

Henry Ford College

Finding the *Best Fit* Pathway for Developmental Math Students

What is the *Best Fit* project?

The *Best Fit* Project combines the benefits of traditional and redesign classrooms. Instructors teach and assess student learning for three weeks, then guide each student into the classroom format which they believe is the *best fit* for that student's success.

How does the *Best Fit* work?

- ◆ Pairs of concurrent sections of Pre-algebra are offered in nearby classrooms. Common lesson plans and quizzes are used between these sections during the first three weeks. Teachers consult after each class.
- ◆ During those three weeks, instructors assess each student's learning style, abilities, math background, and the pace that they learn the material. Students are also surveyed about their learning needs and preferences.
- ◆ At the end of the third week, students are advised about the type of classroom that is the *best fit* for his/her learning style and learning needs. Some students are moved between classrooms. With the help of the registration office, new class rosters are created.
- ◆ After the third week, one instructor continues with traditional classroom instruction, while the other instructor uses self-paced computer-mediated instruction.

What is the student experience?

- ◆ Students receive a welcome email prior to the start of the semester, and meet both instructors on the first day of class.
- ◆ Instructors talk to their students about what to expect during the first three weeks, keeping the focus on student success.
- ◆ Students learn both mathematics and study skills during the first three weeks. They are expected to attend class, be organized, and com-

municate with the instructor via email, phone, and in person.

- ◆ Students become acquainted with the computer mediated environment by creating a temporary account and completing computer assignments.

Observations from the *Best Fit* traditional classes:

- ◆ Students form a classroom community. They are able to work with others who have similar levels of knowledge about math.
- ◆ Students are actively engaged in their learning and participate in class. There are fewer classroom disruptions.
- ◆ Better performance as evidenced by more A's and B's on exams.

Observations from the *Best Fit* computer classes:

- ◆ Students are motivated to complete the course and focused on learning and understanding the material.
- ◆ Students acknowledge the instructor, and follow his/her instructions and advice. They are also quick to respond to emails from the instructor.
- ◆ Independent learners benefit a great deal from this learning environment and it is easier to accommodate personal circumstances and learning disabilities.



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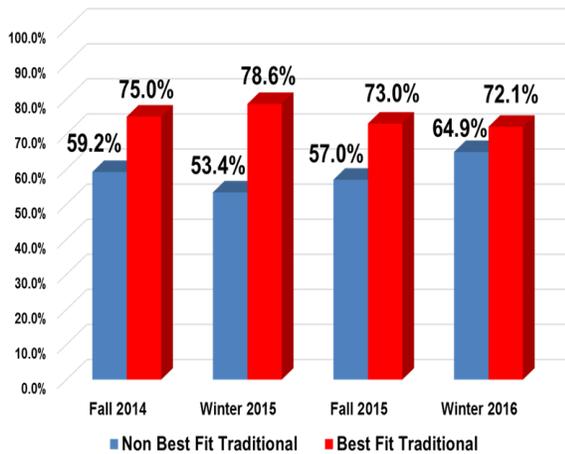


Does it work?

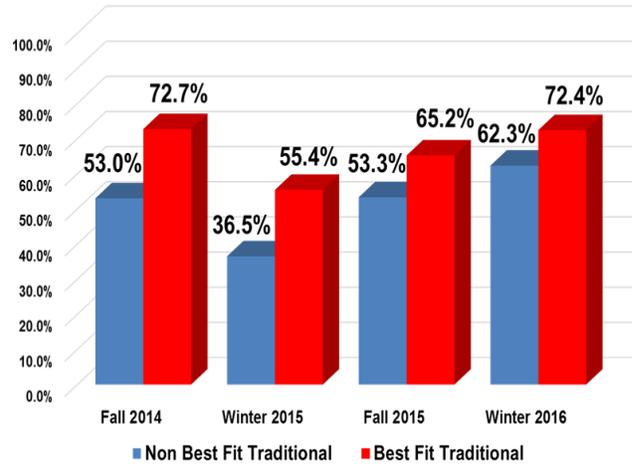
- ◆ More than 15% increase in success rate in traditional class.
- ◆ More than 20% increase in retention rate (average).
- ◆ More than 20% increase in students passing the common final exam (average).
- ◆ Almost twice as many A's on the common final exam (average).
- ◆ More than 10% increase in persistence (average).



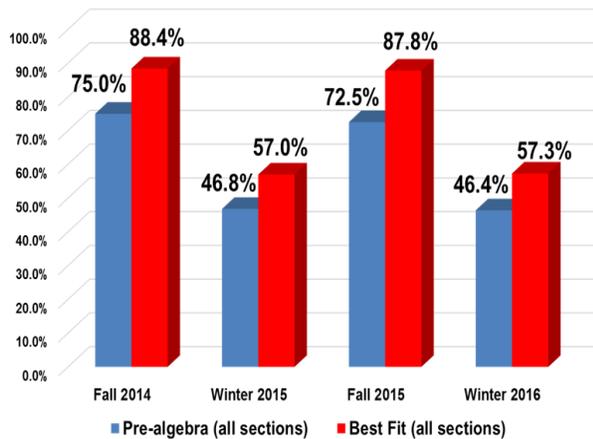
Grade "C or Better" Distribution Departmental Final Exam Traditional Class



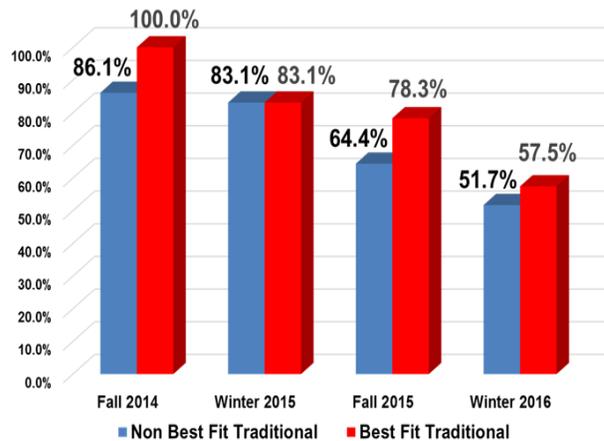
Success Rate Students Who Completed the Course with C or Better



Retention Rate Students Who Took a Class in the Following Semester



Persistence Rate Students attending until the last week of classes



The Best Fit Team

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