

LA Trade Academy

Bridge

Los Angeles Trade-Tech



Los Angeles Trade Technical College (LATTC) serves 25,000 of California's neediest students yearly¹. At a time when colleges are talking about improving student completion rates, LATTC is using existing resources to successfully do just that.

In 2010, LATTC's data showed low rates of student progression from one semester to the next and low rates of course completion. Student persistence was an issue with only 47% of new students successfully completing 6 units, and fewer than 54% of the first-time students who did earn 6 units in their fall term reenrolling in courses a year later².

LATTC also found they had extremely low rates of completion of Math and English classes, with only 8% and 3% of first-time students ever completing a college-level English or math course, respectively. The data was consistent with a decade long trend, and leaders decided something drastic needed to be done.

In the summer of 2010, LATTC decided it was time for a college-wide strategy and paradigm shift, and thus the innovative L.A. Trade Bridge Academy was created. The Academy combines instructional and student support services into a model built on reaching all incoming students to ensure their success in basic skills courses and otherwise. It is facilitated by faculty, counselors, and administrators working collaboratively, and includes two components: an orientation to introduce students to resources and assist them in creating an educational plan, and testing and refresher courses offered to students to provide them with the skills necessary to be successful in subsequent math and language arts courses.

The L.A. Trade Bridge Academy seeks to maximize acceleration through basic skills and on to college-level math and English, and to minimize the amount of remediation courses necessary. There is a heavy focus on incoming students because of the low number of first-time students attempting more than 6 units, the low number of students persisting to a second semester, and the low passing rates of students attempting math and language arts courses.

CORE ELEMENTS

- All students, both incoming and returning, have access to an orientation course entitled "Introduction to Post-Secondary Education."
 - » The 9-hour orientation class is broken up into 3 sessions of 3 hours each, and because it is a non-credit course, it is offered at no cost to the students.

1 According to the Educational Needs Index based on educational, economic, and population factors.

2 2010 ARCC Report: Percentage of first-time students with a minimum of six units earned in a Fall term and who returned and enrolled in the subsequent Fall term anywhere in the system"= 53.6%

- » Faculty co-teach the introduction course and focus on orienting students to a college-going culture, setting educational goals, providing students with best practices and behaviors, and ensuring students know what resources are available.
- Students are given the opportunity to take a diagnostic test, which is strictly informational, to help them determine their Math or English placement level.
- Students are offered Math or English refresher course(s), also non-credit and offered at no cost, to help them perform better on the official placement test, increasing the likelihood of a higher score, thereby minimizing basic skills placement while also maximizing their ability to retain concepts used in subsequent courses.
- Orientation and refresher courses are scheduled consecutively throughout the year for students entering at any time, and are scheduled at times convenient for students with no breaks during winter and summer, and courses offered days, evenings, weekends, and online. Both are open to all students and are completely cost-free.

L.A. Trade Technical College has implemented these new student support programs without the infusion of new financial resources. Instead, they have developed new approaches through collaboration and use existing matriculation and noncredit instructional funds to meet the campus-wide goals for increasing student success. This program is sustainable because it is reconfiguring services that are already institutionalized but are now delivered in a more effective, student-friendly package.

SUCCESS

- Outstanding participation: While the “Introduction to Post-Secondary Education” orientation course is optional, 96% of new students take advantage of the course because they see the value in it. Many returning students have also elected to take the orientation and refresher courses to help them be more successful.
- Increased course completion and persistence for first-time students that participated in the orientation course:
 - » Those successfully completing a course increased by 6%.
 - » Those successfully completing 6 units increased by a dramatic 25%.
 - » Persistence of students from first to second term increased by 10%.
 - » Those successfully completing a math and/or English class increased by 10%.
- Success and persistence rates for the first-time students also improved for those that took Math and/or English Refresher Course(s):
 - » The number of students successfully completing 6 units increased by 17%.
 - » Persistence of students from first to second term increased by 13%.
 - » Those successfully completing a math and/or English class increased by 11%.
 - » Students successfully completing a math and/or English class and 6 units in first year increased 12%.

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