IITG Project Outcomes Form - Report Outcomes : Entry # 746

Name of person reporting outcomes

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IITG Project Title

2018-Rockland CC-Burke-Excelsior's OER OWL... Writing in the Disciplines

Have you applied for, or received additional funds? (choose all that apply):

- Have applied for support from a private foundation or smaller funding source

Access Keywords: Enrollment, Diversity, Capacity, Affordability

While our workshops were designed for faculty who teach students already-enrolled in college courses, the Writing in the Disciplines framework nonetheless supports the goal of access for students. Faculty have a number of options, as well as established models, for making a small but substantive change to their curriculum that will benefit all students. As a High Impact Practice, writing-enhanced pedagogy across disciplines reaches students at all levels. Plus, the Excelsior Online Writing Lab (OWL) is a free, OER handbook for students that faculty can adopt for their classes.

Completion Keywords: Completion, Persistence, Transfer, Retention

The connection between effective written communication skills and academic success in every discipline cannot be overstated. The skills students need to master cannot be taught in one or two writing courses taught only by instructors of English; rather, students must learn the discourses and writing genres associated with their chosen disciplinary pathway if they are to achieve academic and, later, professional success. As noted by Jonathan Monroe, Cornell University, "In pretending to offer a more universal understanding of what good writing is, single course writing requirements do a disservice to students and faculty alike; they persuade students that acts of writing are anything other than situational and multiple. All meaningful acts of writing are unavoidably complex negotiations with particular contexts, purposes, and audiences. In higher education, these negotiations take place within particular disciplines" (Association of American Colleges and Universities, Fall 2003 6.1). Numerous studies have suggested that including formal and informal writing in curriculum improves student success. Thus, it is of great import that we encourage more faculty across disciplines to use writing not only as a measure of but a means to promote student learning. Our IITG grant enabled us to introduce faculty across multiple disciplines to WID concepts, help them identify ways in which to include and assess discipline-specific writing assignments in their curriculum, and share best practices with each other about how best to support student writing. All the faculty who came to the trainings at Excelsior, and the three SUNY colleges (Rockland, Monroe, and Clinton), said they will continue to use writing in their curriculum and many, having experienced positive success with their students, expressed a desire to expand how much writing they teach. While, for a number of reasons, it is not possible to measure in concrete terms how much the inclusion of writing improved student success in these discrete courses, we can say with certainty given the vast research in this field, that receiving training in writing and opportunities to write in diverse contexts inevitably leads to greater student success.

Success Keywords: Applied Learning, Student Supports, Financial Literacy, Career Success

Strong writing skills are important for success both in the classroom and for future work in students' fields of study. The focus on writing in the various disciplines (WID) increased student access to discipline specific conventions and helped them prepare for the writing expectations associated with workplace genres. (See Completion above)
We were able to leverage the SUNY IITG grant to apply for and receive a $200,000 grant from the Booth Ferris Foundation to scale up the Writing in the Disciplines work we have done for this project. The Booth Ferris grant will fund the creation of a new Center for Writing Excellence at Excelsior College that will support and promote Writing in the Disciplines across Excelsior College and provide OER professional development and student resources to serve a broader population. This second and significantly larger award builds upon the SUNY IITG work by adapting the OER training modules we created as part of the IITG project to develop a self-paced professional development course in Canvas Network that will be OER content freely available to faculty at SUNY and other institutions. This online course will go live in September 2019, and faculty who take the course will receive certification in Writing in the Disciplines. We are now preparing to train at least 50 Excelsior faculty with this OER course. After the training, we will perform course revisions to implement genre-based writing assignments in at least 20 degree programs and run a pilot study that will conclude in Summer 2020. The Booth Ferris grant will also fund the development of additional Writing in the Disciplines resources to complement what we have already produced. These resources will focus on a student audience and provide multimedia support for composing discipline-specific genres (e.g., lab reports, executive summaries, and market analyses). These materials will be made available as OER content in the Excelsior OWL, which already serves a large number of SUNY campuses.

