The Michigan Tech Multiliteracies Center works with students, faculty, and staff to address the challenges of learning and communicating in complex and culturally diverse environments

2012-2013 Annual Report

Prepared by Kirsti Arko
May 2013
Introduction

This past year has brought some of the biggest changes and transitions that the MTMC has ever seen. The previous director, after having served for twenty-plus years, announced her retirement in July and left in December, the established position of Associate/Assistant Director sat empty, and a new interim director stepped into the middle of it all in January. With those changes behind us and as we leave behind the writing center versions 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0, we look ahead to a Multiliteracies Center 4.0. This version will have adjusted its programming to meet the needs of the general education curriculum changes, seen the changing populations of students (graduate and/or international) on campus and sought out opportunities to include programming to serve those students, and all the while continuing to provide a level of service and sophistication that is expected from an established “World Class Writing Center.” This 4.0 version that we look towards has begun to take shape through ideas, but the life of this center will begin to emerge this upcoming year. 2013-2014 is already in progress in our plans and we look forward to leaving this year of transition behind to begin creating the new MTMC that will only be an upgrade to the already successful Multiliteracies Center.
Goals

The goals that were established in preparation for 2012-2013 were done prior to the enormous changes that occurred. Thus, there was a shift in energy during the year to accommodate for those changes, and ultimately took energy away from some of the year’s goals. While it didn’t affect the center’s operations, it did mean that some projects had to be put aside. Fortunately, some of those projects became outdated during the year due to the university changes. In the end, there was a lot of work accomplished towards meeting our goals and that work has provided additional opportunities to continue the work this coming year. Thus, included are both the goals from 2012-13, including the results, and a list of the 2013-2014 goals to best reflect how this year’s work has prepared us for next year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012-2013 Goals</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Future Work</th>
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</table>
| Prepare for General Education revisions | • Composition preparation in Coach Education (guest speaker, in-class activities, readings)  
• Strengthened coach recruiting to hire an additional 3 coaches for AQIP  
• Student project focused on Composition resources  
• Collaborated with Learning Centers Steering Committee to trouble-shoot and plan | • Assess the remaining needs for coach training in Composition related topics  
• With new ties to the composition program, heavily recruit students to use the MTMC for coursework  
• Assess the enrollments and attendance for HU 0123  
• Develop pilot program for communication intensive study teams (Introduction to Rhetoric – Bowen)  
• Offer common language writing groups to post-IESL students in Composition |
| Explore potential connection with Kimberly Clark interest in micro-inequities | • Department-funded research trip from MTMC Graduate Administrator to interview KC employees about issues with micro-inequities and diversity  
• Numerous teleconferences with KC executives concerning issues of diversity  
• Departmental colloquium presentation on relationship between KC and MTMC | • Undetermined (the graduate student who was conducting this research will have finished his dissertation, so the future work will depend on the interests of future graduate students) |
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| Implement newly revised handbook and study its effectiveness | • Relied heavily on the handbook for both HU 4101 and coach education  
• Reorganization was much more effective in its usability in coach education | • Assess the necessity for hard copy handbooks  
• Explore options and models for a more multi-modal handbook  
• Plan for revisions that are necessary to align with General Education |
| Continue exit interview project with an eye towards publication | • Collected an additional 9 interviews  
• Received IRB renewal on the project until April 2014  
• Compiled a selection of interviews into a video focused on the University Learning Objectives | • Collect interviews from Fall and Spring graduates  
• Expand the project to include pre-interviews for new coaches (approved in IRB renewal)  
• Develop data management system for files and a data summary file |
| Collaboration with Career Services | • Developed a partnership to provide Career Services Certified training for coaches  
• Offered career appointments to students through the career center  
• Online scheduling | • Continue training program for 2-4 MTMC coaches  
• Offer at least 20 appointments per week during the fall semester (weeks 1-5) |
| Continue to develop partnerships with Engineering Fundamentals | • Worked in collaboration with faculty to provide coaching to groups and offered feedback regarding the accompanying forms | • Continue the collaboration with ENG 1101, 1102  
• Use this partnership as a model for other potential partnerships  
• Seek opportunities for additional partnerships |
| Implement on-line scheduling | • Custom software was created by a CS student team and ready for piloting; staffing reductions postponed the pilot program | • Explore other online scheduling software that would also include a database attached for data management |
| Grow the website, creating a greater presence with online resources | • Website was redesigned to match the humanities department  
• MTMC blog was added to the site | • There is still a lot of potential for bringing our resources online for students and faculty |
| Develop strategies for connecting with alumni | • Facebook presence | • Continue the Facebook presence  
• Grow the connections by working with the Alumni association |
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<tr>
<th>2012-2013 Goals</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Future Work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop additional resources for writing personal statements</td>
<td>• Two binders are available</td>
<td>• Binders need to be reviewed with the goal of quality over quantity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Create a coach education lesson plan that includes coaches writing their own personal statements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop new video for first year student MTMC meeting</td>
<td>• Postponed due to changes in Gen Ed</td>
<td>• Develop orientation events that will include both the students identified by AQIP and our previous group of students (low verbal scores)</td>
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<td>• Rely on presentation and other marketing materials rather than a video (due to the potential for ongoing changes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop new video for World Cultures Study Teams</td>
<td>• Postponed due to changes in Gen Ed</td>
<td>• The future of study teams for Global Issues is on hold until further notice.</td>
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## 2013-2014 Goals

