

**Los Medanos College  
Developmental Education Program  
Student Support Services  
Reading and Writing Center**

**Research/Effective Practice**

The National Writing Centers Association (Simpson, 1985) offers the following basic guidelines for operating a writing center.

1. Because writing is a skill used in all subjects and at all levels of the educational process, a writing center should be considered a support service for the entire institution rather than simply for a single department. Although the budget and staff of a writing center may come from a single department, the mission of the center and its constituencies should encompass the entire institution.
2. Regardless of its organization and design, a writing center should be based on the idea of individualized instruction. Therefore, materials and methods chosen for writing centers should be adjusted to individual needs.
3. Access to the writing center should not be limited by a student's level of preparation or physical capabilities.
4. The writing center should have instructional goals that are clearly understood by tutors and students.
5. Writing center records should provide for continuity of instruction regardless of how its staff is organized.
6. A writing center should have clearly stated, consistent, and ethical principles to guide its tutors. The National Writing Centers Association suggests the following:
  - Tutors should be provided clear explanations of writing center procedures.
  - Tutors should neither directly nor indirectly offer criticism of a teacher's assignments, methods, or grading practices.
  - Tutors should be given guidelines for defining acceptable and unacceptable intervention in a student's writing process.

In *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success* effective practice D.10 focuses on comprehensive academic support services. “Since most developmental students simultaneously enroll in transfer or occupational courses, learning assistance programs are particularly important for students’ ability to successfully move through their courses of study.” (p. 62) However, in the summary of the literature on academic support services, the authors emphasize that “when these services are created for the sole support

of basic skills students or dedicated solely to the goal of remediation, they also suffer a kind of marginalization in the community college community. The effect, unfortunately, dissuades students from usage rather than encouraging it because the service is seen as a designation for failure or inadequacy.” (p. 63)

### **LMC Current Practice (2007)**

The Reading and Writing Center (R&WC) provides reading and writing support to all students, staff and faculty. Staffed primarily by faculty consultants and graduate students, its mission is to work collaboratively with students and faculty as they work through the reading and writing process, providing strategies, feedback and motivation. In addition to English faculty and graduate students, the R&WC employs faculty from different disciplines as writing consultants to achieve the dual goals of providing better support to all students and initiating faculty across disciplines into the realities and possibilities of working with students on their reading and writing issues. The consultants meet monthly for professional development training. The R&WC is supported by funds allocated through positive attendance.