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FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Form Approved:
O.M.B. No. 51-R1217

Preliminary Final

This application should be sent to:
FIPSE: No. 13.925
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Room 3123
Washington, D.C. 20202

1. APPLICATION NO.

2. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NO.
[REDACTED]

3. LEGAL APPLICANT

a. Formative Evaluation Research Associates, Inc.
Legal Applicant Name Inc.

b. _____
Department, Division, or Branch

c. 1130 Hill Street
Street Address, or P.O. Box

d. Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
City State Zip

e. Second Congressional District(s)
Congressional District(s)

4. APPLICATION TYPE:

New Grant Modification of Old Grant

5. PROJECT DIRECTOR

a. John Charles Meeker, Ph.D.
Name

b. Associate
Title

c. [REDACTED]
Street Address, or P.O. Box

d. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
City State Zip

e. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Telephone: Area Code Number

7. FEDERAL FUNDS REQUESTED:

1st Year \$ 64,207.00

2nd Year (If Applicable) _____

3rd Year (If Applicable) _____

Total: \$ 64,207.00

6. INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION (If Applicable)

Approx. Total Enrolled _____

(Check one)
2 yr. 4 yr. Graduate
Public (310) (210) (240)
Private (320) (230) (250)

8. DURATION OF PROJECT:

Starting Date August 1978

Ending Date July 1979

No. of Months 12

9. POPULATION DIRECTLY BENEFITING FROM THE PROJECT

students, faculty members, administrators interested in writing programs

10. PROPOSAL TITLE:

LEARNING TO WRITE AND WRITING TO LEARN

11. BRIEF ABSTRACT OF PROPOSAL:

This proposal requests support to conduct a nationally comprehensive and systematically controlled evaluation of selected writing programs. The project would assess the effectiveness of writing programs by analyzing their impacts on students, faculty members, and the colleges and universities which sponsor them. The research process is designed not only to produce valuable information of interest nationally, but to improve the programs involved in the study through formative evaluation.

The applicant certifies to the best of his/her knowledge and belief, that the data in this application are true and correct, and the filing of the application has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant.

12. CERTIFICATION BY AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL

John Charles Meeker

Associate, FERA, Inc.

Phone [REDACTED]

Name

John C. Meeker

Title

January 13, 1978

LEARNING TO WRITE AND WRITING TO LEARN

I. BACKGROUND

This proposal requests support to conduct a nationally comprehensive and systematically controlled evaluation of college writing programs. All developmental aspects of this proposal have been funded by a \$38,000 planning grant from the Exxon Education Foundation which was awarded to Formative Evaluation Research Associates, Inc. The current status of the study is discussed in Section IV of this proposal.

II. THE ISSUE

Today's educators are concerned about the widespread inability of college students, both traditional and nontraditional, to write clearly and correctly. In response to this concern, writing experts have developed alternative approaches to the teaching of composition, drawing upon resources ranging from classical rhetoric to modern linguistics. Writing experts have also experimented with innovative pedagogical techniques such as computer-assisted instruction, personalized and self-paced modules, peer tutoring, strict tracking, or no tracking at all. Some programs focus on teaching students grammar and standard usage, others emphasize activities designed to improve the cognitive skills of students, and still others intend to improve students' abilities to communicate both in writing and orally with a variety of audiences.

In the face of widespread writing deficiencies, many colleges and universities have already increased their composition requirements or have considered revising their graduation requirements for composition competence. Many new freshmen composition programs have been implemented or are being initiated. Twenty-five such programs will be described in Options for the Teaching of English: Freshman Composition, edited by Dr. Jasper Neal of the Modern Language Association. (This volume is scheduled for release late in 1978.)

Many of the new writing programs have received grant support from major private foundations and from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. Inasmuch as educators, funding agencies, and the general public have placed considerable emphasis on literacy skills, the time appears ripe for a systematic assessment of selected writing programs.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this proposed study is to evaluate selected writing programs by analyzing how they affect students, faculty members, and the colleges and universities themselves. Analysis will focus on such issues as:

- A. What types of activities in the writing programs have the most effect on students' writing? *comparative*
- B. What program characteristics systematically lead to what types of outcome?
- C. Are certain types of students assisted by one approach more than another?

- D. Do the experimental writing programs produce particular outcomes that traditional approaches do not produce? *Comp.*
- E. What costs - financial, personal, or institutional - are related to the different types of programs?
- F. What needs were being addressed in the development of the program and why was a particular program chosen?

