

Conference Proposal: 196th 2YC₃ Conference, 1st 2YC₃ Web Conference

Title: The “Chemistry Help Room”; A Low Cost Method for Supplemental Instruction

Presenters:

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Abstract:

San Diego Miramar College (a California Community College) has successfully implemented a supplemental instruction (SI) program for Basic Skills English and Math students using a small amount of seed money from the California Basic Skills Initiative (BSI). Student success, persistence, and retention rates are significantly higher for the students who take advantage of the SI program. Unfortunately, BSI funds cannot be used to support supplemental instruction for chemistry courses, even though there are many students enrolled in chemistry courses who would benefit from this program and who are also enrolled in other basic skills level courses. With the budget crisis in California, departmental or campus funds to support such a program for chemistry students do not exist.

In response to the need and lack of funding, faculty in chemistry developed a creative low cost supplemental program that involves a combination of volunteer peer tutors who are enrolled in a service learning course, and faculty office hours, to create the “Chemistry Help Room”. Each semester, faculty members recruit peer tutors for the following semester. During the first week of each semester, a schedule is developed and posted in chemistry classrooms, and announced to chemistry students and faculty.

Students may come to the Chemistry Help Room to attend peer led workshops/study sessions, or to meet with faculty members who are holding office hours. During the week, there are opportunities for students to obtain assistance or receive supplemental instruction for nearly every course in the curriculum. Qualitative data from student surveys shows that the program has been valuable to the chemistry students who have participated. Currently, efforts are underway to collect quantitative data through a student tracking system, in order to determine if the program produces successful student outcomes.