

Literacy Project

PALMA Proyecto Avance: Latino Mentoring Association



Abstract

PALMA is a tutoring organization that pairs U-M students with Latino families from the Ann Arbor area. U-M Library's Mini-Grant allowed us to provide a number of much-needed resources to tutors and students both electronically and through physical workbooks.

Objectives

The purpose of this project was to find and provide access to academic, ESL, and culturally-specific resources for our tutors. We hoped to provide tutors with tools that could support their tutoring sessions - - employing cultural and language-specific activities when possible.

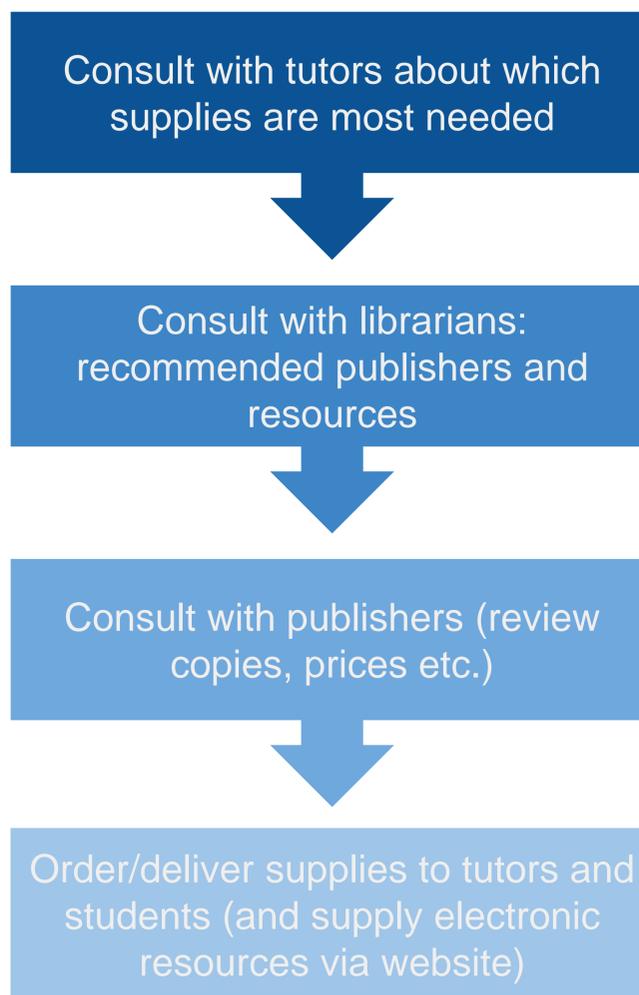
Challenges

Copyright restrictions posed one significant challenge to disseminating information. We wanted to make more ESL resources available on-line so that tutors and students had easier access to these resources, but certain publishers' copyright rules limited what we were able to post on our website.

Library Partnership

U-M librarians (Jo Angela Oehrli in particular) were vital to the success of this project. They connected me with resources, recommended books and websites, recommended publishers to contact, and used U-M Library networks to get exactly the right people on-board in advising me on every aspect of this project.

The Process



Real-Life Impact

This project strengthened community partnerships by helping us connect U-M librarians and Ann Arbor librarians with the members of the Ann Arbor Latino community who are involved in PALMA. This project also advocated for inclusion and diversity by making more resources available that encourage our members' continued use of Spanish even as they seek to learn English. For younger students especially, this is a focus of ours because we seek to be culturally supportive in our ESL approach -- supporting retention of Spanish skills as students learn/use English.

What I learned

Through this project, I learned a number of things about the selection process librarians go through to identify the best resources for certain tasks. U-M Librarian Jo Angela Oehrli introduced me to a variety of on-line resources and provided invaluable advice on the potential for connections between publishers and our organization that I was previously unaware of.

Further Work

In the next school year, we hope to add an additional cultural component that is driven by the Latino families in our program. To further develop tutors' cultural competencies, PALMA plans to host an event where Latino families can take the leading role in teaching tutors about their own culture(s) through the lens of individual holidays or other sets of traditions.

