A Transitions Mission: Implementing a T.I.D.E.S. Model

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ABSTRACT: ***Successful transition to college requires understanding the college system as much as the academic subjects taught therein. This article describes the creation of the Transitions Lab, a T.I.D.E.S. model (Boylan, 2009) of student support including collaboration with institutional and community partners, advising, tutoring, and retesting assistance for students whose initial placement scores did not qualify them for credit-level courses. The article reports an empirical test of the T.I.D.E.S. model through measures of the lab's success in providing comprehensive support for incoming students, introducing the transitions mission fueling the work, and implications for colleges interested in establishing their own lab or scaling up existing student support initiatives.***

The T.I.D.E.S. model initiates interventions at the time of placement.

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A wide body of literature explores the impact of student success interventions which begin after students enter college (Edgecomb, 2011; Fowler & Boylan, 2010; Jaggars, Hodara, Cho & Xu, 2015). Considerably less research examines the effectiveness of interventions which begin during placement or advising before students enroll in college classes, although researchers have examined the impact of advising and placement policies on student retention and success (Baliey, Jeong, & Cho, 2009; Boylan, Bliss, & Bohham, 1997; Hodara, Jaggars, & Karp, 2012). In order to support students placed into developmental courses, Boylan (2009) introduced the Targeted Interventions for Developmental Education Students (T.I.D.E.S.) model of multiple measures placement and comprehensive student support. The T.I.D.E.S. model initiates interventions at the time of placement, an ideal moment in the college admissions process to establish a system of student support systematically addressing issues facing incoming at-risk students, including displaced workers. Increasing students' feelings of belonging and sense of academic integration is essential to their success (Strayhorn, 2012).

Through a 2012 Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant, Southeast Community College (SCC) established the Transitions Lab (T-Lab) to meet the needs of incoming students through a collection of targeted interventions. The lab aids and accelerates student program acceptance and completion by prioritizing relationship building within a "wrap-around" advising model including noncognitive and academic support through advising and tutoring, acceleration of student progress to credit-bearing courses, and a bridge between adult education and developmental studies. The lab builds upon the college's existing student support services, which include self-guided retest preparation, faculty and program advisors, and tutoring. Further, the lab connects students to these resources and others before they have even registered for developmental classes. This article (a) describes the theoretical basis of the Transitions mission and its alignment with the T.I.D.E.S. model (Boylan, 2009), (b) reports on measures of Transitions Lab success in student persistence, and (c) discusses considerations for institutions formally articulating their own Transitions mission.

A Theoretical Framing of Student Support

Placement and Developmental Education

As a comprehensive model of student support, developmental education includes tutoring, counseling, advising, and coursework (NADE, n.d.). Students' access to the majority of these supports, however, occurs after their placement and entry into college. A large body of literature summarizes and critiques single measure placement policies, which predominate among open-access institutions (e.g., Bailey & Cho, 2010; Barnett & Reddy, 2017; Boylan, 2009). Concerns arising from single measures include inaccurate placement (Belfield & Crosta, 2012), concerns about bubble students (i.e., students who score close to the placement cut score (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015), and the inability of a single measure to differentiate between student needs based on language proficiency, time away from school, and other noncognitive factors (Bailey & Cho, 2010; Boylan, 2009).

The T.I.D.E.S. model combines multiple measures to assist advisors' placement of students into courses and other developmental experiences (Boylan, 2009). T.I.D.E.S. includes an inventory and evaluation of available resources, careful consideration of the types of students who would benefit most from particular resources, advising

students based on the established intervention plans, delivering planned interventions, monitoring and evaluating student progress, and revising targeted interventions through data-based decision-making.

Theorizing a Transitions Mission

Inventorying available services supports the formal articulation of a theoretical framework for supporting transitioning students. A Transitions Mission specifies the application of developmental education theories to the transition experience. Like other theories of developmental education, such a mission should acknowledge the unique strengths and needs of adult learners, foster students' sense of belongingness, and fulfill an institutional commitment to intentional interventions for students' successful transitions to higher education.

