# Assessment: Assessment Unit Planning

*Program Review 2014-15*

## YC - Writing Language Development Center Program Review

**Year Under Review :** 2014-15
**Type of Review:** Self-Study (4-year review)
**Program Description :** The vision of the Yuba Community College District Board of Trustees is to ensure student success by: (1) Providing an innovative, world-class learning environment; (2) Building and maintaining an atmosphere of trust within the college district?and with our communities; (3) Developing and maintaining programs and facilities that best meet the?needs of our students and communities (4) Stewarding resources strategically to meet the diverse needs of our?communities and region; (5) Providing educational, economic, cultural, and civic leadership for our?communities and region.

The WLDC meets the needs of the District's vision statement in several ways. The WLDC supports writing on campus. 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. This demonstrates that the WLDC, "[develops and maintains] programs and facilities that best meet the?needs of our students and communities." The WLDC also supports reading. Members of the community need to be able to read about, understand, and discuss matters of shared interest. The WLDC supports academic reading and general reading development, so students can extend the range of the kinds of reading they can understand. This unique focus on reading is evidence that the WLDC "[provides] an innovative, world-class learning environment." The WLDC has a further specific mission to support English language learners. The Yuba/Sutter county region supports many diverse cultural and language 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. These core values show a link between the WLDC's mission and the vision of the district specifically in terms of "[providing] educational, economic, cultural, and civic leadership for our?communities and region."
**Executive Summary (Include a list of team members):** This program review was completed by the Writing and Language Development Center faculty coordinator (Kyra Mello) with input from the WLDC staff (Rosemary McKeever and Kelly Cunningham). The WLDC program review process was to complete the program review and comply with institutional requirements. To complete the program review, we looked back at previous program review and current data in order to see what we are doing right, what needs improved/changed, and anticipate future program needs.
**01SP. Department Goals (Click '?' for Prompt):** (1) PLO/SLOs: In the previous program review, the WLDC noted that the faculty coordinator of the WLDC needed to develop SLO assessment methods and assess English 40A and 40B. This goal was addressed in the Spring 2014. The SLO and assessment tools were created, implemented, and recorded. This process will continue. In effort to continue the process of PLO and SLO updates, the WLDC needs to complete the SLO mapping and updates to the English 40A and 40B and LEARN 590 courses.

(2) FTES: One of the previous goals for the WLDC was to move to a funding structure that would allow the WLDC to collect FTES apportionment. We are still waiting on some direction and 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 and pose challenges to the collection of apportionment via the WLDC 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

During the 14/15 academic year (including summer), the WLDC generated 10.6 FTES, which could have represented approximately $29,500 in apportionment, exceeding the WLDC's annual expenses of approximately $25,000.

(2) Increased Student Usage: Another goal of the WLDC is continued growth. 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. The 2013-2015 semesters remained at a steady 7-8%. However, the WLDC is currently experiencing significant growth. At week 8 of fall 2015, the WLDC is seeing a 16% increase in students, a 26% increase in student visits, and a 30% increase in student hours. Efforts to increase the number of enrolled students have been successful. We've accomplished this growth by visiting classes early in the semester and inviting instructors to walk their classes to the WLDC for a brief tour and explanation of services.

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. We have made better connections with the counseling staff on campus, which has contributed to growth. However, content faculty and administrators still seem to be unaware that there is a writing center on campus, so continued education of staff and faculty remains a priority and goal of the WLDC. The WLDC remains committed to this goal and we continue to explore ways to increase student usage across campus.

We still need to counter the misapprehension that a writing center serves only, or even primarily, developmental writers. We need to convince students (and instructors and administrators) that all writing, including writing done by very competent students, is social, and that writers at every level of competence have something to gain by engaging with readers and with other writers. In point of fact, students who use the WLDC represent every level of competency, from the entry-level English 105 through English 1A, 1B, 1C, and various literature courses. We need to do more outreach to students in transfer levels in order to encourage their involvement with the WLDC. Another way to encourage this is for instructors to have a clearer idea of what kinds of work take place here. Depending on staffing and scheduling considerations, staff would like to attend division and department meetings in various disciplines to explain WLDC approaches and services to instructors. In the past, the WLDC has held FLEX meetings; historically they have not be well attended. During fall 2015 convocation, the WLDC offered two FLEX meetings, which were marginally successful. The staff continues to work on advertising and education methods.

