

PROGRAM REVIEW 2008-2011

Division: **Learning Resources: Student Success Center (SSC)**

Department or Program: **English Writing Readiness Program (EWRT)**

Name and Title of Preparer(s): **Julie Sartwell (Writing Readiness Coordinator)**

I. Description and Mission of the Program

☒ Basic Skills ☐ Transfer ☐ Career/Technical ☐ Other (describe)

A. Brief description of program and mission statement

The mission of the *English Writing Readiness Program* (EWRT) is to provide a foundation of essential writing (and reading and studenthood) strategies and skills that students encounter in their five unit courses, 1A, other content courses, and in their lives.

EWRT, one of the nine programs integrated within the Student Success Center (SSC) serves students in developmental classes, EWRT 200 and 211 (both 5 units), and offers two levels of developmental co-requisite laboratory classes—EWRT 201 and EWRT 212 (1/2 unit each). In addition, EWRT also coordinates with the Reading Readiness Program (READ) in one-unit integrated reading and writing labs (LART 201 and LART 211).

Much of the actual instructional work in EWRT program is performed by Readiness Teaching Assistants (hereinafter referred to as TAs). As in other SSC programs, students depend on the work of TAs. These classified hourly employees facilitate learning for students in individual and small group settings and are regular members of the classified bargaining unit at De Anza. Working up to 16 hours weekly, they provide excellent individualized attention to students at a very low cost to the district. Up to 47 TAs have worked in EWRT and other SSC programs, but their numbers are down to only 33 because of the current hiring freeze. Currently, these 33 TAs facilitate 95-110 sections of 212 and 201 per quarter. The EWRT Coordinator ensures that the facilitation of lessons by Teaching Assistants (TAs) be effective, relevant, and receptive to the varying needs and backgrounds of our students.

B. Summary of the program's main strengths.

- EWRT uses current and pedagogically sound curriculum and collaborates with English faculty and content-area faculty to keep up-to-date with current research and teaching practices.
- Cultural Competence is emphasized to ensure that the curriculum delivered by TAs is responsive to the many cultural needs of our students.
- EWRT provides students with a one to eight TA/student ratio versus the 25-30 class size in the 5-unit EWRT/LART courses. Students receive more individualized attention from the TAs.
- TAs have been not only carefully trained in the lesson plans, but also observed regularly in their delivery of curricula to ensure that the lesson plans are facilitated effectively. Students often comment on how they feel more inclined to participate in the small group setting and get the kind of attention that helps them prepare for transfer-level courses in their end-of-the-quarter evaluations.

- TA training meetings are facilitated by the EWRT Coordinator and were extremely effective in ironing out questions and hearing suggestions TAs had about curricula, grading, student behavior and/or cultural and social backgrounds, delivery methods, and so on. Potential topics, readings and exercises to be used in the future were also covered. These meetings are crucial in the development of the material, the facilitation of the curricula, effective ways to work with students, and foster a professional relationship with the TAs and the Program Coordinator.
- The EWRT Coordinator builds connections with services and programs on campus, such as EDC and Sankofa.
- The EWRT Coordinator maintains contact with EWRT 211 instructors to discuss ways to meet students' needs.
- As Portfolio Coordinator, the EWRT Coordinator, also facilitates the portfolio process--the portfolio is the final exam for the EWRT 211 class. As Facilitator, she/he:
 - 1) meets with individual instructors to train and norm on portfolios,
 - 2) puts together the trios that meet in the middle of the quarter to share assignments and the last week to norm and grade portfolios and to discuss 211 students' needs,
 - 3) is available through the quarter to address 211 instructor needs (providing sample analytic essay prompts, structuring the sequence of assignments, addressing certain student needs), and
 - 4) works closely with the with English Department scheduler and chair.
- EWRT has an overall success rate of 82% in the fiscal year 2007-08, which is up 1% from 2005-06 but down 1% from 2006-07. 82% is higher than the college average at 79%. The program has a retention rate of 90% for 2007-08, the same as 2006-07, a 3% increase from 2005-06, and is on par with the 90% college average.
- The main strength of EWRT lies in the idea that the TAs see themselves as part of a community of support, intervention and outreach to help address the needs of students so that students have an optimal learning environment.

C. A summary of the program's main areas for improvement

- EWRT needs to regain TA trainings and meetings (as mentioned in the above section)
- EWRT needs the hiring freeze lifted and needs to hire more TAs so that we can carry out our important work in assisting students.
- The program can still improve in the development of specialized culturally responsive curricula for students of Latino/a, African descent, Filipino/a, Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian groups. However, the development of effective and specialized curricula takes tremendous planning and time.
- The program can strive to increase success rates for certain populations, Black (71%), Filipino (81%), Hispanic (73%), Native American (73%), and Pacific islander (76%) to 82% for all students.
- The program should try to hire more graduate students in the fields of Composition, Literature, or MATESOL so they are familiar with the latest theory and practice and so they may become instructors at De Anza.
- The program can still adjust more fully to the sudden and deep felt loss of Jean Miller as the EWRT Coordinator.
- Include more strategies especially reading to the EWRT classes since reading and writing are so linked and so that were are exposing students to as much as possible.
- The program could include more training for TAs on learning disabilities and ways to work with nontraditional learners, especially with the training meeting reinstalled.
- The program can still conserve resources as much as possible (i.e. webpage for greensheet and homework).

