

Pasadena City College

Teaching and Learning Communities

Site Visit Report Prepared for the
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
United States Department of Education

Project: Showcasing and Replicating Community College
Programs

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A. INTRODUCTION

1. Summary Description of Intervention Strategy

The Teaching and Learning Communities (TLC) initiative supports the learning needs of under-prepared, first-generation college students and helps them successfully advance from basic skills to transfer and vocational courses. The TLC functions as a comprehensive academic and learning community comprised of faculty members, counselors and students. Instructional models range from single courses to block programs. Current initiatives include a summer bridge/first year experience program, intensive math courses, career pathways, ESL blocks, transfer and probation workshops, and faculty development projects. The TLC is structured to ensure that teachers and students mutually engage in the learning process. The objective is to create an environment in which students benefit from the support of faculty and staff who help them improve their academic skills and find their own voice. Faculty members benefit from the opportunity to explore innovative approaches to teaching and learning, and the college benefits from a center which serves as an incubator for new programs and services.

2. The Site Visit

The two-day site visit was conducted March 24-26, 2008. The site research team included Dr. Katherine Boswell and Susanna Kung. Semi-structured, in-person interviews were conducted with staff, faculty and external evaluators related to the Teaching and Learning Communities Program and administrators from Pasadena City College. A list of interviewees is provided in Appendix A. Site researchers also observed a TLC staff meeting attended by Bob Miller, Brock Klein, Ann Davis, and Lynn Wright, as well as Evangelina Quintanar (Counselor), Melva Alvarez (Recruitment and Outreach Coordinator), and Carlos "Tito" Altamirano (Lab Coordinator).

3. Institutional and Community Setting

Pasadena City College was established in 1924 as a public community college. The college has an FTE of approximately 14,000. Approximately twenty-five percent of the students are Hispanic. The graduation rate for the school is over forty percent. Nearly thirty-four percent of students receive federal grant aid. The campus is located about 10 miles from downtown Los Angeles in the city of Pasadena. The city is home to prestigious academic institutions such as the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), Art Center College of Design, and the California School of Culinary Arts Pasadena. Residents of Pasadena tend to be somewhat more affluent than their counterparts in Los Angeles County. Anecdotally, one TLC staff member estimates that only about 20% of the PCC student body resides in the city of Pasadena; most students hail from L.A. and take public transportation to school. The racial and ethnic makeup of the school differs noticeably from that of the city of Pasadena (see Table 1).

Table 1:

Race	City of Pasadena (%) ¹	PCC (%) ²
White/Caucasian	54	19
Black/African American	12	6
Asian/Pacific Islander	14	31
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	35	34

B. FINDINGS

1. Construction of the Issue

Historically, PCC has had a reputation as one of the most successful transfer-oriented two-year colleges in California, with the second highest community college transfer rate in the state to both the California State University and University of California systems. Results from CA's 2007 Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC) ranked Pasadena City College first in its peer group in four of six indicators, including: "Improvement Rate for Credit Basic Skills Courses," which measures the percentage of students who successfully complete at least one credit basic skills course in a term and successfully complete a higher-level basic skills course in the same discipline, or a college level course in the same discipline, within two years of taking the first basic skills course; "Student Progress and Achievement Rate," which measures the percentage of first-time students who earn a minimum of 12 units and, within six years, earn an associate degree or transfer to a four-year institution; "Percent of Students Who Earned at Least 30 Units"; and "Persistence Rate."

But over time there has been a significant shift in the demographics of students attending Pasadena City College, from almost entirely transfer and continuing education students to increasing proportions of limited English proficient immigrants and underprepared students from L.A.'s inner-city. Student performance at PCC has evolved to the point where it is dichotomous, to paraphrase one faculty member. Although many PCC students continue to successfully transfer to a four year institution, 60% perform at a below-basic, pre-collegiate level, he said. This faculty member added that even at upper levels, student performance is getting worse, and "at the basic level, it's really bad—almost like they were trained to be under-prepared." Despite the changes in the student population, many faculty continue to think of it as a transfer institution. "[We have] got to teach the students we have, not the students we wish we had," said a member of the TLC staff. Basic skills students are increasingly "more the rule than the exception," said one administrator—a sentiment echoed by nearly all of our interviewees.

Over 75 percent of incoming students to Pasadena City College now place into basic skills courses, yet only 26 percent of these students will get a seat in a basic skills course. Of these, only 10 and 24 percent will succeed in the next levels of math and English, respectively, within a year. Only 41% of all basic skills students will succeed in a transfer-level English course, and only 21% will succeed in a transfer-level math course, within 6 years. Moreover, enrollments in these courses are disproportionately Latino and African-American. Despite the high failure

¹ U. S Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2006

² Pasadena Community College Public Relations Office (n.d.)

rates, few initiatives existed at Pasadena City College to address the diverse learning needs of students³.

