CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
AND
LOS RIOS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

#252-86-01
### Reading Across the Curriculum: Strategies for Improving Reading Skills in Content Courses

<table>
<thead>
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<th>ELIGIBLE PROGRAM</th>
<th>PROJECT CATEGORY</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Grant = $71,100</td>
<td>E --- Improvement of Trad. Instruction Prog</td>
<td>Developmental Model</td>
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<tr>
<th>PROJECT PRODUCT</th>
<th>PROJECT TOPIC #1</th>
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<tr>
<th>PROJECT DIRECTOR</th>
<th>PROJECT SUPERVISOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Joan Naake, Instruc &amp; Elizabeth Biggert, Couns</td>
<td>Dennis Edwards, Area Dean Hum/Soc Sciences</td>
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The innovative approach which this Reading Across the Curriculum project uses to improve students' reading skills is to implement reading strategies not in reading classes, but in content area courses. The Fund for Instructional Improvement-supported project was done on a limited basis last year with 13 instructor participants. The project was deemed successful in raising students' reading scores, improving students' comprehension of their traditional coursework and enhancing students' critical thinking skills. The present proposal is to expand the program from eleven content areas at five colleges to include 52 content area instructors at 20 community colleges from 18 districts.
The Reading Across the Curriculum project addresses a major problem confronting California community colleges--students inadequate reading skills. In many California community colleges over 65% of the students read below college level; however, the textbooks are written at college level and above. Therefore, it is the purpose of this project to train instructors in strategies and techniques to improve the discrepancy gap between student reading skills and textbook reading levels.

The innovative approach the Reading Across the Curriculum project uses to improve students' inadequate reading skills is to implement reading strategies not in reading classes, but in content area courses. Done on a limited basis last year with 13 participants', the project was quite successful in raising students' reading scores, improving students' comprehension of their traditional course work, enhancing students' critical thinking skills, invigorating instructors, and facilitating staff development by training community college instructors, whose education has focused on their content area, in how to implement reading strategies in their courses. In addition, the project focused on the educationally disadvantaged by identifying students with low reading scores, encouraging their use of the reading strategies, and increasing, thereby, their retention. In fact, the December, 1985, LARC Abstract substantiates this approach: "Involving all instructors in an effort to teach students course specific learning-thinking strategies may make our curriculum more accessible to students whose academic preparedness does not yet seem to equip them for success .

Since last year's project was so successful, the participating instructors, directors, and supervisors feel it is imperative that this project not only continue but have a multiplier effect. The purpose of the project--to improve student reading skills by training content area instructors in reading skill strategies specifically targeted to their subject matter and textbooks--remains the same. However, the scope is not limited to eleven content area instructors at five community colleges but is broadened to include a total of 52 content area instructors at 20 community colleges within 18 districts.

The multiplier effect is exciting for two reasons. This project provides instructors with teaching strategies to combat a major problem with which community colleges wrestle daily--students'
inadequate reading skills. Second, this project will have an impact on 15,000 students’ reading skills, skills they can transfer to other courses; in addition, the project will revitalize 52 content area instructors at 20 colleges. And since the total cost of the F.I.I. project is $85,100, this means that the cost for each college involved is approximately $4,255 and that the cost per student is approximately $5.67, a small price for improved literacy.

The reading and study skills addressed by this consortium focus upon improving comprehension and critically analyzing reading materials. To address these skills, the 2 project directors and 11 mentor instructors will train 41 additional content area instructors in strategies for improving the discrepancy gap between student reading skills and textbook reading levels. The training will take place in two intensive two-day workshops in which each team of two mentor instructors will train 8-10 additional content area instructors. Thus, faculty will be training faculty in a non-threatening and innovative environment. Each of the 52 content area instructors under the direction and supervision of the project directors (Cosumnes River College) will then implement these strategies in their classes. After implementing these strategies in their classes and evaluating their effectiveness, participating instructors will share with other faculty specific techniques and solutions they have developed and successfully employed in a series of 20 spring workshops to be held on the campus of each of the participating colleges. If only 30 instructors attend each of the 20 campus workshops, the Reading Across the Curriculum project will have reached an additional 600 community college instructors.

Moreover, since the expected attendance at the spring conference is about 350 instructors and deans, the total number of community college instructors and administrators to be reached by this project is over 1,000. And this figure does not include the 106 California community colleges who receive the