CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
AND
YOSEMITE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

#90-0033
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FISCAL YEAR</th>
<th>ID NUMBER</th>
<th>COLLEGE</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>90-0033</td>
<td>Modesto Junior</td>
<td>Yosemite</td>
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**Writing Center Development Project**

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<th>ELIGIBLE PROGRAM</th>
<th>PROJECT CATEGORY</th>
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<td>Grant = $14,498</td>
<td>C --- Special Learning Needs Ed/Dis</td>
<td>Implementation Model</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<th>PROJECT DIRECTOR</th>
<th>PROJECT SUPERVISOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>William Trimble, Division Dean</td>
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**PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION**

Expanded operation of an existing Writing Center was accomplished in order to serve minority, non-native English speaking students. These students were enrolled in English composition classes and could benefit from support services in the area of English writing skills. Specific goals included increasing the hours of service from 30 to 40 hours per week, training of instructional assistants and student tutors, improved attendance record keeping and an improved evaluation process quantifying the contribution of the Center to the success of students in composition classes.
The proposal addresses needs of the educationally disadvantaged, specifically of minority/non-native English-speaking students who require support services in the area of English writing skills. We propose to supplement and expand an existing Writing Center to provide more adequate support to a larger number of post-ESL, non-native-English-speaking students who are enrolled in English composition courses. The increased support is part of a larger division-and college-wide effort to improve the graduation and transfer rates of language-minority students.

Although college support for the Writing Center has grown substantially in the past two years, more urgent priorities have prevented its becoming the kind of full-time, fully-staffed service needed to meet the demand. Our objectives are

- to provide improved service by increasing hours of operation from 30 to 40 hours/week, including some evening hours
- to improve training of instructional assistants and student tutors
- to improve attendance-record keeping to account for drop in student attendance
- to improve evaluation process and quantify contribution of the Center to success of students in composition classes

By providing a working example of a full-time Writing Center, accounting more fully for student participation, and providing evidence of the Center’s effectiveness, we hope to improve the likelihood that the college will continue to provide for the service needed by our students.

Funding requested in the proposal is that necessary to increase certificated time in the Center from six to twelve hours per week, increase instructional assistant time from 20 to 40 hours per week, and provide for approximately ten hours per week additional clerical time.
Writing Center Development Project

1. Specific Educational Program Being Addressed

PROGRAM ADDRESSED

The proposal addresses needs of the educationally disadvantaged, specifically of minority/non-native English-speaking students who require support services in the area of English writing skills. We propose to supplement and expand an existing Writing Center to provide more adequate support to a larger number of post-ESL, non-native-English-speaking students who are enrolled in English composition courses.

An existing MJC English Writing Center provides specialized tutorial support that helps post-ESL non-native-English-speaking students make the transition from high school or college ESL to English composition courses. The Center’s staff attempts to deal with residual second-language writing problems and assists with writing assignments in an effort to improve the retention and persistence of these minority students. The Center is staffed by six hours/week of certificated, instructor/director time, twenty hours/week of Instructional assistant time, and forty to fifty hours/week of student-tutor time. In addition, three or four part-time Instructors elect to use the Center as a conference site for their own students, Incidentally providing supervision of the Center’s activities.

Those students who make very regular use of the Center enroll In a one unit course (Workshop In English Skills) and work with the Instructor, assistant, and student tutors for at least three hours per week. Current enrollment 18 about 135 students. In addition to those, a large number of unenrolled, drop-In students receive help with writing assignments on a less regular basis.
2. Specific Problems Being Addressed

PROBLEMS ADDRESSED

a. UNDERLYING PROBLEM ADDRESSED BY THE WRITING CENTER:

An increasingly large number of non-native-English-speaking students enrolling in the college and seeking to advance toward the Associate Degree and transfer to baccalaureate institutions poses the serious problem of how to provide for the success of these students while maintaining the standards and integrity of the academic program. The problem is especially severe in the area of English composition because of the language handicaps faced by non-native-English-speaking students even after completing advanced courses in ESL. With two levels of remedial English composition followed by the freshman English course, we find that these students typically are frustrated in their attempt to move beyond the lower remedial level of composition. Their numbers fall off sharply in next level; even fewer can successfully complete the freshman college English course. (see Appendix A for specific information regarding success of post-ESL students in English composition courses.)

