

**Modern Language and Science
Learning Resource Centers**

Program Review

November 2010

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INTRODUCTION

Santa Monica College provides a number of learning resource centers to support classroom learning for its diverse student population. These resources include tutorial centers, computer labs, and resource centers offering a variety of educational materials. Many years ago, many of these learning resources were centrally located on the top floor of the Library. As new buildings were built on campus, these centers were relocated adjacent to the various academic departments; this model continues to be used today. The college community recognizes this model has many benefits, but also realizes there are some challenges of having learning resources spread out over the entire campus. The issue of decentralized tutoring and the effectiveness of such a model is currently being discussed by the Academic Senate's newly formed standing committee on Student Support Services/Tutoring.

One challenge of the decentralized model is that the learning resources on campus are not reviewed as a whole through the Program Review process, but rather are reviewed through the various departments under which they fall. Thus, this Program Review will only be covering the Modern Language and Science Learning Resources Programs.

Program Description, Goals and SLOs

Description

The Science and Modern Language Learning Resource Centers (LRC) provide additional learning opportunities for the students enrolled in Science and Modern Languages and Cultures courses.

The Modern Language LRC, comprised of the language lab and tutoring center, is located on the second floor of Drescher Hall, one floor below the Modern Languages and Cultures Department. Both the lab and the tutoring program support the 13 languages taught at SMC: American Sign Language, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Russian, and Spanish. While all students are welcome and encouraged to use the language lab, all students in level 1 and 2 courses are required to complete 15 hours per semester in the lab. This computer lab provides supplemental course materials and allows students additional opportunities to develop their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. In addition to textbook supplemental materials, the lab also provides audio/visual materials and Internet resources, most of which are accessed through the language lab's computerized system.

The Modern Language tutorial program also provides service to students enrolled in all levels of the 13 languages taught at the College. Under the direction of the Tutoring Coordinator – Modern Languages, tutoring is provided primarily by qualified SMC students, augmented by local university students and volunteers.

The Science LRC is located on the second floor of the Science building and provides students with supplemental learning materials to reinforce concepts being taught in the classroom for all classes in Earth, Life and Physical Sciences. Items available to students include anatomy models, chemistry molecules, videos, computer software, and slides. Students enrolled in Anatomy 1 and Physiology 11 have a one-hour per week "To be Arranged" hour, which is fulfilled by using the resources in the Science LRC. The LRC

acquires materials for all science subjects and all science students are encouraged to make use of these resources.

The tutoring program provides assistance to students enrolled in any of the science courses offered at the college. Similarly to the Modern Language tutoring program, tutoring is conducted primarily by qualified SMC students, supplemented by local university students and volunteers. This service is provided under the direction of the Tutoring Coordinator – Science.

Goals

The overall goal of both LRCs is to assist students in mastering their subjects and to provide supplemental resources outside the classroom to help clarify and expand on class material.

To achieve this goal, the programs have the following objectives:

- a. To help students improve their grades.
- b. To encourage students to persist in their studies and have confidence in their ability to learn.
- c. To introduce students to the process of learning science and languages, show them how to continue learning on their own and help them develop reasonable expectations they should have for themselves.
- d. To provide a forum for discussion of the learning experience, teaching methods and learning preferences.
- e. To assist students in making academic decisions.
- f. To work closely with the faculty to keep the LRC programs in tandem with course content.

Student Learning Outcomes

The goals of the Science and Modern Language LRCs are clearly in line with the mission and institutional learning objectives of the College. Students' use of the tutoring programs and the labs help students to "acquire the self-confidence and self-discipline to pursue their intellectual curiosities with integrity in both their personal and professional lives" and to "obtain the knowledge and academic skills necessary to access, evaluate, and interpret ideas, images, and information critically in order to communicate effectively, reach conclusions, and solve problems."

