LEARNING CONNECTION

CHABOT COLLEGE

ANNUAL REPORT
2008-09

Part I: Project Development
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Cindy Hicks
Coordinator, Learning Connection Project Development
Dennis Chowenhill
Coordinator, Tutor Training Program

PART I

Learning Connection Project Development

Background

2005-06

The Building 100 Project

The Learning Connection began as the Building 100 project in 2005-06. After voters passed a major bond, then Chabot College president, Dr. Robert Carlson, proposed moving all learning support programs into the lower floor of a renovated Library, Building 100. When it became quickly apparent that simply "picking up" current learning support programs, located in various buildings around campus, and "putting them down" in Building 100 would not work, Dr. Carlson appointed Cindy Hicks to coordinate the project development effort.

Ms. Hicks dedicated the first year in part to researching adult learning, attending conferences, visiting other community and four-year colleges' academic support centers and Centers for Teaching and Learning, talking with colleagues both at Chabot and other colleges, getting a feel for how others perceived the project, and, with stakeholders, developing a mission statement. (The mission statement and guiding philosophies are attached.) It quickly became apparent that the Learning Connection needed to involve a Center for Teaching and Learning; indeed, the CTL is fundamental to optimal learning support programs. K. Patricia Cross and Thomas Angelo in *Classroom Assessment Techniques* (Jossey-Bass, 1993) articulated what the project development coordinator was beginning to discern: improved student learning is intricately linked to ongoing improvement in the quality of teaching. By Spring 2006, it had become clear that the Learning Connection would consist of a Center for Teaching and Learning that would advance excellence in teaching in order to improve student learning in both the classroom and through learning support programs directly linked to classroom instruction. Instructors would initiate Learning Connection activities and programs. Additionally, the Learning Connection activities and programs would be cross disciplinary and collaborative to more closely reflect the students' experience of college, where they are simultaneously enrolled in classes in various disciplines as well as engaged in extra-curricular activities. (See the Learning Connection concept map attached.)

Because of the vital roles instructors play in student learning, we decided to have the Learning Connection under the vice president of Academic Services and to house The Center for Teaching and Learning and all learning support programs together in Building 100.

2006-08

Program Revitalization/Development

Dr. Marcia Corcoran, the new dean of Language Arts, was assigned administrative responsibility for the Learning Connection, along with responsibility for the Library and the Tutorials Instructional Program and Services (TIPS).

During 2006-08, we dedicated ourselves to revitalizing learning support programs that were faltering, most notably the Tutorials Instructional Program and Services.

TIPS was based on a model for tutorials common at the time it began in the late 1980s, early 90s, when Student Services areas initiated and developed academic support programs. An unintended result of such models is that instructors participate only minimally. By 2006, TIPS was a failed program: tutors trained by an adjunct instructor with a background in organizational development and education offered tutoring in primarily math and English, which duplicated tutoring offered in the Math Lab and Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum Center by tutors trained by instructors in the Math and English departments. During the 2006-07 academic year, we assigned new staff to TIPS and invited everyone on campus to participate in renaming it: Peer Academic Tutoring Help or PATH was the winning name. We coordinated with the Math and English departments on the math and English tutoring that would be offered in PATH to supplement tutoring in the WRAC Center and Math Lab. And we enlisted the math and English instructors to train the math and English tutors in PATH who would be the same tutors who worked in the Math Lab and WRAC Center. We then reached out to other disciplines on campus, asking instructors who thought tutoring might be an appropriate support to their students' learning to recommend potential tutors to the center. Finally, we created a new, collaborative tutor-training model (see attached tutor training graphic), and enlisted discipline instructors to train tutors working in their content areas.

The program has grown enormously, as the attached graph on students' use of PATH over time shows. And instructors have stepped up to take on the responsibilities we have placed on them: only students recommended by instructors are invited to apply to be tutors and all tutors are trained by the tutor training programs coordinator AND a content-area instructor. All tutor trainers meet regularly throughout the year on the tutoring programs, not just in PATH but also in established and new Learning Connection programs:

- Chabot Communication Coaches
- Chemistry Learning Support Services
- The Language Center
- Life Sciences Learning Support Services
- The Math Lab (2008-09 student use data are available and attached.)
- The World Languages Lab
- The WRAC Center
- Peer Led Team Learning
- Learning Assistants in classes across the disciplines

<u>Preparing for a Center for Teaching and Learning</u>

In addition to revitalizing various programs in 2006-08, we created a virtual Center for Teaching and Learning, worked with Staff Development to train chemistry instructors in Peer Led Team Learning, and coordinated and hosted a Reading Conference, sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation's SPECC grant. We also began the process of applying for grant funding to support the development of our CTL and learning support programs, eventually securing a Title III grant.

Furthermore, in Spring 2008, we began planning for the renovation of Building 100. Led by Dr. Corcoran, all the stakeholders developed, first, individual plans, and then a joint plan for shared use of the Bldg. 100 space. Because we had been laying the groundwork for this effort since 2005, we were able to develop with Steinberg Architects a $20-26,000,000 renovation plan for Bldg. 100, including both the Library and the downstairs Learning Connection space, by late May 2008, in time to meet the state's FIP deadline.

Tutor Hiring and Training

The tutor hiring and training programs were developed under the leadership of Dr. Dennis Chowenhill, our founding tutor training program coordinator. All peer tutors are now recommended by their instructors, invited to apply, interviewed by the tutor training program coordinator and the content-area tutor trainer, who has the final hiring decision. Nearly all tutors are hired by the end of the first week of classes; all are hired by Week 3. Tutors may work a total of four semesters and two summer sessions. Once hired, tutors all enroll in TUTR 49A (now 1A), Tutoring Theory and Practice, and in TUTR 49B (now 1B), Content-Area Tutoring. (The Tutor Training Program diagram is attached.) Tutors are trained to help students become intentional about their learning and to foster students' learning independence. (Part II of this report addresses the 2008-09 tutor training program in detail.)

Pilot Projects

Finally, the Learning Connection supported pilot projects during 2006-08, including:

- A modified mastery-learning model integrated into Math basic skills classes (with the Math Department)
- Peer advising (with Special Programs and Services and Counseling)
- CSU partnerships (initially with a CSU math education student working with a Chabot math instructor, then with the CSU Affiliate Scholar program)
- The Learning Assistant Program (with Business, Life Sciences, English, Math, Graphic Design, Art, Photography, CAS, Anthropology, History, World Languages, CSCI)
- On-line Learning Assistants, a precursor to the development of online tutoring
- Peer-Led Team Learning (with Chemistry and Math)
- Tutor reports provided to instructors within 24 hours of a tutoring session, encouraging instructor/learning-support collaboration.
- Chabot Communication Coaches (with the Communication Studies Department)

Pilots which have been successful have been institutionalized, including: tutor training and tutor reports, coordinated by the Learning Connection with instructors in various disciplines; modified mastery-learning in Math, now coordinated within the Math Department; Peer Advising, now coordinated by the Counseling Department; the Affiliate Scholar program, along with a similar UC Berkeley program, both coordinated by the Math/Sciences Division; the Learning Assistant program. PLTL is available and is continuing to be developed in Chemistry.

2008-09: Overview of Activities and Programs

Learning Connection activities and programs saw enormous growth from 2005-2008 (from 50 tutors to 133 tutors and 12 peer advisors; from 9 instructors using Learning Assistants to 20 instructors and 28 sections; from three "core" learning support programs to nine programs, each collaborating with the others), so the focus in 2008-09 was on maintaining and "shepherding" programs and pilots. Additionally, however, we turned our attention to coordinated and strategic efforts in the following areas.