2. The Intervention Strategy

a. Development of the Intervention Strategy

The trigger for the creation of the Teaching and Learning Community at Pasadena City College came when, as a doctoral graduate student, Brock Klein (founding director of the TLC) was asked to participate in an informal learning community sponsored by an architecture professor at UCLA. The course included biology, linguistics, and architecture, and incorporated field trips to the Big Sur. Klein found the experience so powerful that he was determined to replicate the model of creating a collaborative learning environment with more intense encounters for faculty and students at PCC.

The vision for the Center was to create an environment where teachers and students could help each other learn. Students would benefit from the support of faculty and staff that would help students improve their academic skills and find their own voice. Faculty would have an opportunity to explore different approaches to the scholarship of teaching. The College would benefit from a Center which could serve as an incubator for new programs and services which could be tested and tweaked before being scaled up and offered college-wide.

In 2000, The College applied for, and received, a Title V: Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program grant from the US Department of Education, which provided seed money to support the establishment of the TLC. Over subsequent years, staff from the TLC have been very effective in writing grant proposals that have secured soft funding from a subsequent Title V Cooperative grant between nearby Mount Saint Mary's College and PCC, as well as grants from Hewlett/Carnegie Foundation, National Science Foundation (NSF), Irvine/MDRC, MESA. PCC also receives annual funds from the State of California to the Community Colleges system for Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC).

The TLC has become an umbrella that covers five projects: Career Pathways, MathJam, MathPath, MaS, and .xL. The TLC serves first-generation incoming freshmen in need of additional academic and social support. TLC cohort students also have access to a computer lab, individual counseling, and tutoring. Under these projects, the TLC offers a summer bridge/first-year experience program, career pathways, ESL blocks, transfer and probation workshops, faculty development projects, and campus-wide initiatives. TLC programs incorporate speakers, field trips, conferences, and professional development retreats into the curricula. While the original intent of the Title V grant was to provide services to students of color, the focus rapidly shifted within the first three to four months of implementation to a primary focus on meeting the needs of students for basic skills, after a faculty retreat identified that as a critical need. Additionally, an early evaluation had revealed that there were programmatic and curricular issues that needed to be addressed. It was then the project team realized that if they were going to transform student behavior, they needed to profile students to get a better picture of whom they were to serve.

³ Basic Skills Education at PCC: Realizing the Possibilities (n.d.)

b. Organizational Structure

The TLC is an amalgam run by three Project Co-Directors who officially interface with their respective funders about the program components that they oversee. Using a patchwork of grants, the Co-Directors work to create central services that seem seamless to an outside observer, despite distinct funding accountabilities and expectations. In practice, the TLC's management structure is horizontal. "[It] creates issues," said a Co-Director, "but the value is that it can help piece things together, like a link. [We] hope to consolidate not only in the TLC, but across the campus so [that] it is less confusing not just for us, but more importantly, for students."

In addition to the three Co-Directors, the TLC staff is comprised of one full-time and one part-time counselor, a lab assistant, an outreach and recruitment coordinator, and four student interns who tutor. These interns are former TLC students who have succeeded and "want to give back to the TLC."

An academic administrator indicated that one of the greatest strengths of the TLC has been the stability, focus and vision of the leadership team, with two of the three project co-directors having been with the Center since its formation. However, it also creates a challenge in a unionized environment. Project leaders are "not really faculty nor managers, neither fish nor fowl." The staff tend to devote significant time to their work, far in excess of the normal 35 hour faculty workload. "It makes the union nervous. It is not an ugly issue yet, but"

Though the TLC takes a very holistic and integrated approach, it is actually an amalgam of programs funded by various sources. The TLC's program components and services include:

- .XL—Originally a summer bridge and first-year experience program to help students make a smooth transition from high school to college, .XL now refers to any first-year experience program, even if it does not contain a summer bridge. Nevertheless, the .XL program does believe that any first-year program is greatly enhanced by a summer pre-college experience. The college pushed back on the summer bridge components (sparing MathJam, described below, because it had received so many accolades), saying that it was too taxing for the school, in large part due to scheduling challenges. Students in .XL remain with their cohort and with the same instructors for the entire academic year; they are guaranteed spots in English, math, and counseling classes.
- Math Jam/LifeLines— New students who feel uneasy about taking their first college math class in the fall can join the TLC's free, 2-week math bootcamp. Summer Math Jam students learn in an informal environment while making friends and learning about the college. In the fall, students enter the LifeLines program, where they have access to a counselor, tutors, specially arranged study jams (with pizza), and a free math loaner textbook.
- Career Pathways— Students who plan to major in a healthcare profession, art/design, teaching, or business can streamline their path to transfer by joining Career Pathways. Students are guaranteed enrollment in required courses, remain with a cohort of peers who have similar career goals, and can take thematic courses relevant to their chosen major and future career.
- MathPath – This intensive program was created to help students successfully complete two math courses in one semester and earn 12 units. MathPath 1 includes Elementary and

Intermediate Algebra, and MathPath 2 includes Trigonometry and Pre-Calculus. All math courses are paired with student support courses. In addition, MathPath students have access to TLC counselors, tutors, and informal evening study jams.

