

COMPREHENSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM REVIEW

Reading Discipline
Moreno Valley College
Fall 2011



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Web Resources:

<http://www.rccd.edu/administration/educatoralservices/ieffectiveness/Pages/ProgramReview.aspx>

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COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM REVIEW
READING DISCIPLINE
2011-2015

A. Mission and Relationship to the College(s)

The Riverside Community College District Reading Discipline has a strong commitment to students. In fact, all reading coursework is designed to raise student achievement and to provide reading instruction that meets the needs of a diverse population. Reading is the foundation for academic success as well as for personal and professional growth, yet the majority of students are under-prepared for college-level work. As one of the college's entry-level programs, the reading courses focus on the remediation of basic skills such as understanding vocabulary in context, locating the main idea, recognizing supporting details, and learning good study habits. As students continue in the course sequence, they go beyond remediation to develop critical thinking skills such as analyzing an argument, detecting bias, drawing inferences and conclusions, and synthesizing information. Emphasis is placed on the application of basic reading skills to the tasks of the adult reader, student and citizen, who will use reading as a tool in the pursuit of lifelong learning.

The Reading Discipline supports the mission of the district, the college, our students, and our community. The discipline's activities and goals directly relate to and support the district mission as well as those of the college:

“Riverside Community College District is dedicated to the success of our students and to the development of the communities we serve. To advance this mission, our colleges and learning centers provide educational and student services to meet the needs and expectations of their unique communities of learners.” (District Mission Statement)

“Responsive to the educational needs of its region, Moreno Valley College offers academic programs and student support services which include . . . pre-collegiate curricula for all who can benefit from them.” (Moreno Valley College Mission Statement)

B. History

1. Since our last Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) in 2007, the discipline has strived to maintain the quality of the reading program despite the cutbacks due to the current economic condition. The following presents these activities in more detail.

Assessment

The Reading Discipline developed common final exams for the three core pre-collegiate classes. The exams have been administered, evaluated, and updated each semester since Fall 2003 in order to provide valid and reliable assessment information. The analysis of data from the common finals has been the impetus for discipline discussion and reassessment of coursework, as well as for changes in teaching methodology and curriculum. These discussions also were the catalyst for creating new common final exams for Reading 82 and Reading 83 in 2009-2010.

Curriculum

- i. Reading 4 Critical Reading as Critical Thinking was created. The discipline is working on getting this transfer-level reading class to fulfill the critical thinking requirement at CSU.
- ii. Reading 87 and Reading 887, Reading Clinics, were created. Students who receive tutoring outside of class from the Reading paraprofessionals can now enroll in Reading 887, and the college receives apportionment for those tutoring sessions. At this time, however, it is only being offered at Riverside City College as Moreno Valley does not have a designated reading lab and does not have full-time reading paraprofessionals.
- iii. Directed Learning Activities (DLA) that were developed for reading modules in the Reading and Writing Center have been implemented.
- iv. An 8-week accelerated online Reading 83 class was created and has been offered for several years. An 8-week accelerated hybrid Reading 82 class and an 8-week accelerated hybrid Reading 83 were created and offered Fall 2011.
- v. All reading course outlines of record have been reviewed and revised to include sample assignments.
- vi. Jumpstart was created. This summer program gives new students intensified reading and writing intervention before actually enrolling as a student at Moreno Valley College.

Faculty and Staffing

Moreno Valley College has two full-time, tenure track faculty members; as of January 2012, it will have one full-time tenure track faculty member. As a district, the Reading Discipline has significantly decreased in the number of full-time faculty. Due to retirements, the discipline has gone from eight full-time, tenure track faculty to six: two (soon to be one) at Moreno Valley College, one at Norco College, and three at Riverside City College. None of the positions have been replaced.

Placement

The discipline has been notified that the district will no longer fund the use of Accuplacer beginning Fall 2012. Consequently, the discipline has begun discussion on alternative placement instruments. In addition, the reading placement challenge process has been streamlined to facilitate movement of students capable of doing higher-level work.

