

Chapter 15

The Implementation of Computer Mediated Communication in Communication Centers

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Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) is a growing area of study, as the use of the Internet has increased for business, educational, and personal communication. A study conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Project showed that 74 percent of American adults used the Internet in 2010, which is a marked increase from 66 percent of adult Americans using the Internet in 2005 (Rainie, 2010). Not only are the numbers of users rising, but the uses of the Internet are diversifying as well. For example, besides the general public increasingly using computers and the Internet for entertainment and research purposes, email and instant messaging have become supplemental options to the conventional use of telephones and postal service for business communication. The increasing diversity of Internet use in virtually all sectors of society is manifested in the variety of articles listed by the Pew Research Center between January and May of 2011 alone: the research center posted articles discussing Internet use for such purposes as dissemination of health information, pursuit of philanthropic goals, promotion of political campaigns, as well as for participation in social networking and collaborative information sites such as Wikipedia (Pew Research Center, 2011).

Another novel application of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) use is in the area of peer tutoring in communication centers. Using CMC to help students to increase their communication competence when working on papers, assignments and speeches are all ways that the Internet has impacted peer tutor-

ing in communication centers. Implementing CMC in communication centers helps to enhance the services offered by extending the way peer tutors can help speakers from solely face-to-face interaction to the widely growing area of Internet communication.

However, along with the advantages of increasing avenues of service through CMC, there also exist challenges such as the absence of nonverbal signs normally utilized to convey meaning in face-to-face interaction and an increased risk of unintentional rudeness during the peer tutoring process. Such advantages and challenges are discussed in this chapter by reviewing existing CMC research and reflecting on the pilot experiences of one communication center's online program.

The Online Communication Center

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Online Speaking Center was inaugurated in the fall of 2010. It sought to implement findings of prior CMC research and to test the theory that access to online services would enhance the experiences of both the clients and the peer educators (consultants). The online program consisted of two sections of an Introduction to Communication course that required students to consult the center twice over the course of the semester. These two sections had a total of forty-six students enrolled.

Initially, there were four consultants trained to handle online consultations but at the end there were a total of twelve. As the need arose, the four initial consultants trained more consultants throughout the trial period in order to better accommodate the volume of appointments being made. This process of continuous training throughout the trial created a unique opportunity to evaluate how the system was working and to both troubleshoot and question if there were better ways of handling situations as they arose, from both experienced and novice perspectives. The outcomes of this learning process will be discussed in sections covering the topics of advantages and challenges of the Online Speaking Center.

But first, an understanding of the procedures practiced within these online consultations is needed. Although other alternatives such as Skype, WOnline, and WIMBA exist, the communication center currently uses Gmail and Google Documents because of the consultants' familiarity with the programs, in addition to the programs being free to the public. The consultant begins the online session by logging into the Speaking Center's Gmail account. The university uses a form of Gmail, called iSpartan, as the official email for faculty, staff, and students. The University Speaking Center does not have an iSpartan account, but because iSpartan is a form of Gmail, the students' accounts and the Speaking Center's account can communicate with each other through chat. Therefore, the consultant begins the session by inviting the student to chat online. When the student accepts, the consultant greets the student, provides him/her with an overview of what to expect in the consultation, and asks the student to send the speech document to the Speaking Center email account as an attachment. This document can then be converted for online editing by viewing the document

through Google Documents and sharing it with the student. Then, both parties can make changes to the document and communicate through a chat box in real time.

If the consultant highlights a part of the text, the client can see it, and if the client makes any changes, they appear immediately for the consultant to review. Other options included for the consultations are the use of webcams and the “Call Phone” option of Gmail which can be used instead of the chat option. As the consultation ends, the client is provided with a link to an online survey which is designed to give feedback on the consultant and the Speaking Center’s services. The feedback obtained in this manner is the material used throughout this chapter to report the clients’ opinions of both the advantages and disadvantages of the Online Speaking Center.

Advantages

When studying the benefits of adding an online program to communication centers, consultant, workplace, and client advantages were all taken into account. The list of advantages was compiled from client and consultant comments, previous literature, and experiences from the beta test of the new online center. The advantages were diverse, but the main benefits found were convenience, more productive and interactive consultations, increased accessibility, and decreased anxiety.