b. SPECIFIC PROBLEMS ADDRESSED IN THIS PROPOSAL TO AUGMENT THE EXISTING WRITING CENTER:

1. A problem faced by the Writing Center is a lack of resources needed to perform its function as well as it could. Although it now occupies an enlarged and well-furnished facility, it must limit the number of students it serves and the amount of help each can receive because it has staff to operate only thirty hours per week. Students attending day classes crowd in during the morning hours of the Center's operation. Despite attempts to distribute the load over the day, there still are hours during which the quality of tutorial help declines because of the pressure of numbers: the teaching assistant and tutors are sometimes forced to do simple editing of student work when they should be giving more effective explanations. At some hours, drop-in students cannot be attended to. Because of staff limitations, no support service is available for the 300 or more students who attend composition classes in the evening.

2. Staff-training time is not adequate. The instructional assistant is trained by the instructor; student-tutors (very able composition students who have completed advanced composition courses) are trained by both the instructor and the assistant. Staff time now makes possible only two 3-hour training sessions per semester with no time for intermittent refresher conferencing with student-tutors. Additional staff time could provide for more thorough training sessions on a more frequent basis. With more hours available, the instructor/director (herself trained as both an English and ESL instructor) and the assistant could participate in an in-service workshop with instructors of advanced ESL courses, gaining further Insights Into the problems of non-native-English-speaking students in composition courses.
3. Another problem related to inadequacy of staff time is that the staff is unable to implement improvements in organization and procedure that it knows how to undertake and which would provide for more efficient service. Through study of other Writing Centers and labs on our own campus, we are aware of improvements that we can make in attendance and other record-keeping. Drop-In use of the Center, which could be reported for state apportionment, has not been recorded on a regular basis because a time-efficient system for doing so is not in place. Currently, attendance record-keeping is all done by hand from a paper record in the students’ folders, each of which must be gone over periodically and updated, the hours of attendance transcribed by hand to the class record book and totaled at the end of the semester. The process can be computerized and automated using the system now in place in our college computer labs. We need a small amount of staff-time to implement changes that will ultimately save a great deal of time and bring greater support to the Center.

4. A final problem is that careful evaluation of the Center, of the problem of persistence of non-native-English-speaking composition students and of the Center’s contribution to improving their persistence in English courses is difficult to conduct given the resources of the staff. We get regular student-evaluations (anonymous rating forms) of the Center and we have a fair amount of anecdotal feedback from composition instructors. Because of limited staff time, however, we have not been able to make more carefully quantified studies of the effect of the Center on improving the success rate of non-native-English-speaking students in English composition classes. We believe that such studies will improve the likelihood of increased local support for the Center.
3. Population To Be Served

POPULATION TO BE SERVED:

The population served will be post-ESL non-native-English-speaking students in remedial and freshman English composition classes. Our experience indicates that these are very high risk students, often strongly motivated toward academic success but usually frustrated in their efforts to move past the lowest level of remedial English after ESL. On our campus, this population is comprised of about 35% Hispanic and over 50% South-East Asian refugee students. Although the college attracts these residents in large numbers, they are very much under-represented in mainstream, transfer-level courses and on the stage of our graduation ceremonies.
4. Objectives

[SEE “WORKPLAN” SECTION OF THIS DOCUMENT.]
5. Workplan Narrative

WORKPLAN
Objectives, Activities, and Evaluation

a. Provide Improved service to more students by increasing hours of operation from 30 hours/week to 40 hours/week supervised by the Instructor-director and/or instructional assistant with other faculty):

Beginning with the start of Fall, 1990, establish the following hours:
   - Monday through Thursday: 8:00 am. to 3:00 p.m.
   - Fridays: 8:00 am. to 2:00 p.m.
   - Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings: 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Distribute student load over the available hours to keep the number of students using the Center at any hour to a maximum of sixteen.