Adult learners have established social roles and previous educational, vocational, and personal experiences which distinguish them from child learners (Knowles, 1968; Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Adult learners may require more flexible hours and modes of delivery than traditional students because they hold jobs or care for family members. And, although they may not draw from recent classroom experiences, adult learners can bring a great self-awareness and intrinsic motivation to their transition. To support adult learners, institutions should work with students to map their degree plans from their first interaction with the college.

Intentional interventions for transitioning students must also foster a relationship between students and their new college. When students have meaningful involvement in their schools, they feel connected to the school community; however, people in transition often experience feelings of marginalization or believe that they do not matter (Schlossberg, 1989).

Because much of the relational piece of supporting transitioning students naturally occurs in advising sessions, it makes sense that specially trained advisors would lead these initiatives. At Southeast Community College, what began as an abstract idea became the mission of a team of developmental-minded advisors who knew the college and its programs, started relationship-building with students when they walked out of placement testing, and were tasked with addressing student goals and needs on the spot.

The SCC Transitions Lab Model

The Transitions Lab provides comprehensive support to students before they even register to take classes at the college. The model is also unique in that it provides a centralized location for students to access existing college resources.

Referral to transitions. Any student who tests below program-level is walked by a Testing Center representative to the Transitions Lab (T-Lab) and introduced to an advisor. From the lab's inception in Spring of 2012 until Fall quarter of 2017, 7,149 students have completed an initial advisement appointment, and 2,640 students (36.9%) have registered with the lab. Approximately 41% of students who register with the T-Lab do so after a referral from the Testing Center.

All Transitions students work to bring their scores up for college admittance, achieve program-level acceptance (financial aid eligibility), or complete at least one writing or math course prior to graduation; 31% of Transitions students have writing, reading, and/or mathematics placement scores which are below college admittance. Students register for the lab by signing up for a one-credit pass-fail course. The lab offers scholarships for students who cannot afford the $20 credit fee. Registering students thusly allows the students to receive a student ID and access on-campus resources (such as the lab, the library, advisors, etc.).

Targeted interventions based on the Transitions mission. As a systematic application of interventions, the T-Lab provides a soft landing point in the college which supports incoming students through an advising model including wrap-around student support aimed at: (a) noncognitive development, (b) acceleration of student progress to credit-bearing courses, (c) multiple-measures placement advising, and (d) a bridge between adult education and developmental studies. As Boylan (2009) advocates, the lab also carefully monitors/evaluates student progress and revises targeted interventions through data-driven decision-making processes, including developing interpersonal relationships between students, faculty, and support staff.

A campus and community resources inventory is the first step in establishing a T.I.D.E.S. model of student support.

Strong advising to provide noncognitive support lies at the heart of the Transitions Lab mission and is crucial to successful interventions for incoming students (Boylan, 2009). Advisors receive in-depth training about college resources and have created a list of external scholarship programs, housing and family assistance programs, and connections with other relevant community services. Such a campus and community resources inventory is the first step in establishing a T.I.D.E.S. model of student support (Boylan, 2009).

Transitions advisors provide relationship-centered, noncognitive assistance which is intrusive (Varney, 2007) and appreciative (Truschel, 2008). This approach begins in the first advising session, which occurs as soon as a student is walked to the T-Lab. Through open-ended questions and an empathetic attitude of acceptance, advisors establish a trust-building relationship and endeavor to build students' self-esteem and self-motivation by co-constructing a plan that visually maps out the students' current scores against college admittance, program, and graduation-level scores. Because students often are brought to the lab by a testing center representative and begin this initial advising session before they have even registered for the lab, this advising model presents initial support as if it is not optional. At the end of this session, students decide to work with Transitions, to study on their own, or to walk away.

