRS.

QHSC:

- Success amongst LRS members is 4% higher to non LRS members but with a -4% retention. 62% are members.

QLTT:

- Success and retention rates are comparable. Only 15% of students are LRS members. This is no doubt due to lack of learning resources provision at Charlton Athletic.

QMST:

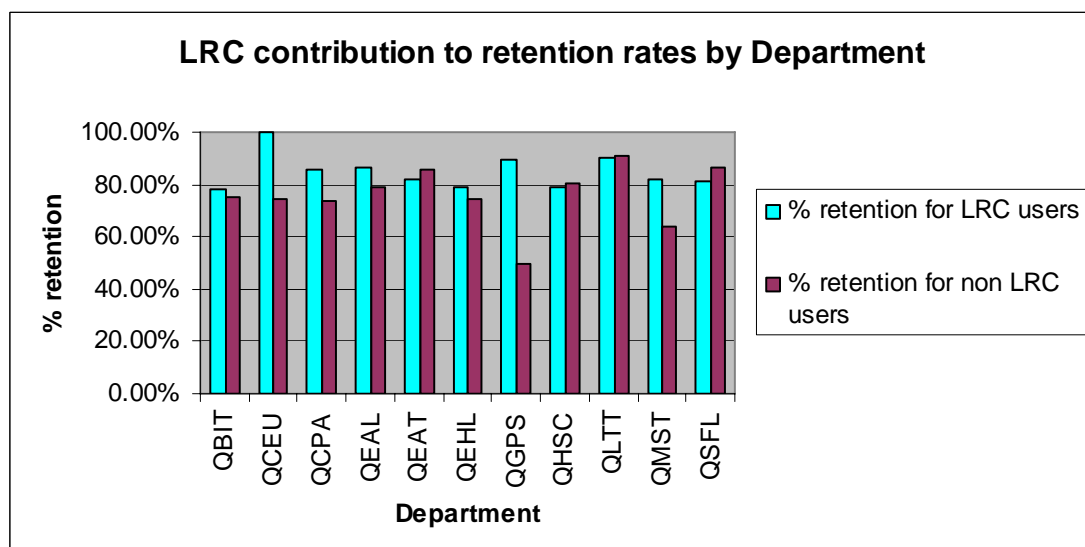
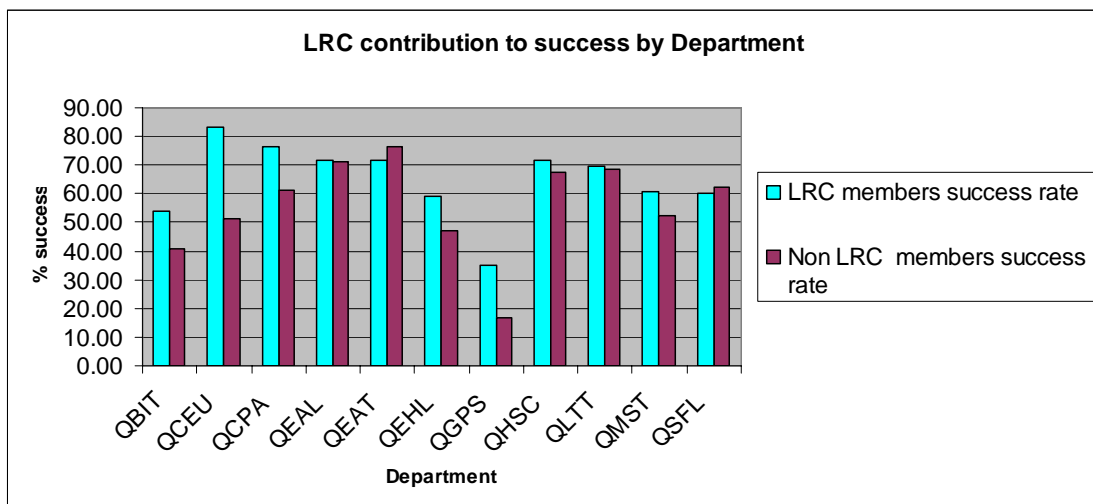
- Success amongst LRS members is 8% higher with an increased retention of 18% amongst LRS members to non members. 77% membership of the LRS.

QSFL:

- -2% success rate and low retention rate for members to non members.

ACCESS (Day time):

- Success amongst LRS members is 21% higher with an increased retention of 10% amongst LRS members to non members. 85% 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.