D. Expected outcomes

Students will practice:

- Producing standard academic writing at the college-entry level
- Writing on a variety of topics
- Sharing and listening to feedback – being active learners
- Critical thinking and original thought
- Writing and reading as processes
- Creating sophisticated sentences and sentence boundaries
- Honing student skills – being on time, turning in HW, participating in class, and so on
- Demonstrating respect for each other
- Using college resources
- Reflecting on themselves as learners

II. Retention and Growth

A. Access, growth, and retention for all students

Over the past three fiscal years, our enrollment has been 2,383 in 2007-08, 2,455 in 2006-07, and 2,532 in 2005.

- Readings and Writing Models are carefully selected and crafted for both levels to appeal to the diversity of developmental students.
- Exercises and activities call upon many different learning styles.
- TAs are exposed to ways of working with students who have learning differences or disabilities
- We shift lab hours to have fuller classes and higher retention as much as possible with the limited number of TAs.
- We are trying to better serve targeted populations, for example, by working directly with the Puente Program, reserving designated labs (the integrated writing and reading one) in order to maintain not only the sense of community in the parent course but to also complement the curricula. (AAPI, the federal grant for students of Filipino/a descent, Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian groups also have reserved seats in the integrated reading and writing labs since these Ss are taking a LART class.)
- We are increasing LART labs for the LART classes and specialized programs such as LEAD!, Puente, Sankofa, FYE.
- The EWRT Coordinator works one on one with students who need specialized assistance.

B. Access, growth and retention for targeted populations

<u>2007-2008</u>	Number	Percentage	Retention
African Ancestry	104	4	82%
Filipino/a	191	8	90%
Latino/a	470	20	86%
<u>2006-2007</u>	Number	Percentage	Retention
African Ancestry	114	5	89%
Filipino/a	211	9	87%
Latino/a	410	17	85%
<u>2005-2006</u>	Number	Percentage	Retention
African Ancestry	142	6	77%
Filipino/a	197	8	92%
Latino/a	453	18	85%

C. How the program addresses the basic skills needs of De Anza students

The EWRT program directly employs the following Effective Practices as determined by the Basic Skills Initiative:

- Assessment and placement are mandatory for all new students.
- Sound principles of learning theory are applied in the design and delivery of courses in the developmental program.
- Curricula and practices that have proven to be effective within specific disciplines are employed.
- The developmental education program addresses holistic development of all aspects of the student. Attention is paid to the social and emotional development of the students as well as to their cognitive growth.
- Culturally Responsive Teaching theory and practices are applied to all aspects of the developmental instructional programs and services.
- A high degree of structure is provided in developmental education courses.
- Developmental education faculty employ a variety of instructional methods to accommodate student diversity.
- Programs align entry/exit skills among levels and link course content to college-level performance requirements.
- Developmental education faculty routinely share instructional strategies.
- Faculty and advisors closely monitor student performance.
- Programs provide comprehensive academic support mechanisms, including the use of trained tutors.

III. Student Equity:

A. What progress or achievement has the program made towards decreasing the student equity gap?

EWRT is a necessary component of programs that support lessening the student equity gap. In fiscal year 2007-08, the success rate for Black students increased to 719%, up from 69% in 2005-06. However, the success rate for Latino/a students in 2007-08 was 73%, slightly down from 79% in 2005-06. And for Filipino/a students, their success rate was 81% in 2007-08, as compared to 86% in 2005-06, so clearly these percentages need to be taken seriously.

B. In what ways will the program continue working toward achieving these goals?

- Continue discussions within the English Department and EWRT to agree upon consistent standards and expectations for the classes.
- Continue discussions within the English Department and EWRT on how to better serve the targeted populations to promote their success. One such way is to continue to work and fine tune this work with specialized organizations and programs on campus (LEAD, Puente, San Kofa, the AAPI IMPACT grant)
- Continue close relations with counselors for their guidance and assistance.
- Maintain close relations with student support programs such as the Listening and Speaking Lab (LSL), Writing and Reading Center (WRC), and the Tutorial Center to know how these services can complement each other to best meet the needs of our students.

C. What challenges exist in the program in reaching such goals?

The most pressing challenge facing EWRT is the hiring freeze set against hiring qualified TAs to facilitate lab courses. The development of any new labs that might continue to aid in the development and success of our students will not be possible without lifting the hiring freeze of TAs. Also, without the training meetings, as mentioned above, TAs and the program coordinator are less able to discuss curricula and student needs.

IV. Budget Limitations

A. Limited Funding and Critical Resources

The TA hiring freeze needs to be lifted to serve nearly **1,200** students each year who require co-requisite Writing labs. Special emphasis on targeted populations is critical to the retention and success of these students

There is also concern that EWRT will lose release time for its coordinator. This would be incredibly difficult for the success of the program if the coordinator is expected to teach a full load in addition to spending full-time in the lab, conducting weekly trainings, meetings and portfolio normings with TAs and Writing instructors, as well as continue to improve existing curricula and create new courses that would help improve the success and retention of our students, specifically our targeted students.

B. Describe the consequence to students and the college in general if the program were eliminated or significantly reduced.

Consequences to the students and the college would be:

- No (or a significant decrease in) EWRT lab courses while demand is increasing. More than 80% of our students place into developmental writing classes and need extra practice and attention in these areas.
- No necessary training on methods and materials for TAs.
- No training on meeting the needs of targeted populations.
- Not being able to create, reach agreement, and norm standards and learning outcomes.
- No time for coordinators to handle individual student and TA requests and problems.
- No regular trainings and meetings.