- Club MaS – Women and under-represented minority students who are interested in majoring in a science, technology, engineering, or math field can join Club MaS (Math and Science). MaS, which translates into “more” in Spanish, means more math and science for its participants. Activities and meetings are scheduled year-round, and include workshops, internship opportunities, field trips, scholarships, and book stipends.
- MESA – Math, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA) is an academic program that supports the efforts of educationally disadvantaged community college students to excel in math, engineering and science so they can transfer to four-year institutions and major in these fields. It includes a study center, academic excellence workshops, transfer advisement, and research opportunities.
- Counseling – All students enrolled in TLC programs meet with a TLC counselor each semester to develop or revise their education plans; discuss transfer goals; and attend study skills, financial aid, transfer, and probation workshops.
- Conexion – The TLC takes advantage of its multi-generational community of learners by allowing past successful TLC students an opportunity to give back to the TLC community as tutors and mentors. All Conexion students must go through PCC’s Learning Assistance Center’s Tutor Training Program.
- Faculty Development – “Under-prepared faculty, under-prepared students” is the mantra at the TLC, which sees professional development and support for instructors as an intervention that provides a great deal of bang for the buck. The TLC sponsors faculty inquiries in math, English, and reading; intensive seminars and workshops; retreats; and informal meetings.

A table found in the Appendix B summarizes the TLC’s first-year experience programs, features, and benefits.

c. Revenue and Funding Streams

Current funding for the TLC comes from:

- A 3-year Strengthening Pre-Collegiate Education in Community Colleges (SPECC) grant funded by the Hewlett Foundation and managed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The grant amount is \$300,000 over a three-year period, beginning in 2006.⁴
- A 3-year Student Support Partnership Integrating Resources and Education (SSPIRE) grant funded by the Irvine Foundation and managed by MDRC, in the amount of \$300,000 over the three-year period beginning in 2006.⁵

⁴ Redden, 2008

⁵ The James Irvine Foundation. (n.d.).

- A 5-year Science, Technology, Education, and Math Talent Expansion Program (STEP) grant funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the amount of \$1,073,481 from 2005-2009 and \$276,813 in 2010. This grant is intended to increase the number of minority and female students at PCC majoring in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields and transferring to four-year institutions. The grant is intended to serve about 600 students over the five-year period.⁶
- A 5-year Title V Cooperative grant funded by the US Department of Education in the amount of \$696,000, shared with Mount Saint Mary's College.⁷
- Annual funds from the State of California to the Community Colleges system; Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC) replaces Partnership for Excellence (PFE). In 2007-08, the TLC was awarded \$173,000 for .XL and \$105,000 for shared MESA clerical support.⁸

Past funding included a 5-year Title V grant funded by the US Department of Education in the amount of \$376,000 per year, and annual funds from PFE.

The Center Co-Directors have been remarkably successful at weaving the patchwork of grants into what appears to outsiders to be a cohesive and apparently seamless whole. Each of the three Co-Directors oversee operating budgets that average about \$350,000 per year.

Despite the significant success of the team in securing outside grant funding over the life of the Center, there has been minimal institutional investment in the Center. It is clear that over the long term, funding will be a significant challenge. The previous college president, who retired last fall after 12 years at the helm, was not particularly fond of the Center or its staff whom, according to a senior academic administrator, he viewed as "mavericks." In an interview with the AED team, the new President, who has been on the job about six months, expressed a desire to "institutionalize" the TLC, and to see it become better integrated and less of a boutique. She would like to see the Center less dependent upon soft money and anticipates "peeling off layers and weaving them into the institution" in order to secure greater sustainability for the Center and its services.

d. Intervention Activities and Methods

To address the challenges presented by the changing needs of a diverse student population, the TLC promotes and facilitates collaborative learning, active engagement, and sustained inquiry in a learning communities setting where the student voice can be heard. As previously stated, the vision was literally to create a space where teachers and students could help each other learn. Faculty and staff would help students find their path, and the TLC would help faculty have breakthroughs in the scholarship of teaching. The TLC would serve as the college's R&D division, where innovations are incubated, tested, refined, and served up for institutionalization. It would be a safe haven for students, who would be able to find familiar faces among the TLC faculty, teaching assistants, counselors, tutors, and peers in the cohort. In this safe haven, students have access to a computer lab from 7am to 5pm on weekdays, as well as a lunchroom and three computers with extended hours for MESA students. The TLC

⁶ <http://www.pasadena.edu/publicRelations/documents/mercury092005.pdf>

⁷ U. S. Department of Education (n.d.)

⁸ <http://www.pasadena.edu/PFE/documents/FY2007-2008ARCCProposalsApproved.pdf>

would also provide administrators, faculty, and staff “an opportunity to fail,” if necessary, in their pursuit of what works, say faculty, staff, and administrators.

Toward these ends, the TLC has “mixed and matched resources to create [and] build an infrastructure,” said one administrator. The TLC intervention takes a three-pronged approach:

1. Professional enrichment to increase faculty and administration commitment to, and satisfaction from, working with basic skills students through:
 - Basic Skills Teaching and Learning Institute for New Faculty: An intensive two-semester professional development program.
 - Faculty Inquiry Groups (FIGs): Faculty inquiry groups are organized around courses, topics, programs, or theoretical approaches to “promote the scholarship of teaching and learning.”
 - Administrator Inquiry Groups: Same as FIG, but geared towards administrators.
 - Ongoing professional development through coursework and guest speakers.

