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Writing Instruction Using an Online Assignment Planner Appendices

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Appendix A

Recruitment Script

I am a Research Assistant on a project entitled Writing Instruction Using an Online Assignment Planner. I am here to invite you to participate in this study. This study is designed to assess how teachers and students use the Assignment Planner in large classes.

The Assignment Planner helps students complete an assignment over a projected timeline by breaking down the process into 11 steps. It suggests the time it should take to accomplish each step before the due date, and provides e-mail reminders to help students manage their time. Each step gives succinct advice on a particular aspect of the research or writing process and introduces students to effective evidence-based writing strategies, fleshed out with examples and links to relevant online resources.

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to:

- 1) Identify yourself as a study participant if and when you access the online Assignment Planner so that the researchers can use online website tracking to record how often students in the study use the Assignment Planner.
- 2) Complete a 10 minute questionnaire in class at the end of term on your perceptions of the Assignment Planner.
- 3) Allow your instructor to send your marks on writing assignments to researchers after the end of the term.

All information collected will be confidential and neither your instructor nor anyone other than the researchers will have access to it. Participation is completely voluntary and there will be no repercussions if you choose not to participate.

Please read the Letter of Information provided. If you agree to participate, please sign the Letter of Consent. If you choose not to consent simply leave it blank. I will collect all the Letters of Consent while the Letter of Information is yours to keep.

Thank you.

Appendix B: Letter of Information

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

WRITING INSTRUCTION USING AN ONLINE ASSIGNMENT PLANNER

Boba Samuels, Writing Consultant, Principal Investigator
Emmy Misser, Writing Centre Manager, Co-investigator

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Introduction

At the Laurier Writing Centre we are currently conducting research on the uses of a new online writing resource, the Assignment Planner, in large classes.

Purpose of the study

The aims of this study are to describe how teachers and students use the Assignment Planner and what their perceptions are of how effective the Planner is in supporting writing instruction in large classes.

Your participation

This study will enlist participants from four large classes, i.e., four instructors and over 800 students. If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to:

- a) identify yourself as a study participant if and when you access the online Assignment Planner this term so that the researchers can use online website tracking to record how often students in the study use the Planner.
- b) complete a short one-page questionnaire about your use of the Assignment Planner in the undergraduate course _____. Completing the questionnaire will take no longer than 10 minutes and will be done in class near the end of term.
- c) allow your instructor to send your marks on _____ writing assignments to the researchers after the end of the term.

Confidentiality

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. Data collected from the online website will be recorded in a secure database and server. Identifying information will be replaced with number codes, and all data, including electronic data, will be stored in a secure location for five years following publication and then destroyed. Group, rather than individual data, will be reported and where participants' responses are referred to directly, pseudonyms will be used.

Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks to participating in this study; however, because this project employs e-based collection techniques, the confidentiality and privacy of data related to use of the Assignment Planner cannot be guaranteed during web based transmission. The benefits of the study to the Writing Centre and university community are that findings will be used to improve future versions of the Assignment Planner and may inform the ways that teachers use the Planner in large classes. Individual participants may benefit by improving their knowledge about writing by using the Assignment Planner.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to participate, you may withdraw at any time and no further data will be sought from you, or you may refuse to answer any questions with no repercussions or identification.

Findings and Publication

Findings of this research will be made available on the Laurier Writing Centre website upon completion of the study in the fall of 2012. A copy of the final report will be made available to the funding agency, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, and upon request by participants. Dissemination of findings may be pursued by publication in academic journals and presentation at academic conferences.

Questions and Contacts

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this letter or if you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University at 519-884-1970, extension 5225 or rbasso@wlu.ca.

If you have any questions about this study or its procedures, please contact Emmy Misser at 519-884-1970, ext. 3339 or emisser@wlu.ca or Boba Samuels at 519-884-1970, ext. 3869 or bsamuels@wlu.ca.

Thank you.

