

PROGRAM REVIEW 2008-2011

Division: Language Arts Division
Program: Computer Lab
Name: George Hein

I. Description and Mission

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Basic Skills Transfer Career/Technical

The Language Arts Computer Lab (AT102/103) consists of (2) two computer laboratory classrooms and a drop-in area. The Lab is equipped with 72 computer workstations for student use. Each workstation includes an audio headset with attached microphone for multimedia instructional activities.

The primary mission of the Lab is to provide an environment for technology enhanced instruction; engaging students in active and collaborative learning experiences; and providing online access to current materials and resources that relate course subject matter to the real world.

All departments within the Language Arts Division utilize the Lab. Faculty are invited to request lab time for whole-class activities prior to each quarter. After the quarter begins, remaining lab time is scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. Students may use the Lab during open lab times for self-directed study. During Winter Quarter 2009, fifty-seven class sections were scheduled for whole-class learning experiences, and hundreds of students used the Lab during open lab hours. Over half of the sections scheduled in the Lab were ESL and developmental level courses (Fig. 1).

Of particular note, the Lab features over a dozen interactive instructional software programs for the ESL Department.

B. STRENGTHS

Brand new computer workstations (cir. 2009) and software result in a reliable and modern teaching and learning environment.

Full-time permanent classified staffing assures that the lab program is coordinated effectively. The Lab is accessible throughout the day and evening; and support is provided to student and faculty lab users.

Flexible and responsive scheduling allows a wide variety of learning experiences to be accommodated meeting diverse faculty needs across the Division.

C. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Faculty members who send their students to work independently in the lab do not always provide sufficient orientation or guidance to make lab time most productive. Recently, the ESL Department held a software training day. Providing such orientation experiences help faculty members better understand how the Lab can be used most effectively by their students.

Open lab hours are often crowded with students engaged in a variety of activities. As a result, the Lab does not always provide the most conducive environment for instructional software use. ESL students are reluctant to actively engage with the software, which requires speaking clearly into the headset-mounted microphone to record their own voice. Instead, ESL students tend to whisper or not speak at all. To address this problem, access could be more restricted in one or both rooms during open lab hours.

In earlier years, the Division had a technology committee, which provided oversight of the lab program. This group no longer exists. More recently, a group of faculty from the ESL department formed a temporary committee to select new instructional software for their department. This group is no longer meeting. While individual faculty members take a keen interest in their own use of the lab, there is no Division-wide sharing or discussion about the utilization of the lab. Thus, best practices and creative uses of the lab are not promoted.

Workstudy students are employed throughout the year to provide additional Lab staffing. Staff size has ranged from a high of ten student employees per quarter to a low of just one. It is difficult to consistently staff the labs using Workstudy students alone. More regular student staffing would result in better support being provided to lab users.

While the space is generally comfortable, the air conditioning is often not working well and the room temperature becomes very warm.

The Lab will soon be equipped with four electric ADA student desks to improve accessibility. Access will be further improved by the installation of special software on the computers for the visually impaired.

D. OUTCOMES

Students should be able to use the lab in accordance with the requirements of their class to accomplish tasks assigned by their instructor to meet instructional goals. The lab should successfully facilitate both whole-class activities and self-directed study, and provide computer access for course-related work.

II. Retention and Growth

ESL and developmental level courses account for over half of the class sections scheduled for time in the Lab (Fig. 1).

Technology enhanced instruction fosters greater engagement in learning through active and collaborative work. Successful use of technology is an important component of academic literacy and communication skills. Online resources provide real-world context to what students are learning in the classroom.

The lab program insures that all students have access to computers suitable to complete assigned coursework.

IV. Budget Limitations

A. Laser printing expenses (toner, paper, maintenance kits) has until now been the largest B-budget expense. Beginning in Spring Quarter 2009, the Lab will employ GoPrint pay-for-printing kiosks to recover laser printing expenses.

