

NDSU Technology Action Plan

I. Submittal Form

NDSU ORGANIZATION OR UNIT			
Center for Writers			
TITLE OF PROJECT			
Field Testing, Adapting, and Preparing Wimba for Face-to-Face Writing Consultations			
Project Duration 4 ½ months	From: April 15, 2010	To: Sept 1, 2010	
Type of Project (Check one)	New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Previously Submitted	Renewal
Total Technology Fee Request: \$2,079.28			
Project Director	Campus Address:		
Enrico Sassi	Room #6		
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Name (Type or Print)	Signature	Date	
Project Director	Signatures in hard copy submitted to		
Enrico Sassi	Bonnie Neas		3/12/2010
Unit Head	Signatures in hard copy submitted to		
Mary Pull	Bonnie Neas		3/12/2010

Executive Summary (maximum of 175 words)

This proposal requests \$3,652.98 to do the following:

- 1) Prepare the Center for Writers to use Wimba to provide online face-to-face writing consultations to NDSU distance education and off-campus students; and
- 2) Provide the necessary equipment to conduct Wimba writing consultation session.

This grant will enable the CFW will be ready to offer Wimba online writing sessions to NDSU students in Fall 2010.

The CFW has not been able to effectively serve off-campus students because pre-Wimba technology did not allow for both online face-to-face contact and real-time document sharing. Wimba has both capabilities, but the system requires careful tailoring of writing session protocols in order to address the nuances and specific requirements of face-to face writing consultations. This grant will fund both the protocol development and required field testing to make Wimba writing sessions successful.

This grant will also provide a laptop and communication hardware required for Wimba. The hardware needs to be portable so that CFW consultants can provide services outside of the CFW (and thus not be restricted by CFW or library hours).

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II. Project Overview

1. How does this project meet student needs?

The Center for Writers (CFW) serves the whole NDSU community by providing writing assistance through one-on-one writing consultations. During fall 2009, the Center conducted 1,538 individual conferences. This extensive use testifies to the value of the Center services. However, the CFW has not been able to offer effective help to distance education (DCE) students because the systems used for distance delivery of writing assistance (Track Changes in MS Word, phone, or email) are inadequate. Because DCE offerings continue to expand at NDSU, the need to offer online writing support to DCE students is increasingly important.

This project will do the following:

- 1) Provide CFW staff with the Wimba experience needed to draft protocols for conducting one-on-one online sessions.
- 2) Enable all Wimba consultants to field test the protocols, thus gaining hands-on experience and providing practical feedback so that a definitive protocol can be created.
- 3) Acquire the necessary equipment to conduct online writing consulting sessions using Wimba.

DCE students and other off-campus NDSU students need individualized academic writing support. Implementing Wimba and fully training the staff will allow the Center for Writers to meet this need and, thus, provide high-quality, face-to-face writing support to off-campus students

2. What audience does this project directly serve? What audience is indirectly served? How many students are affected?

This project will directly serve the student population that cannot come to the CFW for face-to-face writing sessions. This audience is primarily DCE students (3,287 students last spring), but it also includes undergraduate students in hybrid courses and graduate students who are outside the Fargo area for research or work

The NDSU faculty will be indirectly served because the CFW will reduce the amount of faculty time and energy spent on writing instruction related to course assignments.

The NDSU Distance and Continuing Education program will be served because Wimba will reduce the difference in support services that distance education students receive compared to their on-campus peers, which may draw more students into the DCE program.

3. For projects that target a subset of NDSU's students, please describe the possibility for broader application in the future.

As hybrid and online options become more prevalent in coursework at NDSU, all students will be able to benefit from Wimba writing consulting sessions.

Wimba will also serve the broader NDSU community because the technology can be used to record workshops that can be posted to the CFW website or accessed by students and/or classes online.

4. Describe both the immediate and long term impact of this project.

This project will allow the CFW to immediately begin serving DCE students and other off-campus students who have thus far have been unable to use CFW services. Offering this face-to-face, online consulting service will allow more students to receive help with their writing.