Inquiry Keywords: Scholarship, Discovery, Innovation, Mentoring

Three team members presented a summary of the grant project at CIT 2019 in a presentation titled "Using Excelsior's OER OWL to Promote Writing in the Disciplines." We also plan to evaluate the results of integrating writing across the curriculum in the courses touched as a result of these trainings. We will review student outcomes on specific course assignments, and will attain feedback from faculty who developed and/or taught these courses. Many who attended reported an increase in knowledge, based upon survey results.
Additionally, we have provided evidence-based information on writing across the curriculum to 56 faculty members across four colleges. These trainings were recorded and will soon be made available to many more faculty through our highly accessible open-access Excelsior OWL. These trainings have provided faculty with important tools and resources to equip students to increase their use of available research in their respective disciplines of study. As one example, scaffolding is an important element of creating a robust writing assignment that supports learning in written communication and disciplinary content. Students engaging in scaffolded assignments will almost be doing research in their disciplinary field.

Engagement Keywords: START-UP New York, Commercialization, Workforce Development, Alumni/Philanthropic Support, Community Service.

In surveys, employers consistently report that writing is one of the most important skills they desire in employees. They also report that the demand for writing skills is not currently being met by American colleges and universities. By offering Writing in the Disciplines training seminars for faculty at four colleges in New York State—and making these training materials freely available on the web—our project will indirectly help to close this skills gap. Moreover, since Writing in the Disciplines pedagogy focuses on writing in authentic real-world genres, it is more likely than other approaches to writing instruction to provide the kinds of writing skills and experiences that employers demand. In addition, he online materials created as part of this grant will be hosted on the Excelsior OWL and will be freely available to educators and students across New York State.

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As noted above, Excelsior College received a $200,000 grant from the Booth Ferris Foundation to help scale up the WID project. The additional grant will enable Excelsior to create a Center for Writing Excellence and support further OER development and student resources freely available to students and faculty.

1st Choice:

Faculty Development

Faculty Development

- Sharing Best Practices

2nd Choice:

Instructional Technologies

Instructional Technologies

- Open Educational Resources (OER)

3rd Choice:

Instructional Design

Instructional Design

- Student Engagement

What recommendations would you make to scale-up or share your project more broadly (within an educational sector, or perhaps SUNY-wide)?

The four presentations and ancillary handouts will be made available as openly licensed (CC-BY) documents on the Excelsior OWL. Advertising the existence of these materials to all SUNY campuses will be useful to reach our target audience of faculty across the curriculum, system-wide. Additional cohorts could certainly be formed in the future, and the existing materials could be used and/or revised for new audiences.

If you would like to create a community of practice within the SUNY Learning Commons, please describe "members of your community" who would be most interested in your outcomes. Please be specific (e.g., math faculty, instructional designers, student services, registrars, administrators, accreditation or assessment specialists).

SUNY faculty (very broadly defined) who wish to explore how to engage students and enhance their teaching and assessment activities through discipline-specific writing assignments.

Do you intend to create an ongoing "Community of Practice" within the SUNY Learning Commons to continue work and dialog regarding this project?

Yes

Overall, how successful was IITG in meeting your project goals? (You may elaborate on your response in the final question if not addressed elsewhere.)

Extremely successful

Do you wish your current abstract to be used?

Yes

File One Upload and Brief Description

Here is a link to the Writing in the Disciplines (WID) Section of the Excelsior OWL. Forming a key part of the OWL's Educator Resources, the WID section provides slides, handouts, exercises, and instructions for faculty: An Intro to WID, Creating Effective Assignments, Peer Review and Revision, and Effective Feedback and Rubrics:

https://owl.excelsior.edu/educator-resources/writing-in-the-disciplines/

File Two Upload and Brief Description

Attached is the slide presentation shared at the 2019 SUNY CIT Conference. Professors Lynch, Burke, and Jackson described the project, gave examples of the four WID workshops created through the grant, and gave an overview of the faculty survey results to the attendees.

File Two

- SUNY-WID-CIT-presentation.pptx

Project Website Address (Hyperlink 1)

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