Students who work with Transitions gain immediate access to the lab's online course which includes noncognitive resources as well as English and mathematics brush up and sample tests. Advisors demonstrate how to navigate the college's student portal and the online course learning platform. Advisors also personally assist students in acquiring a student ID, registering and paying for the course, and applying for admissions. This proactive advising continues as advisors check on student progress weekly via follow-up contact with students who are not logging time in the online course. As Boylan (2009) notes, student monitoring is an essential part of targeted interventions. Through this contact, advisors check on students' personal circumstances, offer assistance and encouragement to study, or invite students to come to the lab for additional help.

The T-Lab supports academic acceleration by preparing students to retake the placement test and providing tutoring and modularized skills development. Because preparing to retake and improve upon the placement exam is a key motivational driver for students, advisors have taken the placement test first-hand and researched the test content to provide appropriate study preparation materials. Through results from the Accuplacer (and previously the Compass test), 31% of Transitions students place one or more levels below college admittance in reading, writing, and/or mathematics. It is important to support students' placement test preparation and performance, especially since researchers document a negative correlation between placement in developmental coursework and retention (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015; Jenkins & Cho, 2012). The lab offers tutoring on academic skills, subject knowledge, computer literacy, and expectations for interacting in a college classroom. Students can meet with a tutor or work independently through the online platform to reach the required 5 hours of study required to earn a retest waiver. Incoming students may not understand the high stakes nature of required placement tests (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2009); therefore, to encourage students

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to retest, the lab provides students with a T-shirt and a chance to win a $150 scholarship. Since April of 2017, the lab has awarded 27 such scholarships.

Transitions aims not only to help students with proper placement but also to lay the foundation for their college success. To ensure students are prepared for the course they place into, advisors have collaborated with mathematics and English instructors to build the appropriate online course content through Pearson's MyFoundationsLab. Advisors recommend modules based on students' initial course placement. Students are required to complete at least 5 hours of study in order to pass the lab.

A second component of the program is tutoring. The lab averages slightly more than 50 tutoring sessions per quarter with Developmental English instructors and a mathematics tutor; these sessions focus on fostering growth mindsets as much as content knowledge. The lab also offers computer training and other content tutors through the Tutoring and Learning Center which is located in the same space.

In addition to needing to strengthen their content knowledge, students can struggle to integrate into college classrooms when they are new to the U.S. school system or have not been in a classroom for an extended period of time (Almon, 2012; Suh, 2016). Through the lab's individual and small-group tutoring sessions, students gain content knowledge and exposure to the college's participation expectations and increased confidence in their ability to participate. For example, the lab's math tutor encourages all students, but particularly adult multilingual students, to approach him at any time during their sessions. The tutor explains, "We go to the blackboard and figure it out what she's asking right there" (Suh, 2017, p. 136). The board is their "interface to the questions," and through drawings, he can answer questions multilingual students do not yet possess the academic English to ask. As one Afghani student noted, "I just walk by the blackboard, say 'What is this?' He [the tutor] love it" (ibid).

This example illustrates how tutors' interactions with students are also framed by the Transitions mission, prioritizing a sense of community and student importance. Tutors utilize additive language perspectives and a relationship-centered approach to working with students which eases students' transition into college (Harklau & McClanahan, 2012). Students value the relationships they form with the lab's tutors.

Personalized and multiple-measure placement is a third major function of the T-Lab. SCC's official college placement policies are based solely on test cut scores, similar to the math placement policies of every community college surveyed by the National Assessment Governing Board in 2010 (Fields & Parsad, 2012). In practice, however, T-Lab advisors use multiple measures to consult with students as students plan their programs of study and register for classes. Placement assessment measures and methods should include cognitive, affective, and personal variables (Boylan, 2009). In the T-Lab, students and advisors discuss students' placement scores, past course work, length of time since previous schooling, proficiency levels, high school/past college GPA, and career/academic goals. This information is also supplemented by the advisors' personal knowledge of students and various instructors' teaching styles. Based on this information, advisors often recommend a specific schedule for each student including course sections and modalities.

