

Project Title: Blended Learning and On-line Tutoring

Project Category: Strategic Initiative Grant

Principal Investigator: Mary Simone, Educational Technologist, Institutional Technology, Division of Educational Technology and Learning Commons, mary.simone@umb.edu (617) 287-5969

Other Participants: Susan Mraz, Professor Hispanic Studies, susan.mraz@umb.edu , (617) 287-6872; Cynthia Jahn, Director Subject Tutoring Program, Academic Support Programs , Cynthia.jahn@umb.edu (617) 287-76550; Anthony Petruzzi, Director of Writing Assessment , Anthony.Petruzzi@umb.edu , 617-287-7908; Jessica Downa, Media Specialist, Educational Technology and Learning Commons, jessica.downa@umb.edu; (617) 287-3987; Kathleen Polley, Online RN-to-BS Program, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Coordinator, kathleen.polley@umb.edu 617-287-7532

Campus and Disciplines Involved: UMass Boston Campus, Hispanic Studies Department, Academic Support, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, IT, Educational Technology and Learning Commons, College of Corporate, Continuing and Distance Education.

Total Amount of Funds Requested - Strategic Initiative Grants, \$19,184

Project summary:

We believe that this project can serve as a foundation for the development of an on-line blended tutoring model for diverse subject areas at UMASS Boston. This project has two components: one proposes a collaboration among diverse academic departments to expand existing on-line WebCT elementary Spanish language lab courses to include on-line tutoring, the other create a new WebCT course to provide a framework for on-line tutoring for 15 students who are enrolled in Nursing 360 who have been identified by faculty in the Nursing program to need assistance in writing proficiency skills.

The goal of this project is to combine the expertise of curriculum specialists in Spanish and Nursing, e-learning experts from IT, and tutoring and writing experts from the Subject Tutoring and the Writing Proficiency Assessment Programs to develop an on-line blended tutoring model to serve students in two different disciplines. An on-line tutoring model would have significant potential to represent a cost-effective use of tutors' time, help widen student access to tutoring, and broaden the range of tutoring services provided to students not only in Spanish and Nursing courses that have increasingly large classes. Mason (2002) has written that blended solutions of learning on-line and face to face strategies offer the most satisfactory outcomes to teaching and learning.

Academic Support Programs and Hispanic Studies will collaborate with IT to develop appropriate training and-development materials for tutors of elementary and intermediate Spanish. Academic Support Programs currently provides a face to face tutoring model for

students enrolled in Spanish courses on campus. Nursing and the Writing Proficiency Office will collaborate with IT to develop appropriate content training to enable students to satisfy the WPR.

This project proposes to develop an on-line tutoring model that combines the expertise of several departments to offer students the best possible support to achieve the learning objectives of the Writing Proficiency Requirement. IT will collaborate in two pilot groups: 1) Hispanic Studies and the Subject Tutoring Program and 2) Nursing and the Writing Proficiency Office as part of a steering committee to identify which tutoring strategies can be effectively delivered on-line through WebCT and other new technologies and which would benefit from face to face contact. IT will provide technical support to tutors and with the help of consultants create face-to face workshops and on-line training modules to teach tutors and students how to use e-learning technologies within WebCT for tutoring. E-Learning technologies include synchronous technologies such as text chat, audio chat, and asynchronous technologies include email, WebCT discussion forums, wikis, blogs, conferencing, and podcasting.

Project Narrative:

It is important for faculty to enhance curriculum and instructional delivery by employing up-to-date communication tools and methods to keep pace with state-of-the-art learning approaches and technologies as they relate to the acquisition of foreign language, literature and culture. WebCT continues to influence changing trends in student learning at UMass Boston. Since the summer of 2006, Mary Simone, Educational Technologist has used WebCT to deliver important audio-visual course materials for Spanish 101, 102 in face to face and on-line courses. The benefits provided to instructors by WebCT language lab course over the last year have been (1) a paperless repository of student performance on linguistic tasks of reading, writing, viewing, and listening activities, (2) a multi-media repository of cultural materials that provide an authentic context for language learning activities, (3) and a learning community for two way communication between students and instructors to facilitate ongoing feedback and assessment of linguistic performance.

