

Executive Summary

The Saddleback College Reading Program, under the auspices of the English Department, is unique in that it offers traditional classes along with individualized lab classes. It is a multi-level reading program that includes a range of developmental and college level classes as well as independent lab courses, all of which are designed to provide students with curriculum applicable to the general education requirements of the associate degree. These developmental to transfer level reading courses help students fulfill the reading proficiency requirement for the associate's degree as well as assist students in gaining college level skills and applying for transfer.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the classes, labs and services offered by the Reading Program to the Saddleback College community of faculty and students as well as to the community at large.

Traditional classes such as the developmental reading course, English 220 (changed to English 340, Fall 2004), along with one transfer level course, English 180, do not have prerequisites and are, therefore, accessible to all students. English 220 is an entry level course into the composition program. English 170, Reasoning and College Reading, is a transfer level course that is equivalent to English 1B and has recently been approved to fulfill the information competency requirement for an AA/AS degree.

The Reading Lab provides students with individualized instruction designed to assist them in gaining and improving college level skills. The range of lab courses assists students to work on specific language arts skills at their own pace and level of ability. The Lab component to the program is not an entity in and of itself, but serves students from across the curriculum as well as those enrolled in reading, writing, ESL and DSPS classes. Additionally, the Reading Lab serves as a resource center and information service responding to student, instructor, and community queries regarding assessment, placement recommendations, remediation resources, as examples.

Overview of the program review process implemented:

The program review process involved the collaboration of all full-time and part-time faculty and staff from the reading department.

- First, in preparation for the process we reviewed our mission statement and updated our department goals to make sure we were closely aligned with the college's mission statement. Additionally, several full-time faculty members assumed responsibility for the writing of various components.
- The second major step was to develop four different surveys in order to get feedback from students and faculty affected by our program and determine satisfaction levels as well as awareness of our class offerings. Separate surveys were administered online to: ((1)) faculty across campus, ((2)) students taking traditional reading classes and ((3)) the co-requisite lab classes, as well as ((4)) students enrolled in open entry/open exit labs. Results were then shared with reading faculty/staff.
- A third step required the department chair to schedule regular meetings with the College's research analyst to examine the results of the surveys and gather statistical information of a five year period, 1998-2003; the analyst's help was also needed for evaluating the reading program's enrollment patterns, student retention and completion rates, fill rates, and WSCH (Weekly Student Contact Hours) patterns.

- The fourth step involved the Reading Department and the Dean of Liberal Arts reviewing the document compiled by the Chair.

Findings:

Program Strengths:

The student surveys confirmed that the strengths of the program are in fulfilling the program's mission statement by facilitating student achievement and academic success with curriculum that: ((1)) increases and enhances reading proficiency, ((2)) helps students meet the challenges of college coursework, and ((3)) develops essential lifetime reading skills. Over the course of 5 years, from 1998 to 2003, the Reading Program has grown 25%. This takes into account an averaging of the increase in enrollment from the four components of the program – developmental (remedial) reading, intermediate reading, transfer level, and reading lab classes. Additional strengths lie in course retention rates, state-of-the-art reading lab and, most importantly, our professional and dedicated faculty and staff.

I. Research/Statistics:

- Faculty Surveys:
 - The faculty survey showed that 75% of the college community recognizes that remediation in reading is an integral part of the community college. The continued support of the Saddleback faculty is integral to the program.
 - Faculty indicated that the strength of the reading program is "the determination of the staff to: 1) keep improving their services, 2) meet student needs, and 3) communicate with other faculty, especially counselors."
- Student Surveys
 - Student surveys indicated that classes were scheduled at good times which include day, evening and weekend classes.
 - Students felt faculty are not only aware of student needs, but are available for students.
 - Students indicated that the program was beneficial to their preparation for college and life.
 - Overall, students are highly satisfied with the help they have received from the Reading Program.

II. Instruction:

- The Reading Program has state-of-the-art computer technology and software available to the students. Equipment is used by instructors for presentations and by students for hands-on instruction during class time and laboratory sessions.
- Instructors have embraced the technology available to them and use Blackboard, online Web sites, PowerPoint presentations, Gyro Tools, and computer classrooms to enrich student learning.
- Faculty/Staffing: Only accredited instructors teach both the reading laboratory and lecture classes.

- The smaller class sizes (25 student cap) allow the faculty to focus on the individual needs of students in acquiring reading and study skills strategies.
- The Reading Department responds to the changing population of the College by purchasing more ESL materials at all ability levels, accommodating students with special needs, and encouraging the use of multi-cultural materials in both the lab and the classroom.
- Currently, the Reading Program has accomplished major goals and, because of a Title III Grant, is implementing a stronger reading lab infrastructure

III. Curriculum:

- The curriculum is responsive to the students' needs, state mandates, current educational theories, and College goals and general education requirements.
- The Basic Skills segment to the program is very strong as indicated by the increase in both enrollment and retention.

