Bridging the divide: Pilot programming to support students in Intensive English courses
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Introduction
The University of Miami Libraries and the Writing Center paired up during the spring semester of 2016 to provide intensive lab sessions to specific class sessions for students in the Intensive English Program (IEP). As a result, students felt supported and used more library resources. In language learning scholarship, bridge programming has been a main focus to help students transition from a language-learning program into university programming. By collaborating with the IEP program, UM Libraries and the Writing Center were able to pilot bridge programming to support student learning and encourage further transition into university programming.

While the sample size is small, results of bibliographic analysis and student interviews reveal students feel a high sense of self-efficacy as well as a sense of inclusiveness from the bridge programming sessions.

Objectives
Measure previous Student Experience: First, researchers were interested in gathering information on previous education in writing and research in order to put student skills and performance into the context of their previous learning.

Pilot Collocated Services: Second, researchers hoped to measure the impact of collocated services for writing and research support. Through these two objectives, researchers hoped to begin conversations for rudimentary bridge programming by embarking on collaborative relationships for the purposes of helping students transition into the larger university environment. The primary inquiry question was whether or not students felt collocated services were helpful for their writing and research. In specific, researchers asked whether or not collocating services would be helpful for students writing a research paper. Researchers chose to examine collocating services in order to prepare for the future learning commons.

Pilot Bridge Programming: In addition, this data project served as a pilot for bringing two previously distinct services together in an attempt to provide rudimentary bridge programming that would help students transitioning into the university environment. As a future partner in the forthcoming Learning Commons, the Writing Center was a perfect partner for the pilot data project. Additionally, the assignment description for the course required writing and research skills, making the Writing Center a good partner for the project.

Strategic Focus
Strategic focus: UM’s new president has outlined the strategic focus for the next 10 years in the Roadmap to Our New Century document available online. Two areas of strategic focus are addressed in the AiA data project.

Collaboration: First, collaboration across departments addresses the directive to focus on problem-based interdisciplinary collaboration. Collaboration with the Writing Center and the Intensive English Program led to the incorporation of writing and education pedagogy that would have been overlooked without the AiA data project to bring the partners together.

Educational Innovation: Second, the AiA data project is an educational innovation that has herefore been absent at the University of Miami. Collaborating to embed writing and research services into the curriculum provided an opportunity for departments to participate in an action research project to shape the expectations of collaborative research services.

Student Surveys and Interviews
Student Interviews: To augment the bibliography analysis, student interviews were conducted with the class that had access to the collocated services during lab sessions. Students were asked a number of demographic questions before asked to describe their experiences with writing and research. Students were asked what were the easiest and most difficult parts of writing and research. Overall, students rated conducting research as much harder than writing. While most students were able to describe what they found easiest about writing, in some cases, many students were unable to find anything easy about research. After the intensive lab sessions, students were able to describe a variety of search strategies and expressed that they would return to the Writing Center for help in the future. Students are very appreciative of collocated writing and research services. Having easy access to writing and research services helps foster higher student confidence in writing and research.

Student Surveys: Students were also surveyed in order to gather background information as well as their perceptions of their writing and research skills. Comparing previous writing and research education revealed some interesting trends, especially across gender lines. Overall, students reported having more previous writing education than research education prior to enrolling in the IEP program, with the majority reporting a moderate amount of writing education. Previous research education, however, lagged behind, with the majority of students reporting they had no previous research instruction.

While 42% of students reported at least a moderate amount of writing education, only 31% of students reported similar levels of previous research education. One third of students receiving previous research education may seem high until one compares it with the large percentage of students who received no research education at all. While 31% of students reported having no previous writing instruction at all, 57% reported having no previous research experience at all. Overall, IEP students are more likely to have received at least some previous writing instruction and they are much more likely to have received little to no previous research experience.

Their self-reported comfort with writing and research reveal some connection with their previous education in these areas. 73% of students reported that they feel at least a little comfortable writing research papers whereas only 68% of students felt the same way about research. When comparing the student comfort level with their performance on bibliographic analysis, student confidence does not necessarily match the student ability. While most students reported using library databases, students were much more likely to use fair to poor quality resources in their papers.

Discussion
Bridge programs research is difficult to locate in library science literature, perhaps because bridge programming is more likely to occur between two academic departments rather than a single academic department and a library. Bridge programming is more common in K-12 education literature. Indeed, transitional or developmental programming is more common in pre-se- condary education, perhaps because bridge programming may be more of a practice for pre-secondary education, transitional programs are sorely needed in higher education. Dropping student graduation and retention rates may be due to the lack of transitional programs. Bridge programming research can center on distinct student populations, particularly English language learners.

The purpose of this AiA project was to explore integrating Writing Center and research services. The reason for integrating services was two-fold: this pilot integration would serve as a model for the Learning Commons being constructed at the UM Richter Library as well as to explore support for bridge programming to support students transitioning into a university environment. UM is currently planning to implement a learning commons space in the Richter Library, which serves as the interdisciplinary library serving the majority of undergraduates on campus. The Learning Commons is in alignment with UM’s new presidential initiatives to support interdisciplinary learning and teaching because it would collocate academic support systems across disciplines in a single area.

In regards to bridge programming, the project explored possibilities for services to support students transitioning from the IEP program into the university environment by offering collocated services in the classroom. Collocating services, whether in the Learning Commons or in a classroom environment, require coordination and collaboration between departments on campus. While the sample size is small, the process of coordinating and communicating with different departments and building relationships has immense value to furthering the development of services to support students.

Conclusion
Surveying students for previous writing and research education helps determine the instruction needed to help them transition into university programs. While this data project centered on IEP students, the same method could be used to survey other student groups in order to construct fitting instruction programs. Based on the survey results of the pilot project, students may feel comfortable performing research or writing papers but this self-confidence does not necessarily translate into skill. While the data project was very small, the practice of collaborating on an assessment project has led to more interdepartmental relationships as well as an increased awareness of the importance of assessment on campus. This project will help UM Libraries to train partners in the Learning Commons and will provide a starting point to creating assessment for Learning Commons services.

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