Other B-budget expenses include replacement parts for the computers (cords, mice, keyboards, and headphones), general office supplies, and photocopying expenses. A reduction in B-budget will result in replacement parts not being purchased due to budget limitations.

Computer replacement and software upgrades occur on an infrequent and unpredictable schedule. The recent lab refresh was accomplished with funding from a bond measure. The previous lab refresh occurred nine years ago. The long, nine year period between refreshes resulted in the technology becoming very outdated and less reliable. Ideally, the hardware would be replaced every 3-5 years and the software upgraded routinely; New software titles would be considered on a regular basis as new instructional products become available.

Successfully operating the lab requires student staffing. Since the Lab has no budget to hire student staffing directly, the Lab depends on the availability of Workstudy student support. In years past, evening Lab supervision was performed by a casual student employee working up to 24 hours per week. Currently, 16 hours per week of evening lab supervision is provided by a classified staff person. The switch to a classified staff person resulted in more consistent evening supervision but fewer evening lab hours.

B. The Language Arts Division has operated a computer laboratory for many years. Loss of the Lab or a reduction in lab hours would result in thousands of students no longer benefiting from the technology enhanced instruction the Lab facilitates. Students needing

computer access would crowd other labs on campus. The Division would lose the instructional asset of two dedicated computer laboratory classrooms and a drop-in area.

An elimination or reduction in evening classified staffing would result in the loss of open lab hours. Class sections meeting in the lab during the evening would be left without staff support. The Lab would likely be closed and vacant more often during the evening.

An elimination or reduction in daytime classified staffing would result in the program losing its full-time coordinator. Class sections meeting in the Lab during the day would be left without staff support. Scheduling lab usage would become problematic; and the task of scheduling would need to be performed by another person. The recruitment, coordination and supervision of a half-dozen student employees would not occur or would need to be done by another person. Planning and maintenance of the lab would suffer. The Lab would likely be closed and vacant at many times during the day.

V. Additional Comments

The ESL Multimedia Lab at San Jose City College is a laboratory program with similar facilities and technology, but with more faculty involvement and a more structured program.

Fig. 1

Winter Quarter 2009 - Sections Utilizing AT102/103
Language Arts Division - Computer Lab

ESL LSL	Melton	EWRT 1A	Jahan
ESL 234	Flores	EWRT 1A-03	Slothower
ESL 244	Norman	EWRT 1A-04	Slothower
ESL 244	Choi	EWRT 1A	Chow
ESL 244	Gasdick	EWRT 1A	Hanzimanolis
ESL 251	Betlach	EWRT 1A	Coronado
ESL 251	Flores	EWRT 1A	Quintero
ESL 251	Ormeno	EWRT 1A	Silva
ESL 251	Heistein	EWRT 1A-18	Nuss
ESL 260	Oman	EWRT 1A-21	Nuss
ESL 260	Culver	EWRT 1B	Colligan
ESL 261	Ormeno	EWRT 1B-11D	Patton
ESL 262	Heistein	EWRT 1B	Patton
ESL 273-05	Thistlethw.	EWRT 1B	Modirzadeh
ESL 273-61	Thistlethw.	EWRT 2	Colligan
ESL 291	Faravashi	EWRT 2	Howland
ESL 5	Tracey	EWRT 2	Leslie
ESL 5	Lam		
EWRT 201	Sartwell	Jour 2	Grobman
EWRT 211	Weisner		
EWRT 211	Simes	Speech 1	Stasio
EWRT 211	Card	Speech 10	Woods
EWRT 211	Hubbard		
EWRT 211	Shively		Kareemi
EWRT 211	Wann		Vahan
EWRT 211	DeLaney		Skager
EWRT 300	Hanzimanolis		Turner
LART 200	Hubbard		
LART 211	Raffaelli		
READ 211	Marciel	MAND 2-03	Lai
READ 211	Vashio		
READ 211-19	Martin		
READ 211-62	Martin		