Assessment Report

Yuba Community College District

YC - Writing Language Development Center Program Recommendations

Year of Review: 2012-2013
Type of Review: Self-Study (4-year review)
Executive Summary (Include a list of team members): A1. Do students have access to curriculum-specific and/or program-specific support services? If so, describe this service(s). If not, explain why.

To “research and utilize effective modes of delivery for our...services (Yuba College Goals, 2013), the WLDC staff seeks out opportunities to partner with instructors to support student learning.
? Many course materials for the accelerated English 105 curriculum are available in the WLDC accessible to tutors and students; for many students, WLDC tutoring support has been key to progressing successfully in the accelerated curriculum;
? The WLDC invites all English faculty to help it provide copies of materials currently in use in their classrooms for short-term checkout by students and for tutor use.
? As instructors have chosen to adopt the Reading Apprenticeship framework, the WLDC staff has taken steps to train student tutors to recognize and utilize the strategies that support it.
? WLDC staff participate in English final exam holistic scoring in the WLDC, which keeps them abreast of norms and current conversations in the discipline.
? The WLDC has sought partnerships with faculty eager to accommodate embedded tutors in their classrooms. In Fall 2013, an embedded tutor was assigned to four sections of English 105 with two different instructors (an evaluation survey will be given to both instructors and tutors at the shorter end of the semester). The RP Group research has noted the greater effectiveness, for developmental students, of “embedding” tutors in developmental courses (rather than trying to serve these students in the setting of a walk-in, stand-alone center).
? It invites faculty to donate time in the center and to use the space for student conferences or office hours. For instance, in Fall 2013, four full-time and adjunct English instructors held regular office hours in the center.

A2. If services are available, how do they demonstrate an increase in student success?

Yuba College institutional research supports the fact that English students who regularly use the services of the WLDC tend to pass their English classes at higher rates than the body of students who do not use those services. This increase in student success is reflected in a “noticeable” campus-wide increase in writing (7%) and reading (10%) achievement since the WLDC began operations in 2008, according to past-IR Erik Cooper.

The WLDC intends to continue its partnership with the institutional researcher to follow student success in English, ESL, and Reading courses. We compare students who use the WLDC with students in the same courses who do not. Overall, we find that higher student success rates correlate with use of the WLDC:

Success rates for English/ESL/Reading Courses
Sp

09 Fa
09 Sp
10 Fa
10 Sp
11 Fa
11 Sp
12 Fa
12 Sp
13
WLDC No WLDC WLDC No WLDC WLDC No WLDC WLDC No WLDC WLDC No WLDC WLDC No WLDC WLDC No WLDC WLDC No WLDC WLDC
65% 63% 70% 63% 61% 60% 71% 62% 71% 61%

MISSING DATA: MISSING DATA WAS APPARENTLY NOT REQUESTED PRIOR TO MAY 2013 WHEN I SENT OUR PART OF THE DATA REQUEST TO ERIK. ERIK DID NOT RESPOND BEFORE LEAVING JULY 1. SAME RAW DATA WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SENT TO ANABEL AT JENSEN-MARTIN'S DIRECTION. NO RESULTS RECEIVED TO DATE. This data is at best an imprecise measure of the success of the program. It does not take into account the high degree of autonomy students exercise in availing themselves of WLDC services. For example, a student may work with a tutor or not; he may keep a regular appointment with the same tutor or seek feedback only occasionally on a drop-in basis. He may only use the computers to research or type a paper. Students might only use the space to meet with classmates for group work or to do homework.

However, additional assessments may shed more light on the quality of student learning. One way to assess whether students achieve the program's SLO, students will practice writing as a social, recursive process, is to use student tracking software to see how many times a student works with a tutor in a recurring appointment. This would separate out students who have significant, recurring contact with staff or tutors from those who do not. A second assessment involves compiling feedback gathered on the intake form used each time a tutor works with any student, including drop-ins. All these responses are suggestive of the degree to which the student is aware of writing as a recursive, social process. As these responses are collected into a spreadsheet, the document becomes a kind of mini-portfolio of students' changing attitudes and practices. Changed attitudes and practices in writing, even more than success in passing the course, are more evaluative of the SLO, since some students who pass an English course may do so without experiencing much growth in their understanding of the nature of writing, and some who fail the course may have experienced much growth in understanding and be poised to succeed in the course on the next attempt.

