### Mainstream Tutorials for Learning Disabled Students

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<th>FISCAL YEAR</th>
<th>ID NUMBER</th>
<th>COLLEGE</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
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<td>1989-90</td>
<td>89-0770</td>
<td>Laney</td>
<td>Peralta</td>
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#### Proposal Description

Learning disabled students benefit dramatically from course-specific mainstream tutorials. The project proposes to implement student-facilitated study groups geared to mainstream academic courses in an effort to:

1. Increase mainstream instructors' understanding of learning disabilities and involvement in the project.
2. Develop academic and self-advocacy skills needed to succeed in mainstream academic courses.
3. Develop students' capacity to help themselves and one another.
4. Increase the transfer rate of learning disabled students to four-year institutions.

Funding Category & Award: Grant = $35,500

Eligible Program: C --- Special Learning Needs of Ed/Dis

Project Category: Learning Model

Project Product: Learning Disabled

Project Topic #1: Mainstream Tutorials

Project Topic #2: Inter-Disciplinary

Project Director: Sondra Neiman, Learning Disabilities Specialist

Project Supervisor: Don Arnold, Asst Dean Student Services
Mainstream Tutorials for Learning Disabled Students

Traditionally, learning disabled adults have done poorly in college, either because they do not regard themselves as legitimate college students or because they fail to receive the help they need to succeed in mainstream courses. Programs designed to help them, like the Learning Skills Program at Laney College, often fall short of their goals at helping learning disabled students mainstream, graduate, and transfer to four-year institutions because they lack sufficient funding to thoroughly implement all components.

However, research at Cabrillo College, (CAPED Communique, Spring 1990) and Laney’s own experience helping students in English 1A courses, show that learning disabled students benefit dramatically from course-specific mainstream tutorials. The Laney tutorial described in the background statement supported five (5) learning disabled students, all with varying degrees of dyslexia, in an English 1A course. All students passed the course with good grades, and two received A’s.

We have been unable to repeat this experiment because of lack of staff and inadequate funding, but we learned that: willingness to learn about, and adapt to, student’s learning styles is essential; students’ self-esteem needs to be built not through slogans, but through carefully designed sequence of success experiences with the mainstream course assignments. Students need to be trained in self-advocacy skills to create the best possible learning environment, and to take responsibility for their own learning. Students need to know exactly what is required of them; students need to know how to help, and seek help, from one another.

The goals of this project are:

1. To increase the enrollment and retention rates of learning disabled students in mainstream academic and vocational courses by at least 20%.
2. To improve the level of academic performance of learning disabled students in mainstream courses by .5 GPA over non-tutorial students.
3. To increase the number of learning disabled students transferring to four year colleges by 20% over the previous year.

This project enhances the College-wide Educational Plan (Project #5, Model Projects for Disabled Students, Objectives 2 and 4), and could serve as a model that could be
incorporated in the Learning Skills Program after the funding cycle. It could also serve as a model for similar projects in other colleges.
Mainstream Tutorials for Learning Disabled Students

1. Specific Educational Program Being Addressed

Adult students in community colleges have had difficulty negotiating mainstream courses, satisfying graduation and transfer requirements, and transferring to four-year schools for a number of reasons:

1. Learning disabled students need to become proactive assertive learners. They tend to take a passive role as persons needing to be helped rather than persons capable of helping themselves. Because of destructive experiences with the educational systems, they tend to avoid difficult learning experiences, fearing yet more failure. They often speak of the humiliation suffered when they attempt a mainstream course with an instructor who does not understand their problems or special needs. Because they fear such experiences, they typically have not developed the self-advocacy skills required to cope with these courses.

2. Learning disabled students need to approach courses systematically and purposefully. Often a learning disabled student will be satisfied with a partial understanding of course objectives and assignment requirements--defense mechanisms at work! Clarifying goals and requirements, and careful planning to meet them, will be key features of the tutorials.

3. Learning disabled students need to learn how to think critically. Often such students hesitate to ask questions or challenge authority, and both abilities are essential to learning. Critical thinking, geared to course content, will be a major feature of the tutorials.

4. Learning disabled students need to learn how to ask for help from one another, and to help one another. They often understand other students' problems better than any professional helper, but they require training in how to help and be helpful.

This project is similar to an already funded project, STUDY GROUPS--A Retention Strategy for Black and Hispanic Students, project director Milton Shimabukuro. It differs from that project in that (a) it targets learning disabled students and (b) it is a more limited pilot project.
designed to test the efficacy of student-facilitated study groups for the learning disabled population.

This project proposes to implement student-facilitated study groups geared to mainstream academic courses in an effort to (a) increase mainstream instructors' understanding of learning disabilities and involvement in the project; (b) develop academic and self-advocacy skills needed to succeed in mainstream academic courses; (c) develop students' capacity to help themselves and one another; (d) increase the transfer rate of learning disabled students to four-year institutions.

The expected outcome of this project is to raise the completion rate of learning disabled students in courses required for (a) completion of an Associate of Arts degree (b) for transfer to four-year institutions, particularly the State University and the University of California systems. Courses specifically targeted are English 1A, English 1B and mathematics courses through Intermediate Algebra.

