Gap in the Wall:
A Writing Center, Offering Complex Research Support

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Writing Center is the newest, innovative service, established as a project-based initiative within the organization of the Library of Corvinus University Budapest. The present and future goals of the Writing Center require a wide spectrum of services if wanting to cater for the needs of doctoral students and faculty members. This includes traditional and novel tasks, such as fostering publication activities, combating information overload, being familiar with abstract writing, and Open Access offered to experienced and to early career researchers. The goal in this chapter is to demonstrate how the learning and research support activities of a library, comprising curricular and extra-curricular courses, trainings, and consultations can be integrated into the knowledge structures of the university as a whole. The authors place special emphasis on the role of group-based and individual mentoring throughout a university career, spanning from student to researcher, and on the development of transversal skills through the training programs of the Writing Center.

THE CONTEXT

This chapter is focused on the activities of the Writing Center, which is a functional unit of the Library of Corvinus University Budapest (CUB) (henceforth Library). The Writing Center is the only institution of this type in Hungary. The chapter's title was inspired by an Ashna Shome's paper, where she speaks about a pedagogical 'gap' that can be filled by Writing Centers. The authors share with her that this is a main goal of such institutions.

The Hungarian National Strategy on the Development of Higher Education underlines that most libraries in higher education fulfill not only their traditional role but go beyond that (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma [EMMI], 2016). Based on this document and mapping international trends, the "Strategic Directions for higher Education Libraries for 2018-2023" devised by the Hungarian College of University Librarians (Nagy & Karácsony, 2019) has set several priorities. Three of them, i.e. increasing student success, serving foreign students, and providing support to the research process define the philosophy and practice of the Writing Center at Corvinus University of Budapest. It provides students with structured education, state-of-the-art methodology and personalized counseling to help them become more self-sufficient in learning tasks, information searching competences and the formal requirements for publications and references. In the center of the Writing Center's education, we find academic literacy that involves the comprehension of the entire system of thinking, values and information flows of academia (Elmborg, 2006).

The University

The University of Economics of Hungary, as a separate, autonomous university was established in 1948. Prior to that, the education of economics took place at the Faculty of Economics of the Royal Hungarian University of Sciences, founded in 1920. The name and organizational structure of the University have changed several times during the past 72 years as a result of broader political changes and structural reforms concerning the higher education system of Hungary (Karl Marx University of Economics 1953-1990, Budapest University of Economics 1990-2000, Hungarian University of Economics and Public Administration 2000-2003). In 2004, the university received its current name: Corvinus University of Budapest.

The University operates on two campuses and, in the larger part of the period covered here, it was organized into 3 faculties (Corvinus Business School, Corvinus School of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences and International Relations). As of February 2020, the faculties have been abolished and their role has been taken over by so-called university institutions. Corvinus University offers courses on bachelor, master and doctoral level. The language of the education is mainly Hungarian, but one of the strategic goals of the university is internationalization so as to raise the number of courses in English, to employ well-known lecturers from abroad, to invite guest lecturers and to accept students from all over the world.

With the 1st of July 2019, the maintenance rights of the university have been entrusted from the Hungarian State to the state-sponsored but independent Maecenas Univesitatis Corvini trust fund of public interest. This form of funding and the accompanying organizational and operational rules are unprecedented in Hungarian higher education, and the transformation is still in process to this day. As a part of this transformation, the library has been designated as one of the university competence centers

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