While clearly supporting the College's institutional learning outcomes, it has been difficult to develop meaningful, measureable student learning outcomes for these programs. Unlike the classroom, there is no set curriculum for students visiting the LRCs, attendance is not required, and there is no clear correlation between use of the LRCs and success in corresponding classes.

The Dean of Learning Resources and the tutoring coordinators have had preliminary discussions with the Dean of Institutional Research to develop student learning outcomes for the tutoring programs:

- After attending a tutoring session, a student will report increased knowledge of the topic covered.
- After attending a tutoring session, students will have improved their study skills.

Although the assessment tools have not been created, we have been advised that we will have to rely heavily on qualitative assessment measures to assess these student learning outcomes. It has been suggested by our Institutional Research Department that user surveys, tutor surveys and student focus groups be used to gather feedback as a means of assessment.

The Modern Language Department has learning objectives for all classes that have required lab hours. An example from Spanish 1 is below:

Learning Objectives for “Arranged Hours”:

Upon completion of the arranged hours for this course students will be able to:

- A. Pronounce vowels and consonants with enough accuracy to communicate effectively
- B. Ask and answer questions about familiar topics in the target language
- C. Describe and narrate in the present, present progressive and the preterite tenses, using simple pictures

Measurement of these objectives has not yet begun, but we will work with the Modern Language and Cultures Department to do so.

In an effort to begin collecting basic, standardized information from all tutoring centers across campus, a tutor-tracking computer system was installed in nine tutoring centers this summer. By tracking students visiting the tutoring centers, we will be able to see how many unique users we have, how often they frequent the centers, and for how long. We will also be able to begin looking at the effectiveness of our tutoring centers. For example, we will be able to see if students who attended tutoring sessions after receiving an early alert notice did better than students who did not attend tutoring, we will be able to see if students attending tutoring sessions early in the semester did better than those who did not attend at all or those who attended later in the semester, and we will be able to look at the impact of tutoring on GPA, persistence and retention.

We acknowledge we are behind in our work on student learning outcomes and will need to make this a high priority in the immediate future.

Program Environment

Population Served

Both the Science and Modern Language LRCs serve a cross-section of the student body. Students of all ages, academic levels and cultural backgrounds seek assistance in successfully completing their class or bettering their grades. Although most of the students seeking tutoring are having academic difficulty in their classes, others come for review sessions prior to tests or to practice the language they are studying.

The College offers classes in 13 different languages. Since the last program review, the number of different courses has grown from 28 to 37, and the number of sections has grown from just under 60 to 75 sections per semester. All of these courses are supported through the Modern Language Tutoring program, and the Modern Language Lab supports the “to be arranged” hours for 60 sections each semester of the level 1 and 2 courses. Each student in the level 1 and 2 courses (5,600 students per year) are expected to complete at least 15 hours in the lab during the semester. This amounts to 84,000 required hours in the lab per year!

The Science Tutoring and LRC supports 13 different areas of science (50 different courses) within the Earth, Life and Physical Science Departments, for a total of over 220 sections per semester. While students enrolled in Anatomy 1 and Physiology 3 (25 sections) have a required one-hour per week component to their class that is met through using the LRC, many students enrolled in other science classes take advantage of the resources available in the LRC.

Both LRCs and tutoring programs are very heavily used throughout the week. The Modern Languages and Science LRC/Tutoring programs are open 6 days a week in order to meet the needs of the students. The typical weekly schedule is listed below:

<u>Modern Language LRC</u>		<u>Science LRC</u>	
Mon. – Thurs.	8:00 am – 9:45 pm	Mon. – Thurs.	8:00 am – 7:45 pm
Fri.	8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Fri.	8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Sat.	11:00 am – 2:45 pm	Sat.	11:00 am – 2:30 pm

Currently, all tutoring sessions in the Science and Modern Language programs are face-to-face, and are mostly done on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. In an effort to best serve our students, and to meet their immediate needs, both programs offer tutoring on a drop-in basis. Tutoring sessions are offered throughout the day, evenings and Saturdays.

