Learning Center Simplified: Tutoring, Testing, and SI

The Learning Center has undergone many transformations over the past thirty years: Reading and Study Skills changed to “Study Strategies” and then to “Success Strategies”; “Core Curriculum” changed to “Science and Humanities”; “Math” transformed to “Math and Business”; and “Writing” shifted to “Writing and Languages.”

Imagine being a brand-new freshman and solving this puzzle: Which desk should I call for help with Spanish? Isn’t it a humanities course? And what if I need help writing a psychology paper; do I get a psychology or a writing tutor? And is physics a math course or science course? I’m a student with a disability: where the heck is testing services?

The Learning Center has decided to simplify! We are eliminating our four separate tutoring areas (Science and Humanities, Writing and Languages, Math and Business, and Success Strategies). Beginning in Fall 2016 there will be a “Tutoring” area and a “Testing” area. No matter the course or content, students will have one number to call to make an appointment, and one area to report to when they visit the Learning Center.

Students with disabilities who need testing services will easily find our “Testing” area, no longer housed within a “Success Strategies” nomenclature.

**Tutoring. Testing. Simple!**

Bear with us as we re-imagine and remodel our physical space and marketing materials throughout this spring and summer. We are confident that the end product will be a streamlined experience for students seeking academic assistance.

The Learning Center is also pleased to continue the extremely successful Supplemental Instruction program. Online tutoring will also be launched in select courses this upcoming fall in a “Learning Center After Hours” format that will appeal to distance, commuter, and late-night/weekend studiers.

Visit our website for updates later this summer to learn more!

bsu.edu/learningcenter

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**Learning Center Usage: August 2015-March 2016**

- **Tutoring:**
  - 12,150 visits
  - 3,043 students

- **Supplemental Instruction:**
  - 11,382 visits
  - 2,169 students

- **Test proctoring:**
  - 1,539 visits
  - 683 students

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**So far this year, we have served 5,895 students for a total of 25,071 visits!**
Sophia Borzabadi, a sophomore from Noblesville, Indiana, began tutoring at the Success Strategies Desk last semester. She specializes in a variety of skills including test-taking, note-taking, study skills, time management, and organization. She also helps clients work on managing test anxiety and improving reading comprehension. Sophia was drawn to tutoring because she takes great pride in helping her clients gain confidence: “Last semester, I tutored a freshman client who was struggling with exams and feeling overwhelmed. After helping her develop organizational strategies and making a studying plan, she started to improve and gain confidence. She was so excited and proud of herself when she received an A on her history exam, and she thanked me for helping her reach her full potential. It was such a happy moment and I was so proud of her success!” Sophia is studying elementary education with a concentration in gifted/talented education. After graduation, she wishes to travel and teach abroad through the Peace Corps. Coordinator Robert Plienis had this to add: “Sophia is a very talented tutor who goes above and beyond to assist both clients and her fellow Success Strategies team members. I have received positive feedback from both Learning Center clients and those Sophia has worked with in the community. No doubt Sophia is going to make a wonderful teacher in the future!”

Megan Chalfant, a senior from Carmel, Indiana, has been tutoring at the Writing and Languages Desk for two semesters, focusing on helping clients with French and writing skills. She became a tutor because of the opportunity to get to know students’ individual needs. Megan enjoys encouraging and supporting her clients to achieve success: “There was one [English language learner] client who came to me feeling very stressed after a review session for her master’s thesis. It was great to be there for her, talk through her concerns, and help her revise her thesis step by step. Over the next few weeks, I enjoyed getting to know her, hear her passion for her research, and see her gain confidence in her work. At the end of the semester, her sincere thanks was such a reward as a tutor.” Coordinator Robert Plienis also highlights Megan’s ability to connect with her clients: “Megan’s smile and commitment to clients are well-known at the desk. She is extremely passionate and goes above and beyond to assist students who need her help. Clients have provided excellent feedback regarding Megan including her ability to make them feel comfortable and raise their confidence.” Megan is currently double majoring in drawing and French. After graduation, she will be making a pilgrimage to World Youth Day in Poland, and then will be spending some extended time in France doing volunteer work!