Although developmental education practitioners and researchers agree on the benefits of multiple placement measures (e.g., Boylan, 2009), an institution's choice of which measures to use involves multiple trade-offs between cost and precision, test validity and face validity, and local needs and statewide requirements (Bracco et al., 2014). The T-Lab's approach acknowledges concerns regarding available resources but offers additional support to students whose entrance to college and initial course selection benefit most from consideration of multiple measures of their academic experiences and potential.

T-Lab advisors use multiple measures to consult with students as students plan their programs of study.

Bridging adult ESL and developmental education. A final purpose of the T-Lab is bridging the gap between Adult Education, particularly adult ESL, and Developmental Education. Although they share some similarities in purpose, Adult Education and Developmental Education are typically distinct in pedagogy, teacher training, administrative oversight, and funding sources (DeJoy & Smith, 2017). As adult English language learners who transition from adult ESL into credit-level courses, Generation 1 learners face unique challenges as they navigate between these two distinct departments in which their previous educational experiences and first language may not be viewed as adequate resources for college success (Almon, 2012; Suh, 2016). Additionally, Generation 1 learners may have different linguistic and academic needs than Generation 1.5 students, who have attended U.S. high schools and experienced at least some degree of acculturation through those educative experiences (Harklau, 2000; Suh, 2017). T-Lab advisors work closely with Adult Education staff and carefully explain different programs to students. Advisors also direct students whose test scores place them in the prefoundations level to register with Adult Education or ESL before joining the T-Lab. The lab's partnership with Adult Education is another example of how advisors help students navigate the confusing system of the college's multiple student support programs. For all students, the T-Lab's academic and noncognitive supports are personalized and explicit.

Methods

Because students referred to the T-Lab are placed into Pre-Foundations- and Foundations-level courses, they may be at greater risk for not persisting (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2009). Therefore, to examine how the components of a T.I.D.E.S. program might function at a community college, we asked this research question: Does participation in the T-Lab promote student persistence? For this study, T-Lab student progression was examined since progressing through courses implies that students demonstrate skills needed to continue successfully. Progression measures commonly include "course completion rates, success rates of students on probation and/or comparisons of academic credit hours attempted versus academic credit hours earned" (Voigt & Hundrieser, 2008, p. 3).

SCC Student Demographics

Demographic data indicate that the T-Lab serves a larger proportion of the non-White population than the rest of the college. Approximately 40% of T-Lab students' identity as non-White, compared to 21.5% of the Southeast Community College student population. The fact that the lab serves a growing population of first-language Arabic speakers who identify as "White" is also of note since anecdotal evidence suggests that the lab also serves a larger proportion of multilingual students. The college does not provide data on first-generation student status, financial aid, employment, or dependent care. T-Lab data, however, tracks a student body which is 35% identifying as first-generation college students, 34% experiencing financial difficulty, 32% managing employment obligations, and 15% caring for dependents. T-Lab students report additional challenges including language barriers (19%); transportation (8%); deteriorating physical or mental health (9%); self-identified disabilities (5%); test anxiety, balancing school and home life (2%); and technology issues, such as lack of access to a computer or internet (2%). These numbers align with the literature on adult learners and nontraditional students. Furthermore, over 75% of the T-Lab's population is nontraditional.

Measurements

To measure the impact of a T.I.D.E.S. modelled program on student success, the authors conducted chi-square tests. The tests compared whether there was a statistically significant difference in students' persistence based on successful completion or nonenrollment/noncompletion of the T-Lab (i.e., at least 5 hours of study with the lab).

Findings

In order to test the claim that students who finish the lab (i.e., complete at least 5 hours of study in the T-Lab) are better prepared to persist at the college, we compared measures of student persistence including retest rates of T-Lab completers versus noncompleters, test scores increases by T-Lab completers versus noncompleters, success in developmental English course of T-Lab completers versus direct-placement students (i.e., non-T-Lab students), and credits earned by T-Lab completers versus noncompleters/direct-placement students.