Boba Samuels
Writing Consultant
Principal Investigator

Emmy Misser
Writing Centre Manager
Co-investigator

Appendix C: Letter of Consent

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

WRITING INSTRUCTION USING AN ONLINE ASSIGNMENT PLANNER

*Boba Samuels, Writing Consultant, Principal investigator
Emmy Misser, Writing Centre Manager, Co-investigator*

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

I have read the Letter of Information; I understand the nature of this study; and I have been provided with a copy of the Letter of Information to keep. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this study a) by identifying myself as a study participant when I access the Assignment Planner, b) by responding to one end-of-term questionnaire on writing, and c) by allowing the transfer of my class marks to the researchers.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Number: _____

Name/number of course: _____

Appendix D

STUDENT SURVEY

WRITING INSTRUCTION USING AN ONLINE ASSIGNMENT PLANNER

Name: _____ Student #: _____

Gender (please circle): Male Female Other

1. How often did you use or visit the Assignment Planner website?

1 2 3 4 5
 never once or twice 3-4 times weekly more than 10 times

2. A) If you indicated a one or two on the above question please answer the following questions using this scale:

	strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
I didn't have enough information about the Assignment Planner to use it.					
The Assignment Planner was not relevant to the assignments in the class.					
I would have used the Assignment Planner more if I received marks for using it.					
I didn't use the Assignment Planner because I am already a good writer.					
I will probably use the Assignment Planner in future courses.					
I will probably use the Assignment Planner as I go into the upper years of my University career.					
I wish I had used the Assignment Planner more in this course.					

B) Please describe why you think you did not use the Assignment Planner.

3. Please answer the following questions using this scale:

	strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
The Assignment Planner helped me to write the assignment(s) in this course.					
I used the Assignment Planner for assignments in other courses.					
The Assignment Planner provided information about writing that I did not know.					
I used the email notification feature to receive prompts for writing my assignment.					
I found the time management and setting of dates helpful for writing my assignment.					
The professor provided guidance or suggestions on how to use the Assignment Planner.					
The TA provided guidance or suggestions on how to use the Assignment Planner.					

4. What is most useful about the Assignment Planner?

5. What would you change or what did you not like?

6. How satisfied are you with your marks on the writing assignments in this course?

1 2 3 4 5
 Not at all A little Moderately Very Extremely

Appendix E

Interview Questions for Intervention Condition Professors

Intervention Condition Interview Questions
<p>How did you get students to use the Assignment Planner in your course?</p> <p>Which elements of your course assignment/s did you integrate with the AP? How? Why?</p> <p>Which aspects of the AP did you find most useful in your class?</p> <p>Did you assign separate steps or did you assign two or more steps? Why?</p> <p>How much time did you spend on the AP in class?</p> <p>What questions did students have about using the AP?</p> <p>Did you encounter any problems using the AP with your students and can you describe these problems?</p> <p>Do you feel the integration of the AP helped students with the time-management of their assignment?</p> <p>How did you relate learning of course content with the use of the AP? Did the AP promote the content learning you required in the course?</p> <p>Did you use the AP to encourage critical thinking? Were some steps more useful than others in getting students to think critically about their writing assignment?</p> <p>Did the AP provide writing instruction that supports the conventions of writing in your discipline or field of study? Are its steps consistent with the way you write?</p> <p>What evidence do you have, if any, of changes to student writing behavior as a result of integrating the AP into your course?</p> <p>What improvements, if any, in your students' writing might you attribute to the AP?</p> <p>What aspect of writing development do you think the AP encourages most, and is it useful in providing writing instruction? If not, why?</p> <p>Did you learn anything new about writing using the AP?</p> <p>Do you think using the AP is easier/more helpful in large classes rather than small?</p> <p>What do you think of the AP as an in-class writing resource?</p> <p>Do you think you would use the AP the same way in other classes you teach? In classes at other levels (e.g., upper year)?</p>

Interview Questions for Control Condition Professors

Control Condition Interview Questions
<p>Did you use or refer to the Assignment Planner in your class?</p> <p>What writing instruction in class, if any, did you do, or did you direct your TAs to do such instruction?</p> <p>How did you become aware of the Assignment Planner?</p> <p>What weaknesses do you think are most significant in students' writing?</p> <p>What did you know about the Assignment Planner at the beginning of term? Do you know more now?</p> <p>Do you think the Assignment Planner could be used effectively to teach writing in large classes? How?</p> <p>Are there any disciplinary conventions in your field that you feel could or could not be addressed effectively by the Assignment Planner?</p> <p>Do you use any other online resources to support student learning in your class? What are they?</p> <p>Were you aware of any students in your class who used the Assignment Planner? How did you know this?</p> <p>What would prompt you to use the Assignment Planner in future classes you teach?</p>



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