

**Los Medanos College
Developmental Education Program
Student Support Services
Tutoring**

Research/Effective Practice

Research indicates that tutoring is a key component of successful developmental education programs (Casazza & Silverman, 1996). The research is inconclusive about the relative effectiveness of group vs. individualized tutoring, the use of peer vs. professional tutors, or the location of tutoring in academic support services such as a learning assistance center vs. a learning lab associated with a department. However, the research is definitive about one aspect of successful tutoring programs: training. The National Study of Developmental Education followed over 6000 developmental education students nationwide in both 4-year and 2-year colleges from 1989 to 1996. From that large study, a number of reports were issued on various components of developmental education programs and their impact on student success. Martha Maxwell, in *Evaluating Peer Tutoring* (1996), cites one such report issued in 1992 that found that “tutor training is the best programmatic indicator of successful college developmental programs. Institutions that graduate more than 75% of their developmental students are more likely to have tutor training programs than those with low graduation rates where fewer than 25% graduate” (p.6). According to Boylan (2002), “one of the most effective ways of improving tutor training is to participate in the College Reading and Learning Association Tutor Training Certification Program. This program provides guidelines for tutor training and allows tutoring programs to certify tutors at varying levels of expertise...” (p. 50)

In *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success* effective practice D.10 includes peer tutoring and emphasizes the need for systematic tutor training and evaluation of tutoring services.

LMC Current Practice (2007)

Developmental English courses (English 60, 70 and 90), as well as arithmetic, prealgebra, and Elementary Algebra, have at least one in-class lab hour that is designated as time for personalized instruction. In these courses, with the exception of some of the arithmetic courses in which tutors are integral to the personalized mode of instruction, instructors may choose to have one or more tutors in-class during this hour or they may design other opportunities for students to receive individualized help, such as activities in the computer lab.

Tutor training is consistent with CRLA guidelines and evaluated by the tutors via a survey. Tutors who work in developmental math and English classes attend a 10-hour pre-semester training, conducted by a campus tutor coordinator, and enroll in a Human Services course, taught by English and math faculty, for on-going training throughout the semester. Both courses include material on tutoring techniques and Socratic questioning, study skills, cultural considerations, learning styles, learning disabilities, and some English or math content, such reading strategies from the Reading Apprenticeship.

In-class peer tutoring is evaluated through student and instructor perception of the tutor's effectiveness, with specific survey questions keyed to each department's tutoring goals.