Another major purpose of this study is to test a research design which could be easily adopted by others who want to conduct programmatic, formative evaluation of writing programs. The research design could be utilized, with appropriate modification, to conduct internal or external evaluations.

IV. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

This proposal requests support for a one-year study, comprehensive in scope and systematic in design. It is comprehensive in that sample programs would represent four or five different approaches implemented by selective and nonselective colleges and universities in geographically different areas of the country. Sample programs would be chosen with care to insure that they are representative of the "state of the art."

The systematic research design includes longitudinal analysis of data collected from students in experimental programs and comparison groups, teachers, administrators, and program directors. Appropriate qualitative and quantitative analysis will be conducted.

Systematic thorough comprehensive

During the one-year study thorough research would be conducted at colleges and universities representing four or five types of writing programs. (See Appendix A.) Data would be collected from students at both the beginning and the end of the course. Researchers would assess the writing of students and their attitudes toward the course, writing, and school in general. To measure more long-term effects of different writing programs, the study would also include students who had already completed such courses. Particular attention would be given to analyzing whether the effects of different writing programs were related to background characteristics, abilities, and academic interests.

In addition, we would collect pre- and post-test data from directors of writing programs, instructors in the program, and academic administrators in the college or university. Information would also be collected from teachers of upper-division courses to provide another perspective on the long-term effects on students.

IV. CURRENT STATUS OF STUDY

The planning grant awarded to FERA from the Exxon Education Foundation has funded the major efforts described below:

- 1) A review of the literature on writing problems and potential programmatic solutions;
- 2) A review of testing instruments and procedures used to evaluate students' writing abilities;
- 3) Establishment of a panel of consultants (See Appendix B) known for their expertise as teachers of writing, as researchers in this field, or as noted observers of the problems.
- 4) Site visits to exemplary writing programs to insure that a general evaluation design would be feasible and responsive to programmatic needs. (See Appendix C.)

These complementary activities will lead to the development of a detailed research design refining the questions that need to be asked for a thorough and helpful programmatic evaluation of writing programs.

FERA is submitting the refined research design to the Exxon Education Foundation in February 1978. While the Exxon Education Foundation has not committed itself to fund the implementation phase of this project, its commitment to the issue and its confidence in FERA have been demonstrated by the awarding of the initial planning grant of \$38,000.

FERA is also submitting this proposal to the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to seek collaborative support for the project. Maximizing available resources from the Fund and the Exxon Education Foundation would enrich project results. Thus doubling the number of programs studied would strengthen the research findings. Further, the "state of the art" of program development could benefit from formatively evaluating eight to ten writing programs instead of four or five. Finally, an expanded study would permit testing the research design in a broader range of settings, increasing the design's potential value to others interested in evaluation of writing programs.

Although this proposal envisions a one-year study, FERA intends to submit proposals for longer-term studies. These would be substantially enriched by a larger sample of institutions afforded by cooperative funding of this proposed preliminary study.

V. PROJECT OUTCOMES:

Several ultimate outcomes are expected. First, a comprehensive report of the study's conclusions and an executive summary would be submitted. Second, extensive feedback would be given to the participating institutions on their writing programs. Whether written or presented in a workshop, this feedback would be designed to strengthen the individual programs. Third, a transferable methodology for the evaluation of writing programs would be described in the final report. Other schools, not a part of this study, could use this process to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their own writing programs and thus better educate their students. The results of this study could be disseminated in various discipline-based publications, administrative journals, workshops, and through other appropriate professional channels. In sum, the study seeks not only to assess but also to improve writing programs.

VI. PROJECT BUDGET

The proposed budget for this evaluation project is \$64,207. Budget categories are presented in Appendix D.

APPENDIX A

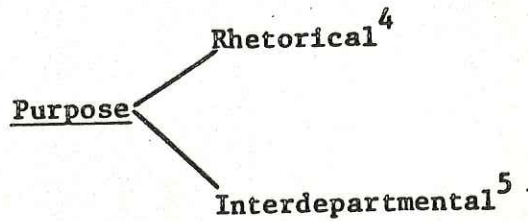
Types of Writing Programs

The model below represents the five approaches to teaching composition which this proposed study would evaluate. Although there are some similarities in perspective among the approaches and some of the same instructional techniques may well be used in more than one of the approaches, these types of programs represent different ways of teaching writing.



