

## Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) Workshops

**Overview:** We plan to conduct nine workshops focused on parts of the BSI Self-Assessment that are aligned with the equity and diversity work of IDEA and LMC DE Program's Goal 2:

Effectively integrate instruction and academic support services: tutoring, labs, supplemental instruction, Reading and Writing Center, counseling services, assessment, and learning communities. Make recommendations based on systematic assessment of these services, and periodically report to the college community on their effectiveness.

The BSI Steering Committee will coordinate related research, organize a college-wide forum, produce a written report summarizing findings, act as a liaison with SGC and the Senates, and coordinate the writing of action plans.

### Definitions:

- From state BSI (p.13) : **Basic skills** are those foundation skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and ESL, as well as learning skills and study skills which are necessary for students to succeed in college-level work.

(The inclusion of ESL recognizes that all ESL is not subsumed under basic skills; however, to the extent that a student is unable to succeed in college-level coursework due to inability to read, write or comprehend English, ESL skills may be considered as foundation skills in accordance with this definition.)

- **“Developmental student” at LMC** is defined as a student who is currently enrolled in or has previously taken at least one pre-transfer math, English, or ESL course.

### A Snapshot of Basic Skills / DE at LMC:

- An average of 1,550 students took the LMC placement test in Fall 2004, 2005, and 2006. Of those, 75% - 80% were assessed as needing pre-transfer level coursework in math, English and/or ESL.
- Developmental math courses comprise approximately 77% of all math course offerings, and 55% of all English course offerings at LMC.
- Of those students who received an AA degree in Spring 2006, 79% had completed at least one pre-transfer level course at LMC.

## **Basic Skills Initiative Workshop #1 Summary**

### **Effective Practice A.1. Developmental Education is a clearly stated institutional priority.**

In attendance: (Ruth, please cut and paste names here.)

### **What is the ideal? (In other words, what would it look like if developmental education was a clearly stated institutional priority at LMC?)**

Developmental education would

- Be a visible, easily identified and understood program on campus
- Be an integral part of all college-wide planning and research
- Receive adequate funding to support its goals and priorities
- Receive the support of college leadership in sending a consistent message about its importance on campus and in the community
- Receive the support of the college community in promoting the pre-transfer curriculum and support services that are the foundation of success for the majority of LMC students
- Reflect a college commitment to a “prepared institution” philosophy that publicly acknowledges the national reality that the majority of community college students will require at least one pre-transfer course in order to meet their academic/career goal, and rejects a student-deficit model that implies students should be “fixed” as quickly and quietly as possible.

### **What evidence do we have about the extent to which this practice is in place at LMC?**

- DE is not identified as a program in the college catalog or class schedule, nor is it found on the college website
- Pre-transfer courses are included in college orientation materials, but there is no mention of a “program” as there is, for example, clear reference to an honors program.
- DE is explicitly referenced in the Educational Master Plan.
- DE is adequately funded, and in fact, constitutes a significant portion of college expenditures
- Faculty in English and math have reassigned time to provide leadership and coordination for the program, but there is no institutional recognition of the duties and responsibilities of these “leads”, nor anything that compels faculty to participate in the professional development and assessment activities they may design.
- While a mission statement, philosophy and goal statement for DE exists, it is not common knowledge, nor does it appear in any college publication.
- Faculty who provide leadership in DE are on many college committees, but not by design. There are no committees, other than the DE committee, that explicitly call for DE representatives.
- Experience in teaching students who are not prepared to engage a college curriculum is not highlighted in hiring most faculty, full or part time.

## **How can we make DE a more clearly stated institutional priority at LMC?**

- Find positive ways to talk about the courses and services we provide for the majority of our students who are not yet fully prepared for our transfer and occupational programs. For example, perhaps we should rename DE the “Academic Advancement Program” which could be proudly promoted and marketed.
- Facilitate open and honest discussions about who our students are and what they need to succeed. Publicize data and invite inquiry.
- Recruit, hire and train all faculty, not just English and math teachers, to teach students in ways that promote active, engaged learning. Create a college culture that stresses that helping students learn is everyone’s responsibility.

## **Basic Skills Initiative #3**

### **October 26, 2007**

**Effective Practice A.4: Institutional policies facilitate student completion of necessary developmental coursework as early as possible in the educational sequence.**

#### **Discussion of research findings cited in the BSI literature review:**

- ✓ Students who complete a developmental education course during 1<sup>st</sup> year of enrollment have better persistent rates; those who complete a developmental education course during their 1<sup>st</sup> semester are retained at higher rates than those who do not attempt remediation their 1<sup>st</sup> term.
- ✓ Students who complete remediation prior to enrolling in college-level courses and those who enroll in remedial courses and college-level courses concurrently earn grades comparable to college-ready students. Underprepared students who did not remediate had lower grades.
- ✓ DE classes should include critical thinking & learning skill development (and not just be repetitive skill & drill)
- ✓ DE students often feel disenfranchised – It is important to provide mechanisms to avoid these feelings of being marginalized

#### **What exists at LMC? What is the Evidence?**

*Effective Practice: Students are required to receive early assessment and advisement for sound educational planning.*

At LMC assessment is recommended but not required. Students cannot enroll in Engl 90 or higher without appropriate assessment scores, but students can enroll in any transfer-level math course without taking the placement test if they have successfully completed Intermediate Algebra at any time in their life.

