

## OUTREACH INCENTIVE GRANT FUNDING: END-OF-YEAR PROJECT REPORT

Title of Proposal: Crossing the Bridge to Academic Discourse: A Collaborative Exploration of What High School Seniors Need to Know to Write Well in First-Year College Composition Courses

Your Name: Susan Groenke Project Date: 8/2012-6/2013

Additional project support received from other university or external sources:

Source	Amount	Title
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**Please use this sheet to answer each of the following questions about your project (1-2 pp total)**

1. **ASSESSMENT:** How did this project document or assess its engagement with the community?

Participants in this project (which included two professors of composition at UTK, the English/language arts curriculum supervisor for Knox County Schools, and several teachers) met several times over the course of the year to discuss "college-level" writing, and to present on instruction that is happening at both the university and secondary levels. University instructors and KCS teachers presented at these various meetings. Each of these meetings were videotaped and transcribed. A summary of what was learned through these meetings is included in the powerpoint slides handout that accompanies this report. I shared these slides with project participants at our final meeting of the year in June. We plan to begin Year 2 of the collaboration in the fall.

2. **PARTNERSHIP/RECIPROCITY:** How did the university and community work together?

Knox County 12th grade English teachers met with first-year UTK composition instructors to discuss what "college-level" writing entails. The 12th grade teachers want to revise their senior writing curriculum to better prepare students for college-level writing. The KCS teachers learned from the UTK instructors what their first-year courses/assignments look like, and the KCS teachers plan to use this information to revise their curriculum. UTK teachers learned what high school seniors are currently being asked to do as writers.

3. **BENEFITS:** What were the benefits (University/community) of this partnership?

KCS teachers learned what "college-level" writing at UTK looks like. Many teachers said they wanted to be a part of this collaborative project with UTK instructors because they did not know what "college-level" writing looked like. We focused on learning what UTK instructors do in their college-level courses (e.g., what writing assignments look like, curriculum sequence, etc.). The KCS teachers benefitted from this knowledge because they can use this information to help them align their 12th grade writing curriculum with college-level writing expectations. The UTK instructors benefitted by gaining some insight into the constraints involved with teaching writing at the high school level.

4. **SHARED DECISION-MAKING:** Did the community have a "voice" or role for input into this project?

Absolutely. The KCS teachers--who we wanted to benefit most from this collaboration--told us what they wanted to know, and we planned our meetings around what the KCS teachers wanted, or felt that they needed. In the first meeting, the KCS teachers said they needed to know what college-level writing at UTK looks like, so we focused our meetings on bringing UTK instructors in to share what they do in their college-level courses. In these meetings, KCS teachers and UTK instructors shared ideas on how to revise the 12th grade writing curriculum to better align with college expectations for writing.

5. **SCHOLARSHIP:** Are there any examples of faculty scholarship that will be informed by this project? I am currently working on writing an article to submit to *English Education*, a leading journal in our field, about the Year 1 collaborative work. I also intend to work with collaborators to submit an article to a journal focused on the teaching of writing. I also plan to continue this research into Year 2, with a focus on how the KCS teachers revise their curriculum.

6. **CONCLUSIONS:** What conclusions and best practices can be drawn from the partnership?

Conclusions drawn include the fact that KCS teachers can gain a sense of agency through their collaborative work. I know many of the teachers appreciated being given some ownership in curriculum revision. We were able to learn what "best practices" in college-level writing instruction look like, including the use of writing workshop, peer review, and explicit modeling of expectations and scaffolded instruction.

7. **FUTURE PLANS:** What are the future plans for this partnership?

Future plans include beginning Year 2 of the project this fall. I plan to interview each of the teacher participants and observe them in their classroom to learn how the knowledge they gained from the UTK instructors will be articulated in their own curriculum revision and instruction.