Technology

The Reading Discipline has secured Basic Skills Initiative funding for Weaver through the 2012-2013 academic year. This web-based computerized program helps improve comprehension, vocabulary, study skills, and grammar. The reading classes have used Weaver since 1990. We currently have no additional online programs for students to improve their reading comprehension, vocabulary, or study skills. When funding ends, students enrolled in online and hybrid reading courses will no longer access reading practice from home, so they must fulfill all their assignments by coming to the Writing and Reading Center (WRC) lab and use book materials.

2. In order to meet the needs of students from the community, the Reading Discipline, in its previous CPR, set specific goals that we have actively worked to achieve:
 - a. Ensure equity and adequacy of resources among the three colleges.

Of particular concern on the previous CPR was the lack of consistency among the three colleges. This continues to be problematic as students at the Moreno Valley College and Norco College have no reading laboratory, have limited or no access to reading instructors in the Writing and Reading Center, and do not have access to a reading paraprofessional throughout the day. All three colleges need a designated reading laboratory that has sufficient space and number of computers and that is staffed by at least one full-time paraprofessional. Similar policies regarding reading instructor access in the Writing and Reading Center would also be beneficial for students.

b. Promote opportunities for authentic reading instruction.

In the previous CPR, the discipline identified Reading 86 as an authentic way to teach reading strategies by using the student's textbook in a content area class. This has provided both the student and the instructor a way to assure that students are transferring reading skills and strategies into the content area classrooms. Riverside City College and Moreno Valley College have offered sections of this course. Moreno Valley College, however, does not have the support that RCC does to promote the course as well as recruit and support students; therefore, MVC has not had the success that RCC has had.

c. Develop a transferable reading course.

The discipline has met this goal by developing a transferable reading course, which is Reading 4. This course teaches critical thinking using expository and persuasive text as the medium; it provides another option for students interested in becoming better readers. At this time, the discipline is working towards having this course meet the graduation requirement for students at the California State University. Currently, students may satisfy that requirement in a number of ways including Philosophy, English and Reading. Several community colleges across California are offering such a reading class that is transferable to any California State University campus. Due to significant section cuts, MVC has not yet had the opportunity to offer this course.

d. Promote alignment in scheduling.

Research in the field of Developmental Education, in addition to data collected at RCCD, suggests that students are more likely to succeed when they take reading and writing classes simultaneously, whether in learning communities or in regular unpaired classes. Students are better able to make the connection between reading and writing and see how these classes support each other. The Reading Discipline has collaborated with other disciplines to align reading with English, ESL and content classes in scheduling. However, with the severe section cuts that have occurred, it has become difficult to offer aligned courses.

- e. Partner with other units of the college and the community to support student needs.

The Reading Discipline has continued to play an integral and crucial role in the promotion of reading across the curriculum. A significant portion of students require reading remediation but not all of these students enroll in reading courses. Literacy development, therefore, needs to be at a college-wide level and involve all disciplines. The reading faculty participates in and will continue to participate in the following activities:

- The Reading Discipline continues to be an important part of the Basic Skills Initiative.
- The Reading Discipline continues to participate in the development and implementation of workshops that provide faculty with tools to help students become better readers and learners.
- The Reading Discipline continues to encourage enjoyment of lifelong reading. For example, MVC has a “One Book, One College” program, which selects a single book that is read, celebrated and discussed in classes, campus events, and daily life for an academic year.

- f. Conduct assessment

The Reading Discipline does and will continue to collect, analyze, and discuss data collected from the Reading 81, Reading 82, and Reading 83 common final exams to modify teaching to improve student learning. Furthermore, the discipline will continue to analyze data collected from various learning communities and fast-tracked courses to assess the value of these cohorts.

- g. Invest in technology

One of the goals on the previous CPR was to continue to seek fiscal support for technologies for instruction and assessment such as Weaver and the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT).

- The discipline has received funding to continue Weaver but this is only for a limited time period.
- The SDRT is the diagnostic tool used to assess students’ abilities at the beginning of Reading 81. The test is changing to an online format, making the paper version obsolete. We still need to locate funds to support this new testing format.