Retesting

Although placement (re)testing is not traditionally considered a measure of student persistence (Voigt & Hundrieser, 2008), we included retesting because of its relevance to incoming students. At SCC's largest campus, 2,640 students registered for the lab, and 1,756 students (66.5%) passed the lab's noncredit class by studying at least 5 hours. Among these 1,756 completers, 1,477 retested (55.9% of all enrolled T-Lab students, and 84.1% of passing T-Lab students; see Table 1).

Table 1.

T-Lab Student Completion and Successful Retesting

T-Lab Cohort	Raw Number
Total registered T-Lab students	2640
T-Lab completers	884
Completers who retested	1477
Completers who retested and improved scores	1276

A chi-square was conducted to determine the relationship between completion of the T-Lab (defined as at least 5 hours of lab study) and whether the student was likely to retest. The relationship between T-Lab completion and retesting was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 959.38$, $p < 0.001$. Table 2 represents the percentages of students who retested.

Completers' improved test scores were considered a second measure of T-Lab success in supporting student persistence. A total of 1,276 T-Lab completers improved their test scores upon retesting. In doing so, these completers bypassed 1,392 developmental courses. A chi-square was conducted to determine the relationship between completion of the T-Lab and whether the student was likely to improve their test score during retesting as compared to noncompleters. The relationship between T-Lab completion and improved retest score was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 56.91$, $p < 0.001$. Table 3 presents the percentages of students in each group who improved their scores during retesting. Although students in both groups may have scored higher while retesting due to their increased familiarity with the test or other issues of Accuplacer reliability, we posit that these results indicate the impact of engaging students and connecting them to campus resources.

Table 2.

Percentage of Students Who Retested during Fall, Winter, Spring 2012

Student Group	*N*	% Retested	% Did Not Retest
T-Lab	1756	84.1% (1477)	15.9% (279)
Noncompleters	884	22.6% (200)	77.8% (684)

Passing Developmental English Courses

A third measure of the T-Lab's success is completer's rate of passing developmental English classes, which have been identified as a gatekeeper course (Roksa, Jenkins, Smith Jaggars, Zeidenberg, & Cho, 2009). In order to determine whether completing the lab correlated to students' ability to pass the gatekeeper English course (as opposed to simply improving their test preparation skills), we compared rates of successful developmental English class completion between T-Lab completers who retested into the developmental English class and direct-placement students (who tested into the class without enrolling in the T-Lab). Results from the chi-square test indicated that there was no significant difference between completers and direct-placement students' rates of passing the developmental English class, $\chi^2(1) = 3.53$, $p < 0.01$ (see Table 4). Given that completers who retested into developmental English may be among the most academically underprepared students in class, this statistic suggests that the lab successfully prepared completers to perform at a rate similar to their direct-placement peers.

Table 3.

Percentage of Students with Improved Retest Scores during Fall, Winter, Spring 2012

Student Group	*N*	% Retested	% Did Not Retest
T-Lab completers	1477	86.4% (1276)	13.6% (201)
Noncompleters	200	65.5% (131)	34.5% (69)

Credits Earned

A fourth measure of lab completion and persistence was completers' earned credit hours. Because T-Lab students are considered at-risk based on their placement test scores (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2009), it was assumed that the T-Lab was successful in preparing students to persist in college if completers earned as many or more credits than the institutional average of 25.674 credits during the first year in college. A two-tailed single-sample *t*-test was applied to determine whether or not completers' average credit hours earned was significantly different than the institutional average of 25.674 hours; the alternative hypothesis was that completers' average credit hours earned was different from the population credit hours earned. The test statistic ($n = 328$) was 1.586 ($p = 0.0568$) and indicated that completers'

Table 4.

