

## Ingham Impact Episode 11 - The Early College at Lansing Community College Transcript

We like to joke around here and say that teaching is tertiary; that our first role is mentoring, second is tweaking the program to make every opportunity the best that it can be for students, and that we still teach in the classroom.

My role here is one of support for students as well as instructor.

It's really designed as a dual role. We are assigned to students when they start with us at the kick-off; it's an orientation of sorts. It's a relationship that we begin then and it carries through all the way to the end when we have our convocation, and hopefully they're participating in LCC (Lansing Community College) commencement.

And, during the first year I serve as English instructor for all of those new students. After that it's my mentees, checking in on a regular basis even once they're out in college classes, helping them with everything from scheduling and planning, career exploration, planning an internship or a volunteer opportunity which is part of the requirement to finish, and then helping with the college search for many of them, and the application process.

We guide and direct those students from academic situations to the challenges of life.

And three years is a long time, but it's

not a long time, and it's a great opportunity to build relationships and help those students grow into wonderful young men and women, to be successful.

Early College is neither high school nor college; it's a unique experience that helps transition students from high school to college. There's components of high school; we get them ready for standardized tests, we still need them to attend school every day, but then there's that college component of: you have to do homework outside of school; you have to know how to study; how can you be independent and responsible at the same time. So those are the things we hope to transition students to so as they become a more independent learner, they're also becoming more responsible. So we take juniors in high school, they come to LCC's campus full time.

They still maintain that high school connection but they're really on LCC's campus full time, and they're taking core classes and we're really pushing and teaching success skills, which are these soft skills that we know these students are going to need to be successful in college classes; and that's really our main goal is to get students to college early, right? Early College. All of our students who stay with us are taking college classes at least in their second year with us, which is their senior year

in high school.

We keep them for a 13th year, as they pursue certificates and associate degrees in basically whatever LCC has to offer.

And then after three years students walk away with a high school diploma, and ideally an associate degree or certificate, and then many of our students go off to four year schools or enter the job world.

The Early College I think definitely creates a unique learning opportunity for all students.

We do not have just honor students; we have students that are struggling learners, we have students that have learning difficulties.

We work with all those students and give them the same opportunity to learn, and we've had some of the most struggling learners come in and they have been our most successful in college classes; they persevere. They go out and get an associates degree, which might not be the most likely to happen coming out of high school because of barriers that were in their way.

That mentoring aspect's really key. These students, many of them first generation, don't have someone that really knows college and so, students, as they're progressing with our classes and into college classes, they just need someone to troubleshoot with, And we're going to guide them along the way.

Questions that come up constantly: "How do I approach my professor?," to "How do I

apply to colleges? How do I apply for the degree? What classes should I take?"

And really just talking about the whole student.

And of course they're coming to us with other issues: home issues and health issues, and how to navigate that, and all of that kind of stuff.

That mentoring aspect is really just supporting the student, the whole student.

Helping students navigate the system; helping students navigate their own lives; helping students learn things that many of us expect one just knows: How do I manage my time?

How do I balance priorities?

Doing that in a focused way, makes all the world of difference for students.

I see our role as really helping this mid-Michigan community gain more access to education, which means better jobs, more productive lives. LCC's goal is to help people have fulfilling lives and benefit society, and I think that's what we're doing here; it's helping students who may not have accessed college, access college. And so, helping out Mid-Michigan, helping out our state, helping out our country and our world.

**END OF VIDEO**