
Philosophy: The Reading and Writing Center

THE CENTER IS DEDICATED TO ASSISTING STUDENTS achieve competence in reading, writing, and related skills essential to success in their work at Cuyamaca College and beyond. The essence of our approach is to encourage students to take charge of their own learning. The Center's motto is "We make good writers and readers, not good papers," usually followed by "...then *they* make good papers."

To this end the Center provides students with a supportive environment in which they can choose (1) to work directly with tutors, (2) to work at their own pace in computer-aided or modular courses, or (3) to attend mini-courses. While like other tutorial centers our intent is to supplement and support existing instruction, a central function of our Center is also to expand instruction. It is mathematically impossible to individualize conventional courses to meet every specific need of every student (one teacher can't meet with thirty students half an hour apiece twice a week), but the Center environment is perfect for doing so.

Naturally this approach demands a high level of involvement from the Communication Arts faculty and the faculty of other disciplines as well. Curriculum development, tutor training, and philosophical and practical direction all must be a part of the wider effort of the department. Similarly, the efforts of the Center must be coordinated with the content-area programs. Since we are assisting *all* students for *all* courses in *all* departments, our program must be developed in light of real needs.

THE CENTER'S AIM IS TO ASSIST *ALL* STUDENTS enrolled at Cuyamaca College, native and non-native English speakers, developmental and highly experienced students.

Students who are identified as lacking in basic skills benefit from enrolling in conventional pre-collegiate-level reading and writing courses—*but they need more*. Likewise, ESL courses are a good first step toward academic success for non-native English speakers—*but not the last one*. Students need additional support as they move from pre-collegiate or ESL courses to the collegiate level. The Center will provide that support.

The Center is equally committed to helping intermediate and advanced students in the full range of disciplines taught at Cuyamaca. Writing and reading are skills which must be revisited as one achieves higher and higher levels of education and as one broadens one's repertoire of cognitive modes in varying disciplines. If, for example, a basic-skills student can benefit from sentence-skill instruction at the Center, advanced composition students can receive assistance with constructing compelling logical arguments. Of course developmental folks can get the help they need with reading as such, but the advanced psychology student can benefit from direction in negotiating technical or scientific discourse.

Many students choose a particular major not only because of a fondness for that subject but also because of an inherent ability to learn the subject. Others, however, may still struggle when reading college texts or when writing about their chosen discipline. The Center is committed to helping these students further enhance their reading and writing skills. □