Program Assessment

The coordinator of the Tutor Training Programs developed self-assessments for tutors to help guide us in the development of the tutor training program. In addition, we developed tutor accountability measures and records, so that the project development coordinator and tutor training program coordinator receive weekly updates on tutor absence, tardiness, and other job training issues.

In May 2008, we formalized the Learning Assistant program, producing an informational brochure for instructors and requiring instructors who use Learning Assistants to attend two meetings, one an orientation to the program and the second a mid-semester report out; to write their goals for using Learning Assistants; to report on the accomplishment of their goals; and to allow Institutional Research to collect data comparing the success indicators of students in classes with LAs to those without LAs.

We established a baseline for the Learning Assistants program, comparing how students in sections of Spring 2009 classes with Learning Assistants performed compared with those in sections of the same classes without Learning Assistants. The Institutional Research Office expects to have the results ready for us in September. We will then begin to compare the baseline data with the data we gather now that the Learning Assistant program has become more formal.

Finally, we collected student use data from SARS. Student use data for PATH and for Math Lab are attached. (ESL, world languages, and other discipline data for students who meet in PATH are included in the PATH totals.) SARS data from other centers are still not reliable, so we use tutor report forms and manual sign-ins when they are available. Based on these very rough indicators, we saw increased student use of the WRAC Center in 2008-09, up from the previous year, even as the WRAC Center is transitioning to a close collaboration with other Learning Connection programs. Students met with Chabot Communications Coaches, though not to the level and not across disciplines as we had hoped. As a result, the Communication Studies department is looking at their curriculum and considering how to integrate the use of communications coaches to support student learning.

Because we were able to hire a new administrative assistant and have her in place in September 2008, we were able to track and report on our spending, as well as to develop procedures and spreadsheets to maintain this effort. With the new VP of Administrative Services, we hope to be able to manage our budget in such a way that we can better compare cost to benefit of various Learning Connection learning support activities.

We are also working with Institutional Research to determine indicators for success on which we can collect data. Certainly we want to look at retention and persistence rates of students, along with student and instructor satisfaction.

We will consult with TUTR 1B and Learning Assistant instructors to develop "quality of the learning experience" measures, as reported by students. An impressive amount of volunteer reporting from students receiving tutorials has indicated for two years that the tutoring they have received has had cognitive and affective impacts that have caused them to persist, even when this has meant returning after a semester of absence. This effect has yet to be documented.

Online Tutoring

Former Committee for Online Learning chair, Jan Novak, headed a small group in 2008-09 to begin a feasibility study for online tutoring. The hope is to receive a Title III FIG grant so we can expand this group in 2009-10 to include instructors who teach online classes and the tutor training program coordinator. (The Title III proposal is attached.) The charge of the group will be to develop a proposal for online tutoring.

The World Languages Lab

Working with the dean of Language Arts, Dr. Marcia Corcoran, also the dean with responsibility for the Learning Connection, the World Languages faculty revised their curriculum to include a one-hour lab. The Learning Connection has provided support with setting up the lab, as well as with developing systems for the smoothest possible operation. This is the first new lab set up in a dedicated space since the Learning Connection project development has begun, and we have learned a lot, especially that the Learning Connection needs to be brought in at the very beginning of the project—at the idea phase, during the curriculum process—so that we can develop cost analyses and coordinate equipment, staffing, and systems. Raising awareness about when to bring in the Learning Connection—and the advantages of doing so—is an ongoing effort, one for which the Learning Connection regularly enlists the support of the vice presidents and deans.

The Center for Teaching and Learning

As noted above, faculty initiate every Learning Connection learning support activity, so providing instructors with access to resources in the forms of money, time, and, most importantly, professional development and faculty learning communities is vital. The Learning Connection project development coordinator, the de-facto CTL coordinator prior to Title III, has worked closely with the Title III coordinators since the grant writing effort began. Additionally, the Learning Connection coordinator continues to serve on the Basic Skills Committee, a source of funding for professional development projects, and the Program Review Committee. Furthermore, the coordinator is active in Reading Apprenticeship, both on the Chabot campus and with the statewide grant efforts of WestEd's Strategic Literacy Initiative. The tutor training program coordinator developed "Tips for Selecting Tutors," available on the Learning Connection website, and with the project development coordinator, produced the informational brochure for faculty on the Learning Assistant program. The tutor training coordinator has also taken

the lead in meeting regularly with instructors, librarians, and counselors to discuss tutoring and instructors' roles in the Learning Connection.

Managing Growth

It became very clear in 2008-09 that we needed to manage our growth in order to continue experiencing success. This led to much attention paid to "right sizing" our staff, both classified and student assistant, as well as to developing systems to enhance operations. A difficulty in this area is that we are planning for two very different scenarios, the current one of learning support centers being in separate locations on campus and the not-too-distant one of us all being located in Building 100. In 2008-09, we addressed present needs always with an eye toward the future, especially in the hiring of permanent staff and the reassigned time for instructors.

Another way in which we have attempted to manage growth is to help instructors when they need to take a step back for a moment. For example, as noted above, our Communications Studies department is very excited about developing a Communication Studies Lab, and the Learning Connection has been supportive of their efforts. We are beginning to see that before the lab can be developed further, Communication Studies instructors need to reconsider their curriculum and the timing of implementing changes, so we are supporting their efforts in what we have realized are steps prior to developing a full-fledged lab.

We also continued to revise our many systems/communications efforts/and accountability records to maintain smooth operations in all Learning Connection operations, from signs to SARS, from the web page to brochures, from regularly updated budget spreadsheets to appointment schedules.

Challenges in 2008-09

Though not the only ones we faced in 2008-09, the most difficult challenges we faced were institutional.

Coordination with Human Resources to Effectively Hire, Train, and Evaluate Staff during the Learning Connection's Project Development Phase

Because professional development and learning support in the Learning Connection are being developed and are conceptually different from professional development and learning support offered at Chabot College in the past, the duties of staff, especially classified staff working in instructional areas, have been undergoing change. Some staff have welcomed the challenge, and others have chosen to work elsewhere on campus; we have hired and trained new staff to take on new responsibilities as they arise, sometimes successfully but sometimes not, so we have seen staff unable to keep up with the changing needs inherent in a project that is developing.

In all of these instances, we have needed the support from Human Resources to advise us on hiring, on appropriate training, and on fair evaluations of staff whose responsibilities were developing along with the program. Unfortunately, there have been disconnects between Human Resources and our program, with the result that we have not been able to appropriately and adequately staff the Learning Connection to date. This has

had and continues to have major impact on the Learning Connection project development.

Facilities

For various reasons—including changes in key college and consulting personnel, the state budget, and the adjustment of the facilities plan as new funding opportunities became available—the plan for a central space in which to house the Learning Connection programs, including the Center for Teaching and Learning and the learning support programs, became derailed in 2008-09, which set the project development back a bit since we had to struggle with how to hold the center together when there was no clear physical center we were working toward. We focused on continuing to inform the deans and administrators on what the Learning Connection is all about and on scheduling regular meetings of collaborative faculty groups—no small feat, given the very limited number of common meeting times faculty have available during the week—and on coordinating the budget in our efforts to "hold the center," as decisions about a space for the Learning Connection were made.

The decision to minimally or moderately renovate Bldg. 100 presents us with new challenges as we plan to meet the facilities needs of Learning Connection programs and activities for the next five or so years with very little money. (At the beginning of the project, $36,000,000 was designated for the renovation of Bldg. 100. That was reduced to $20-26,000,000. We now have $3.5-4,000,000 available for renovating Bldg. 100 since the decision has been made to update the Educational Master Plan and the Facilities Plan and consider building a new Library.)

