West Los Angeles College  
Comprehensive Foundation Skills Plan  
Summer Think Tank Report to the Academic Senate  
September 14, 2010

The Summer Think Tank to draft a Comprehensive Foundation Skills Plan resulted from a charge from the college president to address West Los Angeles College’s Educational Master Plan Objective 2: By Fall 2010 build a comprehensive foundation skills plan to meet the needs of West students.

To ensure wide representation, participants included the AFT Faculty Guild, the Academic Senate, assessment, counseling, CTE, English, learning skills, liberal arts, mathematics, library, TRIO, classified and administration. Meetings were scheduled weekly on Thursdays throughout the summer.

The group agreed to the following:
- Start with the classroom
- Rethink and think outside of the paradigm
- Have choices for students

The group also agreed to ground rules for conducting meetings, including speaking to an issue no more than two times, have a vision for our “desired” outcome, be present and committed to the task at hand, listen to new ideas, establish an online “parking lot” in GoogleDocs for any unanswered questions and assigned homework after each meeting in preparation for the next meeting.

To provide a contextualized approach, the Think Tank reviewed ARCC data, the Educational Master Plan for 2008-2011, the report on the first annual meeting on learning communities, the Basic Skills Plan, iWest, possible funding sources, basic skills best practices and resources. Choosing “Foundation Skills” in place of “basic skills” was another conscious choice, reached by consensus after thoughtful input and discussion.

Not all participants attended every meeting, but each meeting was well attended, focused and productive, leading to a draft comprehensive foundation skills plan, sunshined at the morning breakout sessions of the August 26, 2010 Flex Day. Participants heard a brief introduction and then circulated among the poster boards summarizing each goal, planned action and strategy. They spoke with Think Tank participants and were asked to indicate their priorities among the strategies, using colored do

Guiding principles for the plan include, but aren’t limited to:
- Student equity (access, retention, persistence and completion) is essential to student success.
- At the earliest opportunity, we interact with students to identify their specific areas of need as well as strengths.
- Helping student traverse the intricacies of offices, classes and programs is a high priority.
Improving instructional practices to ensure heightened engagement in learning works in tandem with robust student services.

The draft plan is posted in GoogleDocs with the following four goals:

Goal 1 – Develop new curricula and revise existing coursework to provide more effective routes to college-level skills.
Goal 2 – Student Support Services and Programs
Goal 3 – Change the Culture of Faculty and Staff on Campus
Goal 4 – Organizational Structure and Staffing

With the draft completed, the Think Tank proposes a Senate committee to take charge of the plan and move it forward.
West Los Angeles College
Comprehensive Foundation Skills Plan

MISSION & PURPOSE

As a public community college, West Los Angeles College provides students with a “transformative educational experience.”

This transformation includes classes and services that focus on fundamental academic skills essential to pursuing further education, improving employability and contributing more fully to the quality of their personal lives and to their communities.

Through a carefully designed program of classes, any student wishing to earn a certificate, degree or to transfer will demonstrate many, if not all, of these institutional learning outcomes/core competencies: critical thinking; communication; quantitative reasoning; self-awareness/interpersonal; civic responsibility; technical competence; cultural diversity; ethics; aesthetics.

Our college recognizes that learning is a developmental process, inclusive of all learners, and we commit to students who do not yet possess the prerequisite skills to successfully pursue a course of study leading to a certificate, degree or transfer.

Foundation skills is an essential college commitment, requiring collaboration and communication in teaching and learning. Our integrated approach, a dynamic, collegewide and multidisciplinary partnership, brings together instruction and services to promote and support active and engaged learning for our students.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Student equity (access, retention, persistence and completion) is essential to student success.
- At the earliest possible opportunity, we interact with students to identify their specific areas of need as well as strengths.
- Helping students traverse the intricacies of offices, classes and programs is a high priority.
- Thoughtful assessment includes multiple pathways by which students’ needs are addressed.
- Improving instructional practices to ensure heightened engagement in learning works in tandem with robust student support services.
- Administrators, instructors and staff—all are teachers/learners seeking and practicing the highest educational standards.
CONCORDANCE

West Los Angeles College’s Educational Master Plan (EMP) 2008-2011 links with the Los Angeles College Community College District (LACCD) Strategic Plan, which reflects the California Community College system-wide plan. It states that “College outcomes in the areas of basic skills have been less successful and should be a focal point of near-term efforts to improve student success.” Thus, the EMP “recommends that the college concentrate on four primary objectives,” one of which is “Implement a comprehensive, integrated written plan for an effective Basic Skills program to meet the needs of all West students by 2010.”