Faculty and students have responded so favorably to the use of the Spanish WebCT language labs over the last several months that Mary Simone has expanded the application of WebCT that was offered in fall 2006 to include elementary and intermediate French, Italian, German, and Spanish courses for a total of 28 courses. Susan Mraz has collaborated with Mary Simone to design interactive exercises in the Spanish WebCT language lab to provide constant feedback to students as a form of self evaluation to student performance as well as provide faculty with data for assessment. She is also working with the publisher in order to provide additional personalized WebCT assessments for the next edition of the textbook being used for Spanish 101 and 102. The blending of instructional and technical support is an important part of the successful application of WebCT to student learning. This project proposes enriched training and support for faculty and students in WebCT by blending on-line tutoring with e-learning technology tools and content expertise to produce the best possible learning outcomes for students. This project uses the framework of WebCT to engage students in on-line tutoring that promises to expand their content knowledge of the curriculum, increase access to academic support, and develop new learning strategies by participating in a community of on-line learners using various e-learning technologies.

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences Learning Resource center currently offers tutoring face-to-face to students. The online RN-BS student population requires the same English Language and academic support as their face-to-face counterparts. A review of the Writing Proficiency Program noted that students who enrolled in English I & II in concert with the freshman and intermediate seminars were more successful in meeting the requirements of the WPR. All of the students in the Online RN-BS Program are transfer students and thus have not benefited from the course offerings that prepare them for university level writing. The Online Student Resource Center for CNHS will provide an opportunity for students from geographically remote locations to access self-directed learning modules, downloadable resources while increasing access to real-time tutoring through the “live classroom” synchronous conferencing. Extrapolating from the collaboration of the Hispanic Studies and the Subject Tutoring Program, CNHS assisted

by IT will use a constructivist model to develop the self-directed learning modules in critical reading and writing. There will be 15 students targeted from the current intermediate seminar NU 360 Professional Issues in Nursing to be enrolled in the pilot project. Successful strategies learned from this collaboration will then be used to further increase access to both online and traditional students into the Online Student Resource Center which will use both synchronous and asynchronous tools to meet the diverse learning styles of the students in CNHS. Complementing the College of Nursing and Health Sciences' Alfred P Sloan Foundation Grant: Expanding Access: Taking a Local Approach to the Development and Delivery of Online and Blended Learning programs, this collaboration will enable the campus to enhance the objective of developing, strengthening and expanding on-line tutoring opportunities for students at UMass Boston.

The project plan for the blended learning and on-line tutoring proposal includes the development of a series of workshops and meetings. IT staff in the Media Center and in the ITC with input from content specialists will provide workshops to tutors in how to build an on-line student community, how to communicate with students in their WebCT language lab courses, and to communicate strategies to students in how to perform their course assignments. The first stage of this project will be to assemble a steering committee with combined expertise in information and communication technologies, curriculum development knowledge, and tutor training strategies to develop a blended approach to training tutors with expertise in on-line methods, information handling expertise, educational and pedagogical skills in the content area, and team building, and the ability to work in multi-disciplinary teams. The project will develop workshops in technology and tutor training over the summer and fall of 2007. Two tutors will be hired by the Subject Tutoring Program and two tutors will be hired by the Nursing Program to deliver the on-line tutoring. and will deliver on-line tutoring from November of 2007 through spring, 2008 to one Spanish 101, and one Spanish 102 course and, approximately 56 students, and 15 students selected by faculty from Nursing 360. The project will maintain a website of training materials for tutors, and develop wikis, and blogs to promote an on-line supportive community for tutors and their students that will also serve to document faculty, tutor, and student assessment of the applied technologies and strategies used in on-line tutoring for the duration of the project implementation.

This project will provide UMASS Boston with a basis for evaluating the amount of training and development needed for on-line tutors to prepare students to participate in a blended on-line community and gauge student response to on-line tutoring by documenting individual student reflections about learning in an electronically supported community. Moreover, students can practice not only listening and viewing skills, but oral and writing skills, take on-line assessments with impersonal automatic correction feedback, as well receive personalized tutor feedback. They can evaluate their own performance assessments, but also share them with tutors other students. An outcome of this second objective is to encourage individual students to join other learners in an electronically supported community of Spanish language learners to reflect on individual learning styles and strategies.