Claire Kauffman, a junior from Columbia City, Indiana, is celebrating her fourth semester as a History 150 SI leader. Claire became an SI leader because she received so much help from the SI sessions when she took the course, and she wanted to continue that success for future students. Her love for teaching and helping others is clear: “I have had a lot of students who say they benefit from my SI sessions. Some say that without the sessions they wouldn’t be passing the class. Some say they wish they had started coming sooner. Even semesters later I have students express how valuable those sessions were. These compliments validate that I am making a positive impact.” Coordinator Jennifer Haley adds: “Claire has been a top-notch SI leader for two years. She regularly goes above and beyond the call of duty to provide supplemental materials and instruction to Dr. Neel’s students. Her energy, enthusiasm, and ubiquitous smile will be greatly missed!” Continuing on the theme of helping others, Claire is pursuing a major in nursing with minors in interpersonal relations and sociology, and she wants to continue on that path by becoming a Registered Nurse in an Intensive Care Unit.
Levi Smith, a senior from Huntington, Indiana, has been with the Writing and Languages Desk for two semesters tutoring Spanish and writing. He pursued tutoring to share his passion for learning another language and to make this process fun for other students. He shares this story about sharing this passion: “My first semester as a tutor with the Learning Center I had a Spanish client who had never taken a Spanish course before coming to Ball State. Taking an immersive Spanish course, taught entirely in Spanish, was very overwhelming for her. She came to tutoring feeling frustrated and lost. But with weekly appointments, by the end of the semester she was writing compositions in Spanish with impressive accuracy for never having taken a foreign language course. Both she and I were very proud of her progress.” Coordinator Robert Plienis praises Levi as being “an excellent tutor who cares deeply about his clients. I regularly receive positive feedback regarding Levi from clients including ‘he is the best tutor I’ve ever had in the LC.’ He is kind, very patient, and will be missed!” Levi is currently studying pre-vet/zoology and Spanish, and he has great plans to become board certified in Reptilian, Exotic Mammal, and Avian medicine and eventually be an exotic species consultant and professor at a veterinary teaching hospital. Check out his exciting news under Student Staff Honors and Awards on page four!

Luke Vaughn, a senior from Pendleton, Indiana, began working as an organic chemistry (CHEM 231) SI leader in Fall 2014. When Luke took the class there was no SI leader, and he knew he could have used the help. Now, he sees the benefits of SI for so many of his peers: “One night after an SI session the room started filling with familiar faces. They were students I had in previous semesters who were there for a Organic II study session. When I told them I was happy to see them there, many of them said that it was because of me. It was a great feeling, seeing that I had made a difference.” Coordinator Jennifer Haley expresses her thanks to Luke: “Luke has accomplished quite a bit in his two years with the Learning Center; he has assisted a great number of students in a very challenging Chemistry course that is taught by four different instructors. He is friendly, approachable, and willing to put in a great amount of work to help his students. Thank you, Luke!” Luke is currently studying Pre-Med/Biology and plans to attend medical school when he graduates in May.

Jacob Walker, a senior from Gaston, Indiana, has been tutoring at the Math and Business Desk for a whopping THREE YEARS! Jacob became a tutor because he wanted to help his fellow students succeed. His three years of service to the Learning Center show his strong commitment to his clients, and Jacob shares these stories about his clients: “I had one client who thought she was bad at math. However, she turned out to be one of the most talented clients I have ever tutored, and I always made it a point to praise her ability and build her confidence.” Coordinators Robert Plienis and Jennifer Haley had this to say about Jacob: “Jacob is an excellent tutor who has the unique ability to explain the most complex mathematical concepts to his clients in ways they are able to understand. We appreciate his work with clients, but also his service to the desk. As a Level 3/Master Tutor, Jacob has stepped up to assist with desk coverage, training of new tutors and graduate assistants, and regularly observes and mentors new tutors.” Jacob is majoring in pure mathematics and plans to continue his education in graduate school at Ball State.