In the long term, this project will improve the learning of all NDSU students and the quality of writing that NDSU students and graduates will produce. Since the ability to write effectively is essential in the workplace, this project will improve the opportunities for, and success of, NDSU graduates.

5. Who will pay for ongoing expenses following the technology fee funded portion of this project (e.g., who will replace hardware or software after it has reached its end of life)?

The grant request is for training and start-up equipment. The operational costs in the 2010 – 2011 academic year will be borne by the CFW. If the demand for online services requires additional hours or writing consulting staff in the future, and when the equipment required for online sessions needs to be replaced, the CFW plans to obtain funds from DCE and/or NDSU.

6. Describe how this project will follow best practices in information technology and who *specifically* in the Division of Information Technology, (which includes three departments: Information Technology Services, Enterprise Computing and Infrastructure, Telecommunications and Emergency Support Technologies) was consulted regarding this project?

The CFW Assistant Director and two members of the CFW Online Writing Consulting Committee have received Wimba training from ITS. The Center has relied, and will continue to rely, on the advice and assistance of Lyn DeLorme, Instructional Designer at DCE. Lyn Delorme will also be asked to review the protocols developed for one-on-one writing assistance. (The DCE collaborates on several technology initiatives with Instructional Technology Services to provide technological support for the needs of the greater campus community.)

7. What service on campus is most similar to the one proposed here? How does this project differ?

As far as we know, no service on campus provides face-to-face, online writing assistance. The training of writing consultants and field testing of Wimba (described below) differ from other modes of training on Wimba because it is specifically tailored to the elements of a face-to-face writing consulting session. This unique application requires field testing by the CFW writing consultants because, aside from providing them with experience using the system, testing will ensure that the CFW protocol addresses as many of the scenarios that can develop in a writing consulting session as possible.

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III. Project Description

In April 2009, the Center for Writers (CFW) was asked to add its plans for providing online writing consultations using Wimba to NDSU's report on distance education to the state's Higher Learning Commission. The CFW plan aimed to begin Wimba use in Fall 2009. Unfortunately, the CFW has not had the funds to implement this plan.

Goal: The goal of this grant is to enable the CFW to serve distance education (DCE) and other off-campus students at North Dakota State University by providing online individual, face-to-face writing consultations through Wimba.

Objective 1: CFW consultants will be trained in the use of Wimba for individual online writing consultations

Current Situation:

The CFW staff consists of undergraduate and graduate peer writing consultants who assist NDSU students with writing tasks ranging from class assignments to resumes and job applications. Typically, individual consultations are conducted during 30- or 50-minute, face-to-face sessions. The consultant's role is that of writing coach, and the philosophy is centered on enhancing the students' understanding of their own writing and strategies to improve it.

Occasionally, the CFW writing consultants work by request with off-campus NDSU students, but online services are not advertised to DCE students because electronic submissions and asynchronous feedback are inefficient and inadequate means to discuss the complexities of effective writing. Feedback is currently provided by email, phone, or, most often, using the MS Word Track Changes function to insert comments and suggestions into the margins of a document. None of these methods adequately replicates the writing center session, where student and consultant interact face to face, discussing a paper that both can see and revise together in real-time.

Value of Wimba:

The video and audio capabilities of Wimba, and, more importantly, the system's document-sharing capabilities, eliminate the problems of asynchronous communication to make face-to-face, online writing consultations a viable option.

