

Notes from RWL/OWC Program Review meeting, May 26, 2021

In attendance: Trine Miller, Stephanie Wells, Cara Kreit, Win Cottle, Noel Robertson, Tristan Saldana, Dave King, Caitlin Rolston, Lucas Drisdell, Rion Smith, Justin Atkinson, Debbie Warren, Barbara Hernandez, Beth Sheofsky, Tonya Hersch

Guiding Question 1:

What practices are being implemented within the program to improve student access, retention, and/or success?

- *What research, models, and/or framework is informing the use of these practices?*
- *Intended objectives*
- *What is the impact of these practices on access, retention, and/or success? Please provide both quantitative and qualitative data*
- *Analysis and Reflection: Findings/Challenges/Accomplishments/Next Steps*

Responses:

- The Online RWL and OWC provide just-in-time remediation and connection with faculty and staff outside of the classroom.
- Some instructors have been successful with creating an assignment for students to make an appointment with the RWL at the beginning of the semester to ask particular questions (this helps students feel comfortable with using the service and see how helpful it is).
- There is evidence from research that 1-1 tutoring is helpful for students. Many students need 1-1 support in addition to the time they spend in class. Of the Factors for Student Success: one is a connection with faculty and staff outside of the classroom (See #3 and 10 on the following website:
<https://rpgroup.org/Portals/0/CollegeFacultyStaffandAdmins/StudentSupportRedefined-10WaysEveryoneCanSupportStudentSuccess-January2014.pdf>)
- Provides a personal connection for students, especially those who are struggling or who are unsure if they belong.
- The 30-minute time limit allows us to work in depth with students and make connections with them; allows students more time to articulate their ideas; allows instructors time for more substantial feedback. It is also good to have a clear ending point.
- Benefit of appointment system: We don't feel rushed since there is not a line of students waiting; students know they will get to see us at a particular time and they don't have to wait; this is better for their schedules. Having appointments would also cut down on the number of students who want to write their papers with us.
- RWL/OWC involvement in campus-wide community building activities, such as Road to Success and Spring Ahead

Next steps/ideas:

- Continue using an appointment system for some on-campus RWL hours in the future.
- Find a way to manage no-shows; perhaps create a waiting list or allow students to sign up for appointments during the session.
- Work with IT to set up the above points in the SARS appointment system (Summer 2021).

Guiding Question 2:

What antiracist and equity practices are being implemented within the program to improve student access, retention, and/or the success of Black, African American, and Latinx students?

- *What research, models, and/or framework is informing the use of these practices?*
- *Intended Objectives*
- *What is the impact of these practices on student access, retention, and/or the success for Black, African American, and Latinx students? Please provide both quantitative and qualitative data*
- *Analysis and Reflection*
 - *Findings/Challenges/Accomplishments/Next Steps*

Responses:

- Providing more hours (both the on-campus and online RWL, with increased morning and evening hours) improves access for students who are working or caring for families.
- Online RWL improves access for students who can't come to campus because of transportation issues, disabilities, or family and work obligations.
- Valuing the knowledge and opinions of students of color; helping them make connections between topics they are writing about and their own lives and interests (culturally, socially, economically, etc); helping students to value their own knowledge in relation to a writing prompt or a reading.
- Having 30 minutes for an appointment allows us to have enough time to be intentional with helping students grapple with concepts in the readings and apply them to the writing process.
- Partnering with the Umoja, Puente, MAPS, and STEM learning communities (Fall 2020, Spring 2021 [STEM])
 - Offered dedicated tutoring hours on Zoom for Umoja, Puente, and MAPS
 - Provided a physical presence of a tutor in the Puente and MAPS rooms on campus (Spring 2020)
 - Done orientations and online workshops with STEM, as well as orientation in Umoja counseling classes
- Done OWC orientations for counseling, psychology and architecture instructors, and worked with those instructors to ensure that ISs know their assignments
- How much should instructors be requiring students to use the OWC and RWL? Is it more equitable to make it something extra that students do, or to make it a requirement embedded into the class? (Equity grading: instructors can make this required for homework but can still accept the essay without the student getting tutoring).

