

Online Academic Support: A Multi-College Discussion

Fred Lokken, Truckee Meadows Community College

Steve Rheinschmidt, Iowa Community College Online Consortium

Steve Holland, Eastern Iowa Community College District

Truckee Meadows Community College

Reno, Nevada

- 1 of 4 community colleges in Nevada
- Opened in 1971
- 13,500 students
- 5 campus locations
- Institution of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE)



TMCC demographics

Student Profile

- Enrolled Full-time (12+ credits) 25%
- New Students 16%
- Nevada Residents 92%
- Students 18-24 years old 56%
- Median Age 23.3
- Ethnic Minorities 30%
- Female Students 56%

Outcome Measures

- Campus Retention Rate 71%
- Persistence Rate (Fall 08 to Spr. 09) 65%
- Capture Rate of WCSD Graduates 24%
- Graduation Rate (IPEDS Fall 05 Cohort) 11%
- Transfer-Out Rate (IPEDS Fall 05 Cohort) 18%

(2009/2010 data)



TMCC strengths

- Top 1% of Nursing programs in US
- #1 Dental Hygiene program in US
- TMCC High School
- DE program
 - 18% of students online only
 - > 9,000 enrollments each term/> 6000 students
 - 10 online degrees
 - 26% of campus FTE

Issues for TMCC

- % of students that go to college in Nevada
- Increasing number of under-served students
- Retention/persistence rates
- Developmental math/English
- Graduation rate



Smarthinking & TMCC

- Adopted 8 years ago
- Solution to address “equivalency” of student services for both traditional and online students
- Expanded to a state consortium of TMCC, NSC, CSN and UNLV
- Used heavily by English at TMCC for all composition students

Impact of Smarthinking

- English Dept indicates it would now have to hire 50 PT tutors (train, manage and house) to match support from Smarthinking
- English has experienced a 15 point improvement in retention and credits the Smarthinking online writing center for improving student writing skills
- Smarthinking has been a “flawless” provider of outstanding tutoring services

Iowa Community College
Online Consortium

Partnership for Learning



Steve Rheinschmidt, Director
Iowa Community College Online Consortium

Program Demographics:

42,250 Student Enrollments Spring 2011

72% Female

56% under 25 years

37% new to online learning

40% are enrolled in only online classes

70% enrolled in 1 or 2 classes

Iowa Community College Online Consortium

Partnership for Learning



Goal:

- Deliver the same student services to all regardless of course delivery method.

Issues:

- Online students did not have access to tutoring.
- Emerging need for Math and English tutoring.
- Need to provide evening and weekend services.
- Growing number of students are online only - did not come to campus.

Iowa Community College Online Consortium

Partnership for Learning



Why SMARTHINKING?

- Seasoned, professional tutors
- Access
- Math and English
- Tutors not doing the students work

Why not in-house?

- Cost prohibitive.
- Lack of resources.

Iowa Community College Online Consortium

Partnership for Learning



SMARTHINKING and the Iowa Community College Online Consortium

Implemented Fall semester 2005 for online courses only.

Today, available for all course types: online, blended, web-enhanced.

SSO access via within course

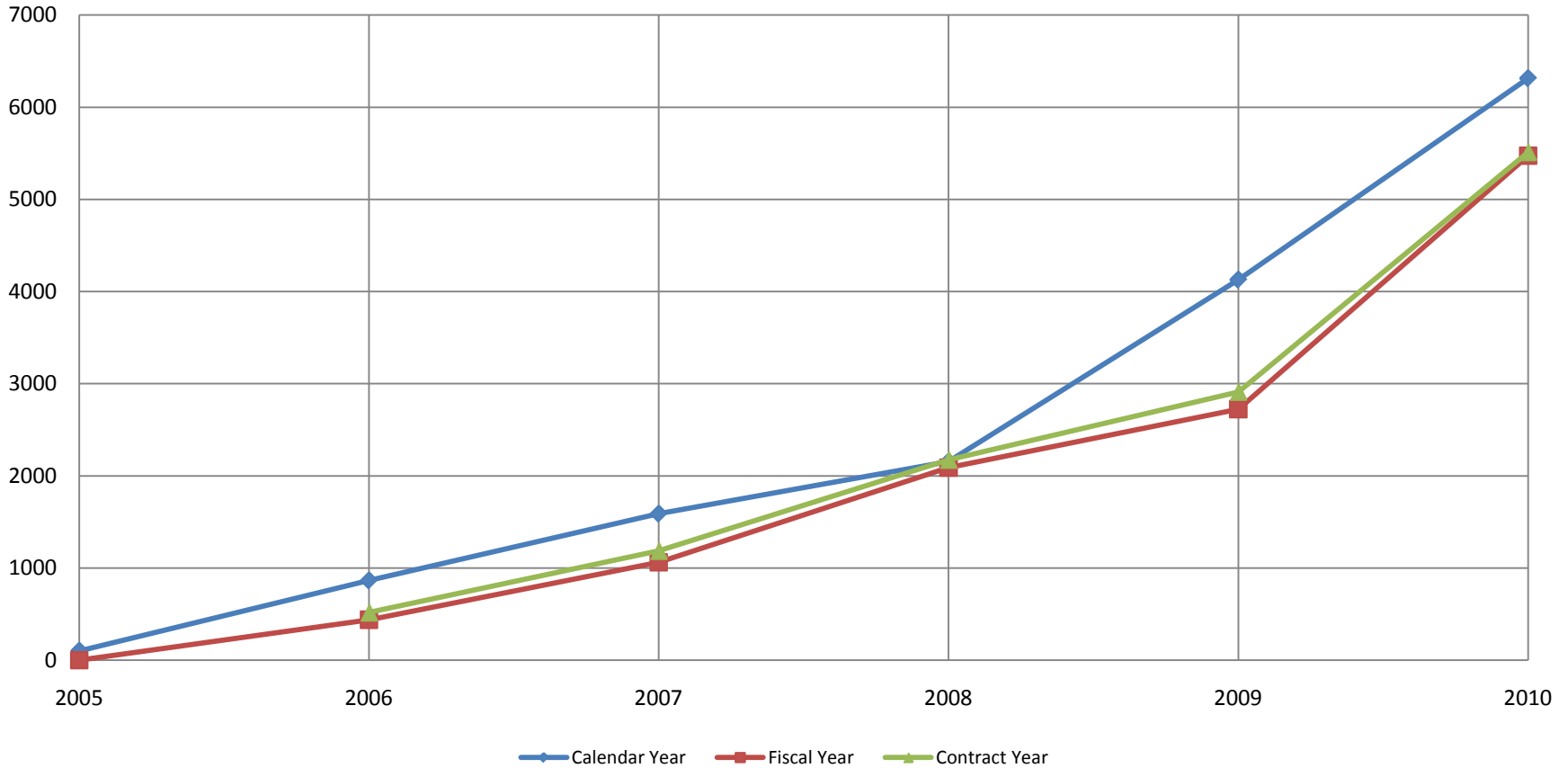
Market via student newsletter, informational email and course announcements.

