

Learner-Centered Education Program
Arizona Board of Regents
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FORM

Proposal Title: Assessing and Evaluating Learning Outcomes in Traditional, Hybrid, and Online First-Year Composition Courses

Institution: Arizona State University DEPT/ Unit: English

Multi-Campus/University Projects
(check other campuses or universities participating)

List other participating agencies:

ASU Main

UA

ASU East

UA South

ASU West

NAU

Briefly describe the program and the development plan.

The proposed study will assess and evaluate student success rates in traditional, hybrid, and online English 101 (First-Year Composition) courses at ASU. The study will use several assessment instruments to collect data that will be used to compare the effectiveness of face-to-face courses (traditional), hybrid courses, and online courses in meeting student-centered learning outcomes. The results of the project will be replicable assessment instruments as well as a detailed evaluation of the current success of English 101 at ASU.

Funding Category

Indicate a primary (P) and, if applicable, secondary (S) funding category:

Professional Development

Program or Course Development/Modification

LCE Research **P**

Improved Assessment of Learning Outcomes **S**

Authorizations

Project Director

Signature _____

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**Learner-Centered Education Grant Program
Arizona Board of Regents**

Part I: Abstract

The proposed study will assess and evaluate student success rates in traditional, hybrid, and online English 101 (First-Year Composition) courses taught at ASU. Success will be measured according to learning outcomes presented in ASU's Writing Programs' Mission Statement (<http://www.asu.edu/clas/english/writingprograms>) and the national Writing Program Administrators' (WPA) Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (<http://www.wpacouncil.org>). The study will use several assessment instruments to collect data that will be used to compare the effectiveness of traditional courses, hybrid courses, and online courses in meeting these outcomes. The extent to which these different delivery methods are meeting the learner-centered outcomes will be analyzed.

The project has two goals that need short-term funding in order to have long-term effects. First, we will develop a series of assessment instruments that will be used to measure the success of English 101 based on three criteria: students' cognitive gains, attitudinal perceptions, and attrition rates. The funds from the LCE Grant will be used to develop the assessment instruments, conduct the assessment, evaluate the data, and revise the assessment instruments. The assessment instruments will provide a framework for continued evaluation of the success of English 101 courses. The findings on the most effective assessment instruments as well as the evaluations of the success of the current writing classroom environments will be disseminated to national, local, and regional audiences, providing a basis for future assessment in the Writing Programs at ASU, as well as at many other institutions.

Part 2: Identification of Need:

Because the cost of providing a university education has risen faster than the rate of inflation in recent years, administrators have come under increasing pressure to find ways of reducing the expense of delivery education, maintaining and bettering the quality of undergraduate teaching, and expanding and supporting a greater focus on learner-centered education. Because instructional costs for composition are relatively low since many of the courses are taught by graduate teaching assistants, instructors, and adjunct faculty, composition programs often do not seem to be good candidates for producing institutional cost savings on a large scale. However, at Arizona's state universities such as ASU, where the cost of new building is a significant cost of education, increased use of alternative instructional formats seem to offer the potential for significant cost saving in the future by allowing institutions to offer more sections of freshman composition to more students without necessarily increasing their use of building space. The two most promising alternatives to traditional, face-to-face instruction are hybrid forms of teaching in which students meet face-to-face one day and online one day each week and fully online courses. Both hybrid and online courses allow the English Department at ASU to use scarce resources more efficiently in order to address the needs of a larger population of students.

Besides diminishing classroom space and a growing student population at ASU, administrators also face problems of access, delivery and engagement in traditional classroom settings along with students' frustrations with and desire to take online courses in order to learn the newest technological options available to them. The development of hybrid and online writing courses has helped the English department work toward solving these problems. Hybrid courses offer students from the Phoenix metropolitan area the opportunity to combine a familiar classroom environment with an online educational experience, hence introducing them to the technological skills they need in order to be prepared for the current and future workplace culture. Fully online courses allow students in the region, state or nation to access quality higher education from ASU without having to be a residential student.

Arizona State University's English Department offered its first section of an online writing course during the summer session in 1999. In the fall of 2000, the English Department's

Writing Programs undertook a small-scale pilot program that offered hybrid composition courses that complemented the growing number of online writing courses being taught online. The department's desire to use technology in ways that enhanced student learning and student involvement in their own learning was at the heart of both the inclusion of online courses and the hybrid pilot program. While a few other universities (e.g. Utah State University and University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee) have begun to adopt a similar style of course delivery, hybrid courses represent a cutting-edge, innovative classroom environment in which students receive the benefits of the familiar face-to-face class along with the direct experience with information technologies. Although we have already been offering the courses on a small-scale, the Writing Programs are looking to increase the number of hybrid and online courses being offered in the English Department.