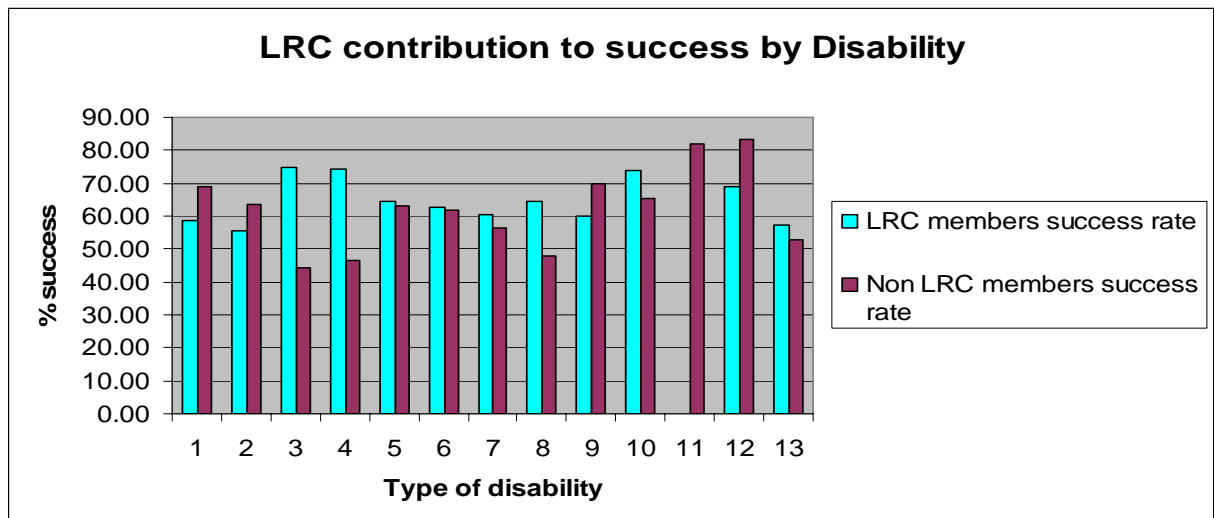
6.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by Ethnicity (see Appendix A for categories):

- Within the Asian groups there is a 6% increase in success for Bangladeshi and a 14% increase in success for Pakistani students who use the LRS to those who do not.
- Within these groups there is a 6-9% increase in retention too for LRS members.
- There is a smaller proportion of Asian students joining the LRS with the exception of Pakistani students. Interestingly there is a higher success rate for Pakistani students who use the LRS to those who do not. (65%-50%).
- Within the Black British groups these students are more likely to join the LRS than any other group, and that in the main they have a greater success rate. An example is the Black British African group whose success rate is 65% for members to 58% for non LRS members.
- Black British African is also the highest group of LRS members at 26%. The only group marginally less likely to join the LRS are Black British Caribbean, whose success rate is marginally better for non LRS members at 60% to 58%.
- Chinese students are less likely to join the LRS though success rates are comparable.
- Students of mixed race, while comprising small numbers of students to the college, are again, less represented as members of the LRS.
- Of the White British students only 29% are LRS members. Their success rate is roughly similar to those who are not LRS members.

7.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by Disability:

- The largest group of Disability according to enrolment data is Other Medical Condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes) with 252 students, followed by Visual Impairment and Mental Ill Health.

- In all categories apart from Temporary Disabilities, there are fewer LRS members to non members.
- Obviously grouping disabilities together tends to gloss over the particular differences affecting academic performance. For example, the relatively high success rate of non LRS members with a disability affecting mobility (69%-59%) may reflect differences in the nature of the mobility disability so that only less than 20% of this group are accessing the LRS.
- Equally is the 75% success rate of students with a hearing impairment who are members of the LRS against a 44% success rate of those who are not, be due directly to any specific aspect of LRS service?
- Those who have 'Other Physical disabilities' are equally distributed between membership and non membership of the LRS but those who are members have a significantly higher success rate, which may indicate again differences in the nature of the physical disability.
- Retention rates are generally unaffected by use or non use of the LRS which is not surprising given that as demonstrated above, the nature of the disabilities does not create any clear cut pattern.



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:

- To undertake an investigation into reasons for low LRS membership from those students reporting a disability.