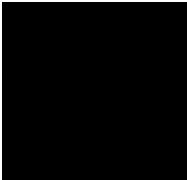
Experience¹

Audience²



Code³

- ¹ Based on Peter Elbow's approach, which emphasizes the process and psychology of writing.
- ² Based on Van Nostrand's approach, which emphasizes the importance of discovering the relation between the writer's subject and his audience.
- ³ Based on Frank O'Hare's approach, which utilizes sentence-combining techniques and manipulation of syntax.
- ⁴ Based on principles of classical rhetoric as developed by James Kinneavy, Ross Winterowd, and Richard Young.
- ⁵ Based on models developed by Daniel Fader and Barbara Fassler in which composition is taught in various content areas outside the Department of English.



APPENDIX B

Members of the National Advisory Panel of Consultants

Evans Alloway	Educational Testing Service
Shirley Lewis	Stanford University
Frank O'Hare	U of Southern Mississippi
Slyvia Schribner	Rockefeller University
A. D. Van Nostrand	Brown University
Richard Young	University of Michigan

The National Advisory Panel of Consultants met in Ann Arbor with FERA during September, 1977 to inform the early development of the study by identifying issues which should be addressed and potential programs which might be visited as possible candidates for inclusion in the sample. Since that meeting FERA has met with members of the Panel informally to consult on specific issues related to development of the research design. The Panel will meet again on February 9 and 10, 1978, in Ann Arbor to review and critique the final proposal for the Learning to Write and Writing to Learn Project. If the proposal is funded, the Panel will be used to assist in the interpretation of information gathered.

APPENDIX C

WRITING PROGRAMS FOR POTENTIAL INCLUSION IN THE SAMPLE

The following institutions have been visited or will be scheduled for a visit by the end of January 1978. The purposes of the day-long site visits are to learn more about the specific writing program(s) offered by the institution and about other interesting programs in that geographical area. During the site visit FERA explores with the Director of the Writing Program and with other administrators their interests in participating in the study. All the institutions visited by January 10, 1978, expressed interest in participating in the study and most were enthusiastic about the possibility of their institution's writing program being evaluated.

<u>INSTITUTION</u>	<u>CONTACT PERSON</u>	<u>DATE OF SITE VISIT</u>
University of Southern California	Ross Winterowd	November 30, 1977
California State College Los Angeles	Saralyn Daly	November 30, 1977
Brooklyn College	Jules Gelernt Lilia Malani	December 7, 1977
Columbia University	Mary Doobie Cy Knoblauch	December 8, 1977
University of California Berkley	Allen Wallworth	January 10, 1978 (met in Ann Arbor)
Central University Miami	Barbara Fassler	January 16, 1978
Miami of Ohio	<hr/>	January 17, 1978
Northwestern University	Robert Bundlach	TBA
Western Michigan University	Kenneth Mc Crorie	TBA
Wheaton College	Frances Shirley	

<u>INSTITUTION</u>	<u>CONTACT PERSON</u>	<u>DATE OF SITE VISIT</u>
University of Massachusetts	Larry Foster	TBA
University of Texas, Austin	James Kinneavy Susan Wittg	January 25, 1978
Saint Edwards Colleges	Anthony Floy ^R ek	January 25, 1978
Miami-Dade Community College	Alberta Goodman	TBA

APPENDIX D

ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS

Salaries

FERA Associate	125 days @ \$100.00	\$ 12,500.00
Research Assistant	150 days @ \$ 60.00	9,000.00
Clerical	75 days @ \$ 45.00	3,375.00
	Subtotal	<u>\$ 24,875.00</u>

Staff benefits at 20% of salaries 4,975.00

Total salaries \$ 29,850.00

Travel

Travel includes one trip to each of five sample institutions to make final preparations for research teams to collect data during their trips to each of the five sample sites. The research teams will collect data at the beginning and at the end of the program. Travel estimates include airfare, per diem cost for lodging and meals, and ground transportation.

25 person trips at \$175.00 air fare	\$ 4,375.00
45 person days with per diem at \$60.00	2,700.00
	<u>\$ 7,075.00</u>

Other Personnel Costs (National Advisory Panel of Consultants and Institutional Program Directors)

Costs for six consultants include honoraria (\$300.00) for National Advisory Panel of Consultants and travel costs (\$370.00) to one meeting to assist with interpretation of results. Also five Program Directors would receive honoraria (\$200) and travel costs (\$370.00) for a meeting to discuss the results of the study. \$ 6,300.00

Billables

Telephone	\$ 500.00
Computer	500.00
Duplicating/printing	125.00
Stipends for student interviewees	4,500.00
Evaluation of writing samples	1,800.00
	<u>\$ 7,550.00</u>

Management and overhead at 45% of salaries

\$ 13,432.00