Before we continue to increase the number of hybrid and online courses, however, we need to evaluate the success of each learning environment more thoroughly to insure that these innovative uses of technologies help students achieve learning outcomes while at the same time providing them with greater flexibility. The short-term funding from ABOR would allow us to develop assessment instruments to evaluate the extent to which both the mission of ASU's Writing Programs and the first year writing outcomes of the national Writer Program Administrators' are being achieved in the three learning environments. The funding would allow us to compare the success rate of face-to-face traditional courses, hybrid courses, and online courses and to determine what attitudinal factors affect that success.

The objective of the study proposed here is to complete the following:

- develop assessment instruments that will measure the success of face-to-face, hybrid, and online English 101 courses based on students' cognitive gains, students' and faculty's attitudinal perceptions of instructional success, and student attrition rates.
- analyze and interpret the data collected through the assessment instruments to determine the effectiveness of our current innovative uses of information technologies to achieve learner-centered outcomes in English 101 courses.

Students in the English 101 courses will have direct and indirect input into the study throughout both the assessment and evaluation phases of the project.

In summary, the project will develop assessment instruments that will evaluate the student success rates in face-to-face, hybrid, and online English 101 courses by measuring English 101 students' cognitive gains, attitudinal perceptions, and attrition rates. This assessment and evaluation will help to better implement innovative technologies in various types of English 101 courses. Presenting the results of the study at national conferences will impact others at colleges in the Phoenix metropolitan and the nation by offering these assessment instruments that will measure the effectiveness of multiple modes of delivering writing courses.

Part 3: Technical Needs:

The technical needs for the project will, in large part, be contributed by ASU's Office of Instructional Technology and Instructional Support (IT-IS). IT-IS will lend the computer and video technologies needed to develop online and face-to-face data collection instruments and the frameworks used to code and analyze the collected data. Graduate students from IT-IS will help Dr. Webb and Teryl Sands Herz to use the technologies throughout the project.

Part 4: Work Plan:

Dates	Objectives and Tasks	Milestones/Data
January, 2004	Select 30 sections of English 101 to include in the study (10 traditional, 10 hybrid, 10 online). Contact participants. Collect enrollment numbers for those courses.	List of courses, instructors, and students for the study.
February, 2004	Work with the Office of IT-IS to develop assessment instruments that will be administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester.* Administer the first set of assessment instruments. Record student enrollment after the 21 st day of classes.	Assessment instruments created for both faculty and students included in the study.
February, 2004-May, 2004	Observe selected class periods of courses to measure the interactions in class discussions. Work with the Office of IT-IS to develop and implement a coding system for tracking interaction.	Coding system developed for observation-based behavioral research.
March, 2004	Record student enrollment after the eighth week of the course.	
April, 2004	Administer middle-of-the-semester assessment instruments.	Middle-of-the-semester assessment instruments finalized.
May, 2004	Administer end-of-the-semester assessment instruments. Collect final grades for students. Collect grades students earned on each of the three major writing projects. Collect final day enrollment numbers.	End-of-the-semester assessment instruments finalized.
Summer, 2004	IT-IS graduate students create coding programs for the data collected during Spring 2004. Correlate, analyze, and interpret the collected data. Write Progress report. Revise assessment instruments.	Progress Report delivered to ABOR. Coding systems created.** Revised assessment instruments.
August, 2004	Select thirty sections of English 101 to use in the study (10 traditional, 10 hybrid, 10 online). Contact instructors and students. Collect enrollment numbers for those courses.	List of courses, instructors, and students for the study.
September, 2004	Administer beginning-of-the-semester assessment instruments. Record student enrollment after the 21 st day of classes. Present to-date findings and assessment instruments at a brownbag talk for ASU's Center for Learning and Teaching Assistance.	
September, 2004-December 2004	Observe selected days in all of the courses to assess interactions found in course discussions. Use coding system developed to track interaction.	

October, 2004	Administer middle-of-the-semester assessment instruments. Record student enrollment after the eighth week of the course. Present to-date findings at Western States Conference.	
November, 2004	Present to-date findings and assessment instruments at the National Council of Teachers of English Fall Conference. Contract 10 independent raters who faculty teaching in ASU's Writing Programs but are not participating in the study already). Conduct a norming session for the faculty. They will use the learning outcomes identified in the study to rate randomly selected essays.	Rating instruments. Independent assessments of essays.
December, 2004	Administer end-of-the-semester assessment instruments. Collect final course grades for students. Collect final day enrollment numbers. Analyze and interpret data and write report.	Report that analyzes and interprets data.
February, 2005	Present findings of the study to faculty at Maricopa Community Colleges.	Conference presentation.
May, 2005	Present findings of the study and the assessment instruments used at the national Computers and Writing Conference. Write and submit final end-of-project report to ABOR.	Conference presentation. Final, end-of-project report.