Advantages for Consultants

There are many advantages, both personal and professional, for consultants in learning how to conduct consultations online. The most commonly stated remarks from consultants and clients alike addressed the convenience of the online speaking center. One consultant said, “I prefer online appointments because I feel they are more convenient for students. I myself have a busy schedule and prefer to do things online. That way I can still wind down and relax but still complete my work.” Another consultant remarked, “Speakers can now get help with whatever they need at home in their pajamas!”

In addition to the convenience online consulting can provide, consultants can learn to be well-versed in CMC in order to become better prepared for their future careers. Santra and Giri (2009) discuss how using CMC helps facilitate more effective communication in the workplace. The authors say, “Computer-based communication not only facilitates new means of educating students, it also prepares a large segment of the next generation to enter the workplace able to use CMC and, by doing so, serves to increase their value as organizational employees” (p. 104). One consultant said, “I am not technology savvy, so a lot of the things we use for the Online Speaking Center I did not know how to do. Using the Online Speaking Center is always a learning experience for me.” She went on to explain that she feels much more comfortable with the technology

now and believes that it will serve her well in the future, for her classes, and for her career.

Additionally, research has also shown that some of the impersonality of CMC can help facilitate more productive work sessions. Joseph Walther (1996) states, "Take away these interpersonal and social hindrances through 'sociotechnical' arrangements, and the resulting impersonal orientation to ideas via CMC increases process effectiveness" (p. 6). For example, reducing superfluous interpersonal and social cues such as visual indicators of class or race that can be distractions as the consultant is working with the client can help to increase the amount and quality of feedback that the consultant can provide.

Finally, an advantage of online sessions for consultants is the interactivity that these consultations inspire. One online consultant expressed this by saying, "I liked that the client was able to see exactly what I was talking about through use of highlighting, and I was also able to see what directions the client was 'adjusting' to when editing." This consultant liked that he was able to give more personalized information as the client was changing his outline while they chatted. In a face-to-face consultation, it is rare that the consultant ever gets to see the actual changes that the client makes to his presentations as he will usually take notes and change his outline after leaving the consultation. This ability to actually see the changes gives the consultant a stronger feeling that he has helped the client and that the client actually understood what he was talking about.

Advantages for Clients

In addition to advantages for consultants, client advantages were also explored through research and comments. The University Speaking Center uses Survey Monkey to provide the clients with a link to an online survey at the end of every consultation, face-to-face or online. The clients had overwhelmingly positive responses regarding the Online Speaking Center. One client remarked: "taking me step by step while chatting to me was highly helpful." As one consultant remarked earlier, the ability to work step-by-step and make changes in real time improved the experience of both the consultants and the clients by being able to ensure that everything was understood and that the feedback was as personalized as possible. Another client remarked in response to a question about the most important thing he learned: "I had errors I didn't see, and it took honest feedback from a peer to show me how to fix them." Another client stated in reference to this same question: "[R]eally good session. [Consultant] was amazingly helpful and this was my first time using this and I believe I will keep coming back." These clients valued the time they spent working with the consultant online and saw this as a helpful resource for presentations they may have to give in the future.

Also, as stated previously, the most commonly stated remarks from consultants and clients alike addressed the convenience of the online speaking center. One client said, "It saves a lot of time to do it over the Internet than having to

come in for some people. I received the same assistance that I would have if I came in. This helped a lot with my organization of the speech.” As this student said, holding a consultation online can save a lot of time, especially if the student is a distance learning student or a commuter. The students’ professor also noted that she believed the online consultations to be easier to attend than the conventional face-to-face consultations; commuters must drive to the campus, find parking (which is easier said than done), and walk to the Speaking Center. Moreover, while it can be inconvenient for a commuting student to make a special trip to campus, it may be impractical or impossible for a distance learning student to come to campus if she lives in another state or country.

In addition to convenience, the alternative to a conventional face-to-face interaction with a consultant opens the door for clients who might not ordinarily consider making an appointment. One of these kinds of clients is addressed in an article by Durkin, Conti-Ramsden, and Walker (2010), who argue that CMC, “in terms of its less stringent language demands and its reduced-cues environment, can provide a medium for positive adaptation of adolescents with communication challenges” (p. 1). Communication challenges could include such things as a stutter, hearing impairment, severe anxiety, or other such challenges that impede communication with one’s peers. In this instance, a client could focus entirely on the content of her presentation and outline with a consultant, and could later focus on her “communication challenge,” in relation to delivery, personally or with a consultant. The online program provides a lower stress environment for this type of client to begin the process of creating her presentation.