While most tutoring is provided on a drop-in basis, appointments are made for subjects with low tutoring demand (for example, geography) or when students cannot attend scheduled tutoring sessions. Both LRC and tutoring services are available during each of the four

academic sessions, although the bulk of the tutoring hours are allotted to the Fall and Spring semesters. The Coordinators allocate their tutoring budgets in direct relation to the number of classes being offered each session. The schedule above, for the most part, meets the demands of our students.

The full-time tutoring coordinators work closely with the department chairs and faculty. They try to keep informed of such issues as changes in textbooks, new courses being approved and course scheduling patterns in order to schedule tutors to best meet the schedules of the students enrolled in classes. When limited sections of a particular course are offered, or if a class is taught at a satellite campus, the coordinators make special efforts to arrange tutoring immediately before or after class, at the offsite location if necessary.

Faculty members are reminded of the tutoring services by both coordinators and many professors include LRC and tutorial services information in their syllabi. The tutoring services have a solid reputation and faculty regularly refer students having academic difficulties to the tutoring centers. These services are further promoted through the Schedule of Classes and the Santa Monica College Tutoring website. Faculty members play an important role in recommending potential student tutors to the coordinators, and enthusiastically assist in testing potential tutors when needed.

The tutoring schedules are posted in the centers as well as on the SMC Tutoring web site: <http://www.smc.edu/apps/comm.asp?%241=176>. (See Appendix A)

Budget

Both the tutoring programs and the LRCs have received modest budget increases over the past 6 years. The Science Tutoring budget of \$17,000 provides for 2,100 hours of paid student tutoring per year and the Modern Language tutoring budget of \$21,000 provides 2,600 hours of paid student tutoring per year. Both tutoring programs use federal work study students, UC/CSU student workers and volunteers to increase the number of hours of tutoring provided.

The Science LRC has received Instructional Equipment funding each year and now has an extensive collection of anatomy models, anatomy and botany slides, chemistry sets, scientific calculators, and other materials. All of these items are very heavily used on a daily basis. Since models are very expensive (models cost between \$200 and \$1,000+ apiece), this categorical funding has been greatly appreciated. Over 16,000 items are checked out each semester, indicating the high demand for these resources.

Staffing

The Modern Language and Science tutoring programs are each overseen by a full-time tutoring coordinator who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the tutoring programs. Responsibilities include the recruiting, hiring, training, scheduling and supervising tutors for all subjects in their areas. In addition, both coordinators provide additional tutoring themselves.

SMC student workers provide most of the tutoring in these programs (neither of these programs have classified staff providing tutoring, such as Instructional Assistants, as do some campus tutoring programs). There are approximately 25-35 tutors working each

semester in each program, with each tutor working 2-10 hours per week. While there are a number of benefits to hiring peer-tutors, there are also some challenges that the tutoring coordinators face with this model.

One of the most difficult staffing problems is finding qualified students who are enrolled in enough units. "Student help" students are required to be enrolled in 12 units, and federal work study students are required to be enrolled in 6 units. Some of the most qualified tutors are part-time students and therefore cannot be hired in our programs. Another difficulty in hiring qualified tutors is competing with the current rate tutors can earn off campus (SMC hourly rate is \$8.00 per hour compared to the private tutoring rate of \$15.00 - \$30.00 per hour). Since the tutors are students themselves, many need to study during finals and are not available for tutoring during the programs' times of heaviest demand. A further difficulty is finding students who can provide tutoring for the more advanced courses—commonly, students graduate shortly after completing the more advanced courses.

Both tutoring programs have agreements with 4-year universities to hire students enrolled at those institutions to tutor in our programs. The universities pay a portion of the student salaries, enabling us to hire highly qualified tutors at a greatly reduced cost. Also, both of the tutoring programs recruit volunteers from the community to provide tutoring. The use of volunteers, university students and college work study students allows the tutoring centers to increase their tutoring hours significantly.

