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# Developmental Literacy [Project Proposal] [not approved]

Rebecca Grant  
*Plymouth State University*

Sarah Parsons  
*Plymouth State University*

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## PSU Integrated Cluster (IC) Project Funding Process & Proposal Form

**Project Proposal Submittal Process:** All IC projects requesting funding will require the completion and submittal of three (3) forms:

- ☒ **Project Proposal Form – project scope & outcomes** (*included in this document*)
- ☒ **Project Guidelines Form – reflective document outlining desirable IC project attributes**
- ☒ **Project Budget Form – Excel spreadsheet to facilitate budget planning**

### **Instructions for Submitting Project Proposals:**

- ✓ Download the 3 forms to your computer
- ✓ Complete the forms and save them; including the title of your project in the file name
- ✓ Forward the 3 files via email to the IC Project Manager, Ross Humer [rhumer@plymouth.edu](mailto:rhumer@plymouth.edu)
- ✓ Project Proposal will be logged & forwarded to the appropriate IC Guide Team

If not reviewed in advance of the submission, it is important to discuss the Project with the IC Guides to review, refine, and rework (if necessary) to obtain funding approval.

**Project Funding Review Process:** All proposed projects will be reviewed by the Cluster Guide team. Depending on the level of funding amounts being requested, the proposal request will follow the process outlined as follows:

- **Level 1:** Any project with a proposed budget of less than or equal to \$1,000 can be approved by the Cluster without additional review
- **Level 2:** Any project with a proposed budget of \$1,000 but less than \$5,000 can be approved by the IC Project Review Team, which is made up of representatives from each of the 7 Clusters (*see release time exception directly below*)
- **Level 3:** Any project with a proposed budget of \$5,000 or greater **or** requires faculty release time, must be first endorsed by the IC Project Review Team and submitted to the Academic Deans for review and approval

The project funding approvals are limited to one academic year; projects which require additional funding in subsequent years will need to be resubmitted annually for review and approval.

**Deliverables:** At the conclusion of the academic year, a deliverable to the Integrated Cluster Proposal Review Team and Academic Deans is required in order for the project director/coordinator, artist, or author and collaborator(s) to be eligible for future funding. This reporting requirement may be met by numerous means which will be identified as this process matures. It is anticipated that awardees will present their works before a wide public gathering to be scheduled during the upcoming Academic Year.

**Instructions for the PSU Integrated Cluster Project Proposal Form:** Please complete all of the elements of the following form in the spaces provided before saving and then submitting the document.

## **PSU Integrated Cluster Project Proposal Form**

**Title:** DEVELOPMENTAL LITERACY

**Project Leadership:** (Identify Project Director/Manager or Co-Manager/s REBECCA GRANT and SARAH PARSONS)

**Project Description:** Each year over a hundred students leave or otherwise fail first-year courses because of literacy issues. A variety of vexing curricular, admission and administrative structures have kept well-intentioned efforts from addressing first-year literacy challenges over the years. Though the problem has been identified, it is not well understood, it is complex, and it has defied conventional solutions.

This project seeks to address this major issue directly. We know that for a large cohort of students, retention, student satisfaction, and student success are negatively influenced by the existing model for literacy-challenged students: receive a failing grade and repeat the course. We must do better!

This project proposes exploring this seemingly intractable problem in four phases. Phases one and two are proposed for this AY.

First, we will conduct research to better understand the problem. Though we have good data on how students travel (or, more accurately, fail to travel) the curriculum when they have challenges with literacy skills (problem identification), we don't know enough about why. Is it a matter of effort or motivation? Is it underpreparation? Are external or environmental factors the culprit? Is it that we aren't connecting dedicated help already available to students in need? Is the curriculum under structured for these students? How do we best identify students who need help? How do we do this early enough to avoid progress-killing frustrations and failures?

Second, we will bring together and collaborate with a wide variety of partners to explore and tackle this challenge. How might cluster engagement help us with a solution? Will themed courses in chosen cluster topics/disciplines and activities improve learning and understanding? What solutions already exist? What do other institutions do? What curricular solutions are available? Are there external partners

with support and resources better suited and already available? Should we identify and deploy an array of solutions? What resources are necessary? What new partnerships? Some initial collaborators could include Knowler Academics, NHTI, the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), National Center on Universal Design on Learning, and graduate programs from a variety of institutions and disciplines.

Third, we will pilot solutions. This may involve a singular curricular solution (such as a new variable credit, completion-based course, for example) or a dedicated array of options (curriculum and partnership avenues simultaneously) that are feasible to try.

Finally, we hope to assess the pilot and provide a holistic solution bridgeable to scale.

### **Project Goals and Outcomes:**

- 1. Project Goals – Briefly identify and describe the objectives of this project** Save a cohort of underserved students who struggle with developmental literacy issues
- 2. Student Learning Outcomes – Outline the expected student learning outcomes** We will impact five of the eight Gen Ed learning outcomes/skills. Concentration will be on reading, writing, and speaking as currently addressed by Foundations and Directions courses in the current PSU Gen Ed.