Among communication challenges, one specific challenge is the existence of hearing impairments. Research shows that “adolescents with hearing impairments used the Internet more intensively than did peers with normal hearing” (Durkin et al., 2010, p. 3). When a client must attend a face-to-face consultation with an interpreter, the logistics of obtaining an interpreter and making an appointment, combined with the stress of communicating with the consultant through the interpreter, can become a strong deterrent from making an appointment. By attending an online consultation, the audio and vocal challenge is removed through the medium of online chat. This option reduces the stress and the inconvenience that members of the deaf community may face when looking to make an appointment for a face-to-face consultation.

Another set of clients who experience a communication challenge and may be reached more conveniently through an online program are those who suffer from a high level of speaking, or social, anxiety. Amichai-Hamburger and McKenna (2006) explain that interaction anxiety can be greatly reduced when the interaction takes place over the Internet in a text-based format instead of face-to-face. This is because the student has more control over how he presents his views and himself. Also, the anxiety-producing elements inherent in face-to-face interaction of having to respond on the spot and feeling as if one is being evaluated visually is not present in a text-based environment

In a related article, McKenna, Green, and Gleason (2002) explain that it is easier for people with extreme shyness to create relationships on the Internet because they can “share [their] inner beliefs and emotional reactions with much

less fear of disapproval and sanction” (p. 10). Reduction of fear is an important factor in the consultation process, as the fear of rejection or disapproval of one’s work product can be a deterrent for those who have a high level of shyness or anxiety. Also, the client can avoid the anxiety of what McKenna et al. call “gating features,” including physical appearance, a stigma such as stuttering, or the belief that their anxiety is visible. The absence of these perceptual cues creates more freedom and less anxiety for the client who may feel held back by them in a face-to-face interaction.

Another aspect of convenience that the online program provided was a way to clarify information with clients who are non-native speakers of English. As with students who suffer from anxiety, non-native speakers have more time to present their thoughts the way that they intend them, by looking up words or checking grammar, when compared to a face-to-face consultation situation. Also, a text-based format helps with clarification between the consultant and the client. One conversation benefited from this clarification when a vacation destination was being discussed. The international student was unsure as to the name of the country in English and she typed “philiphin” and “philippine.” By these two suggestions she made in the chat box, the country was clarified as the Philippines. Both the student and the consultant benefited from understanding what was being talked about and the clarification that the text format brought, rather than having to verbalize the spellings which would add another level of difficulty for the non-native speaker of English.

Though this section has addressed students with particular communication challenges, the average student can also feel a relief from gating features in an online format. One faculty member whose class participated in online consultations remarked that her students felt less anxious about the content of their outlines, such as length and information, when having the consultation online versus having it in person. The students felt more in control of how their information was presented to the consultant when it was text based and not face-to-face, perhaps partly due to the convenience and effectiveness of sharing textual information online.

Challenges

This chapter has highlighted many advantages of implementing an online component in communication centers; however, CMC research and experiences with the trial online program have revealed many challenges that accompany its use. Solutions to these problems were sought and ideas were discovered both through reviewing existing CMC research and through trial and error. Some solutions are still forthcoming, as there are limitations to the communication channel that are particularly challenging.

Challenges for Consultants

The consultants' views of the challenges of this program largely had to do with decreased interaction with their clients. One consultant remarked, "I didn't like the isolation I felt as a consultant while being in the OSC [Online Speaking Center] area." The consultants felt a little isolated off by themselves with a computer. Eventually, they began to do online consultations together in a room in order to feel less isolated, and this greatly helped. However, in the later part of the trial when the phone option was added, noise became a problem in doing consultations together. By talking to their clients on the phone though, the consultants again felt connected and not isolated, so doing consultations together was not an issue anymore.

Challenges for Clients

In addition to the positive comments previously mentioned, clients made some comments which led us to recognize additional areas of improvement. One client remarked, "I felt that a person to person consultation would be more effective. It was harder to get my questions answered." This refers to having to type everything in the chat boxes. For students who may not be efficient typists, using chat boxes can be an ineffective use of their time. The option to conduct the consultation over the phone has helped in these cases.