IV. Outreach:

- Reading and nursing instructors teamed up to identify and train nursing students needing help with study skills. A two-year PFE grant provided resources for Reading faculty to give presentations using textbook chapters the nursing students were currently studying, making the information directly applicable to their studies.
- *Summer Bridge Program*: since 1996, the Reading Department has participated in this program by offering a one-unit reading class to incoming freshman.
- Faculty across the curriculum receive information via flyers to faculty mailboxes or notification through email on the availability of resources provided by the Reading Program.
- Reading faculty have attended orientation sessions to help counselors with distributing information about where students can get help with reading skills.
- Students receive information about help provided by the Reading Lab through MySite, TV/radio ads, Lariat spotlight articles, and the cafeteria marquis.

Areas of Limitation:

I. Research/Statistics

- Need for a computerized database of students' pre and post test scores created with software and a specialized scanner that captures data for such purposes (i.e. Parscore Scanner from Scantron).

II. Instruction: Facility

- Need for a larger facility for the Reading Lab, and more "open" hours so that the Reading Lab can parallel services offered in other learning resource labs on campus such as the LAP, the Language Lab and the Computer Lab.

Faculty/Staffing:

- Lab is staffed each hour not only by certificated instructors, but also with two twenty-five hour a week instructional aides who work on a split shift (two nights and four days each). This creates a difficult work environment for the aides and a difficult coverage problem in lab. Additionally, the aides have an 11 month contract, which creates staffing problems for a program that offers lab classes 12 months a year and needs to be consistently covered.
- The lab component to the program relies heavily on student aides along with our instructional aides and faculty. Presently, the program doesn't have a budget to pay for student aides. Each semester, the Reading Department must depend on the work-study program through financial aid to supply student assistants. With the current budget cuts, there are fewer students who qualify. We need to have dedicated funding, provided through the Division or the Office of Instruction, for student aides.

Funding:

- Funding is inadequate for replacement of technology required for Lab classes as well as for instructional materials used in our traditional classes.

III. Curriculum

- Need for a lower level traditional reading course that is truly remedial to work with students whose skills are far below a college level.

IV. Outreach:

- The Reading Program needs even more visibility on campus. We welcome the involvement of more instructors across the disciplines aware of their students' reading needs and referral of these students to the Reading Program, particularly in the transfer level reading component.

Recommendations:**I. Research/Statistics:**

- Review on a yearly basis various components to the program to assure that our mission and goals are fulfilled. A Program Review is a work in progress.
- Develop/Design a computerized database of students' standardized pre and post testing reading scores in order to validate student success in the program. The past three semesters, the Department Chair has tried to set up this data base, but has met with many obstacles. With the start of this program review, the Vice-President of Instruction provided a dedicated computer for such a system, but unfortunately, the technical support was not available. For this purpose, institutional support is required to provide an OMR Parscore Scanner from Scantron for use in the Reading Lab.
- Capture and report on enrollment of labs past C1 enrollment date. Without this data and a means of reporting it, the college will continue to lose valuable ADA. Collaboration with the District IT may be able to find a solution to this problem.

II. Instruction: Personnel, Funding, Facility

- Hire two full-time faculty to replace those faculty who retired as of May 2004. Until faculty is hired, reading classes will be taught by additional adjunct instructors. Furthermore, a third full-time instructor will be required if growth continues at the current rate.
- Reorganize structure of the department chair position into two: one chair of the traditional instructional program and the other, chair of the Reading Lab component.
- Seek financial resources for replacement and enhancement of technology, software, instructional materials.
- Assign a dedicated computer technician for the reading lab.
- Seek additional space in order to facilitate future growth in labs and classes.
- Increase developmental reading classes in the afternoon coinciding with expanded lab hours during the fall semesters.
- Purchase classroom sets of textbooks and software programs for instruction, and drill and practice with rate, vocabulary, writing and comprehension.
- Locate more cabinet storage space in CC6 and CC7 for all the instructional equipment, especially skills textbooks.
- Purchase three additional dedicated workstations with large monitors for students with disabilities. Current computers aren't adequate to handle software such as Zoom Text or Kurweil.
- Purchase of a small copy machine with fax capability for the Reading Lab.

III. Curriculum

- Create a remedial reading course that prepares students for basic skills classes.
- Create a 1-unit lab class that accommodates those students seeking more of an in-depth concentration of study on 1 or 2 specific skill areas, such as on increasing their proficiency in comprehension, writing, vocabulary, spelling, rate or study skills.

IV. Outreach

- Promote English 170 Reasoning and College Reading with counseling and English 1A faculty. This class takes the place of English 1B for those students transferring to a Cal State University, but counseling doesn't often direct students to this class. There should be an increase in enrollment, since English 170 has been approved to fulfill the information competency for the AA/AS degree.