C. Data Analysis and Environmental Scan

The Reading Discipline anticipates definite challenges in the next four years. It is likely that we will continue to see a significant number of students entering RCCD who are both unprepared and under-prepared to read college level textbooks and other kinds of expository text. This trend has been and will remain consistent with those identified in the previous CPR. In addition, with fewer sections of all classes being offered including reading, identifying ways to accelerate student matriculation while maintaining high success rates will be a priority in the next four years.

Because of these trends, there are important implications for the Reading Discipline that will require focused response and thoughtful changes. For example, Reading 86 was created to reach a larger number of under-prepared students. However, it was not designed to be a stand-alone class. Rather it was designed to be part of a learning community or a companion to a content area course.

The discipline needs to do more to engage the content area faculty in a discussion as to the significance of Reading 86 as a companion course to their course. Reading faculty must work with enrollment managers to make the scheduling of companion courses feasible with a student's class schedule and room availability. Reading Discipline faculty have to be willing to teach the course knowing that it may require a different kind of preparation than what is commonly done for the skills classes. In as much as this is a paradigm shift for all involved, it will take some time before we can expand Reading 86 offerings beyond what they are now.

With the Internet having no regulation per se and more students taking courses and conducting research online, critical thinking skills are becoming more important for success in college courses. California State University requires that students complete a critical thinking course to earn their Bachelor's degree. At the present time, there are only a handful of courses offered at RCCD which focus on critical thinking skills. Those classes are English 1B, Philosophy 11 and Communication Studies 2,3A, 4 and 5. CSU and other institutions allow students to meet the critical thinking requirement in reading courses which focus on a very practical approach to critical thinking.

The Reading Discipline seized the opportunity to create a critical thinking course. It is Reading 4 and currently it transfers to CSU as an elective and serves RCCD student needs in two ways. First, students who are not interested in literature, the study of philosophers, or forensics could develop critical thinking skills with authentic persuasive text in a reading course. Second, the reading discipline could reach more under-prepared students because more students would be inclined to take Reading 4 since it would transfer to CSU and many other four-year institutions and satisfy the critical thinking requirement.

The challenge ahead for the Reading Discipline is to demonstrate that students are likely to perform better in Reading 4 if they have already taken English 1A thus meeting the criteria to make English 1A a prerequisite to the course. Then, the Reading Discipline can begin

the process of including the course as one option for satisfying the critical thinking requirement at CSU for students following the General Education Transfer Curriculum at RCCD.

Enrollment trends increased from 2005-2008 for all three skills courses. In 2009 enrollment decreased slightly for Reading 82 and 83 due to mandated section reductions. Enrollment in Reading 83 did not decrease because this course satisfies the reading competency for the Associates degree. In order to help ensure students are able to matriculate and complete the degree requirements, fewer sections of Reading 83 were cut. Enrollment data does not suggest any major shifts in the demographics of reading students since our last comprehensive review.

The issue surrounding the correct quality/performance indicators for reading to assess its skills classes remains unresolved. Student success rates in the discipline's skills classes are not a good indicator of the success of the skills class. In the case of reading, students enroll in reading courses in order to be successful in other content area or degree applicable courses. Therefore, success rates (based on grades) in the reading class itself are irrelevant and misleading. What would be a truer measure of the success of our reading courses would be success rates of our students in the content area classes taken subsequent to their enrollment in a reading skills class as compared to those students whose reading level was comparable but who chose not to take a reading skills class. Another variable worth considering is the reasons why students drop their classes. If students were required to answer this question prior to dropping a class, then we may be better able to determine whether students are dropping due to course requirements, course difficulty, personal conflicts, etc. Addressing these issues will require additional demand on Institutional Research and require a cooperative effort across the college community. Such an effort needs to be part of the overall Assessment Plan for the Institution.

The discipline's skill courses are sequential but it is inappropriate to include persistence rates as criteria for student success. Reading skills classes do not transfer. Therefore, students will enroll and persist only to the point where they have mastered skills necessary to succeed in content area classes. Also, students who enroll in Reading 81, the discipline's lowest level skills course, are among the least prepared for college work and consequently are at the highest risk to drop out.