We will have met this objective when the Center is open for service for forty hours a week including six evening hours, 18 able to enroll up to 150 students in the Workshop course and accept most drop-in clients, and has no more than sixteen to twenty clients to serve at any one hour. Further evidence of Improved service will be seen in the use of the Center by evening students and in the evaluation responses of student users (now routinely collected) and their instructors.

b. Increase training time for Instructional assistant and student-tutors. During the first two weeks of both fall and spring semesters (relatively quiet times for the Center) provide a total of twelve hours training of the Instructional aide (by instructor director and ESL instructors) and of the student-tutors (by Instructor-director, ESL instructors, and instructional assistant). Provide brief refresher training during he course of the semester as needed. Two ESL Instructors will be paid an honorarium (local budget) to conduct eight hours of staff inservice on special problems of non-native-English-speaking students in composition.

We will have met this objective when the specified hours of training each semester are being provided and when the Instructional aide and student-tutors report greater confidence in their ability to provide useful support for language-minority composition students and satisfaction with the training they are given. After each three hours of training, all staff will be asked to make a short, formal evaluation of training and to respond to a questionnaire regarding their training needs and satisfaction with what is provided. Adjustments in training will be made in response to the needs/satisfaction responses, which will be used also as basis for individual refresher training as needed.
c. Establish an efficient record-keeping system to save time in maintaining attendance records of enrolled students and allow reporting attendance for Irregular drop-in users. A likely model for a workable attendance system is the one now in use by our own college’s general-use computer labs. The Writing Center already has the computer station needed to implement the system. In early fall, 1990, we will begin adapting the system to our needs, making use of a few hours of time of a student clerical helper from the computer lab; By the start of spring semester we will have the system fully operational and begin evaluation to determine ways of Improving It. Better record keeping and the provision of accounting for drop-in use will help make the Center more nearly self-supporting through regular state apportionment and will increase the likelihood of continuing local support of a full-time Writing Center.

We will have achieved this objective when a computerized record-keeping system is in place, attendance records can be maintained without the need for hours of tallying and transcribing at the end of the week and the end of the semester, and we can make an accurate report of attendance hours of drop-in students.

d. Establish an improved evaluation of the Center’s effectiveness and a system for getting better feedback from student-users and their instructors. By mid-fall-semester we will begin a needs/use survey of instructors (an elaboration of one already used last year). We will seek to get feedback regarding numbers and kinds of referrals, satisfaction, and suggestions. Before the end of the semester, we will follow up with interviews (conducted by instructor-director) with at least 10-12 instructors of composition. Web will conduct a similar survey of student-users of the Center beginning mid-fall-semester and hold follow-up interviews with at least 25 students (conducted by the instructional assistant).

We will have achieved this objective when we have received responses and suggestions, more complete than those gathered in the past, from at least 75% of the instructors teaching composition and have received useful responses and suggestions from at least 25% of the Center’s student-users.

By the start of fall semester, 1990 begin a study of success of language minority students in English composition as related to participation in the English Writing Center. (Study of language-minority students in English composition classes is already under way).

The study will be conducted by division dean with assistance from district Director of Research and student clerical help. Files of past and current participants in the Workshop course and the district grade files will be used.

We will have achieved this objective when a study shows the degree to which participation in the Writing Center is related to students’ success and persistence in English composition courses.
Personnel, Materials, Budget

Paid personnel needed for the current Writing Center operation plus the proposed expansion and improvements:

12 hours/week certificated instructor-director
  $13,900  total
  ($6,950) current local support
  $6,950  requested in grant proposal

40 hours/week classified instructional assistant
  $12,036  total
  ($6,018) local support
  $6,018  requested in grant proposal

45 hours/week student-tutor help
  $6,502  part of current local support
  360  hours total student clerical help
  $1,530  requested in grant proposal

Additional unpaid supervision of the Center is provided incidentally by part-time instructors using the site for student conferences. Additional unpaid tutorial help is provided by advanced composition students (generally prospective teachers) who earn units of independent-study credit for training and practicum in the Writing Center.