[Include pertinent data of students.]
West Los Angeles College
Path to Student Success - English

(Draft Model - Still Under Development)

1. College? Sure
   - Non-credit College Readiness Course
   - ENG 20A Placement

2. College? Not Sure
   - ENG 28
   - ENG 101

3. ENG 28/101 Placement
   - ENG 20A Placement

4. ENG 28/101 Placement
   - ENG 21 Modified Learning Skills Course
   - ENG 21 Short-Term Course
   - ENG 21 Project-Centered Course

5. Non-credit College Readiness Course
   - New Student
   - Faculty Advisor or attends a group advising session
   - Those who are not sure will be enrolled in a non-credit college readiness course to prepare them for future enrollment.

6. Improved Reading Course

7. +/or
   - ENG 21 Learning Community
   - College Success Course (Harmony PD)
   - Math

Outcome: Placement re-testing for placement into ENG 21 or 101.

08/25/2010
WEST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE
PATH TO STUDENT SUCCESS - MATH

(Draft Model - Still Under Development)

College Readiness
Assessment: New student meets with a counselor/faculty advisor or attends a group advising session to determine their level of college readiness. Those who are not sure will be enrolled in a non-credit college readiness course to prepare them for future enrollment.

Students take the placement/assessment test, and are placed in the appropriate Math course.

Students "placed" in Math 105/110/112 will be further assessed and placed in an integrated learning community.

Student test scores places them into Math 115 or 117-118 two-semester course sequence or higher.

Specialized Advisement will guide student towards supportive services including tutoring and faculty-led workshops.

Student is enrolled into the appropriate math class.

Outcome: Placement re-testing for placement into Math 118, 125 or 227/245
Foundation Skills Comprehensive Plan

GOALS AND PLANNED ACTIONS

Goal 1 – Develop new curricula and revise existing coursework to provide more effective routes to college-level skills

Writing Team: Holly, Alice, Clare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned Action</th>
<th>Target Date for Completion</th>
<th>Funding Implications</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Restructure foundation skills curriculum</td>
<td>Courses approved and scheduled, Spring 2011; Certificates awarded (when??—varies with certificate)</td>
<td>• Math, English and ESL; vocational departments such as Allied Health, Hollywood Cinema Production, Resources</td>
<td>Modules of vocational courses addressing basic skills; basic skills courses for specific vocational programs</td>
<td>Courses approved and scheduled; Number of students receiving certificates incorporating skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-A – Contextualize math and English basic skills within specific vocational curricula.</td>
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<td>1-B – Revise current basic skills math and English curricula in a number of ways: 1) to reflect general life and survival skills 2) to center around goal-based scenarios (presentation projects) which will be celebrated as a college at end of term 3) Publish model syllabi</td>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
<td>None; faculty buy-in is biggest challenge</td>
<td>Math English and ESL faculty</td>
<td>Some courses include survival-skill instruction; Some courses are centered around term-long projects for presentation</td>
<td>Number of courses; Increase in number of students successfully finishing courses; Increase in number of students progressing to next level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### I-C—Provide short-term basic skills classes

- Model syllabi published for instructor adoption in Spring 2011
- Math English and ESL faculty
- Courses including survival-skill instruction
- Students complete math and English sequences more rapidly.
- Number of courses
- Increase in number of students successfully finishing courses
- Increase in number of students progressing to next level

### I-D—Provide self-paced Learning Skills courses to address identified skills deficits:

- Skills Assessment
- Modularized self-paced courses

| Pilot Skills Assessment Fall 2011 | Learning Skills faculty |
| Pilot modularized courses Fall 2011 | Matriculation director (do we still have this position?) |
| Assessments | Courses |
| Number of students assessed | Number of students enrolled in modules |
| Number of student completing modules | Number of students reassessing at higher levels(?) |

### Strategy:

#### 1.D—Adopt & publish recommended preparation advisories across the curriculum. (from the 2008-2011 Educational Master Plan)

- Prerequisites or advisories considered for all courses going through curriculum committee starting Fall 2010.
- In all gateway classes, Fall 2011.
- In all transfer classes, Fall 2011.