Matlin Weay-Ray, a senior from Greenfield, Indiana, has been a Nursing 330 SI leader for two semesters. Matlin is currently pursuing a degree in nursing with a minor in human development. She plans on becoming a Registered Nurse and will be getting married in July! Matlin decided to become an SI leader so she could give the same help to other students that her SI leader gave to her. She enjoys what she does as an SI leader and loves seeing her positive impact on the students she serves: “I consider it a success anytime one of the students thanks me for helping them to make sense of a concept.” Coordinator Jennifer Haley adds these positive comments: “Matlin is one of those brilliant students who is not only concerned with her own studies, but has a genuine desire to help others succeed. Her students in NUR 330 love her! She has helped many of them to stay in the major and move on to the next course. I wish her the best of luck as she enters the nursing profession!”

Best of luck to all of our Superstar tutors and SI leaders!
Many of the tutors and SI leaders in the Learning Center are awarded Dean’s List honors every semester. Read more about other prestigious awards and honors received by our exceptional student staff.

Student Staff Honors and Awards

Tanner Barton (Writing and Languages) spoke at the World Diabetes Day in Copenhagen, Denmark in November about his life with Type 1 Diabetes. He is also a captain for the Ball State Men’s Swimming and Diving program. Most notably, Tanner has been selected by the Mid-American Conference to represent the MAC at the NCAA Leadership Forum in Phoenix, Arizona in April.

Hannah Dwyer (Science and Humanities) recently received a study abroad scholarship for her Central Europe Field Study this summer.

Jenna McAbee (Science and Humanities) was recently accepted into the 2016-2017 Ball State University Radiography Program. She will begin her clinicals in May of 2016. When Jenna is finished with this program, she hopes to go on to become an Ultrasound Technician.

Savannah Myers (Supplemental Instruction) will be going on a study abroad trip in May to Central Europe, including Poland, Germany, Slovenia, Croatia, Austria, Hungary, and Italy.

Rebecca Shroyer (Writing and Languages) was accepted into the Ball State Dietetic Internship Program, as well as the Ball State Dietetic Graduate Program. She also traveled to Turin, Italy for Spring Break on a mission trip with her church, The Revolution.

Levi Smith (Writing and Languages) was accepted into the Purdue School of Veterinary Medicine for the class of 2020 to pursue a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine.

Alex Thien (Math and Business) has been inducted into Beta Gamma Sigma in honor of his academic achievements within the Ball State Business Program, specifically for his grades in his major of Accounting. Beta Gamma Sigma chooses the top ten percent of business students to be inducted into the organization.

Congratulations!
Level Three CRLA Master Tutors Recognized

2016: Joel Summer, Madison Turner, Jacob Walker, Zane Langenbrunner

2015: Victoria Roser, Landon Kiser, Lauren Fosnight, Becca Byers, Daniela Sorrell

2013: Joseph Urban, Aubrey Smith, Zoey Spengler

2012: Brian Wysock, Jamalat Daoud

2011: William Jacobs, Quinlin Hanson

2010: Christopher Moore

2008: Jessica Connor, Erika Smith, Laura Graves, Jacy Willis

2007: Christine Rich, Kelly Sue Schroering, Andrea Dawn Frazier, Amanda Reese

2006: Andy Ahlersmeyer, Thomas Carlton

Level Three Tutor Certification indicates Master Tutor status. Level Three tutors have engaged in 30 hours of training and at least 75 hours of tutoring. They have also completed self-directed professional development projects.

Learning Center Staff Honored at Disability Services Awards Ceremony

Each year, Disability Services recognizes outstanding students with disabilities with awards named in honor of Greg and Mary Beth Fehribach, long time DS supporters. Greg, a prominent Indianapolis attorney, was student body president as an undergraduate at Ball State and is a former member of the university’s Board of Trustees. He currently serves Ball State as a Distinguished Fellow for the Disability Project, a program designed to facilitate economic and employment opportunities for college graduates with physical disabilities. Students who have done well in the classroom and who have furthered the cause of access and opportunity either through direct action and/or through their example are chosen to receive Fehribach awards. The Fehribachs presented awards to six students this year.

Tanner Barton is a senior health science and Spanish major from Dublin, Ohio. In addition to being a terrific student (4.0 GPA), Tanner is an inaugural member of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and the Co-editor of the College Diabetes Survival Guide. Tanner is also a member of the Ball State swim team and is the team captain this year. He represented all male Mid-American Conference student-athletes this year at the NCAA Leadership Summit. He was one of the recipients of the Fehribach award this year. Congratulations, Tanner!

