

Developing a LU Writing and Reading Center Facilitative Model: Increasing the Effectiveness of Instructional and Tutorial Support for LU Students and Faculty

1. A concise description of the project

In light of the reported findings by the Director of Accreditation and Assessment, it has become apparent that the retention of our developmental students, who account for more than 75% of LU student body, becomes a problem on their fourth year as we lose most of these students. In current research on retention, academic support services, supplemental instruction, and tutoring are among the highest rated contributors to retention.

The Writing and Reading Center was inaugurated in fall 2015 and is using student-centered and context-based tutoring pedagogy and is adhering to the best practices in writing center administration. The WRC offers these developmental students and others individualized, on-site tutoring and the academic support to develop their writing and reading skills, with the goal of improving the retention and timely graduation rates of The Lincoln University students. In the summer, the research grant allowed me to prepare the groundwork for erecting the new WRC by reviewing the scholarship in best WRC practices and administration, preparing the training materials and packets for professional staff and peer tutors, and laying out the assessment and data collection plan for the WRC.

2. Measurable goals and objectives for the project

This project has achieved its three main goals: 1), The collection and synthesis of scholarship in best WRC practices; 2), The compilation of the materials and readings required to train the professional staff and tutors in the best WRC practices and tutoring techniques; and 3), The laying out of the assessment and data collection plan for the WRC and preparing the paper trail necessary for data collection. From the collected research, the facilitative, student-centered, context-based tutoring model was implemented. The training packets were given to the tutors, and staff meetings were used as venues to discuss the best tutoring practices.

In preparing the assessment plan and with the help of the assessment office, electronic intake forms were created for students to fill out every time they visit the center to collect information about the students, their class standing; the course and what they need help with, etc. Also, exit forms were created to collect data about the students' experience and how they would rate their tutoring session, tutor, and the feedback they received from on their work, in order to assess the work we are doing in the Center and the tutors' performance.

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3. The time frame for the project

The project spanned through the summer and the fall semester. All three goals were achieved by September 2016.

4. How the project will enhance teaching/learning at L.U.

The LU WRC currently serves the entire student body in all subject areas. In addition, the success of Writing Centers in increasing retention and graduation rates of non-traditional student populations has made it an indispensable resource in institutions of higher education as an integral component of the student-support system that includes faculty, advising, and support centers. The LU Writing and Reading Center follows the facilitative writer-centered tutoring model. The Writing Center's tutoring philosophy focuses not only on helping students develop as better writers by providing them with strategies to negotiate the different writing tasks, or more specifically, the task at hand, but also by helping them develop into changed, more linguistically-conscious, independent student thinkers who can better execute their writing tasks in various disciplines and situations with better precision and adequacy. The focus in our WRC philosophy is to achieve a better and more improved writer that will be able to carry/transfer the skills he/she has learned to other writing tasks and projects rather than creating a better text.

5. The number of people who are benefitting, and how

- I. The project's primary beneficiaries are the future low-scoring students who are placed in developmental writing courses. In collaboration with the director of Composition, the Writing and Reading Center plays an important role in the achievement and assessment of the developmental writing and reading student learning outcomes.
- II. The project's second primary beneficiaries are all other students at LU, who are getting tutoring at all stages of the writing process, for all projects, in all disciplines, and at all levels of proficiency. All LU students will be able to utilize the WRC services drop-in and appointment tutoring services. So far, the WRC has offered around 700 sessions in the fall semester.
- III. Additionally, the primary beneficiaries are also the faculty, academic advisors, and others who will be able to refer students to the WRC to get individualized assistance on their writing and reading needs.
- IV. The secondary beneficiaries will be students preparing and revising their Writing Proficiency Program Portfolios. The WRC will work closely with the different departments to offer facilitative reading and writing workshops and small reading and writing groups. Through group workshops and one-on-one sessions, tutors will assist students in the revision of their WPP portfolios.

The WRC is serving the entire student body of 1900 students and the whole body of faculty and is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm.

6. How the success of the project is measured?

The ultimate measure of success is the implementation of the WRC full executive plan in the fall semester. The successes and challenges of the WRC will be assessed in an ongoing process throughout the academic year.

7. How, When, and Where the Outcome will be shared?

The outcome of the research will be presented to the department faculty in the spring once the fall WRC assessment data is compiled. Subsequently, the final report of the WRC services will be sent to the Office of Academic Affairs at the end of the 2016 spring semester.

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A Faculty Development Grant Request

Dr. Samaa Gamie
Assistant Professor of English
Director of The Writing and Reading Center
Assistant Director of the Writing Proficiency Program
Department of Languages and Literatures

Budget Page

\$2,000.00 summer salary

\$1,000.00 office supplies and reading materials (This amount was not utilized for reading materials as most of the reading materials were available through online through the databases).

Total: \$3,000.00