Budgeting

Dr. Corcoran has made valiant efforts to clarify, coordinate, and manage the Learning Connection budget as we've worked with two college presidents, now three vice presidents of Academic Services, and five vice presidents of Administrative Services since the project began in 2005. We also have experienced various funding sources for the project since 2005, with funds coming primarily from the general fund under vice president Ronald Taylor and then a shift to the use of Basic Skills Initiative funding, with a small contribution from Title III. Under interim vice president Gene Groppetti funding from the Basic Skills Initiative replaced the money from the general fund. Other sources have supplemented the Learning Connection budget, including VTEA, EOPS, ASPIRE, and small grants focused on enhancing student learning in specific programs on campus. Despite our submission of a unit plan with our budget needs and requests to the Institutional Planning and Budget Committee, we had no budget to work with in 2008-09, so managing the Learning Connection budget was difficult.

Purchasing

Related in part to the confusion with the budget was occasional confusion with purchases. For example, we requested six additional computers for PATH. Our understanding was the request was approved and there was money for the computers. However, to date, we don't have the computers. We also requested a copier from former manager Steve Piatetsky, the person charged with deployment of copiers on campus.

Again, our understanding was that we were going to get a copier, but to date we have not. Most recently there was confusion about the purchase of furniture and equipment for the World Languages Lab, which held up the orders from being processed so long that we are no longer certain they will arrive for the first day of instruction.

Challenges and Goals for 2009-10

We will continue to work with the district and college administrators to address the institutional challenges from 2008-09 in the upcoming year. A large focus will necessarily be on the Building 100 renovation as we work toward a cost-effective space that will support the pedagogies of the learning support programs and the goals of the CTL. Additionally, we will continue to refine our program accountability and assessment efforts by working with Administrative Services on the budget, with Institutional Research on assessments, and Admissions and Records on SARS tracking.

We also hope to have adequate, well-trained staff in place by December 2009 so that we can continue to develop easily accessed, efficient, and effective programs for our students as well as for instructors and staff.

We will have new challenges in 2009-10, as well, stemming from the reduction of faculty reassigned time due to state and local budget constraints. We no longer have discipline coordinators/liaisons (except for the WRAC Center and Math Lab), and the tutor training program coordinator's time has been reduced. While we always have envisioned reducing coordinator/liaison reassigned time (and sharing reassigned time with the divisions) as programs and activities became established and as staffing in the Learning Connection became effective, the sudden cut in reassigned time has already impacted the Life Sciences learning support program—the skills workshops offered as a pilot last year will not be offered this year—and we anticipate an impact on the functioning of the new World Languages Lab. As Part II of this report makes clear, the reduction of the tutor training program coordinator's time will impact the tutoring program as well as efforts to regularly collaborate face-to-face with instructors. We expect to be able to at least minimally maintain most current programs and activities, but are uncertain about our ability to accomplish project development goals in 2009-10.

Even so, the Learning Connection will continue to coordinate and collaborate with BSI, Title III, Program Review, and Staff Development. We further plan to continue our outreach efforts, amping them up a bit through the creation of more informational materials (in various media) as we work with the Center for Teaching and Learning to achieve the goal of advancing teaching to improve learning. We will continue, too, to support faculty in their efforts to enhance student learning through the development of new pedagogies and programs, though we are concerned that the reduction in reassigned time for some campus leaders may lead to busier schedules for all instructors, leaving less time for innovation.

PART II

Learning Connection
Tutor Training Program

Overview

The two most notable developments in the tutorial program this year both pertained to growth: the number of tutors reached its highest, at 133; and there were several new disciplines offering tutorial services for the first time.

Tutorial services were this year offered in ARTS AND HUMANITIES, with tutors in Art, Digital Media, Graphic Design, Mass Communications, Music, and Photography; APPLIED TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS, with tutors in Business and Computer Applications; HEALTH, with tutors in Health Science and Emergency Medical Technology; LANGUAGE ARTS, with tutors in English, English as a Second Language, American Sign Language, Speech, and four World Languages; SCIENCE AND MATH, with tutors for all levels of mathematics, and for Biology, Chemistry, Physiology, Microbiology, Anatomy, Physics, and Computer Science; and SOCIAL SCIENCES, with tutors in History, Anthropology, and Early Childhood Development; fire sciences.

Training

The dramatic increase in the number of tutors had a large impact on the training program this year. The nine hours of Tutor Training 1A were distributed so that after the initial three-hour training/orientation meeting at the beginning of the term, the tutors met four more times, for 1 ½ hours each meeting (rather than six times, for 1 hour, as had been done previously). This made scheduling more convenient for the tutors, and allowed time for more extended discussions of tutor practice. These meetings were supplemented, as previously, by online discussions conducted on the Blackboard site for this class.

At the heart of the Tutor Training 1A course are a few principles that guide the tutor program. Discussions and activities in the class generally reinforce, directly or indirectly, these concepts:

> Peer Tutoring: As a peer tutoring program, we don't "outsource" from the community or look for "experts." We recruit among Chabot students, looking for communication skills, interest in assisting others, and performance as a student. Our tutors are not experts and will not have all the answers. But they have invaluable recent experience succeeding distinctively in the Chabot classes for which they tutor.
> *Training implications*
> - Tutors don't have to know all the answers. Discussion of what to do when one does not have an "answer" that a tutee is seeking.
> - Peer tutoring programs depend on the regular influx of tutors who have recently completed courses. Therefore, 2 years is maximum time for a tutor to work (to make room for new recruits).

Working from ***learning*** goals, not ***performance*** goals: The tutor is not responsible for the grades that tutees are receiving. The purpose of tutorials is to assist students with their learning. Tutorials may result in improved grades for the tutees, but this is a by-product. Tutees who are driven by the concern, "I need an 'A' in this class" or "I have to pass this class" are doing the right thing by seeing a tutor, but discussions of these concerns should be held with the instructor. If a tutee persists in talking about the need to get a certain grade in a class, the tutor should refer the student to the instructor to discuss this concern.

Training implications

- What can a tutor do when a tutee is anxious about grades? Address the concern by focusing on learning. A good tutor will say something like, "A few things you can do that might help you to improve your grade are to examine your study methods, regularly review important material in the class, and be sure that you understand the principles and concepts that you are supposed to be learning as you do your homework. I can help you with all of those."
- Review of "Structure of a Tutorial Session."

Limits of using yourself as a model: It is often valuable for a tutee to learn how a tutor has succeeded in a class. A good tutor will think about how he or she learns and share tactics, strategies, methods that have worked well. This is the simplest and most direct approach to tutoring. However, it is also the most limited, and there is little reason to believe that a tutee is going to succeed by doing the same things that the tutor does. The tutor's approach is this:

- Discuss with the tutee what is happening in the classroom and what frustrations the tutee is having.
- Identify one or two areas to focus on (grasping of certain concepts, practicing a skill, learning to do homework problems successfully . . .)
- Assist the tutee with the methods that seem best.
- Assess the results of your work: Is the tutee getting it?
- Adjust your approach, to find one that works well with the tutee.

The last two of these steps makes the distinction between an effective tutor and a less effective one. ***If a tutor is using the same approaches and methods with most of his or her tutees, the tutor is not being as effective as he or she could be.***

Training implications

- Discuss various learning methods that the tutors themselves have. Appreciate the differences among them.
- Look at a particular problem that a tutee could bring to a session, and imagine at least three different ways of approaching it.

Keeping the tutee active: In a good tutorial session, the tutee is doing most of the work. In the ideal session, the tutee is focused on a task and working through it, concentrated intensely on the problem at hand and not distracted. While the tutee is doing this, the tutor is observing the tutee and assessing what is happening, imagining ways of helping if problems arise. That is, ***the tutee is focused on the work and the tutor is focused on the tutee doing the work***.