Incentives such as salary column advancement, scheduling priority, classroom allocation, and reassignment, are offered.

2. Programs that provide innovative, project-based/thematic, student-centered instruction through:
 - Summer Bridge, or .XL, programs to smooth the transition from high school to college: The .XL programs begin with summer sessions in which students work on math, English, study skills, and college success skills over six weeks. The summer program culminates in a weekend field trip. During their first year in college, cohort students continue to build upon the relationships formed over the summer by taking blocks of general education courses together.
 - First-year academies (basic skills math or English linked with counseling or a content course): Learning communities for students in developmental or pre-collegiate classes. Each year, a cohort of students co-registers for classes in which faculty collaborate to create linked lessons and coordinated assignments. The TLC employs this model in .XL, Career Pathways, and Math Path.
 - Complex learning community models (e.g., first-year experiences and career pathways multi-semester sequences): These are Career Pathways in the form of a four-semester sequence of paired courses for Future Nurses, Future Teachers, and Future Artists and Designers. Another complex learning model at PCC is the Campus-wide Theme Initiative. In the spring 2006 semester, the theme was *What Drives LA: Work*. Faculty incorporated the theme into their courses by making connections between careers in and around LA and what is taught in the classroom.
3. Student support services to encourage engagement, community-building, and collaboration through:

- Intrusive counseling throughout the year
- Peer tutoring and mentoring to create social networks and positive role models
- Instructional aides
- Incentives (book loans, internships, research opportunities, scholarships)
- Summer and Winter “Math Jams,” which are two-week intensive workshops for students whose placement tests suggest a need for pre-collegiate course exposure in an informal and more intimate environment. The program includes a college success component and features a variety of learning activities that have been well received by participants. Students who complete the Jams are allowed to re-take the placement tests and qualify for LifeLines, which includes counseling, book loans, and tutoring. See program descriptions below for additional information.
- Study groups
- Workshops (study skills, financial aid, transfer, etc.)

Target Population and Outreach

TLC students are often referred to the Center by PCC counselors and college admissions staff who, after meeting the students, believe they would be a good match for services. More recently, a full-time dedicated outreach and recruitment coordinator familiar with the local community was hired to participate in “PCC days” at high schools throughout the Pasadena Unified School District, to specifically recruit students who might benefit from TLC programs. A DVD promoting TLC programs has been designed and widely distributed, and the Center has a dynamic website. But the most effective recruitment tool has been word of mouth from students who have successfully participated in TLC programs and tell their friends and family members about the Center and its services.

Each component of the TLC has its own application. Candidates who wish to be considered for the .XL program must complete an application and take the ACCUPLACER tests in math and English. Eligible students are those who perform at a basic skills level in English and/or math as determined by the placement test. Students who wish to participate in other programs must fill out applications and sign contracts to show their commitment. The terms of these contracts vary, though some commonalities include a commitment not to work more than 20 hours a week, to attend office hours as needed for additional help and tutoring, and to follow prescribed sequences of courses.

In any given academic year, eight to ten PCC faculty teach in the various TLC programs. Typically, TLC faculty self-select, and they are often younger faculty or new hires who are less entrenched in traditional assumptions about PCC and its students and are open to trying new pedagogies to address a diverse learning population. Part of the PCC faculty contract includes an expectation of institutional service, and TLC leaders have encouraged academic deans to recruit new faculty to participate in TLC professional development training opportunities in fulfillment of that institutional service obligation.

3. Supportive and Enabling Conditions

Despite the fact that it is now in its eighth year, the TLC is still experiencing growing pains, said a Co-Director who believes that organizational misplacement was a mistake that initially held the Center back in its first few years of operations. A pivotal factor in its recent success has been the organizational restructuring that occurred less than two years ago, and moved the TLC from the Office of External Relations into Instruction under a newly appointed Associate Dean of Student Support. TLC staff now “have a seat at the table” in institutional planning and budget processes, and hold a monthly meeting with the Academic Deans. When asked how he saw his role vis-à-vis the TLC, the Associate Dean responded immediately and definitively, “facilitator and barrier-knocker-downer,” adding that he also has to play the role of the “bad guy” by telling other administrators, faculty, and staff what needs to be done because it is in the best interests of students, or sometimes by putting the brakes on an initiative” when TLC staff are getting out too far ahead of the institution. Since its inception, the TLC has also enjoyed support from the Vice President for Student Services, because it has the hallmarks of a successful program; that is, it is “intensive, intrusive, and holistic.”