Number of Tutoring Hours Provided 2009-2010

Tutoring Center	Student Help	Work Study	UC/CSU	Volunteers	Total Hours
Science	2,119	124	755	101	3,099
Modern Language	2,623	2,053	638	642	5,966

The Science LRC has 1.5 FTE Administrative Clerks (one full-time employee who works week days, and one part-time employee who works evenings and Saturdays). Their responsibilities include checking the resources out to students, maintaining the established organization of materials, cleaning and performing light repairs on materials and equipment, and assisting students identify materials helpful to their studies.

The Modern Language Lab has 1.65 FTE Media Resources Assistants who are responsible for overseeing the lab and for digitizing and organizing supplemental course materials for use on the computers in the lab. Similar to the Science LRC, there is one full-time employee who works the day shift, and one part-time employee who works evenings and Saturdays. Work

in the lab has transitioned from a tape-recorder (analog) environment to a sophisticated, completely computerized environment. The continuous changes in the technology used in the lab makes it difficult for the staff to maintain competency in their positions. It is important for lab staff to acquire more comprehensive computer skills in order to provide full service to the department faculty and assistance to students using lab resources.

Both tutoring coordinators have been active participants in the discussions about the effectiveness of tutoring on campus, and both participated in the most recent accreditation process. The full-time Administrative Clerk has been an active participant on the Professional Development Committee, and all staff participate in the Institutional Staff Development Day. As is common in most departments, the staffing level in both LRCs is sufficient under ideal situations. However, there is only one staff person in the evenings and on Saturdays; overtime pay or closure of the LRC occurs if the evening/Saturday employee is absent.

Resources

Both the Science and Modern Language LRCs have a wealth of resources to support classroom curriculum. The Modern Language LRC has a 55-seat, state-of-the-art computer lab that provides students with programs in which they can practice their aural and verbal skills, including interactive programs to supplement and reinforce classroom materials, language-related websites and videos. We have been fortunate to have had all the lab computer stations replaced in Spring 2010. The lab does run into problems whenever upgrades are made to the hardware or software, since new computer images must be created for the computers and invariably there are glitches which cause frustration for the students, lab employees and department faculty. It has been difficult to keep all stations operating all the time, and with an average of 2,100 students visiting the lab each week, out-of-order stations impacts customer service.

Much of the materials for the language lab come from the publishers of the textbooks being used in the language class. In the past, publishers would send supplemental materials for use in the lab in analog format (audio tapes), which was fairly simple to digitize onto the lab servers. Most publishers now send the lab materials in digital format (CDs or DVDs) which is more difficult to convert to the server. This has presented a challenge for the staff members who were well trained to handle an analog lab, but who lack the background to keep up with the rapid changes in the new digital technologies. The department faculty member liaison to the lab provides much needed assistance to both the lab staff and to the department faculty to maximize use of the lab materials.

The Science LRC has variety of items to assist students with their studies, including microscopes, scientific calculators, over 300 videos/DVDs, 50 software programs, and more than 200 anatomy models. All of these items (700+) are cataloged and processed by library staff and the items are checked out from the LRC using the library's automation system. By using this system, we not only know who has what item checked out, but it also enables us to automatically generate overdue notices and place holds on students' SMC records if items are not returned.

Facilities

Both the Modern Language and the Science LRCs are located in buildings near their respective disciplines. The facilities were designed specifically for each of these programs and, when built, provided an attractive environment for the programs. Students are very much aware of the services offered and take advantage of them. However, with the increase in course offerings, both of the LRCs have outgrown their space—tutors often have difficulty finding an unoccupied table, students have to wait to use the language lab and students have difficulty finding a place to work during peak hours. Due to the nature of tutoring, both areas are noisy, and this problem is exacerbated with the overcrowded conditions.

With the increase in the different languages being offered, especially levels one and two, the language lab has become increasingly overcrowded. Students often wait to fulfill their lab hour requirement until near the end of the semester, at which time it is not unusual for there to be a waiting list of more than 15 people throughout the day. This is less than ideal and creates student behavioral issues and stress for the staff.

