

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

Counseling Intervention in Developmental Courses

Research/Effective Practice

In *What Works: Research-Based Practices in Developmental Education*, Hunter Boylan emphasizes the need to integrate academic and student services for students in developmental education. He states, “It is essential that all courses and support services connected with developmental education be viewed as a system rather than as random activities.” (p.28)

Martha Maxwell in “The Role of Counseling in a Comprehensive Developmental Program for Post-Secondary Students”(1997) argues that “counseling should be an integral part of a successful developmental education program” (p.1). She contends that students often need help to overcome “affective blocks” based on prior negative experiences in school and to plan effectively for their future. Maxwell recommends that counselors be “an integral part of the developmental program team” and work to “reduce the perceived formality and distance of counseling by making it more accessible to students.” (p.2)

Counseling support that is integrated into academic courses and programs is part of effective practice B.3 in *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success* (p. 28). Studies cited in this literature review show that developmental education programs with integrated counseling and advising services have improved course success rates.

LMC Current Practice (2007)

The Counseling Partnership is a collaboration between counselors and instructors who teach English 70 (two-levels below 1A) and Math 12 (Prealgebra). Counselors make two in-class presentations, one at the beginning of the semester to introduce students to student support services and one at the end to answer questions about registration and encourage persistence. Instructors design assignments to reinforce the counseling presentation and require students to meet with a counselor to obtain an educational plan.

The goals of the Counseling Partnership are:

1. Students will have an educational goal, including a major, or at least an understanding of the eventual need to declare a major.
2. Student will identify possible obstacles to successful completion of their courses, and will be able to access resources to help them overcome these obstacles.

3. Faculty will advise students of next level course recommended by week 10.
4. Students will have an educational plan prior to registration period for the following semester.

Lab 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.

Lab Services: Math Lab

Research/Effective Practice

In *What Works: Research-Based Practices in Developmental Education*, Hunter Boylan cites a variety of studies that support one of the major findings of the National Study of Developmental Education: “programs in which classrooms and laboratories are fully integrated had significantly higher pass rates in developmental courses than programs in which there was little integration.” (p. 64)

Classrooms and laboratories are not integrated just because they exist or because students taking classes occasionally use labs. Integration is characterized by

- instructors and lab personnel that work closely together to design lab experiences that are directly related to course goals and objectives;
- a requirement that students participate in lab activities as part of their course assignments and lab activities count into the course grade;
- labs that are in reasonably close proximity to the courses they support.

LMC Current Practice (2007)

With the exception of some of our arithmetic courses, all developmental math courses at LMC have one to two hours of lab “by arrangement” as part of their design. Lab assignments include activities from a locally authored activities packet or computerized assignments. The math lab is located in the same building that houses math classrooms. It consists of a tutoring lab, a study lab, a computer lab, and a testing room. It is open six

days a week for drop-in help and is staffed by math faculty, classified staff, and a few advanced student tutors.

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 CRLA-approved 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.

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.

References

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