You’ve Got a Friend in Me

Building Partnerships Between Literacy Agencies & Community Colleges
Marie Knibbe
Director of ABE/GED Instruction, Literacy Network of Dane County

Jennifer Peterson
Senior Director of Programs, Literacy Network of Dane County
• Intro
• Why partner?
• Our story
• Pillars of a good collaboration
  • Find your ally
  • Coming to the table
  • Roles and responsibilities
• Building and maintaining your relationship
Why partner?
• Low income basic skills and English language learning adults have lower rates of success in college programs
• There are increasing funding opportunities for collaborative work between LAs & CCs from federal and local sources
• Literacy agencies (LAs) & community colleges (CCs) have different essential strengths to offer
• Robust, well-supported, longer-term pathways have been proven to increase success for ABE/ELL learners
5 minutes: Discuss with a Partner

• What are your most important reasons for wanting to partner?
• How do you feel about partnering?
Literacy Network & Madison Community College

• 2011-2015 ESL Classroom tutors
  • Tutors placed in ESL classrooms
  • Some challenges with how tutors were used, data tracking fell off; couldn’t make case for continued support

• 2015-2017 Academic Tutoring
  • 1:1 tutoring for ESL students in pre-GED/postsecondary classes; outside of class
  • Worked with college partner to identify data we could track @ start of partnership
  • Discovered that students who worked with our tutors were much more likely to a) finish the class and b) enroll in the next class

• 2017-present GED/HSED Tutoring
  • United Way grant to support GED/HSED students @ the college
  • Local foundation grant to help ELLs transition into the college: advising, a Transitions class to help with academic reading and writing in English, and tutoring support
Pillars of Collaboration

- Find Your Ally
- Coming to the Table
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Building & Maintaining Your Relationship
Find Your Ally (and Know Them!)
5 Minutes: Reflect & Write

• Who are your current (or potential) allies/liaisons within the college or literacy agency?
• What’s their title? What’s their position within their org? What areas do they oversee?
• Are they authorized to make decisions about partnerships? If not, can they connect you with someone who can?
• Who else oversees areas for potential collaboration?
• If you don’t know some of these, how can you find out?
Coming to the Table

What is the problem we’re trying to solve together?

What do each of us bring to the table?
What’s the Problem We’re Trying to Solve?

Example:

• Program completion rates are very low among ELLs at community colleges (*get exact data wherever you can!*)
• Research states that 20-40% of community college students drop out because they can’t handle the work
• Students who transition from literacy agencies to community colleges may not be prepared to navigate a more complex educational system on their own
• They may also need additional basic skill development and English language skill development (*look @ pre-test data for targeted student population; what do they need?*)
Wait!
Before you panic about the word “data”...

• CCs often have a lot of data available. For LAs, you can do a lot with pre-test scores and simple student surveys.

• Pre-test data: How many of your students have pre-test scores that indicate they could transition to a community college soon (for HS completion or postsecondary program)?
  • Do you have a sense of the skill level required for entrance into the targeted program(s)?

• Student goals and systemic knowledge:
  • Do you have a high school degree?
  • Do you want to attend Madison College?
  • Do you know what programs are available at Madison College?
  • Do you know who to call to enroll at Madison College?
What Do Each of Us Bring to the Table?
Literacy Agencies:
- Community connections
- Trust
- Smaller, supportive atmosphere
- Ability to connect learners with wraparound services like transportation or childcare
- Volunteer tutors!

Community Colleges:
- Breadth of programming and opportunities
- Instruction may be more rigorous
- Credentials leading to career opportunities
- Increasing # of bridge programs
- Testing centers for GED and placement exams
Coming to the Table
5 minutes: Reflect & Write
10 minutes: Discuss with a Partner

• What is the problem you want to solve with your partnering org?
• What types of data could help you illustrate the importance of this problem to a) your partnering org and b) potential funders?
• What strengths/resources can your org offer the partner org?
• What are your org’s needs & limitations?
  • (E.g. need certain data for grant, can place 1 FTE to manage 30-50 tutoring pairs, need designated liaison from other org, etc.)
Down to the Details

• In agreement about each org’s goals, assets, and needs?
• Brainstorm/create actual collaborative program structures and processes
• Drill down into each org’s roles and responsibilities
• Identify trackable measures together
  • Don’t skip this!
  • What information will be most impactful for
    • a) program management, and
    • b) funding opportunities?
  • Get on the same page about confidentiality requirements and release forms (for students, volunteers, test centers, etc.)
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<th>Measure</th>
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<td>Madison College</td>
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<td>Average Testing Gain</td>
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<td>Average Class Attendance Hours</td>
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<td>Semester Completion</td>
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<td>Enroll for Additional Semester</td>
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<td>Literacy Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Tutoring Hours/Student</td>
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<td>Student Tutoring Semester Completion</td>
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<td>Tutors Who Feel Supported</td>
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<td>Students Comfortable with Tutor</td>
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<td>Outcomes for Tutoring Group</td>
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<td>Percent Increase Average Testing Gain</td>
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Roles and Responsibilities

• Using your information from who the players are, what your goal is, what your needs are and what you both bring to the table, create an MOU to detail your roles and responsibilities

• An MOU is NOT a contract and is not legally binding – it is a touchstone to guide your work and ensure clarity

• Include a confidentiality/information-sharing agreement

• Discuss in a face-to-face meeting with your partner before finalizing

• *Example: See sample Literacy Network MOU*
Building and Maintaining Your Relationship: What Makes a Good Partner?

5 minutes: Discuss with a NEW partner

• In pairs, think/talk about a successful past or current partnership you’ve had (can be with another type of org)

• *What makes it work well?*

• If you haven’t had the opportunity to partner yet, what are you looking for in a good partner?
Building Your Relationship

- Mindset: keep your shared goal in mind
- Assume the best intentions
- “How can we help?”
- Be flexible when you can; draw boundaries when necessary
- Get to know key players and processes and honor each other’s processes and requirements
Building Your Relationship
5 minutes: Reflect & Write

• What key players or processes at your current/potential partner organization do you need to learn more about?
• Where can you find the information you need in order to move forward?
• Do the right people in YOUR org (instructors, program managers, etc.) know enough about these? Is there buy-in?
• What is your own mindset about partnership right now? Do you want to make any adjustments?
Maintaining and Growing Your Relationship

• Regular check-ins – not only when there’s a problem!
• Be open to change when something’s not going well
• Share resources when you are able
• Let students know you’re a team committed to their success
• Community building: sharing the successes and challenges
• Data Sharing
Thank you for your time!

• Questions?
• Would you like us to send you this PowerPoint? Email:
  • Jennifer@litnetwork.org
  • MarieK@litnetwork.org