

## **What are Directed Learning Activities?**

A Directed Learning Activity (DLA) is an exercise developed by a faculty member that students complete in a tutoring center. A DLA allows the students to gain more practice on a concept or skill introduced in class. A DLA differs from a homework assignment in that a DLA 1) usually has a short time limit – 30 to 45 minutes, and 2) requires a follow-up session with a tutor after completion.

Though DLAs are not graded, some instructors assign the completion of a certain number of DLAs per semester as a percentage of the students' overall grade. Assigning DLAs assures that the students are getting extra practice and receiving face-to-face assistance from tutors. Ideally, DLAs are created as a department project so as to ensure consensus among the faculty on what skills and concepts are crucial for particular courses. DLAs can be posted on a department's or tutoring center's site.

Chaffey College developed the idea of Directed Learning Activities for use in their Success Centers. Other community colleges have implemented DLAs in their academic success centers as well.

## **Benefits of Creating and Assigning Directed Learning Activities**

A carefully designed DLA can:

- give the students extra practice and require them to receive immediate feedback on their comprehension and performance.
- give instructors a way to expand on ideas and skills they were only able to briefly cover in class.
- allow students to review foundational concepts and skills they have not mastered before entering their present courses.
- connect classroom instruction and tutoring activities by showing tutors the discrete skills needed by students for their courses.
- save valuable class time by reducing the amount of review done in class

## **The following are some links to get you started:**

DLAs for math, Santa Barbara City College <http://sbcclearningresources.net/dla/contents/math/>

DLAs for English, Santa Barbara City College <http://sbcclearningresources.net/dla/contents/writing/>

DLAs for English, Chaffey College <http://www.chaffey.edu/writingctr/DLAInfoSheet.pdf>

DLAs for reading, Santa Barbara City College <http://sbcclearningresources.net/dla/contents/reading/>

DLAs for study skills, Santa Barbara College <http://sbcclearningresources.net/dla/contents/study/>

DLAs for English, ESL and Reading <http://academic.rcc.edu/wrc/directed.jsp>

If you have any questions about creating your own directed learning activities, please contact Gary Sosa, [gsosa@palomar.edu](mailto:gsosa@palomar.edu)