With the number of section reductions imposed on all disciplines across the college at the present time, the Reading Discipline must closely examine cut-off scores to see if we better identify students who can benefit from an accelerated skills course. Possibilities include creating a new course that would deliver the existing curriculum for Reading 81 and Reading 82 over 16 weeks as opposed to 32. The discipline has started to accelerate the curriculum for Reading 82 and Reading 83 to one semester rather than two as of Fall 2011.

The strengths of the unit continue to lie with its faculty. The reading faculty remains committed to serving the students in the district who require reading instruction. Faculty in the discipline have modified curriculum in existing courses and developed new courses,

and they are engaged in discussions as to how to become more authentic in our delivery while maintaining our skills classes. We are aware of the need to serve those students who may not require intensive skill instruction in isolation. The discipline's limitations may stem from not taking a more assertive leadership role with other units, which directly impacts its effectiveness and its ability to offer that authentic instruction.

D. Programs and Curriculum

1. The RCCD Reading Discipline currently offers the following courses:

Pre-Collegiate Core Sequence

- Reading 81, Reading Level 1, 3.5 units, non-degree
- Reading 82, Reading Level 2, 3.5 units, non-degree
- Reading 83, Reading Level 3, 3 units, non-degree

Specialized Courses

- Reading 2, Rapid Reading, 2 units, transferable
- Reading 3, Reading for Academic Success, 3 units, transferable
- Reading 4, Critical Reading as Critical Thinking, 3 units, transferable
- Reading 86, Reading Strategies for Textbooks, 1 unit

Reading Practicum Courses

- Reading 87, Reading Clinic, 0.5 unit, non-degree
- Reading 887, Reading Clinic, 0.0 unit, non-degree

Linked/Paired Courses

- Reading 81 with English 60A/60B
- Reading 81 with English 60A and Guidance 45
- Reading 83 with English 60B and Guidance 48
- Reading 83 with Astronomy 1
- Reading 83 with Communications 1
- Reading 83 with Geography 1
- Reading 86 with English 1A and Humanities 10
- Reading 86 with English 50 and Sociology 1
- Reading 86 with ADJ A33E and English 60A
- Reading 86 with Psychology 1

2. The Reading Discipline has made the following additions, deletions and

revisions:

- Reading 86, Reading Strategies of Textbooks will no longer be repeatable due to change in state guidelines. The Reading Discipline will be creating two separate courses for Reading 86, one linked to Sociology 1 and the other linked to Humanities 10.
- The Reading Discipline has created Reading 4 Critical Reading as Critical Thinking and is now working to meet the critical thinking requirement for California State University. If this occurs, then Reading 4 can be taken in place of English 1B or Philosophy 11, both of which satisfy the IGETC critical thinking requirement.
- Reading 96 and Reading 97 have been deleted from the discipline offerings.
- Reading 87 and Reading 887 Reading Clinics have been created.
- The Reading Discipline has created an accelerated hybrid Reading 82/Reading 83 sequences to quicken the ability for students to get through reading courses and also to support accelerated English 60A/60B courses.

E. Student Outcomes Assessment

On-going assessment of an individual student's skills and academic achievement is inherent in the task of being a reading instructor and has always been an important part of our discipline's focus. Since Fall 2003, the common final exams have been administered by all reading faculty at all three colleges. All full and part-time faculty members are required to administer the common final exam. They receive an item analysis for their own classes/students but have the choice as to whether or not they include the results as part of semester grade calculations. In addition, an item analysis for the discipline as a whole is also distributed and is used for assessing student reading skills as well as for developing curriculum.

Over the past four years, we have continued to make consistent, positive progress on our common final exams and to involve more of our discipline's faculty in using what we learn from assessment to improve our effectiveness. We have been led to reconsider each of our reading courses, to write and rewrite student learning outcomes, to improve sequencing with entrance and exit skills directly stated, to evaluate student progress in regard to discrete reading skills, and to improve student placement in our classes.