8.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by Difficulty:

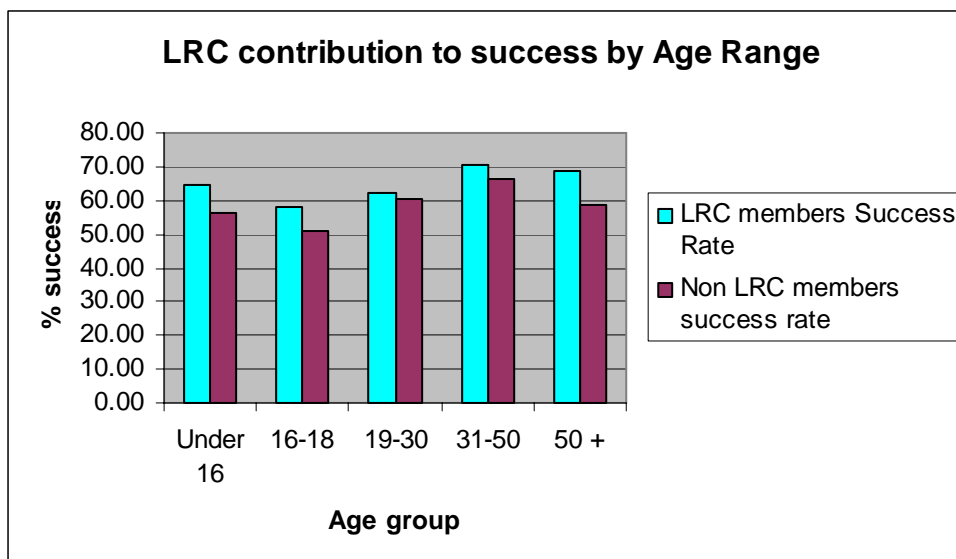
- The vast majority of students do not declare any learning difficulty but those that do are underrepresented in membership to LRS. Whilst this does not seem to have a dramatic impact on success rates or even retention rates it must be a cause for some concern that only a minority of dyslexic students are members of the LRS. This may be because some students are identified as dyslexic after they have joined the college so it may not be apparent in enrolment data but it does warrant further investigation as stated in 8.2 below.

8.2 Action point:

- To undertake an investigation into reasons for low LRS membership from those students reporting a learning difficulty.

9.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by Age range:

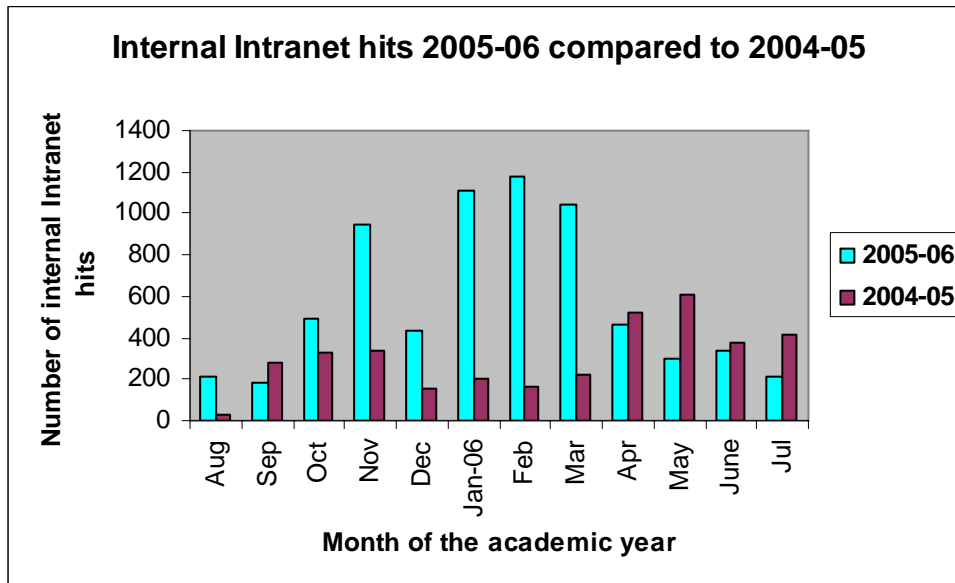
- Data for age range shows that all students across all age ranges are more likely to succeed on their course if they use the LRS.
- The highest success rate is for the 31-50 cohort, but there is also a 9% increase in success for those under 16, and a 7% increase in success for the 16-18 student groups.