Program Description : B3. How is current and previous program review data used to refine and improve program or department practices?
N/A: this the WLDC's first program/service review.

Industry Trends and Program Data Analysis : How do program or department goals align with the education, diversity, demographic, and workforce needs of local communities?

The Yuba College Writing and Language Development Center is unique among Writing Center's nationally in that it was established with the broad operational goal of servicing transfer-level, basic skills, and ESL students. The WLDC acknowledges a particular mission to English language learners, who represent significant minorities in our community. Students in ESL courses constitute approximately 20% of the WLDC service hours, and well over 50% of students served by the WLDC come from households in which multiple languages are spoken.

The WLDCs mission statement and PLO--Students will practice writing as a social, recursive process--encourage students, those

responsible for the future development of the community, to imagine and engage with multiple viewpoints, to work side-by-side with people much older and much younger than themselves, to learn respectfully alongside people of different cultures, religions, and value sets. The ability to do so, and to write with coherence and clarity, is universally applicable to every industry and workplace.

How is your program or department direction driven by empirical data?
In accordance with Yuba College's goals, the WLDC wishes to "foster a culture of evidence-informed decision making, including SLO development/assessment and other measures of student success." One assessment of our PLO/SLO uses our student tracking software to determine how many times a student visits the WLDC and works with a writing assistant:

1) Records are filtered for students meeting with tutors in scheduled appointments. Keeping a regular appointment with a tutor would indicate an understanding of the collaborative and recursive nature of writing. Furthermore, records are filtered for non-appointment visits with tutors by generating a Session Logs report. A Session Log documents that the student has worked with a tutor in a drop-in visit. This documentation suggests an appreciation of a collaborative approach to writing.
Last, if the student works more than once with a tutor with papers in various stages, this would additionally suggest appreciation for writing as a process.

2) A second, qualitative assessment of our SLO requires compiling feedback collected on an intake form before each session with a tutor. This form asks the tutor to interview the student to identify an area of focus for the session, such as brainstorming, creating a thesis, or clarifying ideas; to determine what stage the paper is; to find out what is the most significant change the student has made so far and why; and to ask about the due date and when the student started working on the paper. All these responses are suggestive of the degree to which the student is aware of writing as a recursive process, whether by his identification of a focus, or of a "stage" of writing, or of the necessity of making substantial changes to a paper, or of having allowed enough time for revision and self-editing before the due date. The accumulated data creates a kind of summary portfolio of each student's work over time, which can be evaluated to reach conclusions about student growth in writing practices.

3) The WLDC also works with the Institutional Researcher to measure success and retention among Language Arts-enrolled (English, ESL, Reading) students using WLDC services and to compare them to the population of Language Arts students who do not use those services. The WLDC sees these success rates as suggestive that the WLDC may be helping students succeed; at the same time, it realizes that it only demonstrates a correlation between success and use.

The Data Mart of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office is another source of data, recently used, for instance, to evaluate the success of the accelerated English 105 curriculum. While the data are interesting, the WLDC is unable to reasonably conclude anything about its own direct impact on the general success of students enrolled in those sections.
Curriculum & SLO Assessment Summary
D6. What has your program or department done to improve completion of degrees, certificates, or transfers? What are your future plans?
The WLDC provides instructional support at all levels of instruction, from developmental to transfer level. It works with writing across the disciplines, including papers from any certificate, degree, or transfer program. Its work supports student success directly and indirectly, by providing trained staff and writing assistants to work one-on-one and in small groups, and by providing the space and technology for students to complete their reading, writing, and English language-acquisition assignments.
D7. Do you have any courses, certificates, or degrees that should be in-activated or expanded? If yes, please identify and justify your recommendations with data.
No.
D8. Do all of your courses have current CORs? If not, what steps are you taking to ensure compliance?
English 40A/B, the tutor training courses, have current course outlines.
D9. If applicable, how are teaching methodologies in your program or department assessed?