Dr. Jennifer Haley, Access Award Recipient, and Dr. Courtney Jarrett, Associate Director of Disability Services

Dr. Haley was a recipient of the Access Award, given in recognition of efforts to ensure access and opportunity for students with disabilities. In her fifteen years as a coordinator, Dr. Haley has employed many students with disabilities as SI leaders and tutors.
Education’s path is not always clear, at least not for me. As a first generation college student, I completed a two-year degree in legal assistance at BSU. It was quite an achievement because I was working and commuting to school. After working for a lawyer and realizing that law was not for me, I ended up transferring coursework to Taylor University for a degree in Elementary Education. After graduation, teaching jobs were scarce, so I started working in higher education and found it challenging and rewarding in ways I had never imagined. Interacting with students was something I wanted as part of my career. While working, I completed the Master’s degree in Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education at BSU, and eventually a Master’s in Library Science degree from IUPUI. Working with information, information literacy skills and student needs had become my passion. After completing the MLS program, I worked as a librarian and Tutor Coordinator at Taylor University where I saw first-hand the connection and importance between what learning centers and libraries can do. In 2004, I became an Information Services Librarian at BSU and in 2010 completed a third Master’s degree in Executive Development for Public Services. So, here I am after a long and winding road that leads back to higher education!

As a librarian, I get the opportunity to work with many offices, students, faculty, and staff around campus and share the importance of information literacy. In classes I talk about research, how to search for information, how information is created, credibility of information and more. My goal is to make people more comfortable exploring and asking questions about their research while diving into the resources to find possible answers and ideas.

To help students find information, the library has several options from chatting with a librarian to a one-to-one consultation. These consultations are an opportunity to get focused research attention. I enjoy these because I get to see what the students are working on and how they are using the resources. We also answer a variety of questions at the Reference/Information Desk in person and on the telephone. Students can stop by and ask their questions and tutors should feel free to send students our way or give them our email and contact information.

My educational journey definitely had bumps along the way. While an undergrad I quickly realized that I needed the services of the Learning Center or I wouldn’t be able to continue my college education. Let’s just say my grades told me to get a tutor! So, I did and it was the best decision I made! Having been there, I completely understand when a student needs help. My view is that the library and librarians help people at all levels find the necessary parts of a project or paper while the Learning Center can help them put it together--two parts of an extremely important whole!
Lead Tutors Continue Wonderful Work

The Lead Tutor program started in Spring 2015 as an opportunity for veteran tutors to be able to contribute to the Learning Center’s success and to develop individual leadership and professional skills. Each semester, four tutors who have completed at least one year of tutor training are chosen to participate in the program.

The responsibilities of a Lead Tutor are: 1) mentoring beginning tutors; 2) observing tutors and offering them feedback to help foster their development; 3) collaborating with fellow Lead Tutors to present a tutor in-service training session; 4) serving as a resource and guide for training for all Learning Center tutors; and 5) collaborating with Learning Center Coordinators to discuss Learning Center topics and events.

Lead Tutors for Fall 2015 included Nikki McCord, Maggie Schmits, Joel Summer, and Madison Turner. This excellent team developed a tutor training video on positive reinforcement and they presented an in-service on working with non-traditional learners.

The Lead Tutors for Spring 2016 are busy working on a tutor training video covering the topic of active listening. They will also be presenting an in-service on the dynamics of the tutor/client relationship. Lead Tutors for Spring 2016 are as follows:

Tim Hoblin (Frankfort, IL) – Tim, a senior majoring in Actuarial Science, is a tutor at the Math and Business Desk. When asked about his experience as a Lead Tutor, Tim stated, “Being a Lead Tutor has been great because it has given me the opportunity to extend my knowledge as a tutor not only to clients but to tutors as well. Taking a larger role in a practice I am already passionate about is something I greatly enjoy.”

Landen Kiser (Greenville, OH) – Landen, a senior majoring in Communication Studies with a minor in Geography, is a Geography tutor at the Science and Humanities Desk. When asked about his experience as a Lead Tutor, Landen stated, “I enjoy being a Lead Tutor because I love helping others in any way I can. Not only does this role allow me to help my clients develop the skills they need for effective learning in their classes, it also gives me the opportunity to serve as a mentor and support-giver to my colleagues and friends.”

