

Annual Report for 2006-2007

Promoting a Culture of Communication at TAMUQ



**Submitted by
Cecelia Hawkins, Director**

One of the great values of the Writing Center, in addition to helping individual writers, is that we model serious intellectual conversation (We're) on the journey together.

Sharon Williams – Hamilton College Writing Center Director

May 1, 2007

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The Technical Communications Center *Promoting a Culture of Communication at TAMUQ*

Mission:

- To provide faculty, students and staff of TAMUQ with the opportunity **to enhance written and oral communication skills** through individual tutoring, computer-assisted language learning, workshops and other resources .
- To **promote proficiency** in written work and oral communication **across the curriculum.**
- To **provide faculty support** in developing and teaching writing intensive courses.

Activities that Support Our Mission:

Based on our mission, the TCC is engaging in the following activities:

- **Enhancing written and oral communication skills** through
 - individual, one-on-one tutoring
 - computer-assisted language learning using such software such as Clarity English, Rosetta Stone, Criterion, and locally designed computer-based exercises
 - workshops and mini-courses for staff and students on such topics as e-mail etiquette, basic punctuation, proposal writing, and reading and vocabulary for special academic purposes (targeted writing and speaking tasks and skills)
 - outreach and special programs like the 2007 resume clinic and mock career fair
 - providing resources through a comprehensive website and a reference library emphasizing writing in engineering and ESL texts
 - initiating and implementing a typing tutorial, coordinated with ENGR 289
- **Promoting proficiency in written and oral communication across the curriculum** through
 - Developing writing guidelines and checklists for individual courses such as ENGR 111 and CHEN 481
 - Encouraging Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), Writing in the Discipline (WID) and Writing to Learn (WTL) initiatives by

- Developing course-specific language and vocabulary modules for embedding in engineering, science and liberal arts classes
 - Providing discipline-oriented guides to citation and general guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism
 - Offering customized, in-class workshops on targeted, course-specific topics
- **Providing faculty support in developing and teaching writing intensive courses** through
 - Advising faculty on low risk “writing-to-learn” activities
 - Consulting with faculty on assignment design, strategies for integrating writing into specific courses, and evaluating student writing
 - Conducting peer-review workshops (proposed)

Beyond our stated mission, we have undertaken the following activities:

- Initiated and hosted the inaugural meeting of Education City writing center directors, subsequently called the “Qatar Writing Centers Network” (QWCN)
- Proposed and coordinated a symposium for writing center directors on best practices, to be held in October of 2007 in Doha.
- Initiated efforts to establish a Middle East regional branch of the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA)

Infrastructure

Staff:

Fall 2006: Faculty director, two part-time faculty writing consultants (1/4 time each), two work-study students as receptionists.

Spring 2007: Faculty director, two part-time faculty writing consultants (1/4 time each), two professional staff writing consultants (temporary, half-time), two part-time work-study students as receptionists; one typing tutorial specialist.

Proposed in the 2007-08 budget: Faculty director, one full-time writing consultant (WC III), one full-time faculty speech communications specialist, one full-time receptionist. The two professional staff writing consultants (part-time) and the typing tutorial specialist were not included in the budget request since they are presently hourly, temporary employees (although I consider them “professional staff”).

Staff Credentials:

Douglas McPherson has a Master of Education from the University of Wollongong, majoring in "Designing Instructional Systems." Immediately before coming to TAMUQ from Dubai Womens' College, he had been designing and teaching two blended online developmental English courses, "The Writing Support Program," and "The Reading Support Program," targeting students at risk in these areas.

Deborah Balmer joined us in January 2007. Deborah is a trained secondary teacher who went on to specialize in teaching ESOL at the post-secondary level by completing her M.A. in TESOL. She has over ten years of international teaching experience having taught in various universities & NGO adult literacy programs. She gained credentials in adult ESL in the State of California before leaving the USA. Her previous post before joining the TCC was working on a New Zealand-wide strategy to improve the standard of adult literacy tutoring being practiced in NZ. She was also leading a professional development cluster involving post-secondary educational institutes in one of the major centers in NZ.

Joseph Williams received his Master's in Applied Linguistics at Georgia State University in 2000. He has taught all levels of English from beginner's (Latin American Association) to intermediate (Georgia State University, Academic Bridge Program, UAE University) to native-fluency (Texas A&M University at Qatar). Joseph has extensive experience in teaching study skills, grammar, reading, writing, listening & speaking, and presentation skills. Joseph has also taught beginner's level Spanish.