Another comment was, "It took us 20 minutes to get started." This comment came from early on in our endeavors to figure out the software and the procedure. We learned from this comment to give the technical side a ten minute limit and then to abandon it and have the student email the document and talk about it either over chat or the phone. This method is not quite as convenient as sharing the document, but it reduces the time taken away from the consultation to figure out the technology. We did not want the tutoring process to suffer due to technological issues.

The professor of the two sections that utilized the Online Speaking Center services also noted some challenges that she faced. She found that explaining the technology to the students was a very involved process. However, she said that handouts helped a great deal in explaining the technology and procedure. The other problem she encountered was the belief on the part of her students that they did not need to go to the Speaking Center to practice their presentation if they had worked on organization already. However, in our experience, this is a problem encountered both in person and online. The only solution we have come up with is to stress the importance that speech making is a process and that practice is an integral part of that process, and one in which the Speaking Center can greatly help.

Perceived Impoliteness

Claire Hardaker (2010) defines the impoliteness most commonly found in CMC as either “non-malicious impoliteness” or “rudeness, faux pas, failed politeness” (p. 218). Non-malicious impoliteness refers to a remark given where the intention is not to produce malice but where the speaker recognizes that offense may be caused anyway. Hardaker relates this to a tutor critiquing a student’s work. This is an area that consultants deal with in both face-to-face and online environments and one in which nonverbal cues help a great deal. By smiling and using friendly gestures, consultants can generally negate any potential impoliteness while giving feedback on a student’s presentation in a face-to-face interaction.

The second type of impoliteness in CMC, which Hardaker calls rudeness, *faux pas*, and failed politeness, is when the speaker does not intend to be impolite, but the hearer interprets the communication as impolite anyway. This situation can arise when the speaker fails to perform some behavior marked as polite, fails to recognize a behavior that should or should not be performed in the situation, or when the speaker misjudges the degree of politeness needed in the situation. The main determinant in both of these types of impoliteness is whether the hearer recognizes the situation as unintentional on the part of the speaker or if they see it as intentional.

Avoiding instances in which the hearer may perceive the speaker as impolite is the best way to prevent these situations from occurring. Helen Spencer-Oatey (2005) defines (im)politeness as “an evaluative label that people attach to behavior, as a result of their subjective judgments about social appropriateness” (p. 97). She states that behavioral expectations are generally based on behavioral norms. Spencer-Oatey proposes two principles to stay within good behavioral expectations. Although these principles are useful in both face-to-face and online consultations, only examples relating to online consultations are discussed below.

The first principle is the equity principle. This principle holds that people have the right to not be “unduly imposed upon, that they are not unfairly ordered about, and that they are not taken advantage of or exploited” (p. 100). This can be followed in an online consultation by not telling the client to change something but asking if they would like to change something. It is not the consultants’ job to make the client change anything within their presentation, but rather it is their job to suggest areas that could be made stronger or clearer. This principle can also be followed by providing examples when explaining a suggestion. This use of examples shows effort on the part of the consultant to be involved in the speech-making process with the client instead of arbitrarily dictating changes. Another simple way to implement this principle in an online consultation is to make sure that the client knows ahead of time what she can expect from the consultation and the amount of time allocated for the consultation. This will ensure that the client will not feel that her time or expectations are being imposed upon.

The second principle is the association principle. Spencer-Oatey (2005) defines this as the belief that people are “entitled to an association with others that is in keeping with the type of relationship that they have with them” (p. 100). This principle calls for maintaining the professional expectations of the consultant. For instance, a client will expect the consultant to use correct grammar and spelling while chatting with her. Ender and Newton (2000) discuss the role of the peer tutor paraprofessional, explaining that they become a type of role model for the students with whom they are working. Therefore, if the peer tutor is helping the student to create an organized and coherent outline for their presentation, they should maintain the client’s professional expectations by using correct grammar and spelling.

In addition to these two principles that Spencer-Oatey suggests, Graham (2006) illustrates another way to avoid impoliteness in CMC. He suggests that, in order to avoid impoliteness, the speaker “[M]ust assign intent without prosodic and non-verbal markers, they must accommodate and anticipate the expectations and face needs of an audience that may be, at least partially, unknown, and they must be versed in the expectations of e-politeness or Netiquette” (p. 744). In order to implement this suggestion, the consultant should evaluate the needs of their clients and how to best serve those needs, use language and emoticons to mark force and nonverbal cues in online sessions, and maintain a professional persona with their client. By understanding the student’s assignment, the professor’s expectations, and how to use the technology required for the online consultation, the consultant can thereby show the client that they care about both them and their presentation, which will also help to reduce any potential, unintended impoliteness.