Project Deliverables:

For each of the two pilot groups (Hispanic Studies and Nursing)

1. Create face to face workshops to develop tutors with expertise in the “craft” of on-line tutoring such as basic IT literacy skills to be able to navigate and use the WebCT online environment that
 - Provide tutors with training in pedagogy, IT, team work, and communication skills to be able to assist students in the on-line environment.
 - Provide tutors with clear documentation about their roles and responsibilities in on-line tutoring.
 - Provide tutors with a basic toolkit of tutoring strategies available in an on-line data base to use in the online environment.
2. Create synchronous and asynchronous e-learning tools for on-line tutoring such as podcasting, blogs, wikis, and voice chat that could transform a model of solely face-to face or on-line tutoring to a blended on-line tutoring model.
3. Provide an alternative to a potentially isolating purely on-line environment. This WebCT blended on-line tutoring model has the potential to create a group learning environment that engages students to participate in a community of learners with both shared and unique learning objectives and strategies. This project will use Wimba and other e-learning tools to build on the framework of the content already existing WebCT Spanish language lab courses, and develop an on-line tutoring model for Spanish 101, 102, and Nursing 360 that will facilitate discussion between tutors and students to develop literacy skills.
4. Document tutor and student satisfaction with the application of online tutoring to perceived student performance of listening and viewing tasks, and writing and speaking tasks.
5. Document student assessment to on-line automatic correction feedback, individualized on-line feedback and face to face feedback from tutors based on task. Students will have opportunity to document interaction with tutors through self-assessment on-line exercises, and on-line individualized assessment from tutors. On-line assessment is part of the tutoring process (included in 3 hours of tutoring per tutor, per course, per week).
6. Develop a repository of on-line discussion groups, blogs, and wikis deployed in tutoring that would allow us the opportunity to reflect on the appropriate application of tutoring strategies to the learning needs of students in diverse subject areas. The digital repository of assessments in the WebCT language lab would provide valuable data for student reflection on their individual learning styles and strategies and the assessment and evaluation of student participation in on-line tutoring.
7. Provide faculty in other subject areas access to this repository of on-line tutoring strategies to understand more about how students learn on line, and to evaluate whether an electronically supported community encourages students to join other learners to reflect on individual learning styles and strategies.
8. Assess differences in perceived sense of community experienced by students tutored in face to face, purely on-line tutoring.

Dissemination of Project Results

- Present papers and panel discussions at conferences
- Publish paper
- Establish website repository
- Establish blogs, wikis and podcasts
- Survey/ assessment
- CCDE has funded the use of WEBCAPE and on-line language placement test for students in foreign languages. The database of test questions of WEBCAPE will be useful in assessing the different perceptions of community outcomes perceived by students tutored in face to face, purely on-line, and blended on-line Spanish 102 courses, and students tutored in face to face, purely on-line, and blended on-line Nursing 360 students.

Project Budget

Description	Total Cost	Requested	In-kind
Total this grant	\$21,224.00	\$19,184.00	\$2040.00
Personnel			
project manager (Simone)			
instructional designer (JDowna)			
specialist subject tutoring (CJahn)			
content specialist Spanish (SMraz)			
content specialist writing (APetruzzi)			
Content specialist Nursing (KPolley)			
WebCT trainer (TWT)			
sub-total	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Contracted personnel			
On-line tutoring training workshops (Separate workshop sessions for Hispanic Studies and for Nursing) 4 tutors X30 hours X \$10.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	
1Web designer/developer/ 1 trainer/ coordinator \$32.00 X 150 hours	\$4,800.00	\$4,800.00	
*On-line tutors 36 hours/2 hispanic studies 2 Tutors X 36 hours X \$10.00	\$720.00		Academic Support
On-line tutors 36 hours/2 nursing 2 Tutors X 36 hours X \$10.00	\$720.00		Nursing
sub-total	\$7,440.00	\$6,000.00	
Equipment			
Apple Xserve Quad Xeon Server	\$5,125.00	\$5,125.00	
Apple remonte desktop 3 (10 Managed Systems)	\$149.00	\$149.00	
sub-total	\$5,274.00	\$5,274.00	
server training with apple	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	
Service			
WEBCAPE on-line testing	\$600.00		CCDE
AppleCare Premium Service & Support Plan for Xserve-Auto Enroll	\$760.00	\$760.00	
Conferences participation and Paper presentation			
CIT Faculty Development Seminar 2007- 2008 6 members	\$90.00	\$90.00	
EDUCAUSE/NERCOMP Annual Conference in Worchester March 2008 (2 staff)	\$760.00	\$760.00	
NERRALLD Spring Meeting conference 2008 2 members	\$100.00	\$100.00	
Travel	\$200.00	\$200.00	

