



Center for Academic Success



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VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1: FALL 2014

TLC... MORE THAN JUST TENDER LOVING CARE

By Vicenta Shepard
Reading and Learning Coordinator
Center for Academic Success

For several years the Reading & Learning Program at the Center for Academic Success has collaborated with the faculty that teaches general biology. The General Biology I and II courses have a huge volume of students—every semester they enroll approximately 1,600 strong, who have intentions of pursuing degrees in dentistry, physical therapy, medicine, and other areas that require a strong foundation in biological sciences. Most of the students taking General Biology I and II are freshmen, and are in the midst of a significant academic transition at FIU.

Among the various changes that take place during the academic transition are the development of reading skills and study strategies for university classes. Although many students enrolled in general biology may have taken Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment courses in high school, the study skills repertoire is very different from what students have used in high school.

“These students need to understand that they actually have to read all of the assigned sections,” claims Dr. Pitzer, long-time professor of General Biology I and II. In response to the disconnect between the rigorous biology curriculum and students’ study skills preparation, a collaboration was formed.



The Reading & Learning Program developed a study skills series known as their “Reading Enhancement Workshops” for General Biology I and II students. Over the years, students have nicknamed the program “TLC.” This is not because of the benevolent nature of the program, but for a simple acronym: The Learning Center (TLC). Over a span of 5 weeks, students voluntarily participate in hourly workshops dedicated to learning reading strategies for general biology content.

Through the application of textbook study systems and graphic organizers—among several reading strategies, students have a better sense of organization as they read for class.

“I really enjoyed TLC,” shared Kelsy Pierre-Louis, who participated in the Reading Enhancement Workshops at the Biscayne Bay Campus. “It really helped me get organized with studying—there’s so much reading in a general biology course!”

So just how much has TLC actually helped? Last fall, 1,221 students were enrolled in General Biology I. Out of the 395 students who participated, 349 students (88%) passed General Biology I. In comparison, there were 826 students who did not participate in the program. Out of those students, 65% passed. “There is no replacement for the great instruction that the biology faculty provide our students,” affirmed Vicenta Shepard, Reading & Learning Coordinator at the Center for Academic Success. “However, it’s always nice to see quantitative data demonstrating that our efforts are successful in helping students study.”



AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT TUTOR TRAINING 2014

By Kim Lumpkin
Veteran Tutor
Reading & Learning



This past August, while summer term classes were winding down, the FIU Learning Center staff was busy getting ready for the academic year. All tutors from both the Modesto A. Maidique and Biscayne Bay campuses, as well as the Student Athlete Academic Center (SAAC) were given a full three days of training in tutoring practices that have proven to be successful. This training program has been successfully preparing new and veteran tutors to serve the university community since 2011.

The training sessions were led by subject area coordinators and activities included lectures, group and Power Point presentations, and role playing. The subjects covered included everything from the importance of professionalism in tutoring to when and where to refer students struggling with emotional issues, to new programs that will allow tutors to communicate and collaborate with each other more easily and effectively.

The training is part of a process that will help tutors – and the Learning Center itself, maintain national certification. What really mattered to us as tutors was that it gave valuable insights and new ways to help the students with whom we work. The sessions also reinforced the idea that as the scope of tutoring information continues to broaden, we are challenged to keep up regardless of what field we are studying. Tutors must be able to use a variety of sources and strategies to help students navigate what is often an overwhelming information overload.

Tutors can do this by following a helpful series of steps and adjusting them to the needs of each student and the demands of the task at hand.

Throughout the training sessions, the primary goal was clear: the tutor is a facilitator to help students make the best use of their time and talents. By the end of the last session, all of the tutors knew a little more about how to deal with a variety of situations that may arise during a session.

This summer's training made the tutors aware that our services are important and valued; another example of how the FIU Learning Center continues to strive to provide valuable services to all members of the campus community.

IF YOU CAN PASS “THIS CLASS,” THANK A TUTOR.

By Maria Kulick
Director,
Center for Academic Success

This title might be a poor substitute for the timeless “If you can read this sign thank a teacher” slogan that we have all come to know; yet, the temptation could not be resisted during National Tutor Appreciation week to underscore the important role that tutors play in the academic lives of our students. October 6th – 10th, 2014 marks the week when the Center for Academic Success comes alive with its tutor appreciation activities. During this week the Center also hosts its annual Peer Tutoring Symposium. This year the symposium is titled *Cross-Campus Collaborations: Building Connections for Student Success*. Students are surveyed and encouraged to share their feelings about what their tutors mean to them. Overwhelmingly, student responses are positive. Overwhelmingly, tutors continue to be encouraged by the kudos and kindness of appreciative students, faculty, and staff. “Reading these student responses makes me feel accomplished. They remind me that I make a difference in the lives of our students—that what we do and the tutoring profession matter,” said Zoraida Pastor, Spanish tutor, CfAS”.



ON BEING VIRTUAL

The highly anticipated partnership with online proctoring provider, BVirtual is here! Faculty, students, staff and the wider community can look forward to additional live online proctoring services. BVirtual will provide a seamless, live proctoring experience that combines people, process and technology to deliver a level of exam integrity that raises the bar for proctored exams. It will be particularly beneficial to students who are enrolled in online courses and are in need of alternative on-demand proctoring.

“I am excited that this partnership carries the FIU Testing Center brand—recognized for its many years of testing integrity and quality service to the FIU community,” said Dwight Nimblett, Associate Director of the Center for Academic Success. The cloud based technology would require only a webcam for online proctored exams. Our partner, B-Virtual enjoys a 98% student approval rating with approximately 81,000 students already proctored. We encourage students and faculty to contact the University Testing Center for their online proctoring needs.

For more information, please call:

**MMC – 305 348-2441 or
BBC – 305 919-4043**