Kathy Reardon-Anderson has a B.A. in psychology and education and an M.A. in Chinese studies from Columbia University. She has taught English Composition at two universities in Taiwan, National Taiwan University and National Taiwan Normal University. In the U.S., she has taught and tutored in adult education programs and, most recently, in suburban Washington, D.C. she taught writing and reading in an ESL program at Montgomery College, a branch of the Maryland state system. For three years she was a course coordinator, supervising approximately 13 faculty teaching a course on academic writing. Her particular interest is strengthening students' reading and vocabulary skills.

Funding and Placement within TAMUQ: As of March 6, 2007, the TCC reports directly to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs rather than through the Liberal Arts Program Coordinator. The TCC Director submitted a formal budget for 2007-08, but it is unclear whether the TCC enjoys a clear funding line in the TAMUQ budget.

Facilities and Equipment: Tutoring began in an individual office in the LAS building in February of 2006. In the summer of 2006, the TCC moved into LAS A041, a classroom formerly occupied by Georgetown. Presently, the TCC has one faculty office workstation, one receptionist desk workstation, one writing consultants' desk workstation (shared), a TutorTrac sign-in/out kiosk, 10 student computer workstations and two free-

standing “break out” tables where students and writing consultants typically sit to conduct tutoring sessions.

Measuring Activity and Student Use in the TCC

A comparison of the statistics below shows a doubling of the number of visits from one semester to the next.

Table 1: Compilation and Comparison of Statistics for Academic Year 2006-07

Comparison Category	Fall 2006	Spring 2007
Total # of visits	339	676
Number of students who visited at least once/ total students enrolled	92 / 185	97 / 175
Percentage of enrolled students who visited at least once	49.7%	55%
Tutoring visits (Total #/percentage of total visits)	258 / 76%	454 / 67%
Non-tutoring visits (CALL, typing tutorial, Writing Studio) (Total #/percentage of total visit)	81 / 24%	222 / 33%
Visits for writing courses (ENGL & CAEN)	131	434
Visits for Science & ENGR	92	150
Visits for LBAR	69	6

Some of this increase can be attributed to a higher number of students using the CALL lab, both for grammar/language practice and for typing practice (new in the spring). However, this is not the complete story. Interesting Spring numbers to note are the very large percentage of students who came to the TCC for individual tutoring and the increase in science and engineering visits. In the Fall, the larger number of LBAR visits is due to a required CALL tutorial during which students practiced the Cornell system of note-taking, using our Clarity English software, as well as more writing intensive classes in History and POLS in the fall.

Figure 1 below illustrates how the bulk of our work is still with freshmen and sophomores in the foundations and introductory writing courses although a comparison of this figure to the statistics for Fall 2006 (See Appendix A) shows we have clearly made progress this Spring in serving upper class science and engineering students as well.

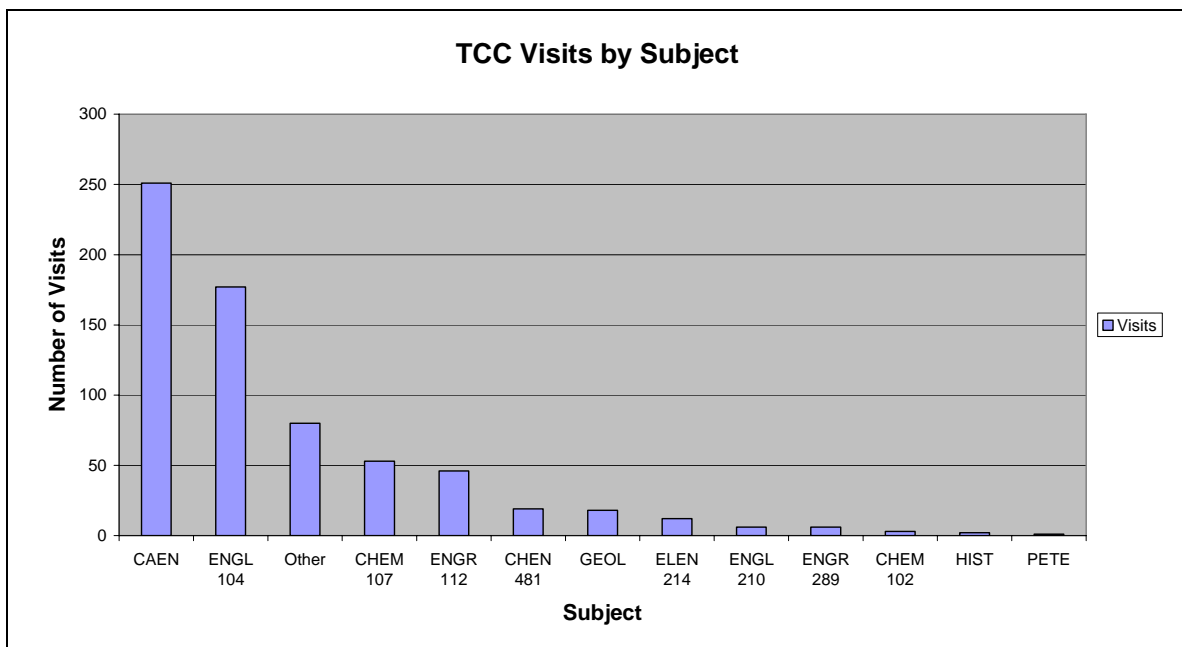


Figure 1: TCC Visits by Subject (Spring 2007)

The next figure compares required to non-required visits. We are very pleased that so many students choose to come to the TCC without being required to do so. This statistic demonstrates that we are offering services that students want and will use.