Project Timetable

Dates	Event	Audience	Action	Duration
Summer 07	Steering committee meeting	All grant participants	Create content for tutor training in technology and content	June-August
	Select tutors	Academic Support/ Nursing/ Hispanic Studies, Writing Proficiency	Hire, process paperwork,	End of August
	Administration of WebCT courses	IT	Enroll students and tutors	End of December
Fall 07	Organize content of workshops	IT/Hispanic Studies/Nursing/Writing Proficiency/Academic Support	Schedule workshops hire consultant trainer	September-October
	Presentation	NERALLT Conference	Present paper	October
	3 workshops Technology training, Tutoring strategies Community building	Consultant/ tutors	Tutoring strategies	October-November
	Meeting	Steering committee		End of November
	Interim Report			Dec 15
Spring08	Presentation	CIT conference	Present panel	January
	Steering Committee Meeting			
	Activation of on-line tutoring	Tutors and students in Spanish 101,102, Nursing 360	Activate tutoring	Early February
	3 Workshops	Consultant/tutors	Feedback and Support	February-March
	Presentation	SAT conference	Present panel	April
	Survey	Students and tutors in on-line Spanish 101, 102, Nursing 360	analyze	Mid April
	Meeting	Steering committee		Mid April
	Project Closure	Consultant/tutors/students Collaborators	Panel discussion and feedback	April 26
	Final report			June 1

QUALIFICATIONS

Principal Investigator : Mary Simone - 10% time

IT, Educational Technology

- Initiated WebCT modules in 26 elementary and intermediate language courses with language lab component enabling faculty to track students performance on-line for the first time (2006-present)
- Designed website for Spanish Language Resource center, an on-line resource for Spanish Language teachers in Massachusetts Public Schools (2002)
- Converted language labs from analog to digital technology to deliver technology to 1300 students per semester in support over 100 courses annually. (1997-2003)
- Digitized the language lab collection and incorporated it into the OCLC data base with staff support and funding from the Healey Library (1988-1995)
- Produced and wrote laserdisc “Le Salamandre” for intermediate French course at UMB (1988)
- Created and Produced Instructional video , “Fidenza” distributed to 12 Universities in the Northeast including UMB (1987)
- Produced and wrote “Imagenes de Mexico” for “De Mucho un Poco,” a Spanish language television program, broadcast on Channel WLIV-TV, Boston, (1983); and aired on UMAB cable network program “Local Focus (1983,1984,1985)
- Assisted with the design and installation of three Tandberg Consoles in the development of a state of the art language lab in Wheatley. (1982)

Program/Project Management

- Coordinating Media Viewing Room installation roll out (2006-present)
- Manages IT support for E-portfolio, rsmart pilot; created on-line SNAP survey for evaluation of product by students and faculty (2006-present)
- Coordinating IT Educational Technology Website architecture design and content organization for Web Services (2006-present)
- Co-wrote WebCT rollout plan as Committee member co-chair (2005)
- Works on UMB WebCT design and administration support model as UMOL group (2004- present)
- Transferred the language lab catalog to Healey Library to consolidate point of access and delivery of collection for students and faculty (2005)
- Managed the Media Center, language lab GRC installation (2004-present)
- Consolidated language lab distribution desk into the library circulation desk to streamline use of materials by faculty and students(2004-present)
- Managed language lab from revenue from language lab trust fund without state revenue and negotiated 89% increase in lab fee (1995-2003)
- Expanded the client base of the language lab to other academic departments and transformed it into a Learning Resource Center offering video viewing and math resources tutoring for Academic Support Department (1993-2002)
- Researched and acquired new language lab facility and supervised its construction in Healey (1984)
- Managed all facets of language lab operation in McCormack for Media Services including acquisitions, hiring, and technical support (1978-1983)