Iowa Community College Online Consortium

Partnership for Learning



Growth in ICCOC Tutor Sessions

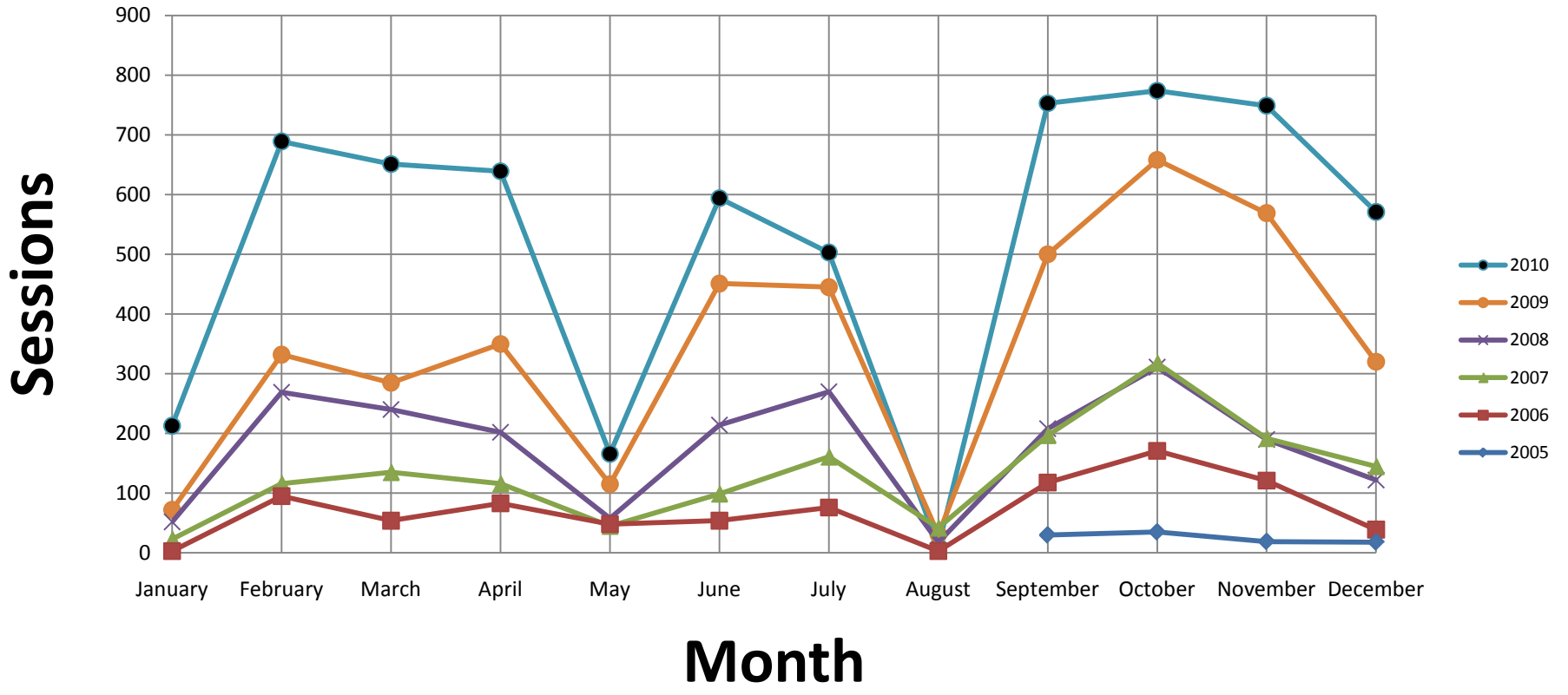


Iowa Community College Online Consortium

Partnership for Learning



Iowa Online Tutoring Sessions



Implementation into Comp I for Steve Holland

Iowa Community College

Online Consortium

Comp I, Summer 2009

Pilot Study, Summer 2009

A total of 23 students enrolled in the course. Discussion threads within the course are limited to 9 students, for a total of 3 groups.

Questions to students

1. On a scale from 1 to 10, with one being poor and 10 being excellent, rank the value for the responses you have received from your Smarthinking tutors regarding your rough drafts.
2. Explain why you gave the tutors the rankings you did.
3. Provide at least one thing the tutors did that you really appreciated. You can provide more than one.
4. Do you recommend changes? If so, what are they and why?
5. Finally, do you think the experience of working with tutors is helping you to achieve better writing results? Why or why not?

Trending positive



Comment	No.	%
Improved grade	11	47.8
Confidence	10	43.4
Thesis construction	8	34.7
Tutors encouraging	8	34.7
Examples helped	7	30.4
Saw value in proofing	7	30.4
Strengths noted	7	30.4
Essay structure improved	6	26.0
Identified mistakes	5	21.7
Worked harder on rough draft	4	17.3
Responses timely	4	17.3
Process enjoyable	1	4.3



Trending negative

Comment	No.	%
Wanted more specifics	12	47.8
Tutors not consistent in advice	7	30.4
Some tutors seemed to be rushing	4	17.3
Suggest 3 choices rather than 2	4	17.3
Word choice-International student	1	4.3
Too long of a delay in response	1	4.3

Instructor's observations