A second critical condition that enables the TLC’s success, according to its leadership team, is the engagement of a core group of enthusiastic faculty who are willing to go the extra mile, who share the vision and values of the TLC, and who have become academic change agents within their respective instructional departments. Faculty are learning about students, and experimenting with and evaluating new teaching strategies, resulting in significant increases in student retention and success. Among the innovations the Center has championed to further engage faculty and administrators in effective teaching and learning practices is the sponsorship of Faculty and Administrative Inquiry Groups. A typical FIG engages a group of faculty volunteers who meet on a weekly basis to explore and recommend potential solutions to challenging instructional issues. “There are always those who are threatened by what you are doing. But if you can build a support network of allies who help keep pushing things out, and you keep your doors, your files and your evaluation reports open and available, change can happen.”

A third component integral to the success of the TLC has been the unusually close support and engagement of a team of external evaluators from the Claremont Graduate University, including senior researchers and doctoral students who have been actively engaged with TLC staff in creating a culture of assessment that has supported both formative and summative evaluation.

Externally, participation in the Carnegie/Hewlett Foundation-funded Strengthening Pre-Collegiate Education in Community Colleges (SPECC) grant has allowed the TLC team to participate in a learning network with other innovative community college leaders from across California. The networking and collaboration among peer institutions and projects which share a commitment to student success has clearly been an important source of encouragement, technical assistance, and support to the TLC team.

4. Challenges and Constraints

The TLC has struggled to gain internal support since its inception. Said one administrator: “The TLC is an island in and of itself. It is not reaching out to divisions.” Anecdotally, many PCC faculty are traditionalists who resist change. Some feel that the TLC’s emphasis on basic skills does not apply to them because they do not teach English or math; others choose not to acknowledge the increase in the percentage of students who perform at or below a basic skill

level. Thus, one challenge that the TLC faces is the need to show that “basic skills is the challenge of all faculty, not just English and math”, say administrators. Another challenge, as mentioned above, is that many tenured faculty are reluctant to exceed the 35 hours per week required by their contract.

Another challenge, which was cited by interviewees at every level, from administrators to faculty and even tutors, was that some members of the PCC community felt that their turf was being threatened by TLC’s leadership. To combat these fears, the TLC strives to maintain its open-door policy and remain transparent. It will continue to reach out to division deans and VPs at every opportunity to obtain buy-in and gain credibility, so that it can move closer to institutionalization. Stakeholders repeatedly said that this buy-in is the critical missing link that will move the TLC from its status as a “boutique program” funded by soft money that is neither “transformational nor sustainable” to a program that is institutionalized. Greater efforts have been made on outreach and public relations. In addition, the program has tried to intensively engage newer faculty, since they tend to be more open to trying new things and to self-assessment than those who have settled into their routines.

Ironically, one of the most frustrating constraints faced by the TLC, which is committed to creating and sustaining a culture of evidence that supports student success, is the lack of accessible and accurate student data. While faculty and staff who were interviewed were careful not to be openly critical, it was quite evident that the leadership of the Institutional Planning and Research Office at PCC has not always been particularly supportive of the TLC and its efforts to track student outcomes. The office has traditionally had a planning rather than a research focus, and has lacked the staff capacity to support TLC requests to track student engagement and outcomes data by cohorts. With the support of a doctoral student from CGU, the Center has expended considerable effort in developing its own student records database, which will be further discussed under the evaluation section of the report.

One of the most serious constraints facing the TLC, however, exists in the inevitable and serious conflicts that result because of space and resource constraints at PCC. Pasadena City College is a large single-campus institution that is essentially landlocked. Classroom space is in high demand, and competition is fierce among different academic and support services for any free space. Despite the evidence of increased retention and student success that result from these cohort programs, the intensive instructional design accompanied by supplemental instruction tie up significantly more classroom space than a traditional academic course. While TLC courses are recognized by academic administrators for their innovation and success, tough questions are being raised by some who question whether the return on investment is high enough to offset the necessity of tying up badly needed instructional space for such long periods of time.

Even the dedicated space of the TLC Center, which was cited by many interviewees as a critical factor in creating a supportive learning environment and home for the students who participate in TLC programs, is scheduled to be reassigned. While the TLC has been assured by the campus administration that they will be relocated, the new space has not yet been identified.

5. Effectiveness and Evaluation of the Intervention

TLC staff and faculty collaborate with PCC’s Institutional Planning and Research Office (IPRO), as well as with a professor and her graduate students from Claremont Graduate University’s

School of Organizational and Behavioral Sciences. Together, they strive to build a culture of data-driven decision making.

TLC activities are evaluated using an emergent design, since the program itself was emergent and exploratory in nature. Thus, more traditional methods would not have worked. "Evaluation is only going to study a program 5% of the time for a program that doesn't change," said the lead external evaluator. "My idea of the science of evaluation as imperfect frees us as methodologists, allows us to be freer in terms of sample size, etc...that point of view is consistent with community learning theory and practice."