It is great that both LRCs are heavily used, but with this use comes the reality of wear and tear on the facility. These facilities are now over 10 years old and both areas need to be painted, the chairs in the Science LRC need to be replaced and the headphones (with microphones) and video players need to be replaced in the Modern Language LRC. The large video collections in both LRCs need to be replaced with similar material on DVD format.

In addition to the student area of the LRCs that are overcrowded, the staff area in the Modern Language LRC is small, with three employees sharing two desks. This has been a problem since moving into this facility, but the problem has recently grown to a point that it has created serious interpersonal relationship problems between two employees. We are looking to add a third desk into this space so each will have their own desk. While solving the problem of two staff sharing one desk, it will create an even more crowded office.

Program Effectiveness

Since the last Program Review, the Modern Language Lab has been moved organizationally from Academic Computing to Academic Affairs, resulting in both the Modern Language tutoring and lab reporting directly to the Dean of Learning Resources. This change was implemented in an effort to better integrate the lab and the tutoring services and to improve student service. Students having difficulty understanding lab exercises can more readily be referred to tutors and tutors can more easily refer students to the lab for exercises to reinforce topics being discussed. A strong effort is being made to hire more students currently working as language tutors to also work in the language lab to better meet the needs of the students.

A Modern Language faculty member has served as a liaison between the language lab and the department faculty for many years. This greatly benefits the lab experience for students and ensures the lab has current materials to support all language classes. In addition, this faculty member provides training to both department faculty and lab staff on using the computers in the lab.

The Modern Language and Science Tutoring LRCs are, overall, successful in providing excellent instructional support to help students keep up with their classes. Adequacy of the

tutoring services and LRC resources are evaluated through an informal process, largely through student feedback to the tutoring coordinators. Students are generally satisfied with the knowledge, sensitivity and explanations of the tutors. Most have indicated their appreciation for the services and believe that without them they would not have been as successful in their classes.

Faculty members frequently provide suggestions to LRC staff regarding the need for updated and/or additional materials to support the curriculum. The tutoring coordinators continue to reach out to the faculty in their respective areas and seek feedback from the faculty on ways to improve their programs.

However, all of our program evaluation is informal and anecdotal. The effectiveness of all of the college's tutoring programs has been discussed off and on for many years and is now being reviewed by the Academic Senate.

Both Tutoring Coordinators have been actively involved in the various tutoring workgroups, task forces, and accreditation sub-committees over the past 6 years. Their first-hand knowledge of, and insight into, the issues and challenges have been invaluable. They are dedicated employees and firm believers in the benefits of tutoring. The College has made studying the effectiveness of tutoring a priority for this year, and the new standardized collection of data across tutoring centers will be of great benefit to this endeavor. The continued input from the tutoring coordinators will be most useful.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The services provided by the Modern Language and Science Tutoring Programs and LRCs are much needed and are heavily used by the students in the corresponding courses. This significant use indicates that these two programs are meeting the needs of students and faculty. The tutoring program coordinators are extremely dedicated to their programs and routinely enroll in courses at SMC to enable them to provide better tutoring and to familiarize themselves with the content of the various courses taught at SMC. It is the dedication of the staff that makes these programs so successful. While anecdotal information is useful, the LRCs must make developing and measuring SLOs a high, immediate priority.

Currently, all tutoring is done in person on campus. Given that both Science and Modern Languages and Cultures departments teach hybrid and/or fully online courses, both of these tutoring programs need to investigate and plan to implement online tutoring services.

As stated previously, there continues to be technological changes in the resources used in the language lab. In order for the lab to meet the College's supporting goal of providing access to comprehensive student learning technology, more staff training in computer technology is necessary. This is especially important for the Media Resources Assistants.