BACKGROUND

Past successes and opportunities. The Learning Skills Program (LSP) has been able to help a significant number of learning disabled students take mainstream classes who have never been able to do so before. In 1989 no fewer than six (6) students--10% of program enrollment, took English 1A because they were members of discussion groups centered on this course. Two students received A's. Subsequently, all of these student have gone on to take English 1B and/or other more difficult mainstream courses.

This small experiment was made possible during one semester because extra staff was available and because of the cooperation of English 1A instructors. It will not be repeatable unless further funding is made available. We believe a real opportunity exists to (a) enable many more learning disabled students currently being served to successfully take mainstream courses, (b) recruit more students into the program than we now have staff or funding to serve, (c) raise the awareness level about learning disabilities in the college as a whole, and (d) create a powerful, self-sustaining support system with learning disabled students helping one another.

Much of the success in retaining students with Learning Disabilities at Laney is due to the strong peer support built into our Learning Skills Program (LSP). The program has established and supports the following:

a. Student Social Club (with monthly meetings, fund-raising activities, social events, trips, and outings. The social club provides much needed opportunities for social interaction lacking in students

b. A student-run support group for Learning Disabled students that holds weekly meeting open to all student in the program to discuss individual feeling around disabilities.
c. Use of Learning Disabled students as tutors in our Instructional classes. They serve as a role model for their peers.

d. Continuing students to classes held primarily to orient and test new students and give personal accounts of their experiences being in the program. This provides a link between new and old students.

e. Students are encouraged to take classes together. They can get group tutoring from the LSP staff. This allows them to learn background information necessary to comprehend new course material. They have a safe, supportive environment within the study groups to ask questions. They act as a mutual support system for each other in interaction with mainstream class instructors around their appropriate accommodations.

f. The LSP provides an environment in which students' strengths are recognized. In our Center, we post and publicize such accomplishments as students' art work, books from our writing class containing students' writings, articles about individual students, and photographs from our social events. The Center is also a gathering place where students can interact.

g. Students have participated in a variety of professional activities such as on a panel for Professional Day Activities, participation in conferences and have discussed learning disability issues in mainstream classes.

h. Many of our students have received awards of merit and recognition from various art and music activities. One of our students received the Chancellor's Trophy Award as Outstanding Peralta Student in 1989. When these accomplishments occur, much recognition is given to the successful student. Students feel pride and gain in self confidence and respect. These good feelings have been sorely missing from the lives of disabled adults and can make all the difference between success or failure.
Problems addressed.
The learning disabled population at Laney College, as at many other colleges, is essentially an invisible population. At a recent staff and faculty development seminar for faculty and staff engaged in student services—the very people who might be expected to know about learning disabilities—almost nobody besides Disabled Student Service staff had any sense that the learning disabled population existed. To a large degree, learning disabled students themselves contribute to this problem, since they have been taught to be ashamed of being different and conditioned not to seek the special help they need. Self-esteem is a major problem for them in dealing with mainstream faculty; consequently, they tend to seek support only from specialists in their problems if they seek help at all. Laney's Learning Skills Program has been very successful at creating a support network for these students, who do well in specialized learning skills classes. The challenge is to help the students reach out more effectively to mainstream instructor, receive help specific to their coursework from advanced students, and develop a support network that looks beyond the campus to facilitate transfer to four-year institutions. The support network must include linkages with programs for learning disabled students at the four-year institutions, and must provide Laney students with the information and skills to facilitate the transfer.
[NO “POPULATION” ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]
4. Objectives

OBJECTIVES

1. To establish a management system to coordinate the project.

2. To identify learning disabled students who have the potential to mainstream and meet graduation and/or transfer requirements.

3. To implement six (6) study groups each semester for students enrolled in mainstream Language Arts, Mathematics, or other courses required for graduation and/or transfer.

4. To monitor, encourage, support, and evaluate students' progress toward project goals.
5. Workplan Narrative

WORK STATEMENT
Objective 1:
To establish a management system to coordinate the project.
TARGET DATE:
September 1990
RESPONSIBLE PERSON:
Project Director
ACTIVITY
• Hire staff members Project director
• Set up an advisory committee that includes faculty and students
• Establish a budget monitoring system
• Train staff members
• Establish liaison with faculty

Objective 2:
To identify learning disabled students who have the potential to mainstream and meet graduation and/or transfer requirements.
TARGET DATE
September 1990
RESPONSIBLE PERSON
Project Director
ACTIVITY
• Recruit participants

Objective 3:
To implement six (6) study groups each semester for students enrolled in mainstream Language Arts, Mathematics, or other courses required for graduation and/or transfer.
TARGET DATE
September 1990, Ongoing
RESPONSIBLE PERSON
Project Director and Coordinators
ACTIVITY
• Train staff members and student workers
• Register students in groups
• Oversee project
Objective 4:
To monitor, encourage, support, and evaluate students' progress toward project