Next steps/ideas:

- Add images to RWL/OWC Canvas page that represent students of color (currently working on this – Summer 2021)
- Continue doing outreach with the learning communities; ISs can spend time in those on-campus rooms when the RWL is slow.
- Provide more crossover with the ESL lab and classes so that ESL students feel more comfortable coming to the RWL

- Add some drop-in hours while we are online
- Add student testimonials and videos to the Canvas site (these can also be shared in orientations for Puente or other classes)
- Outreach through Twitter, Instagram, etc. (I've worked on this with Nicole Cruz)
- More outreach to students and instructors outside of English (and make sure that students know that we help with reading as well as writing)
- Have a table in the library, ESL lab, MAPS, Puente, STEM or other places on campus where there are students; help these students with reading and writing
- Share best practices for reading and writing (such as requiring students to work with a tutor on outlines, etc) with other instructors around campus (perhaps a regular e-mail with best practices?); share mini assignments (outlines, Dave's Writing Across the Curriculum ideas; more support across campus for reading in particular, since many students are struggling to read textbooks)
- Do more research on other specific, targeted things we can do to help Black, African American, and Latinx students; over the next semesters, collect qualitative and quantitative data on how the RWL and OWC contribute to student success
- Possibility of ISs being mentors for student/embedded tutors
- Possibility of having online RWL/Zoom tutoring appointments for an entire class to talk about one issue (understanding or getting started on an assignment, outlining, etc); this could be done for English classes or other content courses
- In IS meetings or meetings with instructors: read relevant articles or watch videos about antiracism topics/concerns and discuss

Guiding Question 3:

- *How are you reviewing and developing the structure, activities, staff, and implementation of your program with the goal to disrupt systemic racism?*
 - *Explain*
 - *Name the issue*
 - *Practice/Plan to change*
 - *Why/Data*
 - *Goal/Impact*

Responses:

- We need to gather data about who is coming to the lab and who isn't, and how does that impact success.
- Are there things in the structure of our program that are creating a barrier to success? For example, if students aren't coming to us, we need to go to them.
- Raciolinguistics- We can't separate race from language (for example, no articles in the Chinese language, so we should be more forgiving with these). How can understanding the power dynamics of language, and how race and language intersect, inform our teaching and tutoring practices? In the RWL/OWC, ISs and instructors should be aware of how our language and how the students' language is shaped by race and how that might affect students; understanding that the very idea that something is an error is subjective; understanding that many of our students may feel uncomfortable because they do not use; the Standard Academic English that is traditional expected in college; helping

students to feel safe with the language that they use. Taking the hierarchy out of language.

- When we work with students, be sure to focus on higher-order concerns (organization, clarity) first, and then grammar or other lower-order concerns.
- Using visuals to attract students to the RWL and OWC
- Focus more on reading support throughout the campus

Next steps/ideas:

- See some of the “next steps” above for question 2
- Continue to focus on higher-order concerns first, rather than on grammar and “correctness”; emphasize effective communication, rhetorical choice, critical thinking, and personal expression over adherence to a prescriptive standard of correctness.
- With ISs and instructors, read articles or watch videos about antiracist issues and practices in teaching and tutoring and meet to discuss.
- Focus more on increasing reading support across campus
- Communicate ideas and tips from antiracism seminar with instructors and ISs and discuss (Currently working on this: Summer 2021)

Guiding Question 4:

- *Describe accomplishments within the program that improved student access, retention, and/or success.*

Responses:

- 30-minute appointments: Moving the RWL online; students know that they will have a specific time to get help without waiting; instructors and ISs have enough time to work in depth with them and make a connection. The access provided by the online RWL has been very helpful for students with disabilities, families, jobs, lack of transportation, and other reasons.
- Fall 2020: Creation of dedicated tutoring hours for MAPS, Puente, and Umoja to create more access for these students. (We will continue doing this once we are back on campus.)
- We could try this again online and call it “Social hour” or something similar – use this time for tutoring and creating community.
- RWL/OWC involvement in campus-wide community building activities, such as Road to Success and Spring Ahead
- In-class orientations done by coordinator and ISs for English classes, STEM, and counseling
- 2017-present: Having more regular IS meetings to discuss updates and changes to OWC and RWL, instructor assignments, best practices for feedback, and other topics, as well as feedback norming.

Next steps/ideas:

- Continue working with learning communities; have tutors move to those spaces (when RWL is slow, or at appointed times) to be available for questions and feedback.
- More outreach to other departments on campus
- Fall 2021: ISs will work closely with English 150 instructors to support students (including understanding assignment requirements, discussing student needs, discussing best practices for feedback)