

This Month’s Topic: The Impact of Tutoring Center Utilization on Course Success and Completion Rates

At the request of the Crafton Hills College Tutoring Center (TC), the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning (OIERP) examined the success and completion rates from Fall 2013 through Spring 2015 of students utilizing the TC as compared to those not utilizing the TC. Specifically, students accessing the TC were compared to students not accessing the TC but enrolled in the same course sections.

Findings

As illustrated in the figure below, students accessing the TC were significantly more likely to earn a successful grade (77.5%) than were students not accessing the TC (69.5%; $p < .001$). On the basis of the effect size (d), this difference was also found to be meaningful or practically significant ($d = 0.18$). The differences in success rates between those accessing the TC versus those not accessing the TC were notable among male students ($d = 0.21$), students 19 years of age or younger ($d = 0.20$), and Hispanic students ($d = 0.20$); that is, the success rates of these student groups benefitted most from accessing the TC.

Students utilizing the TC were also significantly more likely to complete their classes (94.3%) than were students not utilizing the TC (89.6%; $p < .001$). And this difference was found to reflect a meaningful or practically significant effect ($d = 0.16$). The differences in completion rates between those accessing the TC versus those not accessing the TC were particularly meaningful with respect to African American students ($d = 0.22$) and male students ($d = 0.18$); such findings indicate that the completion rates of such student groups benefitted most from accessing the TC.



Figure 1. The success and completion rates from Fall 2013 to Spring 2015 of students utilizing the Tutoring Center as compared to students enrolled in the same course sections but not utilizing the Tutoring Center (i.e., comparison group).

Possible Implications of Findings and Study Limitations

A clear implication of the findings is that the TC may offer students a viable pathway by which to enhance their ability to successfully complete their courses. Additionally, these findings suggest that certain groups of students (i.e., Hispanic students) may especially benefit from accessing the TC. One limitation of the findings is that it is possible that students accessing the TC are somehow different from those not accessing the TC in a way that may account for the observed differences. For instance, students accessing the TC may already possess stronger academic skills or higher academic motivation than those not accessing the TC – two factors that past research has found to be associated with course success and completion.