Most of the evaluation has been formative in nature. "We're constantly asking ourselves: Did it have any impact? Is there a return on investment? How should we be handling all of this rather than spending money without results?" said one Co-Director. "Through emergent evaluation, we've been able to say, 'this works, let's leave it.' A lot of our programs are tweaked constantly," said another. One of the first evaluation "aha" moments was learning that the performance outcomes identified in the original grant application were overly optimistic. Thus, summative evaluation was largely postponed until recently. Nevertheless, summative evaluation has posed a bit of a challenge, since student-level data have been hard to come by; moreover, faculty are suspicious of research that links student success and their classes due to animosity between them and the administration. TLC is just starting to conduct meaningful summative evaluation. Due to budget constraints, a doctoral candidate studying under the lead evaluator is currently overseeing the day-to-day evaluation activities; he is also designing an integrated database that will link to student achievement data that can be pulled directly from MIS. One administrator said that any study released will be viewed with great suspicion, since students self-select into the program, faculty self-select into the program, and TLC courses are offered during prime time slots.

Focus groups and surveys were conducted among students to identify appropriate outcome measures. Success will ultimately be measured by student persistence rates. Shorter-term outcomes include perceptions of connectedness to the campus community, and construction of a support network. Longer-term outcomes include completion of fall and summer contracts, time spent with tutors, whether or not students take another math course, and whether or not they refer their friends to the TLC. The perspectives of faculty members have been more difficult to identify, since study participation and survey response rates have been extremely low. One strategy to address this challenge may be to tie TLC outcome measures to the Accreditation Study, with leadership support from the President and the VP of Instruction.

Preliminary results from qualitative formative studies suggested that:

- students enrolled in linked courses and remaining as a cohort for a year have a greater chance of persisting and succeeding than those who do not
- aggressive, intrusive counseling and structured supplemental support are crucial components of student success
- the TLC (a safe haven, a home) and its staff and instructors (family, friends, confidants, advocates) have an extraordinary impact on this targeted population; and

- what matters most is what happens in the classroom – faculty must participate in an intense and sustained inquiry process to help transform students’ attitudes and behaviors⁹.

In addition to conducting primary research, the TLC also tracks and makes use of secondary research. For instance, the TLC strives to align its philosophies and practices with those identified by the City College of San Francisco’s Basic Skills Subcommittee¹⁰:

- Comprehensive, coordinated, holistic, interdisciplinary, and well-articulated;
- Systematic, ongoing, cross-disciplinary program of professional development for faculty and staff;
- Sensitivity to cultural differences;
- A commitment to empowering students;
- Self-selected instructional and counseling faculty who are interested in working with basic skills students;
- Integrated with an array of academic support programs including tutoring, mentoring, study groups, college success support, linked classes, workshops, counseling, and tech support;
- Implementation of a variety of pedagogies and instructional methods;
- A well-defined sequence of courses, with explicit objectives and content that connect to students’ life experiences whenever possible;
- Collaboration with other programs and services that cater to basic skills students;
- Clear delineations of responsibilities, expectations and outcomes;
- Built-in systems for feedback, evaluation, and improvement.

So that the evaluation will be more comprehensive and rigorous, TLC’s graduate student evaluator is creating and designing a database that will interface with the college’s MIS system to capture student course enrollment, grades, and attendance. This longitudinal database will track students from the first contact at the high school through their entrance into and participation in the TLC program. The database also provides demographic, academic, and contact information that serves to generate correspondence with students and parents. It is also integrated with a student ID card reader, which students must swipe in order to access the TLC computer lab. In so doing, it helps provide evaluators with an additional measure of program dosage and intensity. The TLC is currently operating a Beta version of this database.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

6. Lessons Learned and Significance to Others

Interviewees made note of several lessons they had learned in their involvement with CSTEP. These include the following:

- Risk taking: 1) Be willing to fail. It has to take place in an environment that will accept failure; that is, “your head won’t be on a chopping block if the program doesn’t succeed in 35 minutes.” 2) Change takes time: about 7-10 years.
- Structure: The program originally resided within the Office of External Affairs, instead of the Office of Instruction. That structural misplacement was a mistake that cost the TLC time: “We would have been further along, I think. We met a lot of brick walls and vague faces,” said a Co-Director.
- Stakeholder engagement: More active engagement on the part of administrators early on, such as the current monthly meetings with deans of math and ESL, would have been prudent and consistent with a true learning community.
- “The student voice component is not to be overlooked,” said a Co-Director, “It offers so much to the program.” In addition to student needs and wants, students provided input on measures of success.
- Good data: A stable and reliable institutional research office is important. The TLC had experiences where they were counting on data that never came, or were really suspicious of the data that were sent.
- Thick skin: “You’re gonna make some enemies,” said a Co-Director. “People would like my head on a plate.” Proponents of change, social change agents, and academic change agents rouse the ire of some very active people who feel threatened. Locate your allies and work with them.
- Transparency and establishment of trust: Always keep your door open. Keep your files open and your evaluation results public to minimize the chances of people jumping on you. Lots of programs stay under the radar b/c they want turf, but trust and credibility can only come when programs keep pushing things out and telling the college they can use them as resources.
- Broaden your administrative base: A one person gig is not a good thing. Working with folks who share your vision and values in a consistent way is a good way to promote sustainability.
- Data-driven decision making: Maintain a close relationship with evaluator. Some grad students will perform evaluations free of charge as part of a class.
- Identify those people who are willing to go the extra mile. These people should also be flexible and nimble.
- Identify potential successors: for it to move to institutionalization, faculty will need to come on board to work beside you, and, ultimately, replace you as Project Director.