### 1. Prepare and work with the General Education Revisions
- Composition in the first year
  - MTMC GTAs pitch to all FYC classes
- Create a new version of the MTMC Study Teams, including courses other than Global Issues
  - Global Issues, if applicable
  - Study Teams for GenEd Core 2000 courses: pilot study teams Fall 2013 with the Intro to Rhetoric course
  - Composition study teams
    - Writing groups for shared first-language students (previously those from the IESL program)

Student Success Opportunity (AQIP) administration

### 2. Continue to develop partnerships
- Continue current partnership with Engineering Fundamentals
- Continue “Career Services Certified” program with Career Services
  - Continue to offer appointments in the MTMC for Career Services students
  - Continue to assess the value of this program for both the MTMC and CS
- IGTAAP
  - Provide opportunities for coaches to experience each other’s program services and education
  - Share resources
  - Collaborate on education and events throughout the year
- Enterprise Program: 1-credit communication modules
- HDMZ Consultant Training
- ESL

### 3. Implement and Assess New Operating Hours, including evenings
- Monday – Thursday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
- Fridays 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
- Monday and Tuesday Evenings 7:00 – 9:00 pm

### 4. Continue Exit Interview Research Project

### 5. Explore Digital Database/Scheduling Software

### 6. Develop Strategies for Deepening Connections with Alumni
- Work with Alumni Association and Foundations

### 7. Develop Resources
- Website: Coach application form, donation/contribution, resources for students and faculty
- Multimodal composition coaching resources (collaborate with HDMZ)

### 2013-2014 Goals

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<th>9. Increase the graduate student user population in the MTMC / IGTAAP</th>
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<td>• Collaborate with IGTAAP on meeting the needs of international graduate students at Michigan Tech</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increase the number of individual graduate students who use the MTMC / IGTAAP for all types of appointments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Offer a new program: Graduate Student Writing Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o This program will specifically target graduate students who are currently in the thesis or dissertation phase</td>
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<tr>
<th>10. Identify new populations of students who may find value in the MTMC services and resources</th>
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<tr>
<th>11. Present at this year's Midwest Writing Center Association’s Annual Conference</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Staff Panel presentation</td>
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Data Collection

- **Total number of visits for 2012-2013 was 10,940**, a 15% decrease from last year.

- **795 individual undergraduate and graduate students used the Center in 2012-2013.** (12.5% of the enrolled student population) There were 656 undergraduates (12.7% of all undergrads) and 139 graduate students (11.3% of all graduate students).

- **Evaluations for weekly appointments** maintained a high rate during both fall and spring semesters, receiving a 4.8 / 5.0 average score for both semesters.

- **Study team evaluations** averaged 4.7 / 5.0 for both fall and spring semesters.

- **20% of the students enrolled in World Cultures joined a study team.**

- **The grades of students participating on a World Cultures study team are consistently higher:** 31% received A’s (compared to 22%); 20% earned B’s (compared to 17%); and only 0.8% received F’s (compared to 7%).

- **Demonstrated MTMC impact on retention:** For students enrolled in Perspectives (Fall 2011) who arrived with a “low” (20 or below ACT) verbal score, those who enrolled in a weekly appointment in the MTMC for Perspectives Coaching had an 18% higher retention rate than those who did not use the MTMC.
  - 83.2% retention rate of all Michigan Tech first-year students
  - 82.8% retention rate of students with MTMC appointment (low verbal score). This population also earned an 85% higher rate of A’s in UN 1001 than those who did not use the MTMC.
  - 70% retention rate of students without an MTMC appointment (low verbal score)

- The MTMC continues to honor its commitment to diversity. The 23 undergraduate coaches **represented four of the university’s colleges and schools:** 1 School of Business and Economics, 10 College of Engineering, 1 School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science, 11 College of Sciences and Arts.