#### 1.E—Provide multiple pathways for qualified students to demonstrate prerequisites

- Fax/email system for verification of prerequisites so that students can register pending receipt of official documentation in place Spring 2011.
- Admissions (model after SMC)
- Website clearly explains system
- System works

| Curriculum Committee | Courses with prerequisites |
| Faculty updating courses | Courses with advisories |
| Division chairs | |
| Number of courses with prerequisites published | Number of courses with prerequisites enforced |
| Number of courses with advisories published | Increase in percentage of students succeeding in courses with new advisories or prerequisites. |
| Number of students using system | |
1.F—Focus Personal Development
Courses on college-level study and college life.

| Model syllabi published for instructor adoption in Spring 2011, focusing on values clarification, goal-setting, motivation, delayed gratification, self-care, time management, setting priorities |
|--|--|--|
| • Counseling faculty | • PD courses using the syllabi | • Number of students completing PD courses with new syllabi
• Number of students who have completed these PD courses attaining degrees and certificates |

1.G—Provide orientation in multiple formats

| Non-credit courses for group orientation of new students offered Spring 2011. Multi-media orientation courses available online Fall 2011 |
|--|--|--|
| • Counseling faculty • Distance Learning | • Group orientation courses offered • Web-based orientation courses offered | • Number of students completing orientations with SEPs • Number of students completing certificates and degrees • Number of students transferring |

1.H—Provide diagnostic assessment as well as placement assessment to new students to determine whether they would benefit from skill-building approaches, preferably through intense instructional blocks.

| Very early in process, identifying specific needs of new students. |

1.I—Design a pass/no pass, self-paced, approach that improves reading fluency, increases vocabulary, as well as basic instruction and practice in writing sentences and paragraphs.

| Designed to improve reading fluency, work attack strategies for decoding college-level vocabulary while also emphasizing writing processes. |

8/25/2010
| 1.J - Reading Program – Provide a comprehensive reading program to prepare students for college-level reading in general education classes. This could include:  
• Update existing course outlines to include reading skills  
• Design new reading courses  
• Professional development for faculty in general education disciplines  
• Enhanced connection and alignment between Language Arts and Learning Skills | Fall 2011 | Hire 1 faculty – FPIP prioritization required | Library/ Learning Skills and Language Arts divisions | • # of students enrolled in reading classes  
• # of general education courses with reading in the course outline |

| 1.K - Work with local high schools and middle schools to align English and math curricula. | Fall 2012 | Little to none; use web 2.0 technologies such as SurveyMonkey and GoogleGroups | Assoc. Dean, Teaching/ Learning Effectiveness  
Dept. chairs  
Curriculum Committee  
Feeder school faculty visit West instructors and visit our Project Presentation Fair (see 1-B) | Feedback forms from their visit to West  
Follow up online survey with them 1 mo. later  
5&10 year (or more freq.) assessments of whether alignment was achieved  
Increased numbers of assessed students place into transfer level courses at West |
# Foundation Skills Comprehensive Plan