Plan for Implementation:

- 1) The CFW has created an Online Writing Consulting Committee (OWCC), which consists of four undergraduate writing consultants and the CFW assistant director. The assistant director and two consultants have been trained on Wimba classroom use, and one consultant has been trained in, and used, Pronto and Voiceboard as well.
- 2) The OWCC will use its knowledge of, and experience with, both Wimba and writing consultations to produce a first draft of training protocols for Wimba use in one-on-one writing consultations. Because of the wide range of specific interactions that occur in writing consultation sessions, this draft protocol will require field-testing before a final, usable protocol can be drawn up. (See attached "CFW-Specific Needs for Wimba.")
- 3) The OWCC will train CFW writing consultants on basic use of Wimba, highlight the key elements that need to be field-tested, and provide guidelines for field-testing.
- 4) Over a period of two weeks, writing consultants will pair up with each other for two hours of Wimba field-testing; each consultant will spend one hour as a writer and one as a consultant. This testing will ensure consultants are familiar with Wimba, which is important because they will need to orient future

off-campus students how to use Wimba for individual, face-to-face sessions; also, this practice will provide data to refine the protocols (troubleshooting).

- 5) During the summer, the assistant director will revise the CFW Wimba protocols, integrating the feedback from the field testing.
- 6) The first week of fall semester, the OWCC will introduce the final protocol for using Wimba, and the CFW will advertise its services for DCE students.

Prior to 4/15	4 /15 - 4/19	4/19	4/19 – 4/30	Summer	Week of 8/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OWCC formed • OWCC members trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OWCC develops CFW Wimba protocol draft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OWCC trains CFW consultants at staff meeting and introduces field testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFW consultants field test protocol and Wimba use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant director revises CFW Wimba protocol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFW advertises online sessions with DCE • CFW introduces final protocol to consultants

Objective 2: CFW will purchase laptop, webcam, and headphones/microphone for Wimba sessions

In view of providing online sessions to DCE students using Wimba, the CFW needs a dedicated laptop with webcam and headphones/microphone. While the CFW has computers, they do not serve the purpose of Wimba because of the following:

- 1) Serving DCE students requires being available to work outside regular business hours and during times when the library is closed and, consequently, the CFW is inaccessible.
- 2) Other computers are dedicated to administrative functions and to face-to-face consultations that require internet or access to electronic papers.

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IV. Milestones

List the date for each project milestone. These milestones should represent the **significant** accomplishments that will be associated with the action plan. For each milestone, please indicate its expected outcome and the means for assessing that outcome. (The table may be extended if the number of milestones exceed five.)

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Expected Outcomes</u>	<u>Means of Assessment</u>
1.	By April 19, 2010	Draft protocol developed	Wimba will be ready for field testing	Consultants can undertake field test Draft protocols reviewed by Lyn DeLorme of DCE
2.	April 19, 2010	All-staff Wimba meeting	Field test will begin	Post-meeting assessment form confirms consultants are ready to field-test Field test occurs
3.	April 30, 2010	Field testing complete	Feedback is provided for protocol revision	Feedback/Troubleshooting forms completed and returned to assistant director
4.	August 23, 2010	Final protocol complete	Protocol complete	Protocol is usable Protocol reviewed by Lyn DeLorme of DCE
5.	August 23, 2010	Wimba laptop ready	Online writing consultations can take place	Laptop Wimba systems tested
6.	Week of Aug 23	All-staff Wimba launch meeting	Writing consultants introduced to final protocol	Consultants conduct online sessions
7.	Week of Aug 23	CFW advertises Wimba services	DCE students will be aware of CFW online writing consulting services	Verification of completed advertising communications

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V. Supporting Documentation

Please see Appendices for the following:

Appendix 1: CFW-Specific Needs for Wimba

Appendix 2: CFW informational brochure.

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VI. Budget

Edit the dollar amounts in the “clear fields.” (click in area so that it appears “gray,” then edit) The “darkly shaded fields” can perform arithmetic. Simple use Ctrl A to “Select All” and then press function key 9, F9.