Each semester, the discipline conducts a thorough item analysis which has led to an engaging, lengthy dialogue regarding student performance and instructional methodology. That dialogue continues as we examine the common final results each semester. As a result of information from the common finals, the discipline targets specific reading skills for additional instructional emphasis. This dialogue has also led to revision of the common final exams,

including complete rewriting of the Reading 82 and Reading 83 common final exams in order to better align with student learning outcomes.

F. Collaboration with other Units

The Reading Discipline continues to reach out to as many students in the community as possible and make reading development more accessible. Part of this involves articulating with different units of the college.

Ben Clark Training Center

The Reading Discipline currently offers a Reading 86 course as part of a learning community at the BCTC. This learning community links ADJ-A33C, Public Safety Seminar, with English 60A1, English 60A4, and Reading 86.

Counseling / DSPS

The Reading Discipline continues to collaborate with the Counseling Department to ensure students are made aware of the resources available and, consequently, increase student retention and success. At the beginning of each semester, counselors make basic skills presentations in the reading courses. The reading faculty also participates in the Early Alert Program, so that at-risk students are targeted and informed of support services.

The reading faculty works with DSP&S to ensure that students receive the necessary accommodations for their disabilities. This includes referring students to DSP&S, alerting students to the services of DSP&S in their syllabi, enabling testing accommodations, and incorporating resources in the classroom such as note takers, interpreters, and adaptive software.

Early College and Middle College High School Programs

Moreno Valley reading instructors continue to work closely with the Early College and Middle College High School Director. Reading faculty communicate with the MCHS counselor by providing updates on student progress so that at-risk students can receive the support necessary to be successful.

Faculty Development

Reading instructors have presented a reading strategies FLEX workshop and partnered with an English instructor to offer a Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum workshop. In

Fall 2011, Reading faculty presented Incorporating Reading into Content Area courses workshop. The purpose continues to be the creation of faculty development activities that do not have a singular department or content area focus, but have a cooperative concentration which emphasizes the instructional commonalities among disciplines.

Matriculation

The Reading Discipline has worked with Matriculation in its ongoing analysis of the placement process.

Student Support Programs

In Spring 2007, the Moreno Valley College Title V program sponsored a Reading 83 and Geography 1 course pairing. All students who completed both classes passed their respective Reading 83 or Geography 1 courses. Course pairings are extremely time consuming for faculty members due to the content coordination, skill emphasis, and vocabulary building required for both courses. In Spring 2008, Reading 83 was paired with Astronomy 1A. In addition, Reading 81 has been paired with a fast-track English 60A/60B. In Spring 2011, Reading 83 was paired with Com 1.

Writing and Reading Center

As part of the Writing and Reading Center teaching assignments, Reading Discipline has offered workshops for students on topics relevant to the reading/writing connection. However, this has been limited as reading faculty have few to no hours in the WRC.

The Reading Discipline continues to work with the WRC coordinators to better serve students. The Reading Discipline has two lab practicums, Reading 87 and Reading 887. These reading clinics are self-paced skill development reading clinics designed to help support the reading skills needed in content courses.

G. Outreach

The Reading Discipline has a strong commitment to the college and our community. For example, the Moreno Valley College has, for several years, partnered with nearby unified school districts and created a comprehensive Middle College High School (MCHS) Program. High school students are screened prior to their junior year in high school and admitted to the MCHS Program with the understanding that high school and college curriculum will be taken concurrently. This unique opportunity allows “high risk” students to graduate within two years with both high school and community college diplomas. Reading coursework is an integral part of the Middle College High School Program.

H. Long Term Major Resource Planning

As stated in the previous CPR, the Reading Discipline continues to be constrained in its ability to offer courses and services to students because of limited classroom and laboratory space. The discipline will require District support and funding for the following:

The Need for Access to Computer Classrooms

There is a pressing need for students to have regular and reliable access to computer classrooms so that entire classes can benefit from computer-assisted instruction, including the use of reading program software and the use of supplemental Internet reading materials. Currently, reading classes have limited access to computer classrooms that have enough computers to service a full class of students. While there is a laptop cart in Parkside Complex 8, the logistics of using laptops for the laboratory portion of classes presents significant difficulties. The time required to unlock the cart, to have students get their laptops, to boot up the computers (which can take ten minutes), to keep the laptops charged, and to put away the laptops can consume a significant portion of instruction time. Consequently, the reading lab component requires a concerted effort to move resources to classroom locations or to creatively plan lessons to make up lab time. This is particularly problematic as Reading 81 and 82 require thirty- six laboratory hours, but scheduling these core Reading courses in computer labs/classrooms remain challenging.