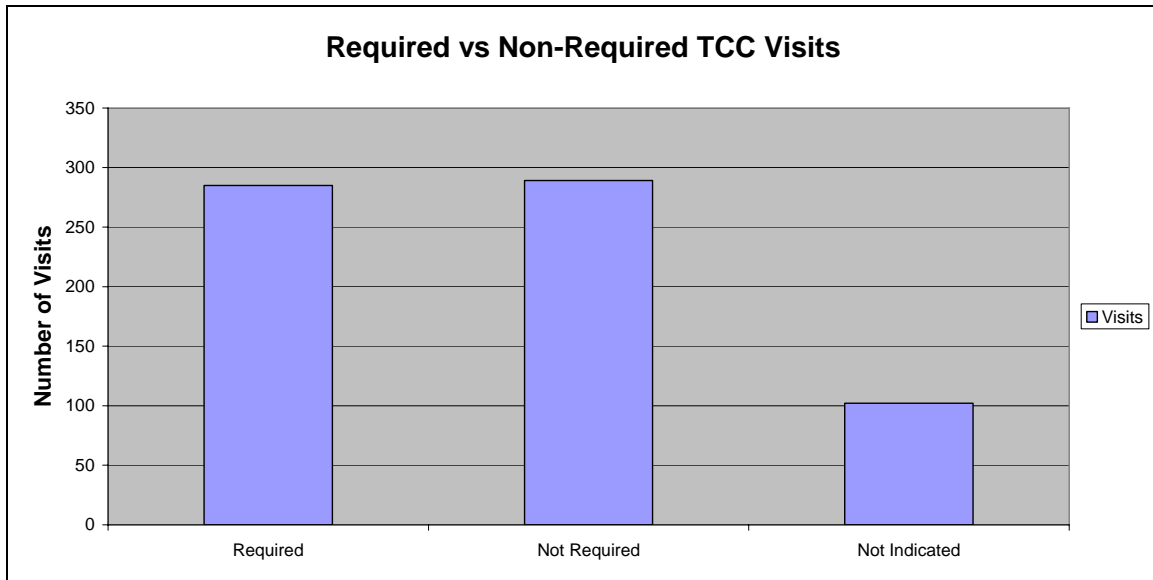


Figure 2: Required vs. Non-Required TCC Visits (Spring 2007)

Scheduling and Accounting for Staff time

The TCC operates this way: A student makes an appointment with a tutor, either by using our on-line appointments system or coming in to the TCC in person. Each appointment slot is a 30-minute tutoring session. We have not limited the number of appointments a student may make within a week, although we will revisit that policy for Fall of 07. We have to find a balance between providing needed support and encouraging personal responsibility.

Our modus operandi in both semesters this first year of operation has been to insure that a tutor was available for appointments every hour that the TCC was open. This generally meant a total of 32 hours a week (64 possible appointments), depending on the number of CAEN lab sections scheduled in the TCC each semester, during which time the TCC was closed for business. Six hours of typing tutorial were also scheduled each week this spring. We stayed open and conducted tutoring sessions during these tutorials, although not always to the best effect because of the resulting congestion. In addition, students were welcome to come in any time the TCC was open to use the computers for language lab or typing practice, as well as take advantage of our Writing Studio. We relied on our student workers, acting as receptionists, to direct traffic and insure that each student signed in and out correctly. However, the student workers' schedules were somewhat sporadic and erratic so that the reception area was often uncovered while writing consultants worked with individual students. Although there were definitely quiet periods in the TCC, more often the space was busy with students making appointments, getting tutoring help, and completing assigned work in the computer lab. One person "on duty" was often not enough.

Staff Time Spent in the TCC

The tables below show the number of hours that each writing consultant (tutor) spent in the TCC or on TCC-related activities during the week, on average, for both Fall 2006 and Spring 2007.

