



News Release

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Peer Tutors Linked to Classes Help Century Students Succeed

Struggling academically can be lonely for college students. At Century College, a program that reaches out to students who need extra help is having significant success.

Launched three years ago by President Larry Litecky, Century's "Tutors Linked to Classes" (TLC) program embeds peer tutors in classes with historically high attrition. The program appeals to students who are willing to turn to a classmate for help, and it has become one of the college's most popular student success initiatives.

The latest data shows that tutors are available in 57 sections of Century courses. Among those sections that are at the pre-college level and offer tutors, students are 18 percent more likely to earn a grade of C or above, and 10 percent less likely to withdraw, if they use a tutor.

“I always tell students that I took this course, I enjoyed it and I had fun with it,” said Lucy Nguyen, a tutor in Prof. Carl Chung’s Introduction to Logic course. “My approach is to spread enthusiasm and really get them excited about the course.”

Said Prof. Chung, “I am the authority figure, so some students think that if they come to me for help, I will think less of them. Lucy, on the other hand, is less threatening and more approachable. Of course, this is a lot to ask of an undergraduate, but Lucy is exceptional. She has the personality and the academic skill to make this work.”

In addition to being in class with the students, Lucy has a set time when she is available and students also can email her to make appointments. Tutors must apply for their positions and complete about 10 hours of training. They are paid by the hour as campus student workers.

English Prof. Cheryl Gfrerer said she is pleased that having tutors in her classes is helping students stay in college and experience more success. “The attrition that happens in a lot of developmental (pre-college level) classes was distressing to me,” said Gfrerer. “As a college, we are looking at a number of things that we can do that lead students to success, and this TLC approach seems to be working. Students are able to relate to other students to gain that extra help.”

Century student and tutor Joe Lombardi of Stillwater, who enrolled at Century after being laid off from his construction job, said the family-like atmosphere that Gfrerer promotes in her classes keeps students from withdrawing when they are stressed. Sheina Xiong, who also tutors in Gfrerer’s classes, said she sometimes tells Gfrerer if students are not catching on to a particular concept so that more time and attention can be given to that material.

Jackie Reichter, Century’s peer tutor coordinator, said the training that tutors receive is certified through the College Reading and Learning Association, a national group. Century currently has about 30 TLC tutors and 28 participating instructors.

“It is so important for students to do well in gateway courses such as English, math and reading,” said Reichter. “Students may be on the line between passing or not passing a course, and tutors can help them cross that line to success.”



Photo: Lucy Nguyen and Prof. Carl Chung



Photo: Joe Lombardi, Sheina Xiong, Prof. Cheryl Gfrerer