

Ready for Launch: Incorporating the LaunchPad Solo for Journalism Resource in a Writing-Intensive Course

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Introduction/Need for Innovation

- Both scholarship and industry feedback highlight the need for college graduates to be competent writers upon entering the work force (Morgan & Rucker, 2013).
- However, students in writing-centric classes struggle disproportionately with complex writing mechanics like punctuation, grammar, and spelling (Lunsford & Lunsford, 2008).
- Online self-assessment quizzes have been shown to increase writer's self-efficacy and mastery of writing skills (Bissell & Collins, 2004).
- Students used LaunchPad Solo for Journalism as a resource to take online quizzes intended to encourage mastery of journalistic writing skills.

How it Works

- Students purchased a *Working with Words* textbook and an online access code to LaunchPad Solo (\$75.99).
- Completed 14 **self-scoring** quizzes during the semester about tricky concepts such as **subject verb agreement, comma splices, verb tense, and punctuation.**
- Students provided feedback via questionnaire.

Future Plans & Advice to Others

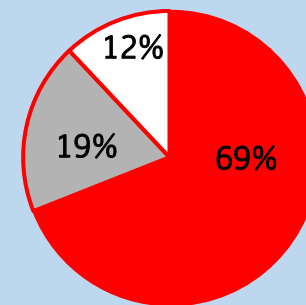
- The resource will continue to be used in future offerings of this course.
- Instructors should provide some **extra credit** quizzes so students are not as anxious about scores.
- The system allows instructors to explore **frequently missed questions** so instructors should review these confusing areas.
- Instructors should allow adequate time to enroll students in the system. No quizzes should be given the first week of class so all students can log on.

Results

<i>Improvement in Writing Skill (N= 26)</i>		
The quizzes improved my...	Mean	SD
Ability to punctuate properly	3.81	1.04
Understanding of grammar rules	3.58	.97
Ability to identify parts of speech	3.46	1.01
Confidence in my writing ability	3.42	.93
Spelling ability	3.35	1

Note: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

Ease of Use



- Easy/Extremely Easy
- Difficult
- Neither Easy nor Difficult

<i>Perceived Most & Least Beneficial Components (from open-ended responses)</i>	
Most Beneficial	Ease of use, accessibility, short length of quizzes, reinforcement of "tricky" concepts, immediate feedback.
Least Beneficial	Quizzes do not indicate why an answer is wrong—instead they direct students to the accompanying chapter in the book.

References

- Bissell, K.L., & Collins, S.J. (2004). Confidence and competence among community college students: Self-efficacy and performance in grammar. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 28(8), 663-675. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668920390254663>
- Lunsford, A. A., & Lunsford, K. J. (2008). "Mistakes are a fact of life": A national comparative study. *College Composition and Communication*, 59(4), 781-806.
- Morgan, A.C., Rucker, K. J. (2013). Competencies needed by agricultural communication undergraduates: An academic perspective. *Journal of Applied Communications*, 97(1). <https://doi.org/10.4148/1051-0834.1103>

