

Faculty Innovator Grant 2010
Center for Learning Technologies

Final Report Form

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Project Title: (10 words or less)	JITTER: Just In Time Tutoring Educational Resource

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1. Describe the specific teaching and learning issues being addressed by the proposal.

The Math and Science Resource Center (MSRC) continuously seeks to improve the tutoring services it provides to the University community. As part of this effort, we needed a way to capture the teaching techniques and content knowledge used by peer-tutors every day so that this information could be shared among all of our tutors. Using Blackboard's blog and wiki technology, the JITTER project serves as a way to supplement the information and knowledge each tutor gathered in their academic and work experience with that of their peers. Each tutor has strengths and weaknesses and the JITTER provides a way for them to work collaboratively to share their knowledge with each other and improve the tutoring services provided to ODU students. The JITTER also provides a means for the MSRC management to identify any areas of weakness for each individual tutor and address any weaknesses to ensure the highest quality of tutoring possible.

2. Describe the revised specific teaching and learning issues being addressed by the proposal (if applicable):

N/A

3. Describe the development activities involved addressing the learning or teaching issue.

From January 2009-December 2010, MSRC math tutors were asked to submit weekly reports and feedback via Blackboard regarding their tutoring experiences in a given week. Using the wiki tool in blackboard, tutors were asked to answer the following questions each week in an effort to capture the pedagogical and content knowledge utilized that week:

1. Identify sections in the textbook where students needed most help or had the most questions.
2. Describe how you explained a given type of problem; if you explained the problem in more than one way identify each method used.
3. Identify tutoring strategies used and explain what worked in your group, what did not work and why.
4. Discuss study group dynamics and explain if and how you were able to get students to work together to help each other learn.
5. Miscellaneous – identify any other interesting information such as insights into tutoring pedagogy or math content gathered in your study group this week.

Using the blog tool in Blackboard, tutors were given the opportunity to dialogue with their fellow tutors regarding their tutoring experiences each week by answering the following questions:

1. Identify the top three questions you encountered while tutoring this week.
2. When you explained this week's material, which technique(s) seemed to work the best for your students? Why?
3. Which technique(s) did not seem to work well for your students? Why?
4. Identify any interesting questions you encountered.
5. Identify any questions you could not answer.
6. Did any student(s) have an "ah-ha" moment in tutoring this week? If so, explain.

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4. Describe the learning outcomes attained by the project.

The JITTER project allowed the MSRC math tutors to interact with each other in an online environment. This was very important as the math tutors involved in the project more often than not worked individually with separate groups of students in a variety of locations around campus. The use of the wiki and blog tools in Blackboard allowed the tutors to benefit from each other's knowledge and experiences without having to meet in person. The dialogue between tutors allowed them to identify and connect with their fellow tutors in a way that they could not have done otherwise without working closely together on a day-to-day or weekly basis. Moreover, the project required the tutors to self-reflect on their experiences each week so they would learn from their experiences from one week to the next.

The JITTER project also allowed the MSRC to capture information and pedagogical techniques utilized by tutors so that it can be referenced in the future by other tutors. This allows the MSRC to continuously improve the services provided to students seeking tutoring assistance.

Finally, the tutors' weekly blog and wiki entries allowed the MSRC management to identify problem or weak areas of knowledge for each individual tutor. The MSRC management addressed such weaknesses in a timely manner by scheduling group meetings with MSRC tutors and faculty from the math department to clarify any questions and ensure the tutors' mastery of the material.

5. Describe unexpected outcomes, if any.

N/A

6. Describe the impact of the completed project on your colleagues, department, college, or community.

While the JITTER is still a work in progress, the ongoing project serves as a way to improve the tutoring services provided to math students at ODU. This impacts the retention efforts of the University because improved tutoring should translate into improved success in math courses by the students who utilize the services of the MSRC. The tutoring services provided by the MSRC supplement the work of the math department faculty; the continual efforts to improve MSRC tutoring services in close coordination with the math department ensure that the tutoring services provided by the MSRC are the best possible.

7. Describe how the project can be a model, template, or prototype for use by other instructors.

This project can be a model for anyone who wants to create an online manual. The JITTER can also be a model for any organization which has a decentralized work model and needs to find a way to allow employees to interact virtually.

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8. Describe the technology used to help address the issues described in the proposal.

Using the blog and wiki functions available through the learning suite in Blackboard, the MSRC was able to gather student facilitators' feedback and insights into how they applied the training they received. Additionally, the blog and wiki technology provided an easy way to capture the various tutoring techniques used by individual tutors. This online interaction allowed the MSRC tutors to build upon the knowledge gained in training and form a web of information that allows them to continuously add new strands of knowledge and fill-in missing pieces.

9. Describe products, if any, that are a result of the project.

The JITTER, or online tutoring manual, is a work in progress. Currently, tutors are reviewing the materials gathered over the last year to turn the blog and wiki entries into a useable tutoring manual that can be consulted by tutors while they are working and can be constantly updated as needed. The information gathered is in the process of being analyzed to find recurring themes in order to better organize the material. The final product should be a searchable database of topics/terms.

10. Describe the future plans for this project, if any.

Once the JITTER is completed, the Math and Science Resource Center will maintain the online tutoring manual for use by current and future math tutors. The tutors will continue to update the information contained in the online manual as part of their tutoring responsibilities.

11. Attach a financial report with updated Budget Plan Matrix.

Final Budget Matrix

Budget Item (equipment, personnel, software, etc.)	Qty	Total Cost	Source of Funds	
			Amount from FIG	Amount from Other Source
Math Consultation – Lee Land	1	\$1000	\$1000	\$0
Math Kits – Tutor Supplies	1	\$1000	\$500	\$500
Computer Equipment	6	\$3000	\$1000	\$2000
Student Worker – JITTER Editor	1	\$1000	\$500	\$500