C. IMPRESSIONS FROM THE SITE VISIT TEAM

a. General Impressions on the Intervention Strategy

The unique contributions/lessons to be learned for the Showcasing and Replicating Community College Programs Initiative from the Pasadena City College Teaching and Learning Center include:

- The single-minded focus of the leadership of the Center on the transactional nature of teaching and learning. Unlike many in academia, the administrators and faculty who participate in the programs offered through the TLC operate on an underlying assumption that teachers can learn from their students, even as students come to learn from the faculty, and that the educational process must be an exchange, not a one-way delivery mechanism. The TLC is viewed as an incubator for testing effective and innovative classroom practices. The Center operates with the somewhat unusual attitude that it is okay to try a new strategy and fail. Hand in hand with the opportunity to test new strategies, however, is a commitment to evaluation, both formative and summative. This is all the more impressive because of the Center's focus on meeting the teaching and learning needs of at-risk students. Many community colleges have teaching and learning centers; few take on the added challenge of trying to apply those strategies with the most difficult to serve students.
- A second lesson that the reviewers took away from the PCC Teaching and Learning Center is the importance of "place," a safe and welcoming environment where students who are new to college and feeling lost and vulnerable can come to find support and resources. In interviews with students and staff at the TLC, a consistently repeated theme was how important it was for first-generation, at-risk students to have a place where there were familiar and friendly faces, where someone knew their name, where they could ask questions or seek tutoring support without feeling stupid. We heard any number of anecdotes about students who commuted long distances waiting outside the door first thing in the morning and staying there until the doors were locked in the evening. For many of these students, the TLC becomes an extended family and support system. These relationships are further fostered by the incorporation of weekend camping trips into summer bridge programs, or frequent field trips to visit university campuses. Most of the tutors and key support staff at the Center are former PCC TLC students who found the support and encouragement they needed to be successful at area four-year colleges and universities, and have returned to provide that mentoring and tutoring support to others.
- Consistent with other national studies that focus on student engagement and success, the core strategies employed across the range of successful programs offered through the TLC prove the significant value of early bridge programs to engage at-risk students and provide prescriptive testing as well as early and intense skills building, particularly in math; the value of creating student cohorts who move through a program in synch through the first academic year; and peer mentoring and tutoring.
- Another significant innovation at the TLC is their development of the FIG (Faculty Inquiry Group) process, an academic variation on the continuous improvement work groups that were part of the Total Quality Management movement popular in the 90s. FIGs, sponsored under the auspices of the TLC, have taken on major instructional challenges, and developed strategies and solutions with significant buy-in from participating faculty.

Replication Lessons to be Learned from TLC

Finally, lessons about the challenges of scaling up, sustaining, and institutionalizing innovative and effective programs may be learned from the TLC experience at Pasadena City College. Ironically, the TLC was created and flourishes in spite of, not because of, institutional encouragement and support.

Among the greatest strengths of the Center are the longevity, passion and grant-writing talents of its key staff, particularly the co-directors. Despite the lack of enthusiasm or support from the previous college administration, the Center survived because of the talent of the Co-Directors for bringing in external funds and earning significant recognition for their promising practices at the state and national levels, providing them with a certain level of protection. The TLC was initially isolated from the academic core of the institution and was located under external affairs, but has more recently been integrated into the instructional mainstream, reporting to an Academic Dean who is actively working to align the Center with institutional planning and budgeting processes. The new President, who has been at the College since late fall 2007, seems supportive and is talking about ways to institutionalize the Center and its programs.

But that institutionalization will bring its own set of challenges. Operating as they have on totally soft funds, the Directors have enjoyed a great deal of freedom to design their programs and to experiment with and test out new approaches and processes. It was very clear in interviews with other academic line administrators at the College that resources, in terms of both space and budget, are very limited. There is already significant push back from other academic departments about the space demands required to support the significant supplemental instruction components that support the TLC's programs, and there are rumblings from the faculty union about the expectations of faculty who participate in the intensive interventions that typify a teaching load in a TLC program. The TLC will need to be able to demonstrate a very significant and concrete return on investment (ROI) in a highly competitive resource environment that seems to operate to some extent with a zero-sum mentality.

b. Recommendation as Mentor College

The evaluators would recommend that Pasadena City College be considered to be a mentor college under the auspices of the Community Colleges Can initiative. The array of academic bridge and support programs provided through the TLC offers many valuable models that seem worthy of further replication at other community colleges. The leadership team is experienced, well-grounded in theory and practice, and has actively participated in other best practice dissemination activities as part of the Hewlett/Carnegie-funded Strengthening Pre-Collegiate Education in Community Colleges project. They are experienced in sharing the lessons learned from their work, and would be invaluable advisors to other colleges interested in learning more about the strategies they employ. However, the staff at the TLC at Pasadena City College also have very full plates, and we suspect that the Community Colleges Can initiative will need to be very realistic about expectations for the amount of time PCC staff will have to provide mentoring support.