Policy and procedure changes were generated out of discussions with the 1B instructors as they met, and ongoing communication among these members of the program becomes increasingly important as the program expands into new areas for tutorials. Instructors who work with Learning Assistants in their classroom were in regular contact with the

tutor training coordinator, but this relationship will need to be formalized and more structured in order to maintain coherence and uniform standards in the program. [See *Learning Assistants*, under **Challenges and Goals**, below.]

Online tutor services

During the fall and spring terms, Jan Novak, then coordinator of the Distance Education Committee (now the Committee on Online Learning [COOL]) met regularly with Dennis Chowenhill and Cindy Hicks to look into developing a tutorial program to serve online students. Ms. Novak observed that online tutorial services that have been conducted at other colleges were most successful when provided synchronously, in "real time." To this end, a good deal of the efforts of this investigation of how Chabot could create online tutorial services was devoted to looking for the best software to accommodated such a program. An outcome of these discussions was that Dr. Chowenhill wrote a proposal for Title III support for a Faculty Inquiry Group devoted to discussing, designing, and piloting online tutoring during the academic year 2010-2011. (Title III FIG Proposal is attached.) Michael Langdon is scheduled to be the project coordinator should this proposal be approved.

Challenges and Goals

The program currently faces a set of challenges that it will need to address in the coming academic year. Meeting these challenges reflect our 2009-10 goals for the tutoring program.

Growth

The growth of the tutor program presents problems in two areas. First, the training program will need to devise ways of offering quality training to greater numbers of tutors. This year the training program was stretched so that the tutors received less individual attention, and the activities of the training sessions became streamlined in ways that precluded the variety of training activities that were applied when the number of tutors was significantly less. With nearly double the number of tutors, the trainer also had to nearly double his time monitoring and coordinating the online Blackboard activities, which are a crucial component in the training program, since tutors meet for 1A training on only five occasions during a semester.

As the program grows, it will also be more important to have **strong, consistent, and reliable institutional support**. A quality tutor program depends on quality attention to the tutors who are, despite their impressive accomplishments as students, not formally trained educators, though in their work they face some of the most complicated learning challenges that the college's students encounter. It not difficult to set up a tutor program that has tutors available to students: one needs to recruit tutors, provide spaces for the work, and announce the services to students. This much can be done in such a way that a program can run nearly unmonitored. In order to provide a quality tutor program, however, that protects students as well as tutors from the entire range of problems that can emerge when students are thrown together with other students with minimal

supervision, one needs ongoing training, monitoring, assessment, and opportunities for program revisions.

Liaison challenges—maintaining contacts

One of the key responsibilities of the tutor trainer is to keep in contact with instructors across the disciplines, in order to keep instructional staff aware of the tutor services, to discover ways that tutors can serve students, and to assure that instructional staff understand both the scope and the limits of the tutorial program. One of the ways that the tutor trainer gets information and awareness to faculty across the campus is by holding regular meetings with the TUTR 1B instructors, since these instructors represent the program and have regular contact with their peers. The regular 1B meetings also assure that 1B instructors themselves are clear about all the policies and procedures of the program (and naturally the 1B instructors often participate in shaping the program's policies and procedures). The TUTR 1B instructors this year were

Matt Davis (Math)
Dhruv Joshi (PLTL Chemistry)
Alisa Klevens (WRAC Center)
Jennifer Lange (Life Sciences)
Cristina Moon (World Languages)
TJ Puckett (outgoing WRAC Coordinator)
Veronica Rodriguez (Communications)
Kent Uchiyama (ESL)

Beyond meeting with the 1B instructors, it has proven useful for me as tutor trainer to circulate around the campus regularly to talk with instructors about the tutor program. By reading email responses from faculty regarding tutor reports that they have received from the Centers, I have become aware of the concerns and questions of some faculty and have talked with them personally. Talking with instructors regularly also helps to keep the goals and services of the program in people's minds so that they think of the program as they discover students who are struggling. Anyone who has received the positive feedback that I have from faculty with whom I have talked will see the significant advantage of the tutor trainer maintaining this sort of high profile. A challenge for the tutor trainer in the following year will be to circulate regularly among faculty when many of them will be busier with classroom and college-wide responsibilities that will emerge as the college faces cutbacks and instructors will be receiving less reassigned time to be innovative and support the maintenance of their instructional programs.

Learning Assistants

Instructors who have tutors assist them in their classroom are responsible for the discipline-specific training of those tutors. As the number of instructors using Learning Assistants increases, and as the learning environments for those occasions become more diverse, it will be necessary for the tutor training coordinator to formalize the relationship of these instructors to the program. Currently, the program has clear boundaries for tutor services, which make distinctions between tutor assistance and other forms of instructional support, and these distinctions are crucial to maintaining the program's

integrity as a uniquely and directly *instructional* support service. Tutors work directly with students to assist the students in their learning; they are not responsible for other forms of support for the instructors to whom they are assigned. To maintain the clarity of this goal, as well as other defining characteristics of the program, the tutor training coordinator may want to create a committee or inquiry group consisting of all the instructors using Learning Assistants to meet beyond the orientation and "report out" meetings, so that they can be sharing practice and keeping informed of the program's policies and procedures.

Recruitment

As the program serves more disciplines, there are more faculty participating in the selection of tutors during recruitment. A lesson learned early in the history of this tutor program is that faculty need training in order to select individuals well for tutoring. The impulse of many instructors merely to select their "A" students is not productive. The coordinator of the program, working with the head of the Learning Connection, will need to find ways to get information out to all instructors who are likely to be recommending tutors. This work is best done face to face. Experience has taught us that providing instructors with written guidelines for selecting tutors has little effect.

Multiple subject tutors

Increasingly, individual students are being recommended to tutor in more than one area. This is due partly to the ambitions of the tutors who see the advantages of this to them. Fortunately, it has its advantages for the program as well, and tutors on duty who can tutor in more than one area are more likely to be kept busy during their hours in PATH, where students needing assistance in any discipline are likely to appear. Meeting the training needs of multiple subject tutors, however, is problematic. Ideally, each tutor, as long as he or she is working in the program, is receiving general tutor training (in TUTR 1A) as well as subject specific training (in TUTR 1B or individually for the Learning Assistants who are assigned to instructors). In the last two years, 1B instructors have discussed ways of accommodating the training needs of multiple subject tutors, and the current procedures, though occasionally cumbersome, are working satisfactorily. With the increase in numbers of multiple subject tutors, however, these training arrangements may need reassessment. It may even prove advantageous for the program to set a limit to the number of subjects a tutor can work in (a policy that is common at others colleges and universities).

Online tutoring

As the college adopts online tutoring, the tutor trainer will need to attend to that program routinely. The tutor trainer up to this point has attended to the needs of tutors by having discussions with them during training sessions; regularly (at least three times weekly) dropping in at the tutorial centers, where tutors ask questions of the trainer and get observed; meeting with tutors who see the trainer during his office hours; and being available at the tutor training website. The trainer will need to have the access to the work of the online tutors that parallels the access he has had to the work of the face-to-face tutors. This may require preparation for the trainer, to manage online "site visits"

and monitoring. It will also result in more time that the trainer will be spending weekly meeting the position's responsibilities.

LEARNING CONNECTION

CHABOT COLLEGE

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2008-09

PART III: ATTACHMENTS

(Additional information available at:
www.chabotcollege.edu/learningconnection)

The Learning Connection Mission Statement

The Learning Connection at Chabot College is an innovative collaboration between students, instructors, staff, and administrators to advance teaching and improve student learning.