(3) Access to data: Information Technologies Director, Karen Trimble was instrumental in providing needed success and retention rates for the WLDC in preparation for the 14/15 program review update. Since Karen's retirement, the WLDC was unclear about research procedures in her absence. The faculty coordinator plans to meet with the new Director of IT in October to establish an institutionalized method for running data reports, which will allow the WLDC to more regularly access needed reports.

(4) Embedded Tutoring: Embedded Tutoring is “one mode of delivery” the WLDC would like to explore, specifically to support English 105, which is an entry-level, accelerated course and necessarily encompasses a wide range of student competencies. This approach would effectually move the services of the WLDC outward, into the classroom, and draw more students into the WLDC through the embedded tutoring sessions. So far success rates in the embedded tutor model have been mixed, but we continue to pursue this as a viable model.

(5) Course Text Library: Maintaining a full library of instructor texts, at minimum for language arts classes, is a goal of the WLDC. This is difficult to accomplish as instructor texts change all the time. The WLDC continues to request exam copies and update the library as changes occur.

(6) K-12 Alignment: Another goal of the WLDC staff is increasing coordination and better alignment of expectations and academic standards between Yuba College and the local high schools; in the words of the Yuba College Goals, to “develop partnerships to enhance educational resources and student opportunities” and “exemplify...civic engagement for our communities.” To this end, in 14/15 academic year, the faculty coordinator and staff have participated in the Yuba College and high school English department meetings to facilitate better alignment between institutions. Depending on constraints such as budgeting and scheduling, staff would like to explore additional partnerships with local K-12 institutions.

(7) Online Tutoring: Another goal of the WLDC is working to develop an online language arts tutoring program using CANVAS LMS in order to serve DE and off campus students. An Instructional Associate has been tasked with developing an online tutoring model and is working with the Technology and DE committees. This project will likely take several semesters to pilot and refine. Staff efforts on this project continue.

**02SP. Facilitate Learning & Collaboration (Click '?' for Prompt):** The WLDC supports writing. 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. The WLDC also supports reading. Members of the community need to be able to read about, understand, and discuss matters of shared interest. The WLDC supports academic reading and general reading development, so students can extend the range of the kinds of reading they can understand. The WLDC has a further specific mission to support English language learners. The Yuba/Sutter county region supports many diverse cultural and

language 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.

We attend the EOPS orientation and present information on the WLDC. Back-to-school Welcome week participation. I helped with Equity report, BSI and early alert for at risk students, we communicate with members of the SSSP committee. The faculty coordinator is an English department member and we have good connection to the English department. We are working with CSC to coordinate uniform procedures for FTES collection. Embedded tutoring in ESL. Book groups for ESL reading class. Literary arts club. Speech tutoring. Share tutors with the CSC. DSPS software and accessible computer.

Online Tutoring: Another goal of the WLDC is working to develop an online language arts tutoring program using CANVAS LMS in order to serve DE and off campus students. An Instructional Associate has been tasked with developing an online tutoring model and is working with the Technology and DE committees. This project will likely take several semesters to pilot and refine. Staff efforts on this project continue.

The WLDC staff is also interested in increasing coordination and better alignment of expectations and academic standards between Yuba College and the local high schools; in the words of the Yuba College Goals, to “develop partnerships to enhance educational resources and student opportunities” and “exemplify...civic engagement for our communities.” To this end and depending on constraints such as budgeting and scheduling, staff would like to explore similar partnerships with local K-12s.
**03SP. Student Contacts (Click '?' for Prompt):** Add in number of contact visits from Program Review and Rosemary.
**04SP. Input to Improve (Click '?' for Prompt):** Add Kelly's report.

The WLDC measures the effectiveness of its services in several ways. First, we measure the efficacy of WLDC services in terms of student success and retention. 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 the previous Director of Institutional Research, 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. As of late, comparison data has been difficult to come by and likely inaccurate given the lack of a college researcher to produce consistent comparison data.