10.1 LRS contribution to success and retention by Centres:

- The main Learning Resources Centres (LRCs) are at Plumstead and Greenwich Park.

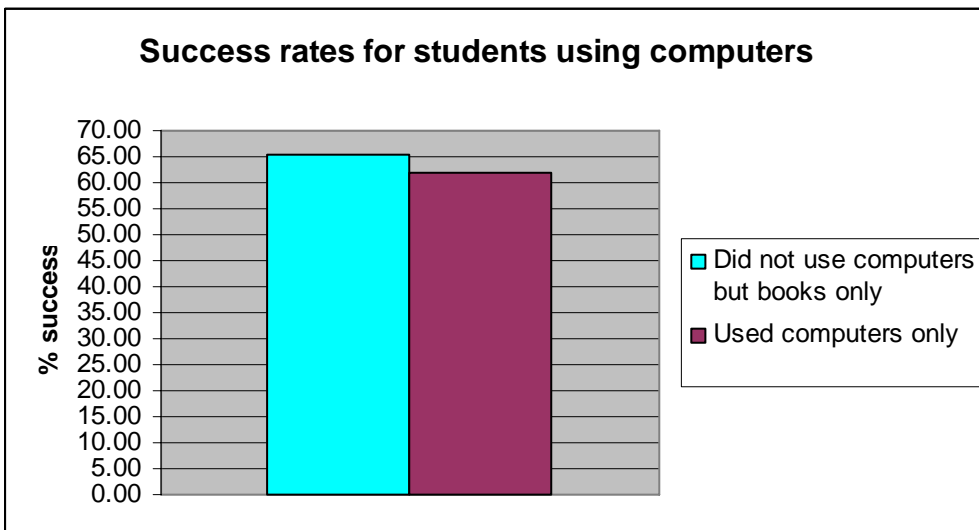
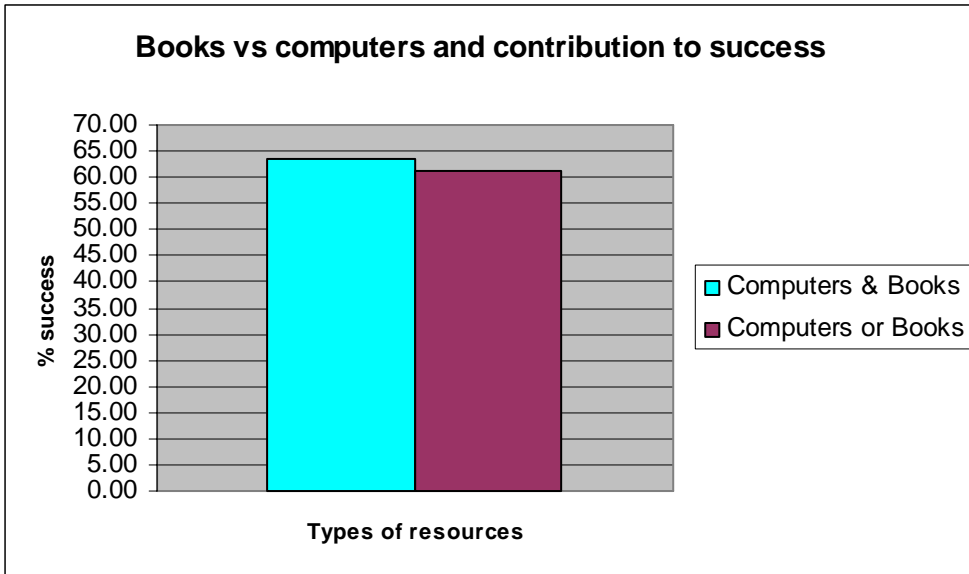
- For the other centres within the college there are networked resources which are accessible via the Student Intranet. At this stage it is not possible to state any direct link between usage of the Student Intranet and any impact on student success.
- Figures for internal Intranet usage for 2005-2006 are as follows:



- Unfortunately the number of e resources hits by curriculum department is not available.
- The number of Athens users (external users to e resources) increased from 171 in 2004 – 2005 to 299 in 2005 - 2006.
- There were 695 hits to e resources in 2005 – 2006 from external Athens users.

11.1 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.



12.1 Conclusion:

Having analysed the data it is possible to conclude that in the 2005-06 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 students 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.