The existing tutor training courses, English 40A and 40B, have SLOs but no SLO assessment methods. As a result, the teaching methodologies for these courses have not been assessed.
D10. If applicable, how are the results of the assessment used to support, improve, and/or expand your current teaching methodologies?
This is currently not occurring.
D11. If your program or department uses a DE modality to support instruction, how are you evaluating the effectiveness of that instruction?
The WLDC does not use a distance education modality.
D12. If your department offers DE courses, what support services does it provide for DE students? What can be done to improve support services for these students?
The WLDC began to explore online tutoring platforms in Spring 2013 in order to be able to extend access to tutoring to distance education and evening students. The staff is now coordinating with the Dean of Distance Education and the Yuba College Technology and Distance Education Committees to create a list of necessary and desired features in an online tutoring platform and will work alongside them to develop an effective tutoring tool for DE students.
D13. How is your program or department applying sound principles of learning and teaching theory to its curriculum?
The WLDC wishes to "foster a culture of evidence-informed decision making" and "research and utilize effective modes of delivery for our...services" (Yuba College Goals, 2013). The Faculty Coordinator and staff keep abreast of current research coordinated and conducted by, for instance, the Research & Planning Group for California Community Colleges, the Student Success Task Force, California Community Colleges Success Network, and WestEd.

Specifically, the WLDC operates on the understanding that a "focus on 'remedial pedagogy' such as 'getting students to...a grammatically correct sentence rather than exploring the material at hand in a meaningful way that [engages] the student in her or his own learning' does not address the adult learning needs of community college students" (Research & Planning Group for California Community Colleges, 2013, p. 9).

In Fall 2006, IAs redesigned the College Success Center's (CSC) English tutoring program. They had three major concerns:

? The CSC tutoring program excluded students enrolled in ESL and reading.
? It did not work directly with student writing.
? All English students—no matter their level of language competency—were required to work through the same curriculum: a packet of grammar review exercises.

The Research & Planning Group for California Community Colleges points out that "skill and drill" pedagogy actually "limits the development of advanced conceptual skills [emphasis added]" (2013 p.9). Indeed, this remedial approach was unpopular among English faculty, students, and tutors alike, and a review conducted by the Instructional Associates about that time discovered that tutors spent a considerable amount of time and effort subverting the model and inventing their own novel techniques for addressing the writing concerns of students. The RP Group notes that many student services programs make the mistake of focusing on "skill and drill":

...the effectiveness of support systems in many community colleges is undermined by an entrenched division between student services and instruction [and this] structural and cultural divide is a missed opportunity to enhance student success. Developmental education students in particular need instructors and support services personnel working together to help them overcome the numerous barriers to academic achievement that they face. Without collaboration between practitioners in these two areas, student services faculty cannot make the most of what happens in the classroom, and instructional faculty cannot effectively leverage support programs to improve students' academic outcomes. (Research & Planning Group for California Community Colleges, 2013 p.10)

The IAs responsible for English tutoring in the CSC therefore sought to create a stronger connection with instruction by collaborating with English faculty. Together they designed a tutoring program based on a “Writing Center” model. This model, which is based on a thirty-year tradition of theory and practice, puts the focus of the tutoring session on actual student writing and rejects an expert/novice paradigm in favor of a collaborative peer-to-peer relationship between the tutor and tutee.

This closer connection to the language arts curriculum was also reinforced by rethinking tutor training. Unlike the tutor training course used previously (Learn 20, Tutor Training) English 40A/40B, Tutoring Writing, requires, minimally, completion of English 51 and co-enrollment in English 1A. To maintain this connection with instruction in the discipline, the WLDC maintains faculty advisors from among English and ESL faculty.
D14. Which CSLOs (course student learning outcomes) and PLOs (Program learning outcomes) were assessed within the last year?
This is the WLDC’s first program review and the PLO is new. The WLDC has developed course SLOs for English 40A and 40B, but without assessment methods, these courses have not been assessed.
D15. For each of the above, how did the assessment data influence program, department and/or course improvement?
N/A.