Table 2: Staff Work Distribution on Hourly Basis for Fall 2006

Staff Member	Total Hours/week	Tutoring Hours/tutoring sessions per week	Instructional support/consulting	Other
Cecelia Hawkins	40	20 hours tutoring /40 sessions	8	Administrative 12
Douglas McPherson	16	6 hours tutoring /12 sessions	5	
Joseph Williams	10.5	10.5 hours tutoring /21 sessions	2	

Table 3: Staff Work Distribution on Hourly Basis for Spring 2007

Staff Member	Total Hours/week	Tutoring Hours/tutoring sessions per week	Instructional support/consulting	Other
Cecelia Hawkins	40	8 hours tutoring /16 sessions	8	Administrative 24
Deborah Balmer	19.5	13 hours tutoring /26 sessions	3.5	Research 3
Kathy Reardon-Anderson	11	7 hours tutoring /14 sessions	4	
Douglas McPherson	2	2 hours tutoring /4 sessions	5	
Joseph Williams	3	3 hours tutoring /6 sessions	3	

As you will note, the two tutors who are also faculty members (Williams and McPherson) only devoted a total of 5 hours of tutoring to the TCC this semester. I encouraged them to reduce their commitment to the TCC this Spring for two reasons: first, because I was able to hire two part-time tutors and second, because their teaching loads were already comparable to or surpassing other Liberal Arts faculty teaching loads and any tutoring they did might reasonably be considered to be service. More details about their contributions in the instructional support/consulting category can be found below in “Staff Time Spent in Non-tutoring Activities.”

Individual Tutoring Sessions Compared to CALL Activities

Another way to think about staff expenditure of time is to consider what percentage of the total visits to the TCC involved individual consultations. The figure below sorts the total number of student visits by the reasons the students gave for coming to the TCC. In terms of staff time and engagement, all categories except the *computer language lab*, *typing tutorial*, and *DVD tutorials* (all CALL) indicate one-on-one contact with students.

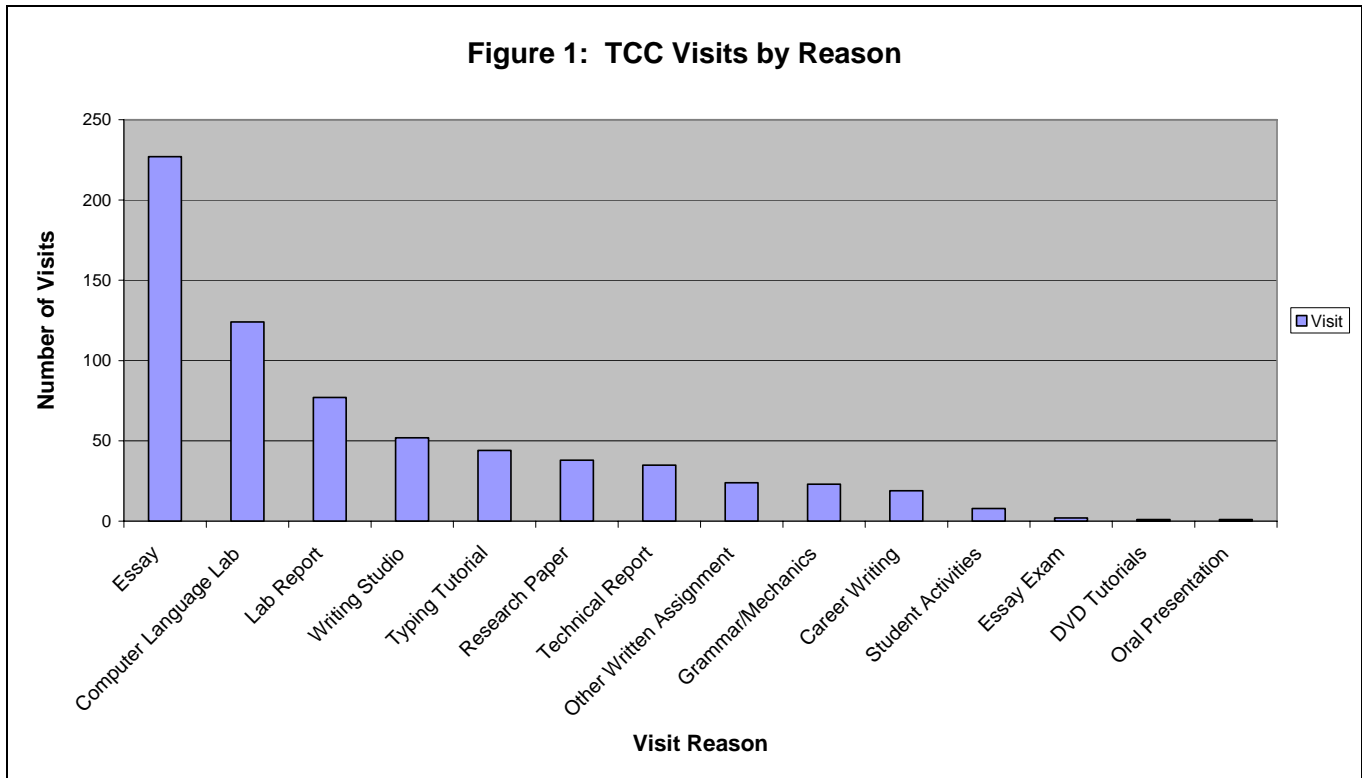


Figure 3: TCC Visits by Reason (Spring 2007)