Restricted Nonverbal Cues

One potential reason for the perceived impoliteness in online consultations is the lack of nonverbal cues when using the online format, which was the most frequently addressed challenge for all participants. One consultant said, in favor of face-to-face consultations, “I like being able to have the human interaction with someone and read the nonverbals to make sure the client understands and is also engaged.” It proved difficult to tell from long pauses, because of lack of nonverbal communication, if the client understood what was just explained, if she was thinking, or if she was checking her email instead of chatting with the consultant. CMC research addresses this lack of nonverbal cues in two major ways that pertain to the online program: using verbal communication to make up for the nonverbal absence and through the use of emoticons.

Walther, Van Der Heide, Tom Tong, Carr, and Atkin (2010) address the practice of using verbal communication to make up for the lack of nonverbal communication. According to their research, “individuals use language-based strategies to pursue relational goals online” (p. 325). They explain that this is done primarily through (dis)confirmation or (dis)agreement. By showing affinity towards something the other person values, it shows good feelings and inten-

tions towards that person, and vice versa. A way of implementing this in an online consultation is suggested by Artemio Ramirez (2009), he argues that “Greater interactivity, in the form of involvement and mutuality, and more positive relationship forecasts resulted when communicators interacted and positive information was disclosed rather than when they observed and negative information was shared” (p. 319). For consultants, this means being involved in the process of improving the client’s presentation and what the UNGC consultants affectionately call the “praise sandwich”: Instead of explaining only what needs to be corrected in the client’s speech, the consultant should tell the client what they did effectively, what the client can work on to improve their speech, and then what struck the consultant as being strong about the document (or a similar pattern of positives and negatives, as long as the student’s strengths are emphasized). Therefore, the consultant is layering the negative, or what needs to be corrected, together with positive information, giving the consultation an overall positive feel while still conveying how to improve. This is a technique used in face-to-face consultations; however, it is even more important in online consultations because it is easier for the client to take any negatives more personally when they do not have the consultant’s nonverbal communication to show them how the comment was meant to be taken. Also, while showing the client specific areas by highlighting the text, moving the cursor, or referencing a specific line or passage, the consultants are making themselves more involved and not being a passive observer of the process which reduces the frustration of the client created by not having nonverbal markers in the conversation.

The use of emoticons is another way of expressing information normally conveyed nonverbally. According to Dresner and Herring (2010), the emoticon was first invented in 1982 by a computer scientist at Carnegie Melon University. He suggested two symbols that are now known as the “smiley face” and the “frowning face,” to clarify if a message should be read as a joke or as a serious contribution in the discussion forum used by his department (p. 249). Since that initial use, emoticons have become more diverse, innovative, and widespread in recent years and are widely used in online and text communication.

In the meetings conducted during the beta test to discuss the online trial program, emoticons were brought up as a concern for decreasing professionalism. CMC research offers an explanation and a strategy to resolve this issue. Franklin B. Krohn (2004) suggests that a generational approach be taken which he calls “Generational Recipient Determinism (GRD)” (p. 325). He explains that, as emoticons have only been around since the early 1980’s, an approach based on identifying which generation the recipient of the online communication belongs to is the practical way to implement them in online communication. He suggests that Traditionalists (those born before 1946) not be sent anything with emoticons, Baby Boomers (between 1946 and 1964) should probably not be sent anything with emoticons, Generation X (between 1964 and 1980) may have some of the more common emoticons, and Millennials (after 1980 and coming of age after 2000) may be sent generous amounts of emoticons. For an online program in a communication center, this means that emoticons are welcomed, as the vast majority of clients are college students falling within the Millennial

category, with a few Generation X members using the services. While Baby Boomers are occasionally encountered as clients in consultations, it is very rare. Therefore, the use of emoticons, according to Krohn, is a useful tool that may be freely used in online consultations.

After establishing that emoticons can be used, the next question is how they should be used. The problem is, as Krohn (2004) explains, “nonverbal cues tend to be more believable than verbal. In a situation where the verbal and nonverbal cues are contradictory, the nonverbal cues will tend to be believed” (p. 322). Emoticons are intentional nonverbal markers which contradict the rule that nonverbal cues are involuntary and spontaneous and therefore received as more honest. In this case, as an intentional emotional marker, emoticons cannot stand as an exact substitute for normal nonverbal cues. They can still be used to mark facial expression or emotion, but they do not express the same amount of information that face-to-face, nonverbal communication would.