Additionally, 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 PLO, 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.

Another way the WLDC has improved the efficacy of the program is in the way that it uses financial resources. In accord with Yuba College goal number three, “Steward our institutional resources with increasing effectiveness and efficiency,” the WLDC is proactive in seeking more efficient use of staff and resources. Its first semester, the WLDC’s cost per student hour was $4.41, its highest. Starting the very next semester, costs dropped to almost half that and mostly continued to fall, even when hours were extended to accommodate evening students arriving for 6 p.m. classes. The WLDC staff attributes falling costs per student hour to a variety of practices:

? preferring group scheduling when possible

? cutting reception desk staffing and cross-training tutors to cover the reception desk
? IAs covering for absent tutors
? IAs covering the slower hours early and late in the day
? increasing student drop-in use, utilizing facilities but not necessarily tutors

In addition, staff learned early on that regularly scheduled appointments tended to drop away as the semester went on, sometimes leaving tutors idle; they therefore began to anticipate the attendance drop-off and factor it into their initial scheduling. In fall 2012 costs went up slightly as a result of high WLDC Sutter Center costs, to $2.14 an hour, before dropping once more to $1.68 in spring 2013. (After spring 2013 WLDC Sutter Center tutoring was discontinued due to its high cost and low student usage.)

**13SP. Professional Development (Click '?' for Prompt):** IWCA, NCWCA, English Community of Practice Teaching Community, EEO Training, On-campus FLEX activities, on-campus noon recitals, ECCTYC, HS Alignment group, Early Alert.

Insert notes from Program Review
**Are you ready to submit your final program review?:** No

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# Program Recommendation: Technology: Monitor and computer replacement and maintenance schedule

We need replacement monitors and a clear replacement schedule/plan from IT.
The original grant furnished the WLDC with ten desktop computer stations for student use, two reserved for adjunct faculty and student overflow, two for the IAs, two for sign-in stations, and one for the reception desk. All these systems are more than five years old; computers and monitors are beginning to fail, but we have been told by our IT department there is no budget to replace deteriorating technology. In the spring 2013 semester alone we had lost four of ten student monitors, rendering those computers useless. By October we had lost 80 percent of our student stations and half our sign-in stations, mostly due to monitor failure. Following urgent requests to the Dean of Language and Fine Arts, in mid-October 2013 administrators allowed a re-purposing of monitors from an unused classroom lab, resulting in replacement of most of the failing monitors, but most of these monitors are old and outdated, most with square screens which don't allow for desktop multitasking.

**Recommendation Priority:** 2. Medium Priority
**Year(s) Requested:** 2012-2013
**Request Date:** 11/01/2013
**Inactive Date:** 01/31/2018
**Supporting Evidence :** By October we had lost 80 percent of our student stations and half our sign-in stations, mostly due to monitor failure. Following urgent requests to the Dean of Language and Fine Arts, in mid-October 2013 administrators allowed a re-purposing of monitors from an unused classroom lab, resulting in replacement of most of the failing monitors. These monitors are functional but not optimal. For example, for the purposes of accessibility, our current square monitors are too small.

At busy times the center has barely enough student computer stations, even with the laptops, since laptops do not network with the laser printer and students often need to print a paper in order to work with a tutor. Loss of computer capacity will impact the ability of tutors and students to work since, for a variety of reasons related in part to androgogy, we discourage them from trying to work from the computer screen and encourage them to work from a hard copy of the paper. Loss of sign-in monitors would result in loss of program data.

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.”
**Evaluation Plan:** We need new, reliable monitors to go with our new CPUs.

## *Plan of Action*

**Equipment -** The WLDC needs new monitors for its new CPUs. The WLDC has a single wide-screen monitor for ADA compliance, with the rest being square screen units. (Active)

**Budgetary Impact:** Fifteen monitors would cost approximately $3000 dollars.

**Timeline/Responsible Party:** It is unclear who is responsible for monitor purchases for our center. District IT installs the monitors, but purchasing has been handled by division and the VPs office.