The Learning Connection is made up of the learning support programs offered through Academic Services, including, to date, Peer Academic Tutoring Help (PATH); the Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum (WRAC) Center; the Math Lab; the Language Center; the World Languages Center; Learning Skills; Life Sciences learning support; the Learning Assistant program; Peer-Led Team Learning; and a burgeoning Center for Teaching and Learning providing foundational support through faculty inquiry, learning pilots, and classroom research. New programs are being piloted regularly. Though each Learning Connection program works to achieve its specific goals, under the Learning Connection umbrella, each program collaborates with the others to accomplish the Learning Connection mission:

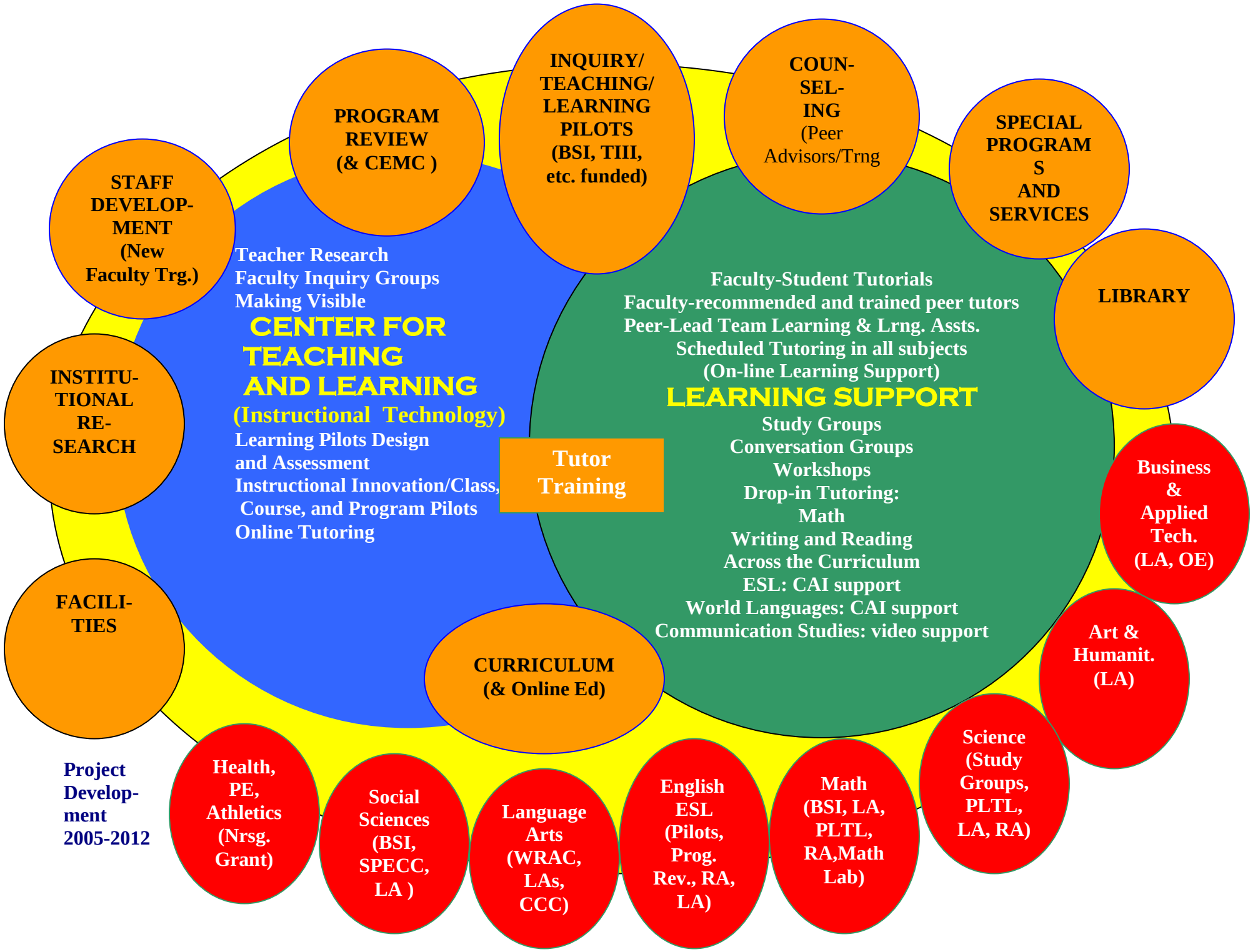
The Learning Connection provides positive, supportive environments and resources for students to work together with instructors, staff, and peer tutors to achieve the broad education goals of the California community colleges and of Chabot College. Most important, the Learning Connection supports students' achievement of their individual goals, whether they be technical and career-vocational, transfer, GE, basic skills improvement, ESL improvement, or personal development.

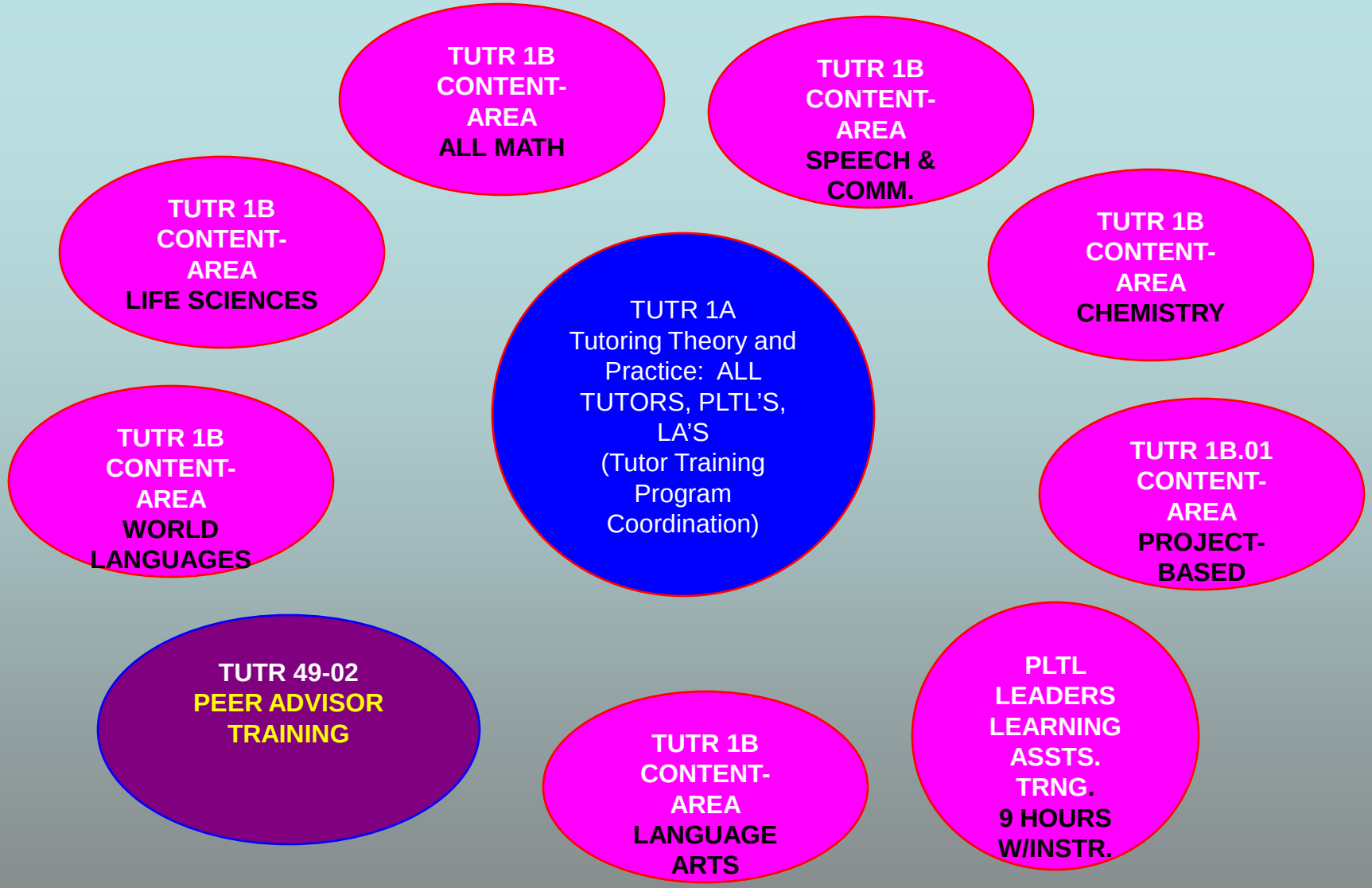
Furthermore, the Learning Connection is committed to professional development and to providing instructors and staff with opportunities to learn about and to pilot new curricula, teaching methods, and learning support strategies. Part of this commitment involves ongoing, formative assessment. This assessment occurs regularly and includes inquiry that is focused both inward and outward into, for example, how effectively disciplines across campus and the Learning Connection are working together to link classroom instruction and Learning Connection activities. The Learning Connection and Program Review work closely together on inter-disciplinary and inter-program assessment, as well as on solving problems and promoting opportunities for all segments of the college to work with one another to support our own and students' learning.