- Student final evaluation scores improved. Observation was made following the fall semester in which both online and live classroom students used tutors.
- Initially, some students (about four) made very little change, if any, from rough draft to final draft. These tended to rank the tutors lower in helpfulness and also were more likely to ask that all mistakes be noted. On average, tutors ranked 8 of 10.

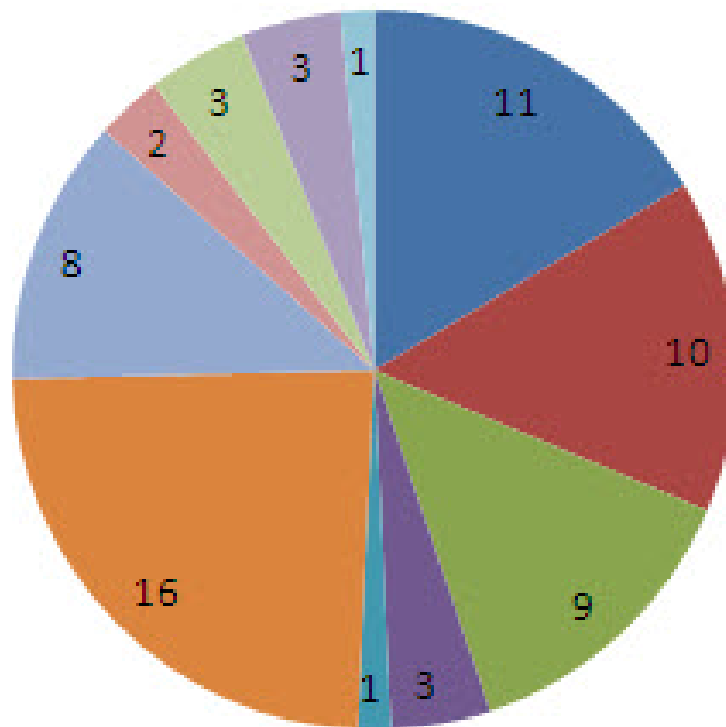
Instructor's observations continued

- Students needed to be taught how to gain the most out of the tutoring experience.
- It is important to view what is being changed from rough draft to final draft.
- Many students commented after working with tutors they saw a notable improvement in their efforts and scores.
- Today, students are asked to specifically comment upon what the tutors have advised. This puts the onus on the students to reflect and make improvements.

Instructor's observations continued

- A discussion thread that asks students to reflect upon the tutoring experience will continue in future courses.
- The instructor created graphics to instruct students how to gain the most out of the tutoring experience.
- The instructor included instruction in the orientation unit to show students how to connect to tutors.
- The instructor was able to eliminate some of the discussion threads and exercises used for skills building.
- Retention was high in the summer Comp I course with 23 of 28 (82.8 percent) finishing the class.

Total Narration Essay Comments



- Word choice/Informal Language
- Fragments/Run-ons
- Punctuation/Comma Issues
- Confusing Pronouns
- Spelling
- Asking for Details/Something is Unclear
- Encouragement
- Tense/Number issues
- Thesis
- General Commentary
- Miscellaneous

Open Discussion