Materials needed for current operation plus proposed expansion and improvement:
  $200  duplicating of materials including local dissemination of project information (locally funded)

  $400  purchase of additional texts and references used in Writing Center (locally funded)

  $200  media supplies (computer and printer supplies) (locally funded)
6. Expected Outcomes

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

a. Objectives:

We expect to see a smoother-running, more efficient Writing Center operation as a result of a better distribution of user-hours and the staff's ability to give closer attention to students' needs in a less-pressured atmosphere. We expect to serve more language-minority students including some who attend only evening classes. We expect to be able to train staff more adequately than before. We expect to make a permanent improvement in the efficiency of our record keeping, saving staff time for the more important task of helping students. We expect to improve the likelihood of continued local funding by making it possible to report attendance for drop-in students and by documenting the effectiveness of the Center in promoting success of non-native-English-speaking students.

b. Impact of the Project:

The ultimate impact of the project will be to make the English Writing Center a more effective part of a wider college effort to improve the academic success of language-minority students. In recent months the Literature and Language Arts Division has sought to foster academic success and graduation and transfer rates of these students by a) establishing a division administered scholarship fund earmarked for non-native-English speaking, post-ESL students with potential and intent to transfer to a baccalaureate Institution, b) increased weekly contact hours in the basic skills composition class (about 40% language-minority students) by two hours and c) initiated a coordinated, intensive language cluster of courses for post-ESL students with the educational goal of earning the Associate Degree and/or of transferring to a baccalaureate Institution. (The cluster includes basic skills courses in writing, [including the Writing Center's Workshop course] and speech.) The development of the English Writing Center into a full-time language/writing support operation will be important to the overall success of the effort.

c. Potential for Continued Support:

College support for the Writing Center has been growing in small increments over the past two years. In fall, 1987, the Center was crowded into a little study area too small for any class, had three hours of an instructor's time and only nine hours of instructional aide time; there were only sixteen student participants. Since then, we have received support to remove partition walls, creating a large, well-furnished site with six computer stations, partitions, and ample storage. Support for instructor time has doubled to six hours and the instructional aide is now a degree-holding assistant with twenty hours; 45 hours of student-tutor help has been added; enrolled participants total 135. Our goal is to establish a Writing Center with a full-time director and full-time assistant. More urgent priorities at this point discourage the college from supporting that goal immediately. We expect, however, that by putting into operation
something close to our ultimate goal, making some improvements in the operation (including making it more nearly self-supporting), and demonstrating its effectiveness, we can greatly improve the likelihood that the college will ultimately support the kind of Center that will contribute effectively to our primary goal of improving the graduation and transfer rates of minority students.

d. Potential of Adaptation to Other Programs:

Our Intent In this proposal is to provide for a local need through the development of service that is fairly common on other college campuses. We are more likely at this point to be adapting from others' programs to improve our own. Locally, the kind of training received by the assistant and student tutors In our Center could well be adapted to meet the needs of the general campus Tutoring Center and the Resource Center of our Behavioral and Social Science Division. Both of those programs provide important support for students generally and are now faced with a growing problem of satisfying needs of students with language- and cultural-related obstacles to success. In our own training, we have been giving increasing emphasis to the special needs of language-minority students, and as part of our local dissemination effort, we would make a point of offering training opportunities to their staffs.
7. Evaluation Plan

Evaluation

Evaluation of the project will be on-going as described in the Work Statement above. A formally written statement of evaluation will become a part of our proposal to the district that it fund the continued operation of a full-time, adequately staffed Writing Center. That evaluation would include data to support our more careful accounting of students’ attendance and the contribution of the Center to student success in composition courses. (Please see Work Statement for detailed description of evaluation procedures.)
8. Dissemination Plan

Dissemination

Dissemination of the project results will be Local. As space and staff-time allow, we will encourage Instructors in other disciplines to refer students whose language problems are an obstacle to their success in writing. Workshop sessions with ESL Instructors will be announced to Instructors in other academic areas who are looking for insights into how to help non-native English speakers with language-related problems.
9. Budget Narrative

[NO “BUDGET NARRATIVE ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.”]