Appendix A: List of Interviewees

- Yu-Chung Chang-Hou, TLC Math Faculty, Pasadena City College
- Jay Cho, TLC Math Faculty, Pasadena City College
- Tina Christie, External Evaluator
- Ann Davis, Project Director, MathPath, MaS, Pasadena City College
- Michael Harnar, External Evaluator
- Jacqui Jacobs, Vice President, Instruction, Pasadena City College
- Brock Klein, Project Director, XL, MathJam, Pasadena City College
- Crystal Kollross, Institutional Planning and Research Office, Pasadena City College
- Bob Miller, Associate Dean, Academic Support, Pasadena City College
- Carrie Mortenson, TLC Math Faculty, Pasadena City College
- Paulette Perfumo, President, Pasadena City College
- Lisa Sugimoto, Vice President, Student Services, Pasadena City College
- Sylvia Villanueva, TLC English Faculty, Pasadena City College
- Lynn Wright, Project Director, Career Pathways, Pasadena City College

Appendix B: The First-Year Experience Programs at Pasadena City College

Summer ➔	➔ Spring	Fall	Services for all students	Resources for all students
.XL – a 6-week summer bridge focusing on pre-collegiate math, study skills, college orientation, and community building	Guaranteed placement into required English, math, and counseling courses	Guaranteed placement into required English and math courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reserved seats in required courses during prime daytime hours Counselors who will help students create an education plan, guide them through the transfer process, and provide them with financial aid advice Instructional aides, tutors, and mentors dedicated to students' success Staff who will provide tech support Teachers and classmates who work together to help one another succeed University and career-based field trips Internships and job-shadowing Scholarships and book stipends 	<p>The Teaching & Learning Center (located in V103)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A state-of-the-art computer lab A collaborative environment for study groups, workshops, guest speakers, homework labs, and tutoring
.XL Health Science Jam – a 1-week summer reading jam, including orientation to college, and community-building	Guaranteed placement into an intensive English-only program, with counseling and tutoring	Guaranteed placement into an intensive math-only program, with counseling and tutoring		
.XL Career Pathways – Math Jam (see below)	Guaranteed placement into required English, math, and a general education course	Guaranteed placement into required English, math, and a general education elective		
.XL Now – Math Jam (see below)	Guaranteed placement into required English, math, or ESL and a general education elective			
Math Jam – a 2-week, no-credit program for students to brush up on pre-collegiate math skills	Guaranteed placement into a math course; tutor/mentor and counselor meetings			

Appendix C: Background Data: Pasadena City College

Established:	1924, accredited 1952
Calendar:	Semester
Accredited:	Western Association of Schools and Colleges Next visit – Spring 2009
Enrollment:	25873
FTE:	14178
Minority enrollment:	36% (not including API)
First Generation in College:	n/a
Students over age 25%:	36%
Associates Degrees awarded:	1731
Graduation rate:	41%
Graduation rate by gender:	39% male 43% female
In-state tuition:	\$508
Out of state tuition:	\$4348
Receiving federal grant aid:	34%
Expenditures per FTE:	\$8220
District-wide unemployment:	5.6% (2004)
Local Governance:	District Board of Trustees– 7 members elected to 4 year terms. No local taxing authority (ended with Prop 13 in 1978), engage in collective bargaining, control district budget, approve new courses
State Governance:	California Postsecondary Education Commission serves an advisory role to governor and legislature. Not a cabinet department. 16 members –from the general public serving 6 year terms: 3 appointed by governor, 3 by the Senate, 3 by the Assembly; 5 members serving at the commission’s pleasure from the education community; 2 students serving 2 years, appointed by the governor. Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges with responsibility for setting policy and providing guidance for the 72 local community college districts with locally elected Boards of Trustees responsible for 108 public 2 year colleges. 17 members appointed by the Governor. Board of Governors selects the Chancellor. The California community colleges enroll 2.6 million students, largest system in the world.

Revenue: Pasadena City College operational revenue:
\$120,210,000
29% local (includes 12% tuition and fees), 71% state
(includes 3% state lottery)

Transfer and Articulation: Common core curriculum for transfer and articulation set
by Board of Governors, policies at <http://www.cpec.ca.gov>

Community environment: Population growth in San Gabriel Valley and Los Angeles
County, increased employment opportunities, decreased
state funding for education

Sources include IPEDS, ECS State Profile (<http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=221>), California Community Colleges System Office (<http://www.cccco.edu/SystemOffice/BoardofGovernors/tabid/190/Default.aspx>), ECS Community College Policy State files (http://www.communitycollegepolicy.org/html/top.asp?page=/html/state_files_main.asp), Pasadena City College Fact Sheet (<http://pasadena.edu/about/factsheet.cfm>), Pasadena City College TLC website, Pasadena City College Trends to Watch (<http://www.pasadena.edu/IPRO/research/environscan.cfm>), Fiscal Status (<http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/CFFP/Fiscal/Accountability/trends/0607/Pasadena.pdf>)

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