TARGET DATE
Ongoing, End of month, End of semester

RESPONSIBLE PERSON
Project Director and staff

ACTIVITY
• See above
• Prepare monthly reports for Chancellor's office
• Prepare reports for Chancellor's office

PROGRAM SCHEDULE
There will be six (6) tutorials each semester for the duration of the project. Based on past experience, the following breakdown is projected but is subject to change:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fall 1990</th>
<th>Spring 1991</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3--English 1A and/or English 1B</td>
<td>3--English 1A and/or English 1B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3--Algebra and other math courses</td>
<td>3--Algebra and other math courses</td>
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All learning disabled students pre-enrolled in such courses will be identified before the beginning of the school year. During the registration period, additional students will be identified and recruited. Faculty in the targeted courses will be asked to help identify students with probable learning disabilities, who will be encouraged to be evaluated for eligibility in the project.

Approximately 18-30 students will be enrolled in the fall semester, 1990. Given enough interest, the program could be expanded in the spring 1991 semester by increasing group size.

An advisory committee will be established prior to the school year. As soon as possible thereafter coordinators and student workers will be recruited. Consultations with appropriate faculty members will be initiated before registration.

During the first two weeks of the fall semester, all staff will be trained and groups organized. Groups, and student progress, will be monitored on a monthly basis and formative and evaluative statements prepared for end-of semester reports.

Staff training will not be a one-time affair, but will be ongoing throughout the school year. It is expected that this will be a learning experience for everybody concerned.
PROJECT ORGANIZATION

A. GENERAL APPROACH: TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION

Laney College, one of four colleges in the Peralta District, is centrally located in a major metropolitan area. It has a tradition of serving minority populations.

The college is administered by the Office of Instruction and the Division of Student Services, both of which have responsibility for learning disabled students. The Assistant Dean of Student Services, Don Arnold, has been extremely supportive of efforts to serve this population, as has the Assistant Dean of Instruction, Jeanette Golds. The coordinator of Disabled Students Programs and Services, Carol Dalessio, has also been very supportive despite having several other responsibilities. Thus, the project can count on having significant administrative support and oversight.

STAFFING

1. Personnel performing activities described in WORK STATEMENT (Section III):
   - Project Director: LD Specialist, Sondra Neiman
   - Program Coordinators: (2) to be selected
   - Student facilitators: (6) to be selected
   - 2-6 Faculty members (to be identified)

2. Hours or percentage of time key personnel will devote to the project:
   - Project director: 10% (most of it early in the program)
   - Program coordinators: (2) 50% or 20 hours per week
   - Student facilitators: (6) 50% time or 20 hours per week
   - Language Arts and Mathematics faculty: 36 hours total

MISSION/METHODOLOGY

The Underrepresented Student Project proposes to build on the success of the English 1A pilot study described above and the experience of STUDY GROUPS--A Retention Strategy for Black and Hispanic Students. Students specifically targeted will be those already in the Laney Learning Skills Program who are prepared to take mainstream academic courses, but instructors will be asked to help identify and recruit the large group of learning-disabled students who have not yet been served.

The project will be supervised by the Laney College Learning Disabilities Specialist, Sondra Neiman.

In addition to her oversight, two half-time instructional assistants will be needed to coordinate the groups and monitor progress. These instructional assistants will be specialists in two areas: Language Arts and Mathematics. They will be trained by Sondra Neiman in the needs
of learning disabled students, in evaluation processes, and in group leadership skills, and will meet with her in weekly meetings.

Additionally, we propose to hire six half-time student workers who, like the student workers in STUDY GROUPS--A Retention Strategy for Black and Hispanic Students, will be advanced students in the appropriate subject area(s). They will sit in on the classes with the project participants and meet regularly with the course instructors to develop materials to use in the tutorials.

METHODOLOGY OF TUTORIALS

Tutorials will include the following:

1. Discussions to clarify course objectives and assignments, and plans to meet them, focused on helping students develop skills in these areas. Responsibility will be gradually handed over to the students themselves.

2. Building skills of self-advocacy (e.g., petitioning instructors to obtain special help or alternative evaluation methods).

3. Building self-esteem through carefully structured success experiences geared to each course.

4. Education about meeting graduation and transfer requirements and skill building in these areas.

Tutorials will be made up of 5-8 students who are enrolled in the same course. They will meet three to five hours a week.
6. Expected Outcomes

[NO "OUTCOMES" ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]
7. Evaluation Plan

EVALUATION
Monthly reports will be submitted to the Chancellor's office. A final report, including both formative and summative statements, will be submitted at the end of each semester in the 1990/91 academic year.

Formative evaluations will include evaluative statements from students, student facilitators, instructional aides, faculty, and the project director.

Summative statements will include completion rates, grades in courses attempted, comparisons of completion rates, and grade averages with all non-group students in the same courses. At the end of the academic year, similar statistics will be compiled and reported for graduation and transfer rates.
8. Dissemination Plan

NO “DISSEMINATION” ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]
9. Budget Narrative

[NO “BUDGET NARRATIVE” ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]