### *Status*

01/24/2014

**Recommendation Progress:** Recommendation Needs Improvement/Attention

Undetermined

## Program Recommendation: Technology: Need for consistent software updates and lab support

Another recurring, related problem is staff's inability to update important plug-ins and the lack of automatic updating processes. This makes students periodically unable to use crucial features of Word, Blackboard and other websites. For example, if Java or Flash go out of date, students cannot access or upload materials on their Blackboard pages, something they do often in the WLDC. Or, if Word is not updated regularly, its format converters go out of date and will not open student documents created in another format such as Works. Even though Word has the capability to convert a Works document and open it, it will not do so if the software is asking to be updated. As a result, students sometimes are unable to open a document they have created at home. (This has happened frequently enough that WLDC staff have created a work-around and tip sheet using a third-party website that converts document formats.)

**Recommendation Priority:** 2. Medium Priority

**Year(s) Requested:** 2012-2013

**Request Date:** 12/01/2013

**Inactive Date:** 01/31/2018

**Supporting Evidence :** Frustrated students.

**Evaluation Plan:** We ask that IT provide a publish set of policies.

### *Plan of Action*

**Equipment -** Beg District IT to come up with a consistent set of policies. (Active)

**Budgetary Impact:** None

**Timeline/Responsible Party:** District IT services

### *Status*

01/24/2014

**Recommendation Progress:** Recommendation Needs Improvement/Attention

Not complete

## Program Recommendation: Technology: Printing access and cost

The Writing Center needs action on a printing system. The IT department has been promising for at least five years to develop a system that would allow students to log in to computing accounts across campus, which, in turn, would allow the WLDC and other centers to offer low cost printing, but that has not yet occurred. To keep printing costs down, the WLDC offers limited printing services for students working on papers for language arts class.

**Recommendation Priority:** 3. High Priority

**Year(s) Requested:** 2012-2013

**Request Date:** 12/01/2013

**Inactive Date:** 01/31/2018

**Supporting Evidence :** This inefficiency is costing the both the center and our students money.

**Evaluation Plan:** We need the YC technology committee and college leadership to encourage District IT services to move forward on such a system and stop making excuses. This technology has been available for at least 15 years at other schools and is now an industry standard.

## *Plan of Action*

**Equipment -** This recommendation depends on IT implementing a modern student desktop log-in system that would allow for printing across campus. (Active)

**Budgetary Impact:** Undetermined

**Timeline/Responsible Party:** YC Technology committee and District IT services

## *Status*

01/24/2014

**Recommendation Progress:** Recommendation Needs Improvement/Attention

The WLDC has discussed this need with the DE and Sutter Center deans.

01/24/2014

**Recommendation Progress:** Recommendation Needs Improvement/Attention

Undetermined. This has been requested through various channels for at least five years.

# Program Recommendation: Equipment: Webcam and microphone headset systems

The WLDC needs one or more web camera and microphone headset systems in order to address the need to over equal services to remote location and DE students.

**Recommendation Priority:** 3. High Priority

**Year(s) Requested:** 2012-2013

**Request Date:** 12/01/2013

**Inactive Date:** 01/31/2015

**Supporting Evidence :** During the last ACCJC site visit and evaluation, it was pointed out that Yuba College is failing to provide equal services to students in DE classes and off the main campus.

**Evaluation Plan:** Costs for such systems run less than $200 per set. A purchase of a single set would allow the WLDC to begin exploring online tutoring during the 2014 year. We have already decided on a online tutoring platform (CCC Confer) but need the camera and headset to be able to use it.

## *Plan of Action*

**Equipment -** Purchase a single web camera and microphone headset set in order to begin implementing a remote tutoring system for satellite campuses and DE students. (Active)

**Budgetary Impact:** $200 one time investment

**Timeline/Responsible Party:** If the WLDC was provided the funds, a purchase could be made immediately so that a remote tutoring system could be up and running by Fall 2014.

## *Status*

01/24/2014

**Recommendation Progress:** Recommendation Needs Improvement/Attention

This need has been discussed with the DE and Sutter Center deans.

# Program Recommendation: Staffing: Hire a full-time permanant Instructional Associate

The WLDC needs the college to move forward on hiring a second full-time permanent IA position. Currently, the center is operating with one permanent and one temporary full-time IA.

