

**THIS TRAIN MIGHT KEEP ME
SATISFIED:
SUSTAINING SUCCESSFUL STUDENT-
STAFF CONNECTIONS FOR ACADEMIC
SUCCESS IN THE WRITING CENTER**



**Rhonda Kavan
Dr. Robert
Hassell
Michael Turner
Lori Danley**

5 October 2017

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Writing Center Changes
- Writing Center Workshops
- Scholarship Tiger Workshops and Scholarship Coaching Sessions
- Freshman English Workshop Curriculum Changes

- Successes
- Challenges
- Considerations for the Future

WRITING CENTER CHANGES

- **Fall 2015 (& Fall 2016 & Fall 2017)**
 - Hired 1-semester full-time temporary Instructional Support Staff member to teach 7-9 sections of Freshman English Workshop & tutor in the Writing Center
- **Fall 2016**
 - Hired a full-time permanent Learning Support Staff member
 - Peer tutors started
- **Spring 2017**
 - Started using WCONLINE online scheduling & data system
- **Fall 2017**
 - Work Study student started

WRITING CENTER CHANGES: SUCCESSSES

- **More staff!**
 - Eases individual loads
 - Students have more choices
 - Writing Center is staffed Monday-Friday 8:00-6:00
- **24/7 online scheduling available to students**
- **Enhanced communication with students**
 - Appointment reminders
 - No-show emails & personal invitations to reschedule (fewer no-shows)
- **Easier data collection & reporting**

WRITING CENTER CHANGES: CHALLENGES

- Staffing/hiring
- Training
 - new staff (full-time temporary staff, peer tutors, Work Study student)
 - new scheduling & data system (WCONLINE)
- Sharing the load
 - scheduling with peer tutors first to ensure they get the experience they need

WRITING CENTER CHANGES: CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Interactive instructional videos in Virtual Writing Center (Adobe Captivate)
- Online tutoring (email, Skype, etc.)

WRITING CENTER WORKSHOPS

REACHING OUT: EXTENDING IMPACT

- Dr. Hassell serves as the Writing Center Ambassador – A **liaison** between the Writing Center and the professor.
- The direct relationship between the Center and the professor allows for the services to be brought directly into the classroom, widening the overall impact of this component of Student Success services via the TSU Writing Center.
- These workshops are designed to meet the specified needs of the professor in regards to the content and various learning styles of the students.

The Writing Center at TSU has extended its effort to connect with the various colleges and professors through actively becoming an integrated part of the classroom experience.



WRITING CENTER WORKSHOPS: STUDENT-PROFESSOR RELATIONSHIPS

- We all want to feel **cared for** and **valued** by the significant people in our world. Students are no different.
- Another way to communicate positive expectations to students is by directly telling them they have the ability to do well.
- When you tell your students you have confidence that they can handle a difficult assignment, you impart a very powerful message.

Demonstrating caring is one of the most powerful ways to build positive relationships with your students (Kerman et al., 1980). When your actions and words communicate that you sincerely care for your students, they are more likely to want to perform well for you and enjoy coming to school.

WRITING CENTER WORKSHOPS: CREATING A CULTURE FOR SUCCESS

- Review what happened or where the student needs assistance.
- Identify and accept the student's feelings.
- Review alternative course of actions or areas of improvement.
- Explain the rules and guidelines as they apply to the situation or assignment.
- Communicate an expectation that the student will continue to perform and take a proactive approach.

If applied effectively, pride can be an extremely powerful force in developing positive teacher-student relationships (Kerman et al., 1980).

In many classrooms, students are proud of the fact that they are behaving and achieving at a high level.

WRITING CENTER WORKSHOPS: SUCCESSES

- Increased requests for in-class workshops
- Increased Writing Center appointments following in-class workshops

WRITING CENTER WORKSHOPS: CHALLENGES

- **Scheduling**
 - University-wide workshops mostly limited to spring semester right now
- **University-wide workshop attendance**
- **Overlap or redundancy of services with University-wide workshops**
 - Career Services, English-resumes/CVs
 - Graduate School-theses/dissertations

WRITING CENTER WORKSHOPS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Enhanced advertising (Facebook events, calendar of events)
- Partnership with other departments on campus

TIGER SCHOLARS SCHOLARSHIPS: STUDENT DEBT & RETENTION

Statistics

- More than 40% of first-time students who are full-time and seeking a bachelor's degree do not graduate within 6 years.
- Those who don't complete college are 3 more times likely to default on their loans, with the average debt load for those in default \$14,500.
- “Low-income students, first-generation college students, and minority students . . . [are] underserved by the current system.” While only 9% of students who have the lowest income graduate by age 24, 77% of students from the top income graduate.
- More: <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-focusing-higher-education-student-success>

TIGER SCHOLARS SCHOLARSHIPS: SCHOLARSHIPS ARE FOR EVERYONE

- Marianne Ragins, author of *Winning Scholarships for College, Fourth Edition, 2013*, won more than \$400,000 in scholarship money. I checked out this book many times from the library, and I ended up buying a good used copy off of Amazon for about \$5.
- Felecia Hatcher, who was told by her guidance counselor that her varying GPA from 2.1-2.7 would keep her from college, won \$100,000 to go to college. She dedicated her book, *The “C” Students Guide to Scholarships, 2012*, to that same guidance counselor. I got a used copy of this book for about \$7.
- Scholarships are for everyone, including those with 3.0 GPAs and those with low GPAs.