Guiding Philosophical Statements

1. Though our institution reflects society and its diversity, we appreciate that each learner is a unique, whole person.
2. Institutional environments shape learning.
3. Each learner brings previous knowledge and perspectives to new learning experiences.
4. Institutions provide opportunities for learning.
5. Responsibility for learning ultimately rests with the learner, though institutions support and guide learners in accepting and fulfilling this responsibility.

Spring 2006


STAFF DEVELOP-MENT (New Faculty Trg.)
PROGRAM REVIEW (& CEMC)
INQUIRY/ TEACHING/ LEARNING PILOTS (BSI, TIII, etc. funded)
COUN-SEL-ING (Peer Advisors/Trng
SPECIAL PROGRAM S AND SERVICES
LIBRARY
INSTITU-TIONAL RE-SEARCH
FACILI-TIES
Teacher Research
Faculty Inquiry Groups
Making Visible
CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING
(Instructional Technology)
Learning Pilots Design and Assessment
Instructional Innovation/Class, Course, and Program Pilots
Online Tutoring
Tutor Training
Faculty-Student Tutorials
Faculty-recommended and trained peer tutors
Peer-Lead Team Learning & Lrng. Assts.
Scheduled Tutoring in all subjects
(On-line Learning Support)
LEARNING SUPPORT
Study Groups
Conversation Groups
Workshops
Drop-in Tutoring:
Math
Writing and Reading
Across the Curriculum
ESL: CAI support
World Languages: CAI support
Communication Studies: video support
Business & Applied Tech. (LA, OE)
Art & Humanit. (LA)
CURRICULUM (& Online Ed)
Project Develop-ment 2005-2012
Health, PE, Athletics (Nrsg. Grant)
Social Sciences (BSI, SPECC, LA)
Language Arts (WRAC, LAs, CCC)
English ESL (Pilots, Prog. Rev., RA, LA)
Math (BSI, LA, PLTL, RA,Math Lab)
Science (Study Groups, PLTL, LA, RA)



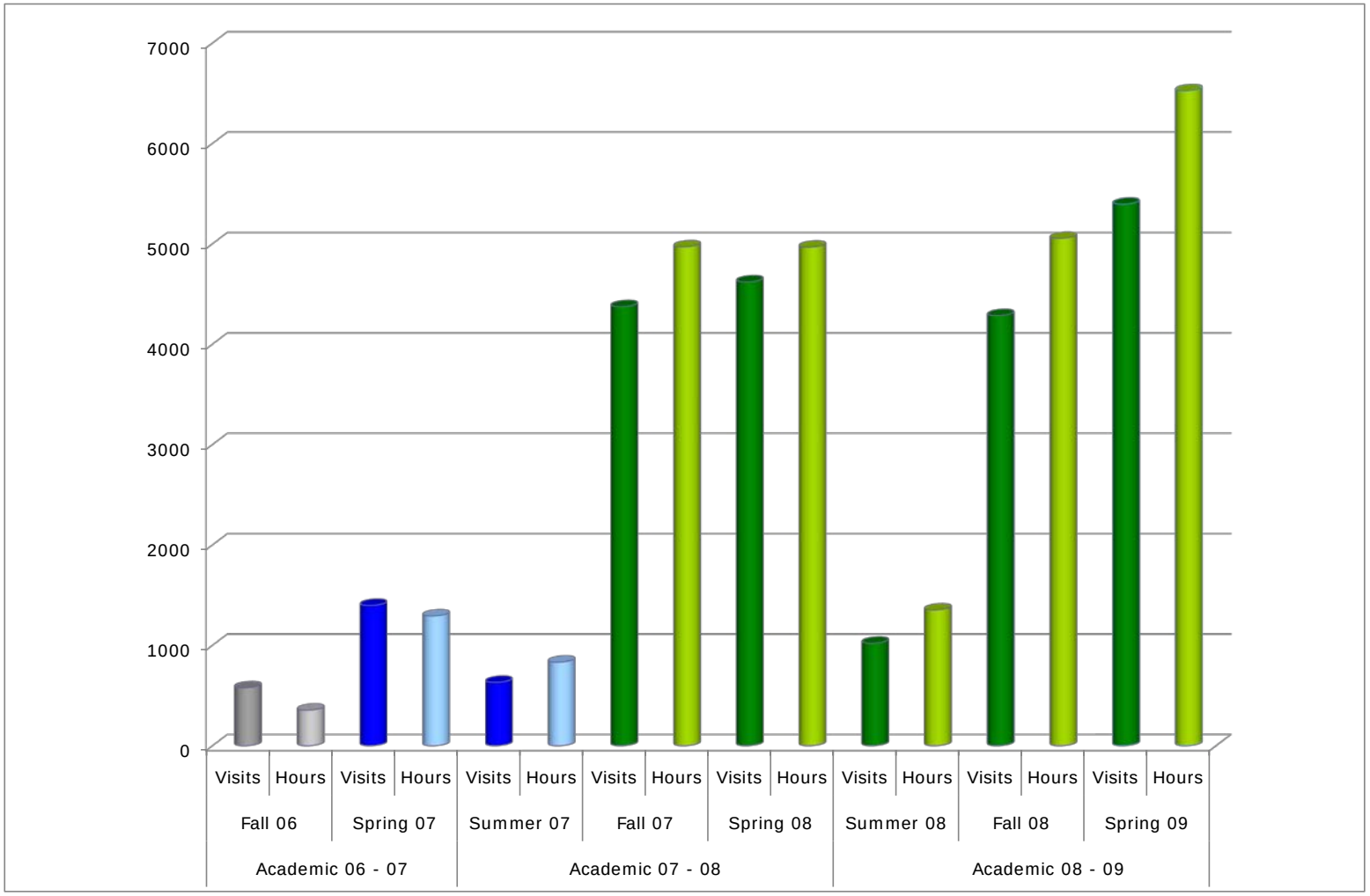
LEARNING CONNECTION: TUTOR, PLTL LEADER, LEARNING ASSISTANT, PEER ADVISOR TRAINING PROGRAM(S): 2009-10

Learning Connection

PATH

Visits/Hours 2006 - 09

(Tutorials → Transition → PATH)