- **28% of the staff are non-majority** (racial or hybrid identity, international, multilingual, non-traditional, and/or GLBTQ)

- **80% of the staff are non-majority and/or female**

- **International students continue to rely on MTMC services.** In the fall, 41% of the appointments were used by international students; 42% of the spring appointments were used by international students.
MTMC Evaluations
Evaluations are collected from those with weekly appointments and study teams at the midterm point of the semester, and during the last two weeks of the semester. The midterm evaluations are meant to be a tool for coaches in order to assess the session and determine changes that may be necessary in order to make the appointment or study team more effective. The final evaluations are utilized to measure the overall satisfaction of the student with the MTMC services, resources, and staff. Historically, the scores on the evaluations are always high as nearly all of the registered weekly users are very satisfied with our services.

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<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>Total Submitted</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Weekly Appointments</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Study Teams</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Weekly Appointments</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Study Teams</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Weekly Appointments</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Study Teams</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>162</td>
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Coach Recruiting

With 5 coaches graduating in the spring (2013), numerous coaches taking co-ops and internships during (2013-2014), and the increase in staffing through the AQIP initiative, we were faced with hiring 14 new coaches, in comparison to our average of approximately 6 coaches. This presented a challenge to ensure that quality was not sacrificed in order to reach the quantity. To ensure the quality was not compromised, previous recruiting strategies were maintained, but it was also necessary to focus only those strategies that had been historically effective and include new strategies that would help to meet the goal of 14 new coaches.

Current coaches identified a common factor that had been an important part of their recruiting process: a personal connection. Most of our coaches said they would not have pursued this position had it not been for someone else encouraging them and telling them specifically that they thought they would make good coaches. Based on this information, we wanted to ensure that each strategy implemented would provide an opportunity for personal connections.

In addition, there is always a challenge in adequately expressing the work that coaches do. Many people on campus, students, faculty, and staff included, carry misconceptions about the actual work of a coach and equate the work to that of a proofreader. To work towards eliminating these misconceptions and better communicating the variety of work and the type of thinking coaches engage in on a daily basis, we created a document that explained both the work of coaches and the benefit of this work to a coach’s overall development as a university student and a future employee. The link to the Coach Exit Interview video was also shared in this documentation.
# Recruiting Strategies

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<th>Strategy / Target Group</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Email all academic advisors through the Registrar’s list serv</td>
<td>• Sent recruiting materials to all advisors and asked them to personal contact a few of their students whom they thought would be best suited to work as an MTMC coach</td>
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</table>
| Composition instructors                             | • Visited composition instructors during their monthly meeting to ask them to identify and contact their current or former students whom they thought would be best suited to work as an MTMC coach  
  • Follow up to the meeting: Sent recruiting materials to all instructors with the same request |
| MTMC Coaches                                        | • Contacted their current and former students with recruiting materials and a personal note that encouraged them to apply based on the skills that the coach recognized during their sessions working together  
  • Identified peers in their courses, student organizations, athletics, or other university affiliations and encouraged them to apply |
| Humanities faculty                                  | • Recruiting materials sent to HU-FAC with a note from Karla that asked instructors to contact current and former students whom they thought would be a good fit with the MTMC and encourage them to apply |
| * Presentation to the Center for Diversity and Inclusion | • Explained the value of our work to the entire university  
  • Explained the value of the work experience in developing the university student and the future application to the workplace  
  • Discussed the requirements and desirable qualifications of MTMC coaches  
  • Asked the staff to contact any students whom they thought would be a good fit for the MTMC and encourage them to apply |
* New Coach Information Session

- A special event was advertised to any undergraduate students who were interested in working in the MTMC. It was an opportunity to explore, in more detail, the work, prior to making the commitment of turning in an application.
- Over 20 students attended the event and 8 undergraduate coaches prepared short presentations and discussion questions that were used during the roundtable discussions.

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<tr>
<th>Recruiting Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applications Received</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Coaches Hired for Fall 2013</td>
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</table>
Presentations and Workshops

“Writing Basics: Communicating Clearly.” Presentation to UN1010 students, March 2013. (Keshab Acharya)


“MTMC Working Towards University Learning Goals.” Presentation for External Stakeholder, Nov 2013. (MTMC undergraduate and graduate coaches and staff)

“Writing Center Work and Observations.” Workshop for Houghton High School - Writing Center Student Staff and Teachers. October, 2013. (Kirsti Arko and undergraduate staff)


“Campus Learning Centers.” Presentation for Orientation Team Leaders. August, 2012. (Kirsti Arko)

Coach Education

Fall 2012 Course Objectives: HU 4101 Multiliteracies Center Practicum
• To work toward fulfilling the mission statement of the Michigan Tech Multiliteracies Center: We work with students, faculty, and staff to address the challenges of learning and communicating in complex and culturally diverse environments.
• To develop genre knowledge, cultural and linguistic knowledge, self knowledge, and process knowledge in order to improve the effectiveness of our work.
• To address challenges of daily work.
• To demonstrate a positive commitment to domestic and international diversity by recognizing the challenges, responsibilities, and privileges that accompany the social and cultural positions of ourselves and others.