TIGER SCHOLARS SCHOLARSHIPS: SCHOLARSHIP CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

- I have given two scholarship presentations this semester, creating pdf handouts that can be used by the participants.
- I re-use those handouts for classroom assignments in my English 1011 class.
- [Search for My Future Scholarship Seminar, Sept 21, 2017](#)
- [Writing for Scholarships: The Journey to \\$100,000 Begins with a Single Sentence](#)

TIGER SCHOLARS SCHOLARSHIPS: SCHOLARSHIP CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

- Some of my students have applied for the following scholarships:
 - Dr. Pepper Tuition Giveaway, top prize \$100,000; other prizes, \$25,000, \$2,500
 - \$1,000 Active Life Scholarship for Financial Literacy
 - \$1,500 Shout It Out Scholarship
 - \$10,000 Unigo Scholarship, D: Dec. 31, 2017
 - Scarlett Family Foundation Scholarships, open to business and STEM majors with a 2.5 GPA who graduated from a Middle TN county high school, D: Dec. 15, 2017
 - \$1,000 RentLingo.com scholarship, writing about their dream job in 750 words or fewer
 - Scholarship America Dream Award, \$5,000 to \$15,000 based on the financial need of the student, D: Oct. 15, 2017

TIGER SCHOLARS SCHOLARSHIPS: SCHOLARSHIP CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

- Several scholarships require very little writing, which can be used to have students focus their writing to a specific audience.
- Many students who first wrote for the Active Life Scholarships would start out generally, though the scholarships ask for more of the “I” voice.
- Students can be made to think of stories and how to share those “telling” stories in very few words.
- <http://www.getupgetactive.org/active-life-weakness/>
\$1,000 Active Life Scholarship to Tackle Your Weakness, D: Oct. 31, 2017
- <http://www.getupgetactive.org/active-life-political-awareness/>
\$1,000 Active Life Scholarship for Political Expression, D: Dec. 31, 2017

TIGER SCHOLARS SCHOLARSHIPS: SCHOLARSHIP CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

A Scholarship That You Can Plan Assignments Around

- ***Taco Bell Live Mas Scholarship, opens in 2018***
<https://www.livemassscholarship.com/#home>
 - Ages 16-24
 - \$5,000, \$10,000, to \$25,000 to pursue your passion
 - Legal resident of the 50 US and the District of Columbia

Create and submit a 2-minute or less video that tells a story of your life's passion.

- ***By having students read the official rules, you can have them plan, script, and make videos that feature all the information asked for.***
- ***This teaches reading rules and creating a visual message and how writing can be instrumental in planning.***

TIGER SCHOLARS SCHOLARSHIPS: FURTHER INFORMATION

- I bill myself as a writing tutor and scholarship coach. Everyone in the TSU Writing Center helps with scholarships and what is involved in applying for them.
- Students can sign up to have a scholarship coaching session, where I help them search specifically for scholarships for their majors or careers.
- At the end of a coaching session, I send them a PDF or Word document, allowing them to have a copy. I retain a copy to expand upon and help other students.
- By maintaining a blog where I can house all the presentations (and this one too), I create a way to share our expertise about scholarships and helping to retain students: more money—scholarships, internships—less college debt.

TIGER SCHOLARS SCHOLARSHIPS: SUCSESSES

- Our students have returned & told us they received scholarships.

TIGER SCHOLARS SCHOLARSHIPS: CHALLENGES

- Workshop attendance
- Promotion of events

TIGER SCHOLARS SCHOLARSHIPS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- More campus/community partnerships
- The More Money, Less College Debt Initiative

FRESHMAN ENGLISH WORKSHOP

CURRICULUM CHANGES: DEVELOPING THE CURRICULUM

- Direct application to ENGL 1010
- Building and sustaining connections with students
- Building and sustaining connections with English faculty
- Promoting academic success and retention

FRESHMAN ENGLISH WORKSHOP

CURRICULUM CHANGES: MODIFYING THE CURRICULUM

- Standardized content supporting development of writing skills to meet learning objectives for ENGL 1011—Developing thesis statements, writing topic sentences, using commas correctly, etc.
- Individualizing instruction—individual conferences and feedback on student work
- Students workshop ENGL 1010 assignments
- Outreach to ENGL 1010 instructors for materials with instructor's class assignments and activities
- Students sign up for tutoring appointments with Writing Center tutors weekly

FRESHMAN ENGLISH WORKSHOP

CURRICULUM CHANGES:

SCA WRITING CURRICULUM

- WritePlacer cut off score raised from 5 to 6
- Collaboration with Math and Reading Center staff
- Final group project integrating math, reading, and writing skills
- Fall Freshman English Workshop SCA sections

FRESHMAN ENGLISH WORKSHOP

CURRICULUM CHANGES:

MID-POINT SUCCESS

- Improved relationships with English 1010 faculty
- Improved attendance rate in ENGL 1011
- Increased student success and motivation (67% Fall 2016-73% Fall 2017 pass rate)
- Positive feedback from ENGL 1010 faculty

FRESHMAN ENGLISH WORKSHOP

CURRICULUM CHANGES: CHALLENGES

- Some students claim they don't have anything to work on—in ENGL 1010 or any other class.
- Some students got moved multiple times (to be with other students who have the same ENGL 1010 instructor, merging of sections with low enrollment, etc.).
- Students continue to withdraw themselves from the class, although at a lower rate.

FRESHMAN ENGLISH WORKSHOP

CURRICULUM CHANGES:

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Interactive instructional videos in eLearn (Adobe Captivate)
- Online sections of ENGL 1011
- Scheduling WritePlacer exam during class