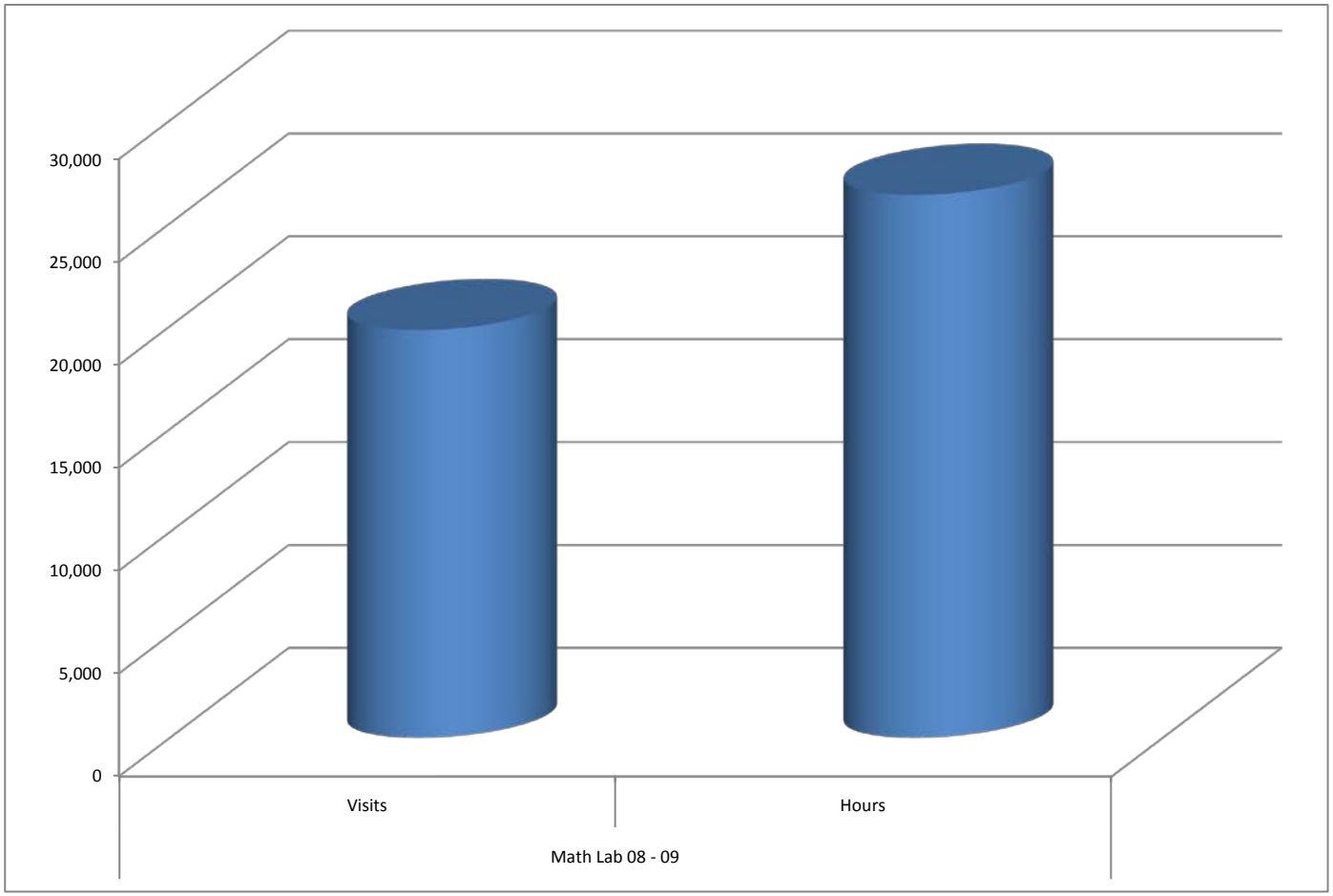


* Includes only PATH, not WRAC, Math Lab, etc ...

Tutorials Transition PATH

Math Lab

08-09 Visits/Hours



Math Lab 08 - 09

June 16, 2008 - May 29, 2009

Visits	Hours
19,808	26,381

CHABOT COLLEGE TITLE III INITIATIVE
Faculty Inquiry Group (FIG) to Investigate
Core Issues and Practices in Assessment and Student Learning

Name of FIG Leader(s)
Dennis Chowenhill
Connection

Division or Department
Tutor Training Program/Learning

Language Arts Division/English

Phone
723-6813

E-mail
dchowenhill@chabotcollege.edu

Interested applicants should submit a narrative describing the proposed inquiry project. Proposals should address the following questions:

Which of the Title III Comprehensive Development Plan Goals does this FIG address?

- ☐ ***Increase success and persistence in developmental courses.***
- ☒ ***Increase success and persistence in courses supported by learning support services.***
- ☐ ***Develop student learning outcomes and appropriate assessments at the course, program and college level.***
- ☒ ***Maintain and increase enrollment by increasing persistence.***

2. What is the problem at the heart of your investigation? **What core issues and practices in assessment and student learning will you address? What do you expect to learn or accomplish as the result of this investigation?**

Chabot College has an expanding distance education program in which increasing numbers of students take courses online every year. Unlike students taking courses at the campus, however, students in these courses have no access to a tutorial services program, despite the fact that Chabot is required to make all student services available to online students. At Chabot this is a particularly conspicuous inequity since the tutor program at Chabot has increased in size and use over tenfold since the inception of the current tutor program that is part of the Learning Connection. This term there are 135 tutors working in the program, the highest number in Chabot's history. These tutors offer services in nearly all the academic disciplines of the college, from every division, as well as vocational programs (including the EMT, CAS, Digital Media, and Mass Communications programs).

The retention rates of students taking online courses at Chabot are lower than the retention rates of students taking courses in classrooms. There are many possible causes for this. It is axiomatic within online instructional programs that many students signing up for classes online have unrealistic expectations, one of which is that taking a class online is going to be "easier" or less demanding than taking one in the classroom. There

are other, equally intuitive, possibilities, for instance that since online instruction is still relatively new, students are not yet as fluent in this modality as they can be expected to be as classroom students. The "culture of the classroom" is well documented. But the culture of online instruction? Many of the possible causes of the lower retention rates in online courses, therefore, may be beyond solutions offered by instructional staff. But others are within our grasp, and they are equally feasible. Chief among these is the possibility that tutorial assistance for online students will not only ***offer students instructional support targeting their specific needs*** as they take their courses, but ***decrease the isolation*** that online students often feel.

At this time, online tutoring is still being researched across the nation, and is the topic of discussion of major professional organizations, like the College Reading and Learning Association. The efficacy of online tutoring is still being documented, and many forms of online tutoring are currently in practice nationwide, ranging from sophisticated programs that offer synchronous tutorials, to simpler ones that offer discussion boards that tutors visit at set times during the week, to respond to messages left for them.

This Faculty Inquiry Group will bring together a group of seven to ten Chabot faculty who have experience with online instruction and have expressed an interest in studying online tutoring. They will work with a software program that has been used by other community colleges, Tutor Track, studying the program's features, and testing it out by means of pilot studies conducted with Chabot tutors tutoring online. The tutors will be trained to do this work by the current Tutor Training Coordinator, Dr. Dennis Chowenhill, and his replacement in the fall, Angie Magallon. They will work with tutor trainers in the disciplines, a few of whom have already expressed an interest in being part of this project (Matt Davis, of Math; and Jennifer Lange, of Biology/Anatomy).

Focus questions for this FIG:

- What do we know from our shared experience about the learning needs (specific to individual disciplines) of our students?
- What are special learning needs of online students, according to discipline?
- Which of these learning needs can be addressed by tutor services?
- What tutor services are most needed for specific disciplines?
- To what extent can tutors online provide the services identified, above?
- Will the Tutor Track software enable the college to provide the tutor services identified?