In Fall 2006 LMC assessed approximately 3600 students, but we do not know how many of these students enrolled. A math instructor said that this semester roughly 90% of his prealgebra students had taken the placement test, which is a significant increase relative to four years ago.

*Effective Practice: Students are advised and encouraged to enroll only in college-level classes consistent with their basic skills preparation.*

Advisement differs depending on the counselor. Anecdotal evidence suggests that students who have taken the assessment test and received academic advisement often cannot remember which counselor they met for the advisement and do not understand why particular courses were recommended. There is a perception that students often enroll in classes that fit their schedules, rather than following their advisement or assessment recommendations.

A variety of other concerns were expressed by individuals in the group based on their personal experiences:

- Students are often encouraged to take GE courses because these courses do not have prerequisites, yet the advisement ignores English placement scores.
- Underprepared students who are inappropriately enrolled in GE courses do not pass; yet faculty fear that prerequisites will adversely affect enrollments.

- Some GE course designs are not consistent with the level of preparation indicated by the advisories. This makes advising students difficult. In particular, it is difficult to identify courses that ESL students can take.
- Some GE courses could be appropriate for DE students but the way these courses are currently taught makes it difficult for DE students to succeed.

*Effective Practice: Mechanisms/cultures exist to alleviate potential marginalization or stigma associated with isolation of basic skills students.*

The ESL/Child Development Learning Community is an example of how to prevent marginalization of basic skills students. These students are currently employed in the Child Development field, so they bring expertise to the classroom that motivates their learning and their success.

Another example is the RN program's new approach to handling students who do not pass the statewide assessment when they first enter the nursing program. Students cannot take nursing classes until they complete remediation, but they are encouraged to enroll in a new course about the nursing field that is designed to motivate them to continue.

Other concerns expressed individually:

- Students feel marginalized when they can only take DE courses.
- Some faculty do not want to teach developmental students and refuse to acknowledge the need for reading and writing remediation in their own classrooms.
- Students who have trouble navigating the system are not being effectively served.

*Effective Practice: Outcomes for basic skills students concurrently enrolled in college-level and basic skills courses are carefully monitored; data are used to adjust policies and/or recommendations to students.*

This is not occurring at LMC.

### **How Might These Practices Be Advanced at LMC?**

The following ideas are not prioritized and may not have the unanimous support of the group attending the workshop.

*Assessment and advisement:*

- Develop a shared vision and philosophy for advisement for DE students that reflect effective practice.
- Create opportunities for early assessment, including a flyer with clear and easy steps for the student to follow. This flyer should be available in every office on campus.
- Investigate ways to accommodate students who enroll late without undercutting the assessment and advisement process or setting students up for failure. For example,
  - identify courses that are typically needed by this population (e.g. Engl 70, career or other counseling courses, prealgebra, etc.) and start a few sections of appropriate courses later in the semester.
  - Restrict enrollment for late starters to pre-selected courses.

- If research demonstrates that late enrollment correlates with higher failure rates, investigate the feasibility of closing registration prior to the start of classes. Require EOPS applications and assessment be completed prior to registration.

*Concurrent enrollment in DE and GE:*

- Create Learning Communities that pair DE or ESL courses with appropriate GE courses. Cal State East Bay's First Year Experience Program is a good model; students choose a cluster of classes based on their assessment score and area of interest.
- Develop or revamp existing courses to serve as an "intro to a major" (e.g. Intro to Engineering, Intro to Nursing, Intro to Environmental Sciences) and pair these with relevant DE courses. The "intro to a major" could be designed to teach reading, critical thinking, and problem-solving in the discipline.
- Create multiple Occupational Education "pathways" that are tailored to DE level.
- Create pairings of DE English and GE; GE faculty can tailor their reading and writing assignments to the appropriate level of English.
- Identify through research the appropriate level of English preparation for each GE course. Create GE "strata" or bands that are keyed to English preparation. Establish English prerequisites or advisories for each band of courses. Design reading and writing assignments for each band of courses keyed to English level.
- Identify GE and Occ. Ed. faculty who are willing to advertise their classes as "designed for [a given level of English or math preparation]". Compensate these faculty to participate in professional development designed to address the needs of underprepared students, such as the Reading Apprenticeship.
- Offer professional development for all GE faculty that helps them analyze the reading level of their textbook, the difficulty level of their writing assignments, etc.
- Ask every department to identify one GE course that is appropriate for students who assess at a given level.