Jenna McAbee (Leo, IN) – Jenna, a senior majoring in Radiography & Health Science, is a Physiology tutor at the Science and Humanities Desk. When asked about her experience as a Lead Tutor, Jenna stated, “I love being a Lead Tutor because I like having first-time tutors come to me if they have questions; this opportunity has taught me a lot about leadership. I enjoy helping tutors become the best they can be in order to help clients succeed in their courses.”

Joel Summer (Lafayette, IN) – Joel, a senior majoring in Secondary English Education with a minor in Spanish, is a tutor at the Writing and Languages Desk. When asked about his experience as a Lead Tutor, Joel stated, “I’ve really enjoyed being a Lead Tutor for multiple reasons. With the tutoring I do for the Learning Center, I get to implement the educational practices I’ve been learning in the classroom. Being a Lead Tutor also allows me to train and guide others as they work with students. It’s a really rewarding experience for all aspects of my life.”

Our Lead Tutors have continued to show excellence in all that they do!
Professional service to national organizations is imperative in higher education. Networking with colleagues in our field has allowed us to develop great programming for our students here at Ball State. It is tremendously rewarding to share ideas and learn from colleagues across the country, to present at national conferences and publish in peer-reviewed journals, to plan conferences, and to be of service to others who are new to the field.

Coordinator Jennifer Haley Elected NCLCA President

Jennifer Haley was elected President of NCLCA (National College Learning Center Association) and was inducted into this office at the annual conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in October, 2015.

NCLCA’s mission is to support learning center professionals as they develop and maintain learning centers, programs, and services to enhance student learning at the post-secondary level.

Dr. Haley has been serving as the chief officer of the organization, supervising all business and affairs, and acting as chairperson and presiding officer of the Board of Directors and membership meetings. Over the past fifteen years, she has served on the Executive Board as Vice President, Conference Chair, Publications Officer, and Webmaster.

She will also serve chairperson of the 2017 NCLCA Summer Institute.

LC Coordinator Robert Plienis Serves as Chair for International Conference

Robert Plienis, Success Strategies and Testing Coordinator and Writing and Languages Tutoring Coordinator, is currently serving as Conference Chairperson for the 39th annual Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) conference. The conference is scheduled for July 11-16 at the JW Marriott in downtown Indianapolis.

AHEAD boasts over 2,900 members from 12 countries. This organization supports the belief that society is ultimately enriched by difference. AHEAD provides opportunities for professional development to people who work to assure usable, sustainable, and inclusive higher education environments for students, faculty and staff with disabilities. Plienis has been a member of AHEAD for 12 years, chaired this same conference in 2009 in Louisville, KY, and served as the organization’s Manager of Member Services and Marketing from 2010-2012.

The theme for this year’s conference is “Toward Equity and Access: Illuminating the Pathways AHEAD”. Plienis has been working for over a year to organize logistics and social activities for the conference, which is expected to draw over 1,200 attendees.
Tutors are certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), providing a national standard for skills, training, and recognition for successful work.

SI Leaders are trained according to the rules and procedures of the International Center for Supplemental Instruction.

The Learning Center is certified by the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE), an organization that recognizes programs that meet or exceed the criteria of good practices as defined by the professional research and literature of the field.

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**Mission Statement:**

The mission of University College’s Learning Center is to enhance the academic success of Ball State students by providing free peer tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, and workshops covering a variety of academic issues. In addition, the Learning Center serves as a scholarly pre-professional experience for undergraduate and graduate student employees. Finally, the Center strives to impact the extended university community through faculty development efforts, learning technologies, and outreach programs at other sites.

**Goals:**

- Provide an educational opportunity for each postsecondary student admitted to the university.
- Develop in each student the skills necessary for the attainment of academic, career, and life goals.
- Maintain the university’s academic standards by providing academic assistance through peer tutoring, workshops, Supplemental Instruction, and review sessions which pertain to specific classes as well as broader academic skills.
- Enhance the retention of students.
- Continue professional training of the coordinators and tutors so that current theories, research, and teaching strategies can be implemented within the program.
- Guide students to reach their academic potential while realizing the benefits of academic collaboration.