The Need for Laboratory Space

In an effort to serve students enrolled in reading courses, there needs to be a concerted effort to support attainment of course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO). One of the ways this can be done is to invest in a reading laboratory. The Writing and Reading Center, the space shared with the English and ESL disciplines, is inadequate, limiting the reading student's access to resources. There is no designated space for a reading laboratory. Despite being called the Writing and Reading Center, this facility does not provide reading students with adequate access to reading instructors, computer use, or reading materials.

I. Summary

The Reading Discipline will continue to strengthen the quality of the reading program. In its

ongoing mission to meet the needs of the college's students, the discipline has the following goals:

1. Make Reading 4, Critical Reading as Critical Thinking, satisfy the CSU graduation requirement.

A course in critical thinking is a graduation requirement for students at the California State University. Currently, students may satisfy that requirement in a number of ways including philosophy, English and reading. Several community colleges across the California are offering such a reading class that is transferable to any California State University campus. It is the intent of the discipline to make Reading 4 a class that will satisfy the critical thinking requirement at CSU.

2. Promote reading and writing alignment in scheduling.

Research in the field of Developmental Education, in addition to data collected at RCCD, suggests that students are more likely to succeed when they take reading and writing classes simultaneously, whether in learning communities or in regular unpaired classes. Students make the connection between reading and writing and see how these classes support each other. We want to advertise when possible pairs of classes are offered so students can include reading and writing classes in the same semester.

3. Partner with other units of the college and the community to support student needs.

The Reading Discipline will continue to play an integral and crucial role in the promotion of reading across the curriculum. A significant portion of students requires reading remediation but not all of these students enroll in reading courses. Literacy development, therefore, needs to be at a college-wide level and involve all disciplines. One possibility might be offering Reading 86 outside of learning communities.

4. Conduct assessment

The Reading Discipline plans to continue to collect, analyze, and discuss data collected from the common final exams for Reading 81, Reading 82, and Reading 83. We want to change the survey questions to reflect students' perceptions of their success in meeting the student learning outcomes. In addition, the Reading Discipline wants to create new assessment instruments for Reading 86, Reading 3, Reading 4, and Reading 887.

5. Invest in technology

It is a goal of the Reading Discipline to continue to seek fiscal support for technologies for instruction and assessment such as Weaver and the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT). Weaver is an online computer program that gives students self-paced practice in specific reading skills. The Reading Discipline needs funding in order to renew the site license after 2013. The SDRT is the diagnostic tool used to assess students' abilities at the beginning of

Reading 81. The test is changing to an online format, making the paper version obsolete. We will need to come up with funds to support this new testing format.

6. Revise course outlines of record

The Reading Discipline would like to change the names of the three core pre-collegiate courses Reading 81, Reading 82, and Reading 83. We believe it will help to better promote the courses since it will more accurately reflect the course content. In addition, the discipline needs to revisit the COR's and discuss the issues of repeatability.

7. Create a discipline mission statement.

The Reading Discipline of the three colleges would like to create a statement that reflects our mission for students, the college, and the district.

8. Create 86H and 86S.

Reading 86 cannot be repeated; therefore, the discipline needs to create Reading 86 courses that are content-area specific to the classes they are paired with such as History and Sociology.

9. Make Reading 3 the prerequisite for content-area classes.

The Reading Discipline would like to collaborate with other units such as nursing to make Reading 3, Reading for Academic Success, a prerequisite for content-area classes that have large amounts of challenging textbook material.

10. Explore ways we can accelerate student progress through the reading sequence.

The Reading Discipline would like to offer more accelerated reading courses both individually and paired with English to help students be better prepared for the college classes they will encounter.

J. Recommendations to the Program Review Committee

(none at this time)