Dresner and Herring (2010) identify three ways that emoticons can be substituted for nonverbal communication in text form. These are “(a) as emotion indicators, mapped directly onto facial expression; (b) as indicators of nonemotional meanings, mapped conventionally onto facial expressions; and (c) as illocutionary force indicators that do not map conventionally onto a facial expression.”(p. 250). Though the use of emoticons as emotion indicators and facial expressions is important, the most relevant use of them for our study of online consultations would be their use to mark the force that a statement should convey, or to convey the intended meaning of the statement. Dresner and Herring (2010) explain this type of use by saying, “uses of emoticons as indicators of illocutionary force can be viewed as an expansion of text in the same way that, for example, question marks and exclamation marks are” (p. 264).

Additionally, the emoticon can indicate whether a comment is a joke, just playful, or truly serious. For instance, a statement such as “That is not exactly right; let me explain again” has a different force than “That is not exactly right :-) let me explain again.” The former statement can be ambiguous, either read as if the writer is looking to help, or as if the writer is irritated that they are going to have to explain something yet another time. The latter statement clearly has a lighter tone, with the speaker looking to help, perhaps even as though they are taking some of the blame for the problem not being exactly right. In this case, the emoticon can be used to more clearly mark how the statement should be received. Use of the emoticon is also one way to avoid conveying unintentional impoliteness, as discussed in the previous section.

Privacy and Time Limitations

Two other challenges encountered while conducting the pilot online program were issues of student privacy and time limitations for funding purposes. In an effort to protect student privacy, the consultants were not sure about how to report the sessions to the students’ professors: How much should they tell the professor about the consultation? In a face-to-face consultation, the consultant usu-

ally hands the client a paper copy of the report form to give to his professor, if he so chooses. These report forms include the day and time that the student came into the center, the name of the consultant he worked with, and the consultant's notes on what they worked on in the consultation. However, with the online program, there are no paper copies to give to the clients. Therefore the consultant must email the professor. It was decided that the best way to do this without infringing on the student's privacy was to ask the student if he would like his professor notified, and then to just tell the professor the student's name. In the future, the suggestion is to have an option in the online survey to notify the student's professor. Then, if the box is checked, a notification will automatically be sent to the professor.

Another problem encountered was the additional time commitment required for online consultations and how that affected funding. It took an average of sixty minutes to conduct a consultation online that would normally take thirty minutes face-to-face. Therefore, consultants could not take as many clients, and staffing suffered. The eventual solution to this problem was to add the voice option to consultations. With this option, the consultant would conduct the consultation through the shared Google Documents option, but they could talk to the client over the phone instead of typing. In order to do this, the consultants use the "Call Phone" option in Gmail. When clicked, this option allows the consultant to call a phone number and talk to the client over the internet through a headset. This cut the time back to the thirty minute limit of the face-to-face consultations. Then, the students who would rather do their consultation through the chat option can make an appointment with the consultants who have more flexible schedules.

Conclusion

This chapter reported on a pilot online consultation program at a communication center. Although some lessons were learned and shared, there is much research that can still be done on the implementation of CMC in communication centers. As this was a test trial of students who were required to use the online consultation format, it would be beneficial to look at a situation where the students are not required and to ask why they chose the online option. This would help us understand why some student populations self-select to use the online consultation option. Also, more research needs to be done regarding the phone option to see what different effects it may have from using chat. Use of video is also an option that future research could focus on.

Overall, the results of the trial online consultation program were encouraging and we have high hopes for the future. There are still some areas that we are working on to further advance our knowledge of how this program can help the UNCG Speaking Center and other communication centers. We believe that technology and CMC has become such an integral part of American society that neglecting to implement it at our center would not help to move forward the

work that we are trying to do on our campus. By adding this new program, we hope to help more students and more fully prepare our consultants for the workforce. We are also exploring new technology and other options for reducing such current challenges as the lack of nonverbal cues and perceived impoliteness. As technology and related research are continuously developing, we hope that in the future we will be able to overcome these challenges to make the online consultation an integral part of what we do at our communication centers.

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