Teaching

- Design and Teach training workshops and orientations to faculty and students in WebCT, language lab web site, and use of the language lab and media center facility (1978-present)
- Taught in WebCT on-line course, EDC501 design and instruction (2006)
- Taught face to face courses: Spanish 101, 102, and 201 elementary and intermediate Spanish; Graduate School of Education, EDC 497C practicum, field supervisor of middle and secondary school teachers of English, French, Italian, and Spanish (1994-2004)
- Taught EDC497C, Teaching and Learning in the Discipline, French, Italian and Spanish in both Prometheus and using virtual forum (1995-2004)

Committee Service

- Organizing summer 2007 Internal Association of Learning Lab Directors at Tufts University and UMass Boston
- Organized spring 2006 NERALLT meeting at Connecticut College, New London, CT.
- Served on Search Committee to hire instructional designer UMB Media Center, Chair(2006)
- Serves on UMOL user group for WEBCT vista 3 and 4 (2004-present)
- Serves on New England Association of Learning Lab Directors Advisory Board of International Association of Learning Lab Directors (2006-2007)
- Served on Media Center Task Force, Co-Chair, Spring-summer 2005
- Served on Committee on the Establishment of a Media Center as principal writer and researcher (2002-2003)
- Served on UMASS Boston, Technology Task Force, 1994-2002
- Served as project manager of committee on Distance Learning for foreign languages ,Boston Public Schools, CU-SeeME MUSE system, 1995-1998
- Served on Advisory Board, FIPSE Grant for interactive videodisc “In the French Body,” project, 1990.
- Served as panel leader for design of Tandberg language lab console and work stations, Tandberg International Headquarters, Armonk, N.Y. (1989)

Education

• Graduate Fellowship in Communications, Rotary International Scholarship, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, D.F.

- MS. Boston University School of Public Communications
- MA, UMASS Boston, English
- Massachusetts Secondary School Teaching Certification,
- BA, Connecticut College

Professional Affiliations:

- IALLT International Association of Learning Laboratory Technologists
- NERCOMP
- TIS- Technology Information Systems Group, UMASS Boston
- NERALLD New England Association of Learning Lab Directors
- ASCD : Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development

Participants:

Content Specialist : Susan Mraz,

Department of Hispanic Studies, Spanish/Portuguese Language Coordinator 10% time

Spanish/Portuguese language coordinator, Full-time professional track lecturer / administrator, to coordinate and teach in Language Instruction Program, train and supervise a large number of part-time lecturers, teach graduate level methodology courses, develop curriculum, and to act as departmental liaison. :

**Letter of Support for the Blended Learning and On-line Tutoring
Project Category: Strategic Initiative Grant**

As the Language Coordinator for Hispanic Studies and co-author of Caminos which is used for three semesters of Spanish at UMass Boston, I am very interested in developing an e-learning solution to the problem of providing tutoring services for the increasing numbers of Elementary and Intermediate Spanish language students. Our goal is to provide expanded and flexible services to students who cannot meet with tutors during the day in a face to face format.

To meet the specific goals of Spanish language tutoring, I will be working closely with Mary Simone and Cynthia Jahn so that we might identify specific strategies and train appropriate tutors to work in an online medium.

I anticipate that I will be part of the steering committee and will spend 2-4 hours a week until the project is up and running and 2 hours a week afterward. I will serve as the creative content developer for all interactive components and will oversee the training of Spanish Language tutors. I look forward to the successful development of the template for blended tutoring for students.

Sincerely,
Susan Mraz

Content Specialist: Kathleen Polley, On-Line RN-to-BS Program, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Coordinator 5% time

As the Director of the Online RN-BS Program I am very excited at the prospect of developing an e-learning solution to the problem of increasing academic support services to the Online RN-BS students with the hope of expanding the services to the generic nursing students. To meet the specific writing and critical reading of the transfer students in the online program I will be working in concert with Anthony Petruzzi so that we might identify specific strategies that will increase the successful first submission pass

rate of the online students on the WPR. I anticipate that I will be part of the steering committee and will spend 2 hours a week or .05% of my time for over ten weeks. I look forward to the successful development of the template for blended tutoring for students.