As you can see, **out of 676 total visits, the combined CALL activities totaled 170 visits, and the writing studio, 52, so that the remaining 454 visits (67%) were one-on-one tutoring sessions.** This analysis demonstrates an important synergy. The CALL lab encourages independent learning and personal responsibility. The one-on-one tutoring further encourages this mentality by helping students to identify and work on their own particular writing problems.

It is also important to note that a great deal of staff energy and planning is expended in the preparation for computer-related activities that appear, on the surface, not to require staff time. And, as you will note in the section below called “Conclusions,” we have learned this semester that interaction with students during computer-related

activities is important to insure some learning is taking place, even with the typing tutorials.

Staff Time Spent during Tutoring Sessions

Another way of looking at staff time commitment is to look at the range of time spent during visits. The screen shot below, in Figure 4, captures one page of the TutorTrac Visits page.

Reg	Center	Reason	Date In	Time In	Date Out	Time Out	Total Time	Tutor
7470	Qatar	Tutoring: Technical report	5/3/2007	4:02 PM	5/3/2007	4:34 PM	32	McPherson,
7325	Qatar	Tutoring: Research paper	5/3/2007	12:00 PM	5/3/2007	12:27 PM	27	Hawkins, Ce
6322	Qatar	Tutoring: Research paper	5/3/2007	11:39 AM	5/3/2007	11:54 AM	15	Hawkins, Ce
6321	Qatar	Tutoring: Essay exam	5/2/2007	2:59 PM	5/2/2007	3:24 PM	25	Hawkins, Ce
6480	Qatar	Tutoring: Research paper	5/2/2007	10:04 AM	5/2/2007	10:24 AM	20	Hawkins, Ce
6907	Qatar	Tutoring: Research paper	5/2/2007	9:38 AM	5/2/2007	10:10 AM	34	Williams, Jo
7131	Qatar	Tutoring: Other written assignment	5/2/2007	8:57 AM	5/2/2007	9:23 AM	26	Williams, Jo
6909	Qatar	Tutoring: Essay	5/2/2007	8:40 AM	5/2/2007	9:40 AM	60	Williams, Jo
6392	Qatar	Tutoring: Technical report	5/1/2007	4:00 PM	5/1/2007	5:00 PM	60	McPherson,
6392	Qatar	Tutoring: Technical report	5/1/2007	4:05 PM	5/1/2007	5:00 PM	55	McPherson,
6910	Qatar	Tutoring: Essay	5/1/2007	3:14 PM	5/1/2007	4:05 PM	51	Hawkins, Ce
6394	Qatar	Tutoring: Research paper	5/1/2007	2:56 PM	5/1/2007	3:15 PM	19	Williams, Jo
7275	Qatar	Tutoring: Research paper	5/1/2007	11:33 AM	5/1/2007	11:45 AM	11	Balmer, Det
6417	Qatar	Tutoring: Technical report	5/1/2007	10:02 AM	5/1/2007	10:47 AM	45	Balmer, Det
6374	Qatar	Tutoring: Essay	5/1/2007	9:38 AM	5/1/2007	10:15 AM	37	Balmer, Det
6907	Qatar	Tutoring: Research paper	5/1/2007	9:31 AM	5/1/2007	10:10 AM	39	Balmer, Det
6418	Qatar	Tutoring: Lab report	5/1/2007	8:00 AM	5/1/2007	8:52 AM	52	Balmer, Det
6393	Qatar	Tutoring: Research paper	4/30/2007	4:29 PM	4/30/2007	5:02 PM	33	McPherson,
6712	Qatar	Tutoring: Technical report	4/30/2007	3:35 PM	4/30/2007	3:45 PM	10	Hawkins, Ce
6393	Qatar	Tutoring: Research paper	4/30/2007	2:28 PM	4/30/2007	3:12 PM	44	Hawkins, Ce

Figure 4: Screen Shot of TutorTrac Visits List

If you look at the time spent per visit, you'll see a range from as few as 10 minutes to as long as 60 minutes. Some students require only an answer to a quick question while others come with much longer, more complex papers or more profound sentence-level or organizational problems that require intensive tutoring.

What's more, our records show that a single tutor will have multiple visits with a student, often on the same paper. Again, we are looking for a balance here between providing ample support and encouraging greater student ownership of their work. But on the whole these multiple visits indicate multiple drafts and revisions and signal a healthy working relationship between student and tutor as well as a student who is actively engaged in learning to write.