### **Rationale and Impact:**

Considering the questions below, please write your project rationale and impact statement.

Include how this project will further the Mission and Vision of PSU with respect to 1) fostering collaboration across disciplines; 2) addressing a relevant societal issue, and 3) establishing relationships with community partners, external institutions, companies, non-profits, schools, government agencies, etc. and 4). Making an impact

**Project Rationale and Impact Statement:** Each year over one hundred new PSU students leave, fail or otherwise don't complete first-year courses because of a wide variety of literacy issues that have remained unaddressed for many decades. In fact, you have to reach back to the normal school era to find dedicated preparation for literacy challenged students at Plymouth.

A variety of vexing curricular, admission and administrative structures have kept well-intentioned efforts from addressing the problem over the years. In other

words, though the problem has been identified, it is not well understood, it is complex, and it has defied conventional solutions.

Existing administrators and units on campus have not addressed this issue. Mark Fischler, Dean of First Year Experience, recognizes that almost 30% of first year students leave PSU for various reasons, but he has no specific data on this issue. Elliott Gruner, Director of Composition, knows that each year over a hundred students fail or otherwise leave Composition class in progress, but his survey of instructors in 2014 identified academic struggles in general as the culprit in about half those cases—the other cases were beyond the reach of his study. PASS, specifically targeting a particular fraction of challenged students, and the Writing Center, seeing students who voluntarily subscribe, have no data on the larger population of students. Gruner reports that sometimes students are referred from PASS to Writing Center or in reverse without dedicated investigation of specific student challenges. Peter Parker, Professor in Languages and Linguistics, took on a similar issue regarding English-language learners among first-year students and found much the same dynamic: no dedicated study or university-wide effort to address a known issue. In the case of English-language learners, Parker studied and developed targeted programs and curricula to help students who were otherwise not being helped. We hope to do the same for students struggling with literacy challenges.

We think this plan will help PSU solve one of our most long-standing and pervasive issues with student success in writing, literacy, and beyond. This project is significant not only for the hundreds of possible students we might reach, but also it is perhaps more important for the degree of impact it may have on each of those students: this work can make the difference between success and failure for their entire college experience.

### **Project Team**

**PSU Project Participants** (essential core team participants including faculty and staff)

| <b>Name</b>          | <b>Position/ Title</b>       | <b>Project Role</b> | <b>Discipline/<br/>Specialty</b>      | <b>Email</b>                |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Rebecca Grant</b> | <b>Teaching<br/>Lecturer</b> | <b>Co-PI</b>        | <b>First year<br/>courses/English</b> | <b>ragrant@plymouth.edu</b> |

|               |                   |       |           |                        |
|---------------|-------------------|-------|-----------|------------------------|
| Sarah Parsons | Teaching Lecturer | Co-PI | Education | sfparsons@plymouth.edu |
|---------------|-------------------|-------|-----------|------------------------|

**Non-PSU Project Participants** (stakeholders; partners; academic institution; etc.)

| Name             | Organization     | Project Role       | Discipline/ Specialty    | Email |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Knower Academics | Private business | Co-developer       | All academic disciplines |       |
| NHTI             | CC system        | Curricular partner | Reading/Writing          |       |
| CAST             | Institution      | Curriculum support | Learning and development |       |

**Student Participant Profile** (Identify the student population/s to be engaged in the project.

Identify if this has been or is planned to be incorporated into curricula)

| Class/ Student Organization/ Individuals | Role in Project   | Academic Level (Undergraduate or Graduate) | Academic Discipline | Total Student Population |
|--|-------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------------|
| First-year cohort                        | Target population | Undergrad/Grad support                     | All/Gen Ed          | >100                     |

## **IRB (Institutional Review Board) Compliance**

IRB Compliance: <http://www.plymouth.edu/office/institutional-review-board/>

- This project DOES NOT require IRB compliance  
 This project DOES require IRB compliance (*complete below*)

IRB Approval Status:

## **Project Management: Timeline and Milestones**

Identify the timeline for the project including start, completion, and major project milestones. A closing report will be required as a part of the project funding process.

**Project Start Date:** NOW

**Project Complete Date:** Phase one and two= this AY; Phase three and four=following AY

| <b>Project Milestone</b>             | <b>Milestone Description</b>  | <b>Target Completion Date</b> |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Problem ID</b>                    | <b>Identify the problem/gather data</b>                               | <b>12/16/2016</b>             |
| <b>Understand/Explore Problem</b>    | <b>Work with partners, conduct research, and analysis</b>             | <b>6/30/2017</b>              |
| <b>Pilot solutions</b>               | <b>Pilot single/array solutions</b>                                   | <b>12/15/2017</b>             |
| <b>Assess pilot, bridge to scale</b> | <b>Assess pilots, determine resources required, recommend scaling</b> | <b>1/29/2018</b>              |