Content Specialist:

Anthony P. Petruzzi, Director of Writing Assessment Education: 5% time

Ph. D., University of Connecticut, English, 1995.

M. A., Middlebury College, English, 1976.

B. A., Franconia College, English, 1974.

Massachusetts Educator's License, Initial, English 5-9, and 9-12

Areas of Specialization:

Rhetoric and Composition: Writing Assessment; Philosophies of Composition; Rhetorical Theory; Plato; and History of Rhetoric.

Philosophical Hermeneutics: Theories of Interpretation; Reading, Literacy, Critical Education and Pedagogy Theory; Pragmatism; and Cultural Studies.

Literature: Ralph Waldo Emerson; Luigi Pirandello.

Areas of Generalization:

American Literature and Pragmatism; European and Italian Literature; Multi-Cultural American Literature; Intercultural and Communication Theory.

Teaching and Administrative Experience:

- **2004 to Present: Director of Writing Assessment, University of Massachusetts, Boston:**
 - Critical Reading and Writing 283: Proficiency in Analytic Writing
 - Critical Reading and Writing 282: Elements of Writing Proficiency
- **2002-04, Chair, Department of English, Middleborough High School:**
 - English 1, 9th grade, Standard, College, and Honor levels
 - English 2, 10th grade, Standard and College levels
 - English 3, 11th grade, Honor level
 - English 4, 12th grade, Honor level
 - Eng 57: Creative Writing
- **2000-02, Assistant Professor, Boston University:**
 - Rhetoric 101: Critical Thinking and Writing
 - Rhetoric 102: Research Writing
- **1998-2000, Assistant Professor, Bentley College: Coordinator for Communication Across the Curriculum:**
 - Exp 101: Expository Writing: Summary and Synthesis.
 - Exp 101L: Expository Writing: Summary and Synthesis.
 - Com 320: Intercultural Communication.
 - Com 322: Theories of Persuasion.
 - Eng 234: The European Tradition.

Eng 354: Modern Italian Literature and Film: Politics and Sex in Post-War Italy.

- **1995-1998, Assistant Professor, Director of Composition, Graduate Faculty Member, University of Nebraska, Kearney:**
 - Eng 895: Graduate Directed Reading: Teaching Composition in Secondary School.
 - Eng 805: Graduate Seminar: Composition Studies.
 - Eng 411W: Advanced Expository Writing: Literacy: Writing as a Social Act.
 - Eng 311W: Advanced Composition: Study of Writing Processes.
 - Eng 252: Introduction to European Literature.
 - Eng 251: Introduction to American Literature: Emerson and the American Tradition.
 - Eng 102: Expository Writing 2: Argumentative Writing.
 - Eng 101: Expository Writing 1: Critical Thinking.
- **1990-1995, Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Connecticut:**
 - Eng 250: Honors 1: Approaches to Literature.
 - Eng 249W: Advanced Expository Prose.
 - Eng 212: The Modern Novel (T.A.).
 - Eng 127W: Masterworks of English and American Literature.
 - Eng 113: Renaissance and Modern European Literature.
 - Eng 109: Composition and Literature.
 - Eng 105: Composition and Cultural Diversity.

Note: “W” is a writing intensive designation; “L” is a double session with a Lab component for additional time for writing instruction.

Related Experience:

Co-Director of the University of Connecticut Writing Center, 1994-95.
Reader, Freshman English Placement Essay, 1992 & 1993, University of Connecticut; and 1999, Bentley College.

Letter of Support for the Blended Learning and On-line Tutoring Project Category: Strategic Initiative Grant

The recent Campus Writing Program Review, written by Drs. Christine Hult and Joe Law, addressed the current structure and delivery of writing support at UMB:

We learned via the self-study that there has been a recent proposal to consider expanding the support services through a writing center, more along the lines of the traditional academic writing centers with which these reviewers are familiar. University Writing Centers typically include drop-in and on-line tutoring services for writing at the time of need on specific writing assignments for students across the university. There is considerable professional literature regarding the development of a writing center that we would suggest you consult. The philosophy of an effective University Writing Center is that it engages students at all levels and in all disciplines in thoughtful conversations about their projects so that students learn to be more independent writers. An effective University Writing Center wisely avoids revising and editing for students because that only makes students more dependent.