The work of this team will include:

- Discussion of tutor support possibilities for students, including a review of existing services at Chabot
- Consideration of the special learning needs by discipline, and possible roles for tutors in meeting these needs
- Discussion of the extent to which tutorial services identified by the above discussions can be offered effectively online
- Identification of special disadvantages and advantages of online tutoring

Examination of the Tutor Track online software, in terms of our students' needs.
Design of pilots of online tutoring, including possibly an Online Writing Lab (OWL)
Training of selected tutors for pilots
Observing, critiquing, and assessing pilots
Recommending further action at the end of the term

***3. How have you arrived at these questions?* What hunches do you have going into this proposal? What data have you considered so far to develop and/or test your hunches? If your thinking is informed by any specific research literature or work underway at other colleges, please describe.**

The current Tutor Training Program Coordinator has had the opportunity to discuss online tutoring at national and state conferences, and has learned of successes and frustrations of colleges that have online tutoring services. A assumption that has driven some programs is that online tutoring is ineffective unless offered synchronously. Not all participants in tutor programs, however, accept this assumption. Currently, the Tutor Training Program Coordinator is piloting online tutoring services in two sections of English, one at the lowest level of basic skills instruction (English 101A), and another at the first term of Freshman Composition (English 1A). He also conducts discussions with Chabot tutors who occasionally tutor online for computer science courses. The current coordinator of the Chabot Committee on Online Learning, Jan Novak, has also been discussing online tutoring with the Tutor Trainer since the beginning of this academic year. Our observations so far have suggested the following hypotheses:

Online students at Chabot feel "left out" by being denied tutorial services.
Online tutoring could provide learning support that at least parallels face-to-face support.
Once the appropriate software was discovered and staff trained to use it, the maintenance of online tutorial services should not present significant new burdens to staff or the college.
Training for online tutors can be incorporated into the current tutor training program, which is extensive and already provides opportunities for this unit of training.
We could be wrong about all of the above, given the complexities and poorly understood nature of learning in a computer-mediated environment.

4. *What are your plans for investigating these issues?* That kinds of data do you intend to consider? What external research literature will you include?

This FIG will devote most of its energy with the tasks enumerated in item #2, above, conducting our own original research. To supplement and guide this work, however, external research literature will be sought by asking participants at colleges with online tutoring services what they recommend, and by scanning through EbscoHost Academic Search Elite, for professional journal articles, and checking websites of professional organizations that discuss tutoring (like the National Association of Education, and the College Reading and Learning Association, as well as national organizations of

disciplines, like the National Council for Teachers of English, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and the National Science Teachers Association). Individuals within this FIG can assist in this work, by consulting the websites of professional organizations of their disciplines.

5. *Who will be involved?* Please provide a list of the names and titles of faculty/staff/administrators/students you expect to participate. For each individual, describe the experience, knowledge and skills the participant will bring to the proposed inquiry. For the FIG leader, describe any applicable experience or skills that apply to coordinating the group (e.g. report writing, meeting facilitation, research).

The following individuals were contacted a week before this proposal was written (so that not all have responded yet). * Indicates that the individual has already conveyed an interest in participating.
Institutional Support:

FIG Leader:
Dr. Dennis Chowenhill, Instructor, English; Coordinator of the Tutor Training Program, and the New Faculty Training Program. Dr. Chowenhill was Director of Activity One (Basic Skills in English, Math, and ESL) of the 1992-1997 Title III Grant, has been Project Coordinator of a Funds for Instructional Improvement Grant (1999) that linked ESL and History instruction, a participant in a Funds for Instructional Improvement Grant (1988?), that trained faculty across disciplines in Classroom Assessment Techniques and utilized one of the first computer networks linking colleges in the state (an Infotrak system—clunky, but interesting), and has coordinated Chabot instructional programs in Reading, English, and ESL. Dr. Chowenhill has also taught hybrid English classes at Chabot and is currently piloting online tutoring services in two of his English classes. This semester he is teaching two sections of English 1A, using the same materials and assignments, one a traditional face-to-face class and the other online (except for an introductory session and two meetings, for the midterm and final examinations). The intention of this pairing is to research the advantages and disadvantages of online instruction in English composition, reading, and critical thinking.

Jan Novak - Business, Coordinator of Chabot Committee on Online Learning

Lisa Ulibarri - ITS/English. Extensive experience with online instruction, course design, Blackboard. Can provide technical assistance with software.

Wanda Wong – Computer Science/Business, extensive experience with mediated instruction, expert in applications currently used at Chabot (like Blackboard)

Scott Hildreth – Astronomy/Physics, experience teaching online, campus leader in online instruction

Michael Langdon – English. The only full-time English instructor with experience teaching online. Chair of the English subdivision's distance education committee.

Cristina Moon – World Languages: Spanish, experience teaching online, distance education leader in World Languages

Jaswinder Bhangal – Business/Accounting, experience teaching online

Susan Tong – Social Sciences: Sociology, PACE Program, experience teaching online

Andrew Pierson – Psychology, online experience

Jennifer Lange – Life Science: Anatomy/Physiology, experience teaching online

Michael Thompson – Social Sciences: History, experience teaching online.

Matt Davis – Mathematics. Coordinator, math subdivision, tutor trainer for math.

6. ***How do you intend to organize the Inquiry, and what do you think it will cost?*** **Describe how your group will work together (e.g. how often you'll meet, how responsibilities will be divided and shared). Then, submit a draft budget covering the relevant expenses.**

Accommodating participants' schedules to the extent possible, this Faculty Inquiry group will meet ten times during the Fall 2009 term. My plan at this point is to have the committee meet weekly for the first three weeks, to gather momentum and focus, and to define our pilots. Since the focus is ***inquiry***, dependent on the observations and discussions of the participants, the work schedule of the FIG will have to be organic, meeting needs and priorities yet to emerge. But the following outline of activities will provide the structure for the project. The ten items represent meetings:

- Identifying learning needs of our students, specific to disciplines. Considering the extent to which learning needs of online students are shared, as well as the extent to which some may be unique to online learning.
- Discussing how tutor services can address the learning needs of students [first priority], then how Tutor Track can be utilized to address those needs [second priority]. (Tutor Track is the software we will be using in our pilots, but we will be thinking outside its limits.)
- Examination of Tutor Track software, with guidance from our technical support (Lisa Ulibarri).
- Discussion of performance goals for pilots: improved retention, level of activity online, quality of performance . . ..
- Designing pilots--their goals and implementation
- Identifying tutors for participation, and their training
- Discussion of pilots generated, including their support needs and ways of monitoring them
- Further discussion of pilots, observation of TutorTrac implementations

- Assessment of pilot results
- Assessment of pilot results, continued, and recommendations to the college regarding the establishment of an online tutorial program.

Each of our meetings will call on participants to share information that they can gather from colleagues in their disciplines, and through contact with their professional organizations (journals, conferences, other contacts).

Budget

FIG leader: $2,g053 per CAH x 3 CAH	= $6,159.00
FIG faculty participants:	
• 11 members	
• 10 one-hour meetings = 10 hours	
• 3 hours each for discipline-specific research	
• Total: 11 members x 13 hours x $46.92/hr	= $6,709.56
Tutor training on software use:	
3 hours per tutor x 11 tutors x $10.00/hour	= $330.00
Full-year cost of TutorTrac software, including the software, 24/7 support, Whiteboard module, SSL security, and LabTrac to archive tutoring sessions -- estimate	= $6,000.
Total	=$19,198.56