*Creating community to prevent marginalization:*

- Create opportunities through innovative use of college work-study to provide on-campus jobs for DE students, e.g. student ambassadors.
- Require a college success class that incorporates leadership training.
- Make sure DE courses are interesting and relevant to students' interests.

**What research do we need to conduct?**

- Identify through research the appropriate level of English preparation for each LMC GE course, i.e. compare success rates by English preparation.
- Compare the success in college-level courses of DE students who complete remediation first versus those concurrently enrolled.
- Determine the number and percentage of DE students who become transfer-prepared; how long does it take them?
- Each fall determine the percent of 1<sup>st</sup> time students who assess; determine the percentage of those who assess that follow their assessment advisement for math.
- Compare the success rates of students who enroll prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> day of class with those who enroll after the 1<sup>st</sup> day of class.
- Identify colleges that close registration prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> day of classes (e.g. Valencia Community College in Fla.) Investigate the implementation issues and solutions for such a change.

## **Basic Skills Initiative #4**

### **November 29, 2007**

**Effective Practice B.3 : Counseling support provided is substantial, accessible, and integrated into academic courses/programs.**

#### **Discussion of research findings cited in the BSI literature review:**

Effective developmental education programs include:

- Intrusive, proactive, early advisement, counseling and intervention
- Intensive monitoring
- Mandatory orientation
- Highly structured and accessible counseling, especially for part-time and evening students
- Partnerships between faculty and counselors, including program planning and evaluation
- Training for counselors in specific needs of DE students
- Comprehensive counseling services, including social and affective needs of students

#### **What exists at LMC? What is the Evidence?**

*Effective Practice: A proactive counseling/advising structure that includes intensive monitoring and advising serves students placed into developmental education courses.*

- Orientation attendance has declined
- Student handbook includes information on advisement based on assessment scores
- 27% of faculty participate in Early Alert system
- A 1 unit orientation class has been developed through counseling ; three sections were offered Fall 07 and nine sections will be offered in Sp 08, four of them at off-campus sites
- EOPS and Athletics send out progress reports students enrolled in those programs

*Effective Practice: Counseling and instruction are integrated into the developmental education program.*

- DE Counseling Partnership in English 70 and Math 12- a counselor makes a presentation in these courses early in the semester informing students of counseling services and the importance of ed planning. The goal is for all students in these courses to have an ed plan by the end of the semester. In Math 12, about 34% of students enrolled at first census had an ed plan by the end of the semester in both Fa 06 and Sp 07. In English 70, it was 47% in Fall 06 and 35% in Sp 07.
- Learning communities such as Puente and Create to Change integrate counseling and instruction.
- ESL courses are now inviting our ESL counselor to make presentations in ESL courses
- Most faculty are not in communication with counselors

*Effective Practice: Counseling staff are specifically trained to address the academic, social and emotional needs of developmental education students.*

- Counselors have broad training and experience, but the college has not provided any specific training for counselors on the content/pedagogy of DE courses or students' needs in those courses.

*Effective Practice: Counseling of developmental education students occurs early in the semester/quarter.*

- No, except for DE partnership presentations in English 70 and Math 12 and special learning communities such as Puente and Create to Change, and recently, ESL courses.

### **How Might These Practices Be Advanced at LMC?**

The following ideas are not prioritized and may not have the unanimous support of the group attending the workshop.

- Involve counselors in early alert process, perhaps through some kind of electronic monitoring/tracking system such as ACES, a program used at CCC.
- More focused interventions for students on academic probation
- Identify students who do not have an ed plan and send them an invitation to set up a counseling appointment
- Have counselors schedule appointments “on the spot” after presentations in English 70 and Math 12 presentations – could this be done on line?
- Ask EOPS to alert instructors prior to sending out mid-semester progress reports in order to allow instructors time to structure appointments/conversations with students about their progress.
- Develop a case management approach for students who need it most
- Tap into student leadership initiatives in order to have students encourage other students to see a counselor and develop an ed plan/ encourage peer mentorship
- Encourage greater communication and collaboration between faculty and counselors, eg. class assignments that promote counseling and advisement
- Encourage group approaches to advisement
- Include expertise in working with DE students in all job descriptions and hiring processes, not just English and math / provide professional development on teaching DE students for all faculty
- Create a Student Success Center, a centralized place to address students' needs
- Provide families with orientations/ information so they can better support family members who attend college
- Promote use of the Career Center to help students identify their goals
- Hire more counselors, especially those with expertise in counseling and advising DE students

### **What research do we need to conduct?**

- Track the number of entering first time freshman who state degree/certificate/transfer as a goal who attend an orientation and have an educational plan. Do this every semester.