Fall 2012 Coach Education (Experienced Coaches)
• Theme: Reflections on Speaking and Writing with Accents
• Action Projects:
  o Develop rubrics for Personal Statements and Resumes
  o Develop two video representations of MTMC Work (World Cultures and Orientation Week Introduction to MTMC)

Spring 2013 Coach Education (All Coaches)
• Ensure coaches are familiar with a wide variety of MTMC resources and strategies for integrating the resources into sessions. (“Resource Minutes”)
• Support one another through the challenges of study teams by allowing time for group discussion and problem solving
• Provide support and strategies necessary for coaches to carefully plan for weekly appointments and study teams.
• Review procedures and strategies for walk-in appointments, especially for new coaches who may not have a lot of walk-in experience.
• Model “offering alternatives” by reviewing more than one approach when presenting ideas for weekly appointments, walk-ins, and study teams
• Complete a final project: a new or improved resource for the MTMC
• Prepare coaches for the General Education changes that will take affect Fall 2013 (Specifically, Composition)
• Review the course goals and concepts that will be necessary for Composition coaching (Audio: Audacity, visual, and print)
• Strengthen coaches’ backgrounds in visual rhetoric and design through a review of the Non-Designer’s Design Book
• Explore diversity/discourse/identity and how it affects our work as MTMC coaches
• Update the “Identity Kit” with coach essays
• Learn strategies for motivating others, both individuals and teams

Coach to Coach Program
Experienced coaches are paired with new coaches for a weekly appointment. During this appointment, the new coach is given the opportunity to experience an appointment from the perspective of a student, and the content covered includes course material from the MTMC practicum or problem-solving and discussion surrounding the entire coaching experience.

Successes, Concerns, Challenges: Repeatedly, this is rated highly by coaches as one of the most beneficial components of coach education because of the opportunity to receive a varied perspective on issues from multiple coaches.

Coach Panel:
“Reflections on Accented English and Standard Language Ideology”
(in response to the text *English with an Accent* by Rosina Lippi-Green)

Workshops:
• Responding to Drafts and Understanding Genres
• High Stakes Communication (Resumes and Personal Statements)
• Motivating Others
• Coaching Composition: Reviewing Terms and Assignments
• Responding to Multimedia Projects

Graduate Administrators and undergraduate teaching assistants participated in both the planning and delivery of coach education
Highlights from Final Reflections

“Working at the MTMC isn’t just about being able to help people communicate. It’s not even about learning to better communicate yourself. At least 70% of the work we do in the center is understanding the style of communication we are presented with, no matter how well or poorly it is expressed.” Sylvia Ferragut

“I believe that this ability to build up a unique “profile” for each student over time has been the most useful skill I have developed this year as an MTMC coach.” Dave Joda

“I’ve learned how to work with people who are totally different from me, and to use those differences not as a divider, but as place to plant seeds of creativity and as a space to grow and learn. I’ve learned how to reflect on situations, and more importantly, on myself in order to take things away from them and bet better for it. I’ve learned how to dive head first into situations and still land on my feet. I’ve learned to think in the moment and come up with ways to solve problems. But perhaps the most important thing I’ve learned is how to listen and really hear people. Not only do I listen to their words, but also what they don’t say; what they can’t or don’t know how to say.” Travis Gendron

“I can look at my experience at the Multiliteracies Center as one of the most influential times in my life. I think the key idea that the MTMC develops within its coaches and presents to the students that enter it, awareness. Having the constant dedication to reflect upon your own thoughts and actions and reevaluate your pre-constructed beliefs and values is a core value of this center and one I have come to appreciate and employ within my own life.” Matthew Nanney

“I think working as a coach in the MTMC will benefit me in my future career as much or more than any other experience I have had at Tech over the past few years…I think the first noticeable thing that I have gained from working in the MTMC is confidence…I have been exposed to more cultures, personalities, educational fields, and education levels than any other place I can think of. This has left me with the ability and confidence to openly work and communicate with almost any person I might encounter in my future career.” Abe Peterson

“I stopped and realized how lucky I am to work at this center and how proud I am to be a part of something so progressive and student oriented.” Victoria Leveille

“There are a lot of people who know intrinsically what they need and have a clear vision, but just have no clue how to ask for it. As a coach it’s our job to be able to bridge that gap; to know which questions to ask to give them the tools they need to communicate with us properly.” Katrina Deane

“Being a coach challenges you to be different and stand from different points of views. It gives me a chance to become more open minded to things and keep my mind open.” Pang Moua