**GOALS AND PLANNED ACTIONS**

**Goal 2 – Student Support Services and Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2-1. Empower students with pertinent information, tools and strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-1-A – Expand assessment and placement – Increase the numbers of students who assess when they enter West in order to increase student achievement outcomes of degree/certificate completion and transfer.</td>
<td>Initiated Spring 2009</td>
<td>Additional resources needed</td>
<td>Admissions; Matriculation</td>
<td>Counseling support provided is substantial, accessible, and integrated with academic courses/programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-1-B – Expand the availability of group counseling sessions to meet the needs of first-time students and expedite the development and approval of SEPS via DegreeWorks. Group counseling sessions for financial aid applicants have been ongoing for one year. SEP workshops are offered every month.</td>
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<td>2-1-C – Expand Faculty Advising</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Development Coordinator</td>
<td>Counseling support provided is substantial, accessible, and integrated with academic courses/programs</td>
<td>Classroom visits</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Develop a process for identifying and training faculty advisors to work directly with students who have declared majors within their disciplines. Faculty will provide basic information about the program roadmaps and pathways related to the courses they teach.</td>
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<td>Counseling Division and Academic Departments</td>
<td>Counseling of students is enhanced by Discipline-specific advising. FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Pair discipline faculty advisors with counselors to develop departmental orientations. Expand beyond current pairings with math and English. The goal is to make this official and also incorporate Child Development and/or Business in the pilot. Possible pairs: Math 105, English 20, English 21 with PD005. Math 112, Math 115 or English 28 with PD40.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>2-ll. Learning Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PD Transfer Course</strong> — The PD Discipline will develop a PD transfer course</td>
<td><strong>Fall 2011</strong></td>
<td>A different PD course will probably be eliminated in the course offerings</td>
<td><strong>PD Discipline / Counseling Department</strong></td>
<td>More students will transfer because they will be more informed about transfer options</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Alert System** — Implement the new alert system:  
- Phase 1 – Train faculty to use the new online early alert system in a timely manner  
- Phase 2 – Expand distribution on the reports | | | | |
| **2-II-A** — Leverage the learning communities concept college-wide.  
- Connect Student Services and Academic Affairs  
- Expand the Mentor program, including training for faculty and staff  
- Student tutors in class – Supplemental Instruction  
- Start a counseling graduate internship program to conduct new student orientations and expand paraprofessional counseling services and classroom visits | Requires funding | Outside funding needed | | |
| **2-II-B** — Strengthen Tutoring programs  
- Math, English FT Instructor involvement with tutor training  
- In-class tutor for Math, English classes – Supplemental Instruction | | | Chair of Math, English | Higher instructor visibility / involvement with instruction outside of class  
Easy access for students to a tutor with direct knowledge of methods used in their class |
| 2.G - Expand faculty and classroom involvement in the DSP&S program  
- Math, English FT Instructor involvement with DSP&S program  
- DSP&S classroom visitations to Basic Skills classes  
- Create a team of presenters from all staff and faculty to conduct general presentations of all student services, including online services. | | | Early intervention for students qualifying for DSP&S program |
### GOALS AND PLANNED ACTIONS

#### Goal 3 – Change the culture of faculty and staff on campus

<table>
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<th>Immediate Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3-1. Faculty Learning Communities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1.1 – Create faculty learning communities to provide instructors and counselors with models of effective instructional practices and opportunities to discuss and share instructional strategies. (i.e., dialog, brown bags, classroom visits, etc.) These should include groups collaborating on particular projects like contextualizing specific skills classes. An English or math teacher working with a group of Allied Health students would benefit from having regular contact with some Allied Health faculty, to build that into.</strong></td>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
<td>Additional funding required, possibly grants</td>
<td>Associate Dean, Teaching/Learning Effectiveness</td>
<td>Faculty experiment with new pedagogical strategies</td>
<td># of faculty who participate in learning communities, # of new techniques implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2 – Create cross-discipline professional learning communities that practice reflection on an ongoing basis. The Poppy copy encourages faculty, staff, and administrators to active reflection of the college's basic skills program, but does not have a detailed strategy. Rodgers (2002) defined a four-phase professional development reflective cycle as 1) presence experience, 2) description of experience, 3) analysis of experience, and 4) perimentation. Key to this process is focusing on the description of what happened in the classroom versus the instructor's interpretation. Learning communities will consist of a cross-section of campus faculty to meet to discuss &quot;moments&quot; in the classroom. It is a qualitative process through which each instructor takes turns presenting their moments while the other instructors take turns asking qualitative questions about what happened (and do not jump into offering advice). By putting air comments in the form of questions, the presenting instructor expands the details what happened. The instructors asking questions help the presenting instructor see a situation objectively (for instance rather than being labeled lazy, students might have a knowledge of key terms and help seeking behavior).</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>All departments can participate</td>
<td>Faculty learn reflective practices and build a shared framework of student learning</td>
<td># of faculty who participate in professional learning communities, Qualitative assessments from participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3.4 – Teach students about metacognition and help-seeking behavior. Metacognition refers to one's knowledge about their cognitive processes. Students engage in metacognition when they notice that they are not learning something. Many students know what it feels like to read and re-read a section of a chapter and still have no idea what they read. Often times, they feel helpless, but there are strategies that they can use to improve their cognition. First, they can read the headings, introductions, and conclusions of the chapters. Second, they can read tables, pay attention to the flow of the chapter, etc. Third, they can consult their syllabus for the learning objective. Metacognitive practices include using simple strategies such as these to improve one's cognition. There are others that are obvious to educators, but are often overlooked by students. These include knowing the best environment to study, how much time one should study before a test, etc. This also includes when one should ask for help. Students often lack help-seeking behavior (such as visiting an instructor during office hours, contacting their instructors when they are experiencing a problem at home, etc.). The result: students fall behind. To prevent this from occurring, instructors will spend time during the first three classes teaching students how to read their text book, how to study, and how to identify when they need assistance. They will also use the time to encourage students to come see them. Furthermore, a college-wide webpage consisting of metacognitive strategies and encouraging help-seeking behavior will be created and posted on syllabi. | Spring 2011 | N/A | • Academic Senate | • Students learn about their own learning.  
• Students learn help-seeking behavior. | • Number of times students seek help from their instructors. |
### E. Solicit feedback focused on student learning