NDSU ORGANIZATION OR UNIT Center for Writers		
PROJECT DIRECTOR(S) Enrico Sassi		
A. Salaries and Wages (Number)	Number of Months	FUNDS REQUESTED
1. Staff (1)	10 hours over 3 months	\$ 150.00
2. Graduate Students (3)	12 hours over 4 ½ months	\$ 78.00
3. Undergraduate Students (13)	52 hours over 4 ½ months	\$ 224.00
B. Total Salary and Wages (Sum A.1., A.2., and A.3.)		\$ 452.00
C. Fringe Benefits		\$ 53.58
D. Total Salaries (Sum B and C)		\$ 505.58
E. Equipment (List each item; include installation and maintenance costs in your estimates)		
1. Laptop 15" with docking station and external keyboard/mouse		\$1,504.50
2. Webcam		\$ 29.95
3. Headphones/speaker		\$39.25
4.		
F. Total Equipment (Sum items in E.)		\$1,573.70
G. Materials and Supplies (List each item)		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
H. Total Materials and Supplies (Sum items in G)		\$0
I. Total Salaries; Equipment; Materials and Supplies (Sum: Line D + Line F + Line H)		\$2,079.28
J. Total Technology Fee Request		\$2,079.28
K. Match (Describe in Match Section)		\$270.00
L. Total Project Expenditure (Sum: Line J + Line K)		\$2,349.28
Name (Type or Print)	Signature	Date
Project Director Enrico Sassi	Signatures in hard copy submitted to Bonnie Neas	3/12/2010
Unit Head Mary Pull	Signatures in hard copy submitted to Bonnie Neas	3/12/2010

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VII. Budget Justification

A1. Salaries and Wages – Staff: \$150 (10 hours @ \$15/hour)

Over the summer, the Assistant Director will combine all feedback from field-testing, revise the protocol (including testing revised elements on Wimba), and write final protocol.

A2. Salaries and Wages – Graduate Students: \$78 (6 hours @ \$13/hour)

[April 19 training meeting – 3 graduate writing consultants for 1 hour each – Paid in Match Below]

Field-testing – 3 graduate writing consultants for 2 hours each

[Fall final training – 3 graduate writing consultants for 1 hour each – Paid in Match Below]

A3. Salaries and Wages – Undergraduate Students: \$224 (28 hours @ \$8/hour)

OWCC members prepare draft protocol – Cumulative 4 hours

[OWCC introduce draft protocol at April 19 meeting – 4 consultants for 1 hour each – Paid in Match Below]

[April 19 training meeting - Other graduate writing consultants (8 consultants for 1 hour each) – Paid in Match Below]

Field-testing – 12 undergraduate writing consultants for 2 hours each

[Fall final training – 12 undergraduate consultants for 1 hour each – Paid in Match Below]

C. Fringe Benefits – Total: \$53.58

Staff @ 30%: $\$150 \times 0.3 = \45

Graduate and Undergraduate Students enrolled in classes during the work period: 1.5%: $\$572 \times 0.015 = \8.58

E1. Equipment – Laptop 15” with docking station and external keyboard/mouse: \$1, 504.50

Dedicated Wimba laptop is required for online sessions. Portability is essential for sessions that might take place when the library is closed and, thus, the CFW is inaccessible. Docking station and keyboard/mouse are required to make the laptop into a hard-wired desktop while the computer is used at the CFW, thus allowing for the fastest connection speeds possible.

E2. Equipment – Webcam: \$29.95

Required for Wimba sessions

E3. Equipment – Headphones/speakers: \$39.25

Required for Wimba sessions

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VII. Budget Match

While the CFW is under substantial budget constraints, it will fund the following hours for the writing consultants:

A2. Salaries and Wages – Graduate Students: \$78 (6 hours @ \$13/hour)

April 19 training meeting – 3 graduate writing consultants for 1 hour each

Fall final training – 3 graduate writing consultants for 1 hour each

A3. Salaries and Wages – Undergraduate Students: \$192 (24 hours @ \$8/hour)

OWCC introduce draft protocol at April 19 meeting – 4 consultants for 1 hour each

April 19 training meeting - Other graduate writing consultants (8 consultants for 1 hour each)

Fall final training – 12 undergraduate consultants for 1 hour each