While there is a strong relationship between the Modern Language Department and the LRC, there are some areas that could improve. Some of the new courses being offered by the department have proven difficult to locate appropriate lab materials. Courses move through the curriculum approval process and are scheduled to be taught prior to lab materials being identified and licensing for lab use is obtained. It would helpful if lab materials were identified as part of the curriculum approval process, allowing staff the time to acquire permission to digitize lab materials and licensing permission to use materials in a lab setting.

While it is an understandable decision that the Science and Modern Language Departments offer a variety of courses during the Summer and Winter (rather than multiple sections of the same course), it does have an impact on how many hours of tutoring per course can be offered. Last winter, for example, only three sections of languages were offered, but each was a different language. Therefore, different tutors had to be hired for each language, and since there were only 35 students per language, the number of tutoring hours per language was very small. Additional communication between the departments and LRC about such impact might result in different scheduling.

Response to Previous Program Review Recommendations

In 2005, the Program Review Committee made three suggestions for the LRC to strengthening its program from within, which are stated below.

- Work with the Office of Research to develop surveys to garner more formalized student feedback to supplement anecdotal information currently collected.
- Work with the Office of Research to develop methods for measuring the effectiveness of the services delivered; and
- Work with respective departments to develop appropriate student learning outcomes.

Unfortunately, these recommendations have not yet been fully implemented. As mentioned above, there have been several attempts over the past six years to look at tutoring on campus in a comprehensive manner. Rather than the various tutoring centers each developing different surveys, and collecting different information, it was agreed that standardized data should be collected. However, there was no consensus regarding what data should be collected. The tutoring coordinators of the four major tutoring centers agreed that our services and efforts are very similar, and would like to develop standardized SLOs for all tutoring centers, and to have standardized methods for measuring effectiveness of services delivered. The discussions that have taken place have been very beneficial and those involved understand the complexities involved in successful tutoring centers. There has been great cooperation and a desire to look at tutoring from a campus-wide perspective. Developing standardized SLOs and meaningful surveys will be the next step and should provide useful information and guidance for the future direction of our programs.

APPENDIX A

Tutoring Information Webpage on SMC website

Santa Monica College offers free tutoring services to all enrolled SMC students. These services are designed to improve student success and include both individual and small group tutoring sessions with knowledgeable and experienced tutors.

Tutoring Centers

<p style="text-align: center;">Math Tutoring</p> <p>Location: Math Complex 84 Tutoring Coordinator: Paul Williams Phone Number: 310/434-4735 Hours: Mon. – Thurs. 8:00 AM – 9:00 PM Fri. 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM Sat. 11:00 AM – 4:45 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Modern Language Tutoring</p> <p>Location: Drescher Hall, Room 219 Tutoring Coordinator: Peter Sierra Phone Number: 310/434-4683 Hours: Mon. - Thurs. 8:00 AM - 9:45 PM Fri. 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Sat. 11:00 AM - 2:45 PM Closed Sunday</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Science Tutoring</p> <p>Location: Science Building, Room 245 Tutoring Coordinator: Sandra Willis Phone Number: 310/434-4630 Hours: Mon. – Thurs. 8:00 AM – 7:45 PM Fri. 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM Sat. 11:00 AM – 2:45 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reading Lab</p> <p>Location: Drescher Hall, Room 312 Tutoring Coordinator: Joyce Cheney Phone Number: 310/434-4682 Hours: Mon. - Thurs. 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM Fri. 9:15 AM - 2:00 PM</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">English and Humanities Tutoring</p> <p>Location: Drescher Hall, Room 313 Tutoring Coordinator: Joyce Cheney Phone Number: 310/434-4682 Hours: Mon - Thurs. 8:30 AM - 5:15 PM Fri. 9:30 AM - 2:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ESL Tutoring</p> <p>Location: ESL Building Tutoring Contact: Janet Harclerode Phone Number: 310/434-4569 Appointments: Mon. - Fri. 9:00 - 4:00 Schedule an appointment here</p>