Percentage of Students Passing a Developmental English Class Spring 2015-Spring 2017

Student Group	*N*	% Retested	% Did Not Retest
T-Lab completers	31	87.1% (27)	12.9% (4)
Direct-placement students	453	71.5% (324)	29.5% (129)

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average credit hours earned was not statistically different from those of the general population. Because T-Lab students are considered less prepared than the average student enrolling at the college, the findings suggest that the T-Lab was effective in supporting completers' persistence.

We further tested whether a similar proportion of T-Lab completers earned college credits as their direct-placement peers. A group of 176 completers was paired with a group of direct-placement students; each group included 65 students with Pre-Foundations scores (adult-education level) and 111 students with Foundations-level (developmental) scores. We performed a chi-square to determine whether completers were more likely to earn credits. There was a significant positive relationship between T-Lab completion and earning credits, χ^2 (1) = 14.3089, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 5).

Table 5.

Percentage of Students Earning Credits

Student Group	*N*	% Earned Credits	% Did Not Earn Credits
T-Lab completers	176	51.7% (91)	48.3% (85)
Direct-placement students	176	31.8% (56)	68.2% (120)

Because the lab focuses support for transitioning students, such as those moving from Adult ESL into developmental courses, we also disaggregated the data to examine credit earning among Pre-Foundations-level students (i.e., those initially testing into Adult Education/ESL). A chi-square was performed comparing the 65 completer and direct-placement student groups. Although the Pre-Foundations completers earned 213.5 more credits than the control group, the relationship between T-Lab completion and credits earned for Pre-Foundations-level students was not significantly stronger than direct-placement students and credits earned, χ^2 (1) = 6.61, $p < 0.01$ (see Table 5). The findings suggest that although the T-Lab provides essential support for transitioning students, those who enter with skills placing them at the Pre-Foundations level may need additional support to persist through college courses.

Table 6.

Percentage of Pre-Foundations-Level Students Earning Credits

Student Group	*N*	% Earned Credits	% Did Not Earn Credits
T-Lab completers	65	36.9% (24)	63.1% (41)
Direct-placement students	65	16.9% (11)	83.1% (54)

Understanding Student Decisions Not to Enroll

Despite promising results, which advisors share with students during the initial advisement, many students choose not use the Transitions Lab. Students' decisions not to register for the lab are motivated by a number of factors. Some face challenges related to finances (i.e., inability to pay $20 to register for the course). Some students view their initial test scores through a fixed mindset and believe they are not capable of college success. Others feel more comfortable beginning college in the classes in which they have been placed or decide on Adult Basic Education or ESL for a more extensive course with face-to-face instruction. Some students who wish to retest decide to study independently.

Advisors constantly look for ways to respond positively to factors influencing students' decisions not to enroll. The lab now offers full-ride scholarships for students with financial need and continues its partnership with and referrals to the Adult Basic Education/ESL programs. Advisors also carefully frame their discussions about students' test scores and academic/career goals in growth mindset language (Dweck, 2008).

Discussion

Southeast Community College's Transitions Lab introduces students to existing college resources to provide holistic support beginning before they enroll in the college. Nontraditional students, including those who are seeking retraining, are multilingual, or are among their family's first college attendees, benefit from a centralization of student support services to facilitate their transition to college. The T-Lab's successes illustrate how incoming students initially placed into developmental education, nontraditional students in particular, can benefit from a program that recognizes their uniqueness as adult learners, fosters their sense of community, and provides systematic interventions to address academic and noncognitive interventions.

Comprehensive, Adaptable Student Support

A primary advantage to targeted interventions at the placement stage is the model's deliberate attempt to "plac[e] as many students as possible directly into college-level courses with appropriate learning assistance and support services" (Boylan, 2009, p. 18). Improved placement motivates T-Lab students, but advisors frame student success beyond more than retest scores. They address vectors of student development related to interdependence, competence, and developing purpose and integrity (Chickering, 1969) by balancing students' drive with development of successful academic habits.