Staff Time Spent in Non-Tutoring Activities

Finally, it's important to understand what the writing consultants did with their time **not** spent in tutoring. First, all the staff attended weekly staff meetings to troubleshoot problems, coordinate schedules, brainstorm new strategies and facilitate student activities. Individual contributions are detailed below:

- **Deborah Balmer** began the work of building a TCC webpage which will serve as a portal to selected on-line and computer resources to supplement tutoring. She responded to faculty requests for help with individual students. She also worked

with faculty in defining/refining expectations on specific assignments and giving advice on grading student presentations and grammar requirements. She first identified, for example, major documentation problems with a geology paper during a tutoring session and worked with Professor Earl Hoskins to address the issue with his class. Importantly, Deborah embarked on the background reading required to put together a research proposal to look at TCC/writing center effectiveness as well as the effectiveness of tools used to identify ‘at risk’ students entering TAMUQ, and she began writing the research proposal for that project. This project is now “on hold” for at least a year until we have some assurance of a stable situation in the new building.

- **Kathy Reardon-Anderson** developed study aids for use in the TCC, many with a specifically engineering orientation. She also served on this spring’s admissions panel as a Liberal Arts representative. In addition, Kathy began developing vocabulary modules for embedding in engineering, science and liberal arts classes. Finally, she researched and guided the purchase of resources to help us implement a “tutoring in reading” initiative.
- **Douglas McPherson** spent non-tutoring time identifying and testing, purchasing, licensing, installing and training staff in the use of software packages including Rosetta Stone (immersion software) and Criterion (writing assessment and feedback software), used both in the TCC and in CAEN lab classes. In addition he worked with Deborah to discover the best method for integrating CALL capabilities into our tutoring methodology.
- **Joseph Williams** served as a mentor for two student groups who presented in an academic competition held in Dubai. He created and presented two workshops for support staff. He also participated in the Resume Workshops and created a faux company for students to practice their interviewing skills. Finally, he provided instructional support for Professor Mohamed Nounou on presentations for CHEN 481.

Impact of the TCC on Students and Student Writing

(T)he writing center is not a fix-it shop. Resist that label no matter who you serve-- because for any writer, developmental or advanced, the way to learn to write involves working through texts with others, talking about and reflecting on writing.”

Valerie Balester – Texas A & M University Writing Center Director

This is the hardest aspect of TCC performance to assess. (As an aside, this is exactly the area we had hoped to address in the research project we had begun to develop prior to the news about our downsized situation for academic year 07-08.) Every writing center conference agenda, listserv, discussion board and informal get-together of writing center professionals ends up in a discussion of how to evaluate the impact of writing center work on students and student writing.

On the one hand, it’s fairly easy to observe success when a student with a modest level of competence and motivation comes in to the TCC for multiple visits on the same paper. For example, here’s a series of records (Figure 5) from the TutorTrac report summaries page for a student in ENGL 104 in the Spring semester, working on a research paper. Various TCC tutors worked with this student and recorded these reports.

4/18/07: (The Student) and I reviewed his outline and proposal for his research paper. This involved discussing MLA format, parallelism, organization, and subject-verb agreement

4/24/07: We discussed breaking up the long introductory paragraph, rearranging some of the information in the body paragraphs, keeping the focus on green building, providing evidence for a few generalizations, and alphabetizing the works cited.

4/25/07: The student brought in his 104 research paper. For the most part, it was well done. Most sentences were clear. However, there were parts that were not logically drawn together. Some paragraphs had details that did not follow the topic sentence. In some places, inappropriate connector words were used. In other places, I suggested that he include connector words to indicate that he was moving to another idea.

4/30/07: We went through the first draft and addressed the professor's comments. Most of our effort was turned towards paragraph unity and keeping the relationship to the thesis clear. N----- cleared up for himself how to cite on-line sources correctly.

5/3/07: (The Student's) research paper is extremely well developed, correctly cited, and coherent in a way that makes the whole argument move forward clearly and logically. **The improvement is stunning. N---- seems finally to understand!**

Figure 5: Tutor Comments Showing Progress on Student Paper

In contrast, here is a series of reports (Figure 6) on another student in the same class, working on the same assignment. This student has very weak language skills and low motivation, and our ability to make progress with her is thus quite limited. For this kind of student, we would need a sustained, intensive, almost boot-camp approach to have any long term impact on her skills.

4/8/2007 **Some major problems** in her essay for James. Her organization of ideas and coherence within paragraphs is a problem. She admitted that she had not proof-read her essay enough before handing it in. She seemed to be in a hurry during the appointment, even though she stayed on for an extra 20 minutes. She was going to make another appointment, but I asked her to please make sure she had done a lot more work on her essay before coming back again.

