

## ACS Information Fluency Project 2002

### *Project Title*

*Technology Tutors and the development of a Technology Resource Center in collaboration with the Writing Center*

### *University of the South Project Leaders and Contact Information*

Dr. William Clarkson                      bclarkso@sewanee.edu  
Professor of English  
Director of the Writing Center

Ms. Heidi Lowry                              hlowry@sewanee.edu  
Reference Librarian

Dr. Vicki Sells                                vsells@sewanee.edu  
Director, Academic Technology Services

### *Abstract*

Since January of 2001, the Academic Technology Center has provided computing services to students in a newly renovated facility located in the ground floor of duPont Library. At the beginning of the fall semester of 2001, Writing Center tutors (previously working from another location) began utilizing space in the Academic Technology Center. Writing Center tutors provide individual help to students with writing assignments. Many of the assignments are associated with courses officially designated as writing intensive.

An area of the Academic Technology Center adjacent to the Writing Center is a natural space to provide students with a Technology Resource Center. Technology tutors could provide students with assistance in constructing web pages, preparing digital presentations, and help with the incorporation of digital multimedia (sound, images, and video) into course assignments. In a collaborative venture, the Reference department of duPont library, the Writing Center, and the Academic Technology Center, will assist students with all aspects of information fluency, including writing, research, and technical skills involved with building multimedia presentations and WebPages.

In addition, the Writing Center, the Reference department, and the Academic Technology Center will jointly offer a workshop to faculty members interested in exploring how writing intensive courses can be offered which explore alternative avenues of electronic expression in addition to the traditional "paper".

### *Rationale*

If information fluency is envisioned as the optimal outcome of the successful combination of computing skills, information literacy, and critical thinking skills, then the integration of information fluency with the Writing Center is a natural evolution. Writing and communication skills are crucial to a liberal arts education. The integration of information fluency with writing and communications skills is of utmost importance to a society in which the process of information dissemination is rapidly evolving from the traditional print mode to an overwhelmingly ubiquitous digital model. It is important that the process of critical thinking developed in a liberal arts environment be successfully transposed to the digital medium of communication, particularly to the development of web-based expressions of thought and creativity.

In this project, we will attempt to forge alliances between library staff, technology staff, faculty, and students in order to explore how to integrate computing and information resources as curricular resources. Our experience with developing a Technology Resource Center with Technology Tutors based on the Writing Center model should prove useful and instructive to other ACS institutions. Actively engaging faculty in a process of thinking about the appropriate use of technology tools should also provide insight and experience that can be shared by other ACS schools.

### *Preliminary Description*

- The development of a program to train Technology Tutors as well as to train a number of Writing Tutors equipped with technical skills to begin in the fall semester of 2002
- The creation of online tutorials and guides for basic technology skills involved in multimedia and web development and linking those to the existing Writing Center web site
- Development of a workshop for faculty stressing the confluence of information fluency and writing skills
- Integration of resources available through the Reference Department of the library with the Academic Technology Center for the benefit of the Writing Center and Technology Resource Center
- Exploration of possible integration of online tutorials and guides with the Introduction to Library Resources class

### *Plans for Follow-Up and Evaluation*

Surveys of students using the Academic Technology Center will help determine the effectiveness of the Technology Tutors and also guide future directions. Surveys of faculty participating in the “information fluency and writing intensive” courses will determine additional needs and directions for this project. Feedback from faculty participating in the workshop experience will also provide ideas for future workshops as well as determining the success of the initial workshop. Successful experiences can be shared with other ACS institutions via a web page and an online conference.

Online tutorials developed for Technology Tutors and students utilizing the Technology Resource Center also provide a focal point for continuing evaluation and modification of the project.

### *Plans for Dissemination of results to the rest of ACS and beyond*

The implementation of online web resources (tutorials and guides) and an online conference will disseminate the experiences of Technology Tutors and the evolution of a Technology Resource Center to a wider audience. The online conference will allow for the sharing of thoughts and experiences by other ACS institutions.

### *Suggestions for Replication*

If implementation of Technology Tutors is successful, then all of the online guides and tutorials developed can be shared with other ACS schools. In addition, the use of a cross-consortial online conference can allow for direct communication between ACS students involved in providing information literacy skills.

### *Time of Year*

Planning: Summer and Fall of 2002

Implementation: Fall and Spring semesters of 2002 and 2003