Future Goals and Program Direction:

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K27. Based on Program Review, what are your plans for future department/program improvements?

FTES: WLDC staff has explored the possibilities of collecting FTE apportionment from the state of California under Learn 590. As long as the center is funded by California grant monies, it is unable to collect apportionment. There may be other constraints on the collection of state apportionment for student time in the WLDC, depending on the interpretation of pertinent Title V sections. Staff believe the discussion of how to interpret Title V should include personnel at the district level and include legal counsel. Some issues that are vague or otherwise problematic include the following:

? The definition of “lab hours”
? The definition of “line of sight” and “supervision” in reference to a qualified faculty member
? The definition of “physical proximity” and “in range of communication”
? The definition of “available at all times” in reference to the center coordinator
? The application of minimum qualifications requirements
? Requirements that students be referred, not self-enrolled, for tutoring
? How much “active involvement” is enough when students engage in computer-aided instruction; how much is “some” level of student tutor intervention

However, putting that discussion aside, since its opening the WLDC has generated potential FTE of 100.2, which could have generated between $275,049 and $323,846, depending on which reimbursement rate is deemed appropriate. Depending on the outcome of discussions on Title V requirements, then, the WLDC could generate funds sufficient to support all of the student tutor payroll, supplies, student printing, and duplication.

Increased student use: The first semester the WLDC opened it served 404 students, about 4% of the fall 2008 enrollment of 9,712. In fall of 2009 it served 6% of students. In fall of 2010 the WLDC served about 7% of enrolled students. In fall of 2011 the WLDC served 688 (8%). That number dropped to 607 (7%) in fall of 2012. Nevertheless, in 2010, 2011, and 2012 Yuba College students named the WLDC as the program at Yuba College that “positively impacted them the most.”

The WLDC staff would like to see more enrolled students make use of the center, especially as the Institutional Researcher (Cooper) correlated higher success rates (in English, ESL, and reading classes) with regular use of the WLDC. The staff and faculty

coordinator have primarily focused on informing students enrolled in Language Arts classes, visiting those classes early in the semester and inviting instructors to walk their classes to the WLDC for a brief tour and explanation of services.

Outreach to the general student body has been less effective. Efforts include flyers and bookmarks created in collaboration with library and circulated in the library and the WLDC. The WLDC has offered workshops on general interest topics such as research papers, citation, and grammar topics, but response has been minimal. One problem with outreach to new students is that the online student orientation, which features various Yuba College services including the College Success Center, omits any reference to the WLDC. Not only administrators but counselors, too, often seem to be unaware that there is a writing center on campus.

SLO Assessment: The faculty coordinator of the WLDC needs to develop SLO assessment methods and assess English 40A and 40B. This will occur in Fall 2014.

Access to data: The WLDC could also benefit from more and more consistent data from the Vice President's office. This is particularly important in light of the absence of a dedicated college-level institutional researcher.

Are you ready to submit your final program review?: Yes

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YC Goal 9 - Empower students to act effectively in their communities by their mastery of language and awareness of their audience and purpose.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YC Goal 9 - Help students to develop an appreciation of writing as a social and recursive process.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YC Goal 7 - Encourage students to employ a variety of rhetorical tools suitable to their audience and purpose.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YCCD VS 3 - The WLDC has a goal of supporting English language learners. The Yuba/Sutter county region supports many diverse cultural and language				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
groups who seek to learn English both to leverage their personal job skills and to be able to more fully participate in the community. Many of the students who use the WLDC are English language learners, both those in ESL courses and those who have mainstreamed into college level courses but are still actively mastering English.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YCCD VS 3 - The WLDC has as a goal the support of writing in the classroom and beyond. Local employers want employees who can communicate clearly in writing. The WLDC offers cross-curricular writing support, so students in any discipline--vet tech, nursing, ECE--have the opportunity to improve their writing.				

Goal	Recommendations	Plan of Action & Budgetary Impact / Tasks	Status	Feedback & Follow-Up
YCCD VS 1 - To find innovative ways to support literacy through technology and human resources.				