Supporting the Transition from Adult ESL to Developmental Education

A T.I.D.E.S. model provides necessary support for nontraditional students, like adult English language learners. Advisors provide social and academic support for English language learners and other "at-promise" students (Boykin, 2000), and the Transitions Lab provides Generation 1 learners with essential social capital, such as knowledge of who to ask about financial aid or how to approach instructors with questions. Generation 1 learners emphasize the Transitions Lab's role in easing their entry into developmental English and other credit courses (Suh, 2017). Learners value advisors' assistance which ranges from answering math problems to navigating the college's registration and course requirements systems. As one Kenyan-educated student who transitioned from adult ESL explained,

> That's what that's what they're [the advisors are] for. 'Cause they're there to help, so I go over there whenever I need help. 'Cause there was [*sic*] the first people I met and interact with them, actually feel free to talk to them for anything [laughter] so I'm really happy, just when I'm even passing over there, they just say 'Hi!' Oh, okay, you here. [laughter]. (Suh, 2015, p. 18)

Even after she finished studying in the lab, the student felt confident in her relationship with the advisors and her belief that she was welcome in the lab and therefore at the college. In contrast, some of the literature on adult ESL reflects particular programs' problematic inability to make connections between students' academic/linguistic goals and college resources (Shapiro, 2012). Some of students' frustration with adult ESL programs stems from

their misunderstanding of the purpose of beginning ESL classes (communicative competence rather than academic language proficiency; Norton, 2013). The T-Lab acts as an important liminal space for students moving from adult ESL into college-level courses. The lab's partnership with Adult Education is another example of how advisors help students navigate the confusing system of the college's multiple student support programs. For all students, the T-Lab's academic and noncognitive supports are personalized and explicit. Personalized and clear student support services, similar to those provided by the T-Lab, have been shown to increase students' sense of belonging, persistence, and retention (Fike & Fike, 2008).

Cross-College Collaboration

The lab's collaborative nature is illustrated by the fact that less than half of T-Lab students are referred by testing center staff: 59% are referred by program chairs, faculty advisors, instructors, admissions, registration, career advisors, academic advisors, success coaches, community organizations, and other students. At SCC, student referrals are particularly common among recent immigrant communities from the Middle East and Africa. Through their network, T-Lab advisors successfully advocated for mental health services at the college, partnered with English faculty to create lab-sponsored reading and English conversation groups, and collaborated with community nonprofits to support high school seniors and connect at-risk students with housing and utilities assistance programs. Such strategic partnerships can increase community commitment to student success (Sandy & Holland, 2006).

The T-Lab has experienced its share of growing pains in its work to create a comprehensive and collaborative student support system. College stakeholders from Adult Basic Education, Admissions, Testing, Financial Aid, Career Advising, Tutoring, and Developmental Education each have expressed concerns about how a new program might affect their mission, responsibilities, and status. At first, the T-Lab's opening and expansion felt threatening to Adult Basic Education, which experienced a decreased enrollment rate in direct proportion to T-Lab enrollment, and for some Testing Center staff whose work included advising. In hindsight, some of this tension might have been diffused by a greater emphasis on connecting students to existing resources. As Boylan (2009) has noted, the intervention must carefully consider which types of students would benefit from which services and then enact data-driven adaptations.

Administrative support, particularly between Adult Education and Developmental Education, is also integral to successful institutional cooperation (Boylan, 2004). Several SCC administrators were integrally involved in creating the Transitions mission and design; they also later supported the lab's expansion. The lab's early success was also due to the work of engaged faculty. The lab was originally coordinated by the second author, who was at the time a developmental English faculty member.

Limitations

The study faced several limitations, including the lack of an experimental design. Students self-selected into the T-Lab intervention and decided whether or not to complete the recommended program of study or access the available resources, introducing self-selection bias. Further, lab staff assumed that 5 hours of recorded study time was an appropriate length for the intervention.