When students are not getting it,” there is often a difference between what is taught and what is learned. It is therefore important to solicit feedback from students. Effective practices include ending out half or one-third sheets of paper and asking each student to answer multiple questions at the end of class. Sample questions: “What did you learn today? How can you apply this new knowledge to your life? What is unclear for you?” These questions allow students to focus on their learning and apply their knowledge. Student responses to these brief questions provide an opportunity for instructors to gauge student learning.

| Fall 2010 | N/A | All instructors | Instructors able to gauge student learning. | Students think of ways to apply new knowledge. | Feedback reflects student learning outcomes for the class session. |

### F. Schedule regular, informal, group faculty meetings with the academic deans

-  

### G. Division chairs meet with their division faculty to discuss curriculum and pedagogy

-  

### H. Use an Etudes Discussion Board as a forum for curriculum and pedagogy discussions

-  

## B-III. Strengthen connection between Counselors and Faculty and Staff

### J - DSP&S Service Referral Training

Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) will provide training sessions for faculty and staff about learning disabilities and other learning challenges. The sessions will include training regarding the identification and referral to DSP&S of students demonstrating learning challenges.

| Spring 2011 | None | Dean, Student Support Services | Faculty become more knowledgeable about learning challenges | # of students referred to DSP&S |

### J - General Service Referral Training

The Counseling Office will provide training to faculty and staff regarding the assessment of risk factors and warning signs that may warrant referral to counseling services. The Counseling Office maintains a list of community-based referrals for psychological, medical, legal, and social services in document known as the ‘rainbow guide.’ Access to and knowledge about the information should be expanded:

- Make complete list available electronically
- Make smaller version available in print for faculty reference

| Spring 2011 | None | Counseling Division | Faculty become more knowledgeable about risk factors | # of faculty who receive training |
# Foundation Skills Comprehensive Plan Template

## GOALS AND PLANNED ACTIONS

### Goal 4 – Organizational Structure and Staffing

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<tr>
<td>4.A – Reconfigure a Foundation Skills or Student Success Committee</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td>• New committee is established, and meets regularly</td>
<td>• Completion of committee assessment form</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.B – Participate in district-wide student success committees and activities</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td>• At least 10 West faculty, staff and administrators participate in DW SSI activities</td>
<td>• Reports of this participation in minutes of new Foundation Skills Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.C – Hire Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning Effectiveness</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>Funding for new position</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.D – Hire Full-time Learning Skills instructors (Learning Center) – The college will hire two permanent full-time Learning Skills instructors (one with an emphasis in Math, the other with an emphasis in English) to staff the Learning Center and provide supervision for tutoring and Writing Lab services. The instructors will also teach Learning Skills courses and coordinate the Learning Center community.</td>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>Funding for 2 new positions – FPUP prioritization required</td>
<td>Library/Learning Skills Division • Hire 2 faculty</td>
<td>• Hire 2 faculty</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.E – Recruit and hire faculty who are both knowledgeable and enthusiastic about developmental education are recruited and hired to teach at the college.</td>
<td>Fall 2001</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>• Division Chairs • Senate • AFT Guild</td>
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</table>