**Recommendation Priority:** 3. High Priority

**Year(s) Requested:** 2012-2013

**Request Date:** 10/01/2013

**Inactive Date:** 01/06/2015

**Supporting Evidence :** The WLDC is currently staffed with a single full-time permanent IA. This creates a tenuous situation where if the temporary full-time IA were to leave to pursue more stable employment, the center would not be able to function. Two IAs is the minimum that would support a high-quality program. Loss of an IA would have several adverse results:

? It would result in curtailing open hours and intermittent closures at the noon hour (the busiest hour in the WLDC) to accommodate committee meetings (both IAs currently serve on at least one standing committee).
? It would prevent the remaining IA from taking legally mandated breaks during the work day.
? It could result in the WLDC not opening at all on some days, such as in the event of illness or another necessary absence.
? Loss of one IA would have wide-ranging adverse effects on students, tutors, and instructors: students would lose access to computers, printing, and tutoring; student tutors would not be able to work; adjunct faculty would not be able to work in the adjunct space or hold office hours or student conferences in the center.
? Furthermore, it is reasonable to suppose that the WLDC would eventually experience reduced student loyalty to the center if students learn the hours are unpredictable.

The IAs are integral to the operation of the center and supervision of student tutors.
**Evaluation Plan:** We would like HR to move forward with the hiring process to fill our second full-time permanent IA position, which has already been approved by the college.

### *Plan of Action*

**Staffing - Faculty -** The interview process for this position needs to occur immediately. (Active)
**Budgetary Impact:** None. This is a replacement position.
**Timeline/Responsible Party:** District HR. This should be accomplished within the first month of the Spring 2014 semester

### *Status*

01/24/2014

**Recommendation Progress:** Recommendation Addressed/Satisfactory Progress
The position closed on 1/10/14 but there has been no further information provided from HR on where this stands.

## Program Recommendation: Staffing: IA reclassification

The current IA job description does not reflect the increased scope and demanding nature of the IA's job in the WLDC.

**Recommendation Priority:** 3. High Priority
**Year(s) Requested:** 2012-2013
**Request Date:** 11/29/2013
**Inactive Date:** 01/01/2018
**Supporting Evidence :** In many areas, the actual work of the WLDC IAs differ from the formal job description:

? They supervise up to 24 student workers (the WLDC's historic high).
? They coordinate with Financial Aid, Calworks, and Human Resources departments as well as, in some cases, the Board of Trustees in the approval, hiring, and documentation of workers.
? They collect and verify federal work documents for student workers.
? The job setting, described as being primarily an instructor-supervised classroom setting, is simply obsolete. The actual job setting is a busy, often noisy tutoring center.
? The current job, far from being closely supervised, requires strong heuristic problem-solving and the ability to prioritize conflicting demands.
? Knowledge of or practical experience with writing center theory informs the judgments the IAs must exercise daily working with students and mentoring tutors.
? IAs also take responsibility for advertising WLDC services to students and instructors by creating and distributing flyers, conducting class orientations, and presenting at campus orientation activities.
? IAs take the lead in accounting for and containing payroll and other costs.
? IAs take the initiative towards continuous improvement of all aspects of WLDC operations, whether that means writing grants to secure funds for equipment, asking for assistive software to accommodate a diversity of learners, developing SLOs, and assessing program efficacy.

? Implementing software, including TutorTrac and training students and other staff on the system.

**Evaluation Plan:** This action is in the hands of the college leadership and the district HR department. We would ask that these groups look at the outdated job descriptions for the Language Arts IA position and update them to appropriately reflect the real work and important contributions of these staff members. The IA is both campus learning centers have transitioned from their previous role of classroom aides into what are essentially de facto supervisory positions, particularly in terms of over-seeing student staff and payrolls.

## *Plan of Action*

**Staffing - Technical/Clerical -** A reclassification has been submitted. (Active)
**Budgetary Impact:** To be determined by the District.
**Timeline/Responsible Party:** YC Presidents office and District Human resources.

## *Status*

01/24/2014

**Recommendation Progress:** Recommendation Needs Improvement/Attention
A reclassification request was submitted in Fall 2013 but has not been answered.