*Separate assessment instruments will be developed for and administered to the faculty and the students.

**These coding systems will be created in such a way that they can be used even when the study funding has ended.

Part 5: Key Personnel

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Part 6: Expected Results and Outcomes:

Funding for this study will allow us to compare student success rate in English 101 when it is delivered in three different types of teaching environments—traditional, hybrid, and online. The first expected result will be a series of assessment instruments that can be used even after the funding ends. These instruments will provide ongoing evaluation of English 101's success in achieving its defined learning outcomes.

Secondly, the data collected through the assessment instruments will result in measurements of success using the following criteria: students' cognitive gains, attitudinal perceptions, and attrition rates. The data that will be generated in each of these core areas is as follows:

- cognitive gains: grades on three major essays, final grades for the courses, and independent ratings on randomly selected essays.
- attitudinal perceptions: students' perceptions of interaction and instructional effectiveness, faculty's perceptions of interaction and instructional effectiveness, and student-to-student and faculty-to-student interaction in all three environments.
- attrition rates: number of students enrolled in the courses on the first day, the 21st day, and the final day.

Cognitive gains and attrition rates will be correlated with student and faculty perceptions of the course in order to draw conclusions about the reasons for the success rates. Collecting information on student and teacher perceptions along with observing class discussions in each teaching environment will allow us to explain the findings about cognitive gain.

The project will result in usable products that help not only Arizona State University's Writing Program, but also other writing programs across the state and country. Given that writing programs are often as large as whole departments, the impact this project will have is far-reaching. At the end of this project, I will disseminate the following information to local and national communities:

- Factors/criteria that should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of traditional, hybrid, and online courses.
- Success rate differences between the three course environments and reasons for these differences, based on the correlation between cognitive gains/attrition rates and attitudinal perceptions.
- Replicable, durable assessment instruments that can be used by local and national Writing Programs to evaluate their success in meeting their learning outcomes.

I will disseminate this information at the following conferences: Western States Conference, Computers and Writing Conference, and the National Council of the Teachers of English Fall Conference. I will present the results and assessment instruments at two brownbag presentations at ASU.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

REQUEST FROM ABOR	EXPLANATION
\$4355 in faculty summer pay (plus 25% ERE)	This represents the cost of Dr. Webb's summer pay in order for her to work with IT-IS graduate students to create a coding system for the data collected during Spring 2004. She will also correlate, analyze, and interpret the collected data, write the Progress Report for ABOR, and revise the assessment instruments in order to prepare them for the Fall 2004 data collection period.
\$7000 in technical costs (plus 18% ERE)	This represents the cost of help from ASU's Office of Instructional Support and Instructional Technology (IT-IS) during Spring, Summer, and Fall 2004. Two graduate students from IT-IS will develop all of the assessment instruments used in the study, assist with electronically recording class discussions, and devise a coding system/framework to evaluate data collected from the instruments.
\$2000 in auxillary pay for 10 independent essay raters (plus 15% ERE)	This represents the cost for help from 10 independent raters during Fall 2004 at the rate of \$200 per rater. The independent raters will use the learning outcomes identified in the study to evaluate and grade essays that will be randomly selected from the courses in the study. The raters will be recruited from a pool of instructors and lecturers in ASU's Writing Programs.
\$1646 in Staff Travel	This represents the cost for Dr. Webb to present the study findings and the assessment instruments at three national and regional conferences during the funding period. The English Department has committed funds for conference travel as well, but the monies requested from ABOR will supply the additional needed costs not covered by the department's contribution. Dr. Webb will present at the Western States Regional Conference in October, 2004, at the National Council of Teachers of English Conference in November, 2004, and at the national Computers and Writing Conference in May, 2005. These conference presentations will disseminate the findings to secondary and postsecondary writing teachers and researchers in both regional and national forums.

ASU'S INSTITUTIONAL CONTRIBUTION	EXPLANATION
\$8710 in Faculty Salary (plus 25% ERE)	This represents the cost of 10% of Dr. Webb's salary for an academic year (2 semesters). This will release Dr. Webb from teaching one course each semester so that she can devote that time to the proposed project.
\$1600 in Staff Travel	This represents the English Department's contribution that will partially cover Dr. Webb's travel to national/regional conferences to disseminate the study's findings. She will present at the Western States Regional Conference in October, 2004, at the National Council of Teachers of English Conference in November, 2004, and the national Computers and Writing Conference in May, 2004.
\$18,721 in Indirect Costs (49.9% MTDC)	This represents the full amount of indirect costs associated with this study.