Implications

Community colleges have received a great deal of national criticism resulting in institutional trends of smaller windows of opportunity for aspiring college students. Targeted interventions widen these opportunity windows, yet previously reported programs support students once they enroll in college and begin taking courses (Fowler & Boylan, 2010; Greenfield, Keup, & Gardner, 2013). Several lessons can be learned from SCC's work to create a T.I.D.E.S. model of developmental education.

Institutions creating their own targeted intervention system should carefully consider how to avoid duplicating services.

Fostering a Community for Collaboration

Programs such as the Transitions Lab are particularly beneficial because they systematize an institution's existing interventions, directly increasing their scalability. The T-Lab has not established tutoring, test preparation, or advising at SCC, but it has created a centralized location to house these services and direct students to other existing campus resources. It is challenging to initiate hybrid academic/student services. Developmental educators establishing targeted interventions can break through institutional silos with finesse, patience, bridge-building, and willingness to communicate between departments. Institutions creating their own targeted intervention system should carefully consider how to avoid duplicating services as well as how to keep all stakeholders engaged through design and implementation so that program changes are clearly articulated and backed by qualitative and quantitative data.

Data collection and reporting is another essential component for collaboration. Higbee, Arendale, and Lundell (2005) call upon developmental educators to seek out qualitative data, which "can illuminate the multiple and shifting realities of students in transition" while "demonstrating the richness and overlapping variety of both developmental and nondevelopmental students' experiences" (p. 12). Qualitative research, such as that continuously conducted for the T-Lab, can "allow educators to explore more meaningfully the complexity of students' multicultural issues in developmental programs" (Higbee, Arendale, & Lundell, p. 12-13). The lab's constant qualitative and quantitative data collection not only illustrates its significant impact on the lives of transitioning students but also allows the college to continuously assess and revise its efforts.

SCC's experience illustrates the need for initial and continued administration support. Lessons learned from the creation and development of the T-Lab at this community college suggest the importance of keeping conversations with administrators focused on increasing student engagement, enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. The authors have found that these conversations are most successful when they reinforce how targeted interventions, such as the T-Lab, create a more positive and engaging experience for students.

Future Research Directions

Future research could examine whether students using all aspects of the lab are more successful than those who use only part of the lab, such as the online study program. In addition, mandatory placement into a T-Lab model could be investigated as well as varied requirements for recorded hours of study time.

Conclusion: Articulating a Transitions Mission

This article describes how one institution, Southeast Community College, enacted a comprehensive system of developmental education as advocated by Boylan (2009) and presents an empirical test of the T.I.D.E.S. model. Based on data regarding retesting rates, improved test scores, and grades in the developmental English class from this study, we support the utility of comprehensive developmental models for not only improving student success but also increasing students' likelihood of entering college. The article further outlines a philosophy of student-centered caring, which we refer to as the Transitions Mission.

A T.I.D.E.S. program, like the T-Lab, must consider ease of use for first-time students. What the institution might proudly herald as a collection of varied support programs can present to students as a

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disjointed labyrinth of buildings, offices, new faces, and communication expectations. Therefore, the Transitions Mission not only identifies services for potential students, it also articulates the value system guiding and organizing student support services. A Transitions Mission centers interventions around a view of students as "at-promise" (Boykin, 2000) and connects students to resources to ensure that they have every opportunity to meet their full potential. Ultimately, a Transitions Mission forces institutions to do more than acknowledge that biases exist, that support does not reach some students, and that students come to college with different experiences and resources. Such a mission decenters a college's filtering system and returns students, with a focus on their resources and potential, to the center of its work.

The T-Lab provides a comprehensive student support system benefiting displaced workers, multilingual students, and other nontraditional students through targeted interventions for developmental students (Boylan, 2009). The findings indicate the potential of T.I.D.E.S. programs to support whole-student growth and privilege students' prior experiences and present circumstances even before students step foot in a developmental "class."

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