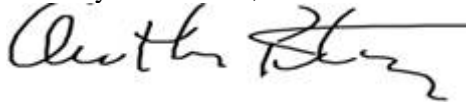
Some of the students we spoke with, students who were required to write numerous papers in a music or economics class, felt they were not getting the help they needed at the point of need at the RRWSC. One woman said she had been on a waiting list for six weeks and still hadn't seen a tutor. Another said that the writing workshop she attended didn't meet her needs

because it was on a generic topic rather than specific to the kind of writing she was being asked to do in her course. Additionally, she mentioned that because the workshop was “drop-in” students coming in late disrupted the flow and the teacher was never really able to get to the heart of the discussion in the short time allocated. Though it is meeting the needs of many of the UMB students, we suspect that there are students who are not currently being served by the ongoing tutoring model employed by Academic Support Programs.

Recommendation: Consider development of both drop-in and on-line “writing center” tutoring service that would meet more of the needs of a broader range of students—particularly those in upper-division writing-in-the disciplines courses. Expanding services in this way would, of course, require additional resources as well. (6.2 Writing Center in addition to Academic Support Services).

They made two important points: our model of delivering writing support, through Academic Support Services, is not traditionally accepted as best practice; and, more importantly, it is not serving the needs of all students at UMB. As the project narrative notes, there are two issues that a restructured Writing Center would address: establishing writing support in an online environment to assist students off campus; and supporting transfer students who have not taken English 101, 102 or the First Year Seminar (the Gen. Ed. pathway courses to the Writing Proficiency Evaluation). This initiative should be the first step in developing a traditional University Writing Center with On-line capabilities to better serve all of our students, including those who work 9 to 5 or are in geographically diverse locations.

Anthony P. Petruzzi, Director of Writing Assessment, CC 2/2100, 2/20/07



Content Specialist: Jessica Downa 10% time
Media Specialist, Educational Technology and Learning Commons

**Letter of Support for the Blended Learning and On-Line Tutoring Project Category:
Strategic Initiative Grant**

I began my career at UMass/Boston in 2000 working as a student in the ITC Faculty Media Lab, assisting faculty with the development of online learning materials. A majority of my skills lay in the training and development of academic technology and pedagogy. I have a great deal of experience with one on one training of faculty, staff and students in multimedia development, web development and new technologies and the development and customization of multimedia projects, podcasts, videos, training tutorials & interactive web elements.

In my current position as Media Specialist I am always eager to implement, evaluate and improve on the learning experience student receive here at UMass/Boston. My role in the Strategic Initiative Grant will be the creation of web based tools to assist tutors in achieving there goals. By developing, maintaining and supporting the use of blogs, wikis, podcasts and screen capture tutorials for this project I hope to use these new technologies to help develop a training modular for tutors to assist students. I also plan on developing a website to act as a repository for clients working on this project to obtain materials and as a part of the final project deliverables. I anticipate I will be spending 4 hours a week over the course of 10 weeks and 10% of my time on this project.

Sincerely,
Jessica Downa
Media Specialist
Umass/Boston

**From: Cynthia Jahn,
Director, Subject Tutoring Program, Academic Support Programs**

**Letter of Support for the Blended Learning and On-line Tutoring
Project Category: Strategic Initiative Grant**

As the Director of the Subject Tutoring Program, I look forward to the opportunity to work with Susan Mraz, Mary Simone, and participating IT staff on the development of online tutoring materials for Spanish 101 and 102 to provide students and tutors with new opportunities for working together. This undertaking is critical to continued efforts to expand tutorial services at the university, where commuting students and tutors face many challenges in finding compatible times for scheduling traditional face-to-face tutoring sessions. It is our hope that the online tutoring model developed through this project will help build a foundation for expanding online tutoring availability to other programs.

I will participate as a member of the steering committee, assist in the development of tutor strategy training materials, and provide support to tutors. I anticipate that I will spend 2 hours a week or .05% of my time over eight weeks of the summer and 12 weeks of each semester.