

Final Report for Writer's Workshops
Learning Initiative
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Numbers

Fall semester 2006 saw 131 undergraduates seeking entrance into the Education Department Teacher Preparation Program. Twenty students of the 35 who failed the Writing Proficiency Exam came to workshops to seek help. We met in GI 225 and also the Dean of Education's Conference Room. I saw students on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:30am – 2:30pm each week (in 30 minute intervals) from the beginning of November 2006 through the end of January 2007. No workshops were held during winter break.

Fifteen of the 20 students who attended workshop regularly all *passed* the exam on their second attempt. Most of these students attended *four or more* workshop sessions. I have documentation of strong improvement through weekly, consistent practice. The students were so grateful for the help and thrilled at their improvement and success on the exam.

Challenges

Five of the twenty students did not pass. Two of these students had such challenging, multiple issues with their writing ability that there was just honestly not enough time to effectively help them. Of these two students, one came very consistently and pushed through his frustration to keep trying. He did not possess any single literacy strength. I strongly suspected multiple learning disabilities and urged him to seek out the resource center and be diagnosed and served. He did not, and his obvious processing difficulties never improved.

The other student with challenging, multiple issues only came to workshop a total of three times, sporadically (once per each month). One of those times, she came unprepared. She did not seem to possess the same determination to improve as did her male counterpart. I was not surprised by the test results for either of these students.

One final student I had concerns for came to workshops a total of three times and continued to struggle with punctuation, which ultimately was the reason why she failed her second exam. I think if I had more time with this student, we could have found a break through.

The Unexpected

The last two students' failing scores honestly surprised me. Although they each had continued difficulty with grammar issues, they worked hard and I felt very confident of their ability to pass. They each completed four different workshops. Analysis of the data showed the only difference between their workshop participation and those that passed was one to two less sessions and sporadic attendance. I know that they each expressed struggling with high test anxiety, especially when future stakes were so high.

Exciting Success

On an extremely positive note, one student in particular achieved unprecedented levels of growth and change. This young man not only worked with me once per week and sometimes twice, but he also sought out almost daily writing tutoring in his home town during winter break. He also worked with Susan Gannaway, Master Tutor at WSU as well as the Disability Resource Center staff.

This maximum effort would be remarkable enough just left at that, but this young man was more determined than any other student I have ever met despite the fact that he had cerebral palsy. He wanted more than anything to have the opportunity to impact special education students in his future classroom turned community. He wants all of his students to know that they can do ANYTHING that they put their minds and hearts to, and now he is in the Education Sequence and well on his way to doing just that. I will celebrate the small part workshop played in his ability to serve his students well.

Conclusions

Some conclusions of the data are as follows:

- Five or more sessions of participation provide optimum assurance of passing.
- The sessions need to be weekly and very consistent, not once each month or less.
- Students with multiple literacy issues and characteristics of learning disabilities should be directed immediately to the Disability Resource Center to receive the help specific to their needs. Short term help in workshop all by itself is not all that they need.
- The workshops need to get started earlier than three months prior to an exam date; four or five months would be better.
- Only 20/35 students sought help after failing the exam. There needs to be a more effective way of getting the word out. Although all of my time slots were filled most days, in the future it would be really valuable to reach and help more students of the total number who failed. I would also like to see more preparation students come before they take the exam the first time.
- It is important to let pre-service education candidates know that they don't have to be islands, that we are all in the learning process, and we all need to work together to grow and improve. It's the smart folks who seek out tutoring as a resource for success.
- Education professors and students alike would like to see this program continued on a more permanent basis. Workshop has met a very real and continual need over the past four years. If it should become a viable part of how the Education Department provides wind beneath the wings of their future teachers, I would be first in line to apply for the position!

I thank you all for the opportunity to serve these future teachers. It was an honor and a challenge to meet their social-emotional learner needs and encourage these students towards stronger literacy skills.

Names	Remedial /Prep	#Sessions	P/F	Concerns
Student 1	R	5	P	NO
Student 2	R	6	P	NO
Student 3	R	5	P	NO
Student 4	R	3	F	YES
Student 5	R	3	P	NO
Student 6	R	5	P	NO
Student 7	R	3	F	NO
Student 8	R	3	F	YES
Student 9	R	4	P	NO
Student 10	R	5	F	YES
Student 11	R	5	P	NO
Student 12	R	5	P	NO
Student 13	R	5	P	NO
Student 14	R	6	P	NO
Student 15	R	5	P	NO
Student 16	R	3	P	NO
Student 17	R	5	P	NO
Student 18	R	4	F	NO
Student 19	R	3	P	NO
Student 20	R	4	P	NO
15/20 students passed = 75%				
10/11 students who attended 5 or more sessions passed				
4/9 students who attended 4 or less				

sessions failed								