5/01/2007: Student was here for 30 minutes. She brought her essay from James. She was upset because she got an F grade. The paper **has many problems, on many levels**. She was going to actually read the information she had been given on referencing so that she could get that right. **She acknowledged that she hadn't followed instructions**. We did not get through her introduction as we spent a lot of time trying to clarify her thesis statement and the 'funnel' approach she had taken in her introduction. It is a difficult process for her as **she is still not really ready to wrestle with words and ideas** in order to shape another draft. **She just wants to 'fix it'** and then finish. We did not even touch on her grammar and sentence construction. She was going to come back at 11.30am.

Figure 6: Tutor Comments Showing Lack of Student Competence and Motivation

Finally, here are comments on a series of visits about CHEM lab reports and an ENGR 112 technical report from a student who takes full responsibility for his writing and chooses to use the TCC as a way to perfect rather than just remediate his writing (Figure 7).

<p>4/9/2007 A quick check through the student's lab report.</p> <p>4/16/2007 A check through the student's lab report. He guides these meetings, stopping where he needs to ask questions or wants a different word</p> <p>4/23/2007 Assisted with the student's read through of his lab report. He self-corrects as he goes and needs very little intervention</p> <p>5/01/2007 Thorough reading of the group report on the robot design. The major issue we talked about was tense inconsistency. There was also some new vocabulary needed to describe the situations the robot faced. (The Student) drives the interview by calling attention to the areas he doesn't like or feel comfortable about.</p>
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Figure 7: Tutor Comments Showing High Student Motivation and Success

Interviews with faculty whose students have consistently used the TCC or who have entered into collaborative efforts with us on particular assignments will reveal mixed results. John Bryant points out that profound problems persist for many students at the sentence level despite required visits to the TCC. He does see, though, an enormous difference in overall organization, attention to detail and appropriate formatting from one semester to the next, with the same set of students, after requiring them to work with us on technical reports. Mohamed Nounou, on the other hand, did **not** see much difference between the first and second paper in his CHEN 481 course, despite required visits. He and I agreed that, for this particular group of seniors and juniors, the depth and breadth of their writing and language problems were far beyond the capability of a one-hour class and two TCC visits to repair, particularly when the students placed such a low priority on the course and the written assignments.

What **is** certain is that any student who works with a TCC tutor, and who makes an effort, will improve the assignment on which we have worked together. However, the mantra of writing center professionals is: “We work with the writer, not the writing.” In other words, each moment with a student in a tutoring session is a teaching moment, during which we’re constantly reinforcing the principle behind the grammar error or problem with organization or revision of the headings hierarchy. We’re hoping to foster good writers, not just good written products.

Conclusions from Year One of the TCC:

1. *Developing relationships with individual faculty is some of the most important and productive work we do.*

Our ability to identify student problems, communicate immediately with faculty, and develop a strategy “just in time” is one of our greatest strengths. In addition, the ongoing relationships we’ve developed with certain faculty—actually kinds of collaboration—mean that we can have a consistent and reinforcing impact on student writing.

2. *We need to find a way to address the severe English language deficiencies of students beyond their freshman year.*

Many students at all academic levels—sophomores, juniors and seniors—come to the TCC for tutoring with reading, vocabulary and grammar deficiencies that cannot be addressed in one or two tutoring sessions. These are the intractable problems which make assessment so difficult for faculty and class work so unusually challenging for students. We have the tools and skills to tackle these deficiencies but no institutional mechanism to provide sustained support for these students.

3. *Computer-assisted activities require tutor intervention and oversight to insure student learning.*

We learned that students who had been required to visit the TCC to work on specific writing problems (eg., prepositions or articles) made much better progress when they made an appointment with a tutor, began the sessions with some preliminary discussions of the problems, and then were directed to the relevant computer based activity for practice. At the conclusion of the computer exercise, a review of the work with the tutor was most productive. Thus, we learned that we could not efficiently oversee individual students working on computer-assisted activities while at the same time conducting an individual tutoring session with a second student. This discovery has implications for our process as well as our scheduling.

4. *We could usefully schedule two tutors simultaneously for certain periods during the semester and towards the end of each week.*

We discovered that appointments later in the week filled more quickly than appointments on Sunday and Monday. Also, we know that students are more likely to schedule appointments close to due dates; as a consequence, we were often unable to schedule all students who wanted an appointment during peak periods. Predicting those occasions and scheduling appropriately will be the challenge.

6. *We need more readily available, brief, customized guides to specific writing, formatting and citation issues.*

During tutoring sessions, we were often scrambling to find appropriate guidelines, examples, explanations and take-aways for specific problems. We have sufficient resources, but they are not necessarily readily available nor in a format that provides

quick access for the student and tutor. Thus, we are devoting summer down time to the development of additional supplemental resources.

7. *Some faculty and students are still not aware of the services we offer.*

We plan an information blitz in the fall to be sure that faculty are fully aware of the range of services that we can provide to them and their students. We plan memos, e-mails, and personal visits with faculty to outline our services, provide blurbs for their syllabi, and offer to visit their classes to make sure students know where we are and what we can provide. We will be asking to participate again this year in new student orientation and, for the first time, in new faculty orientation.

8. *We need to refine our interface and methodology in the use of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) tools as supplements to tutoring.*

We have a fledgling website portal from which we are building links to internet and local tools that can help our tutors supplement student learning. There are endless resources, but we want to select and organize these in a way that makes accessing them easy and rewarding.

Goals and Objectives for Academic Year 2007-08

Our primary goal for the academic year will be to maintain our present visibility and momentum in the face of a substantially downsized operation and facility. We have already begun to develop a promotional and public relations strategy that will keep our identity in focus and remind students and faculty where we are and what we offer. We will, however, be forced to discontinue or severely restrict those activities associated with our own space and technological capabilities.

Based on our mission statement, we have established some goals and objectives for the coming academic year. For certain of these goals we have included only very general operational statements because we want to stay flexible and responsive to the faculty and student needs as they arise and are expressed.

- **Enhance written and oral communication skills** in these areas:
 - individual, one-on-one tutoring
 - maintain the present of level of service (454 visits/semester)
 - computer-assisted language learning
 - continue to develop resources and tools but discontinue active use of CALL in tutoring until a suitable facility and staffing are available
 - workshops and mini-courses
 - offer two workshops for support staff each semester, if a space is available

- postpone university-wide student workshops until appropriate space is available
 - outreach and special programs
 - provide resume-writing clinic prior to 2008 Career Fair
 - comprehensive website and a reference library
 - enrich the supplemental tutoring page on our website
 - continue to update the website with resources and information
 - enhance the resource collection in the area of job search writing
 - continue the typing tutorial, coordinated with ENGR 289 and in cooperation with the CALL lab
 - Writing Studio will be discontinued until we have an appropriate facility.
- **Promote proficiency in written and oral communication across the curriculum** through the following activities:
 - Develop writing guidelines and checklists for four more individual courses and possibly all labs
 - Encourage Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), Writing in the Discipline (WID) and Writing to Learn (WTL) initiatives
 - Develop course-specific language and vocabulary modules for embedding in ENGR 111 and 112 and POLS 206 (pilot project for Fall 2007)
 - Develop 14 weekly units focusing on the academic word list for use in the Spring 2008 in ENGR 289
 - Revise and publish discipline-oriented citation guides (MLA, APA, SPE, IEEE, CEP, ASME) and general guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism
 - Offer customized, in-class workshops on targeted, course-specific topics (e.g., taking essay exams, summarizing and paraphrasing, writing in teams) in response to faculty requests
 - Train peer tutors as part of the proposed TAMUQ Honors Program.
- **Provide faculty support in developing and teaching writing intensive courses** through
 - Participating in the new faculty orientation.
 - Promoting our services more effectively to faculty through program faculty meetings, e-mails and handouts.

- Maintaining our working relationship with Professors Bryant, Gyezley, Nounou, and Hoskins as well as lab coordinators. Developing collaborations with at least one additional faculty member in each program.
- Developing close collaborative relationship with all writing faculty (CAEN, ENGL 104, and ENGL 210).
- Offering to conduct in-class peer review workshops for any faculty requiring writing assignments.

Long-range goals and efforts

As part of our long range planning, we want to work on the following:

- Speech communications laboratory to offer support in the preparation of and practice for oral presentations, conducting on-line and teleconferences, podcasting and other multi-modal means of communication
- Workshops targeted to need and responsive to faculty and student requests
- Reinvigoration and enhancement of the Writing Studio concept
- Intensified tutoring and support in reading
- Community outreach
- Peer tutors
- Industry outreach and collaboration
- Teaming training
- Longitudinal research project to study impact of TCC on student writing
- Proposal for institutional mechanism to provide sustained support to language-deficient students beyond their freshman year

Many of these long-range plans depend on our regaining a suitable space to house and ground our activities. The importance of this need cannot be overstated. A viable, attractive, well-appointed and appropriate space reflects the institution's commitment to good communication. If students (and support staff and faculty) are to fully accept the centrality of our work and profit from our expertise—if we are to realize our full potential—then we must have a space that visibly and palpably promotes a culture of communication.

Writing (is) a social act, a kind of focused conversation in which people learn and improve by bouncing ideas, responses and skills around like basketballs on a playground. And a social act need(s) a social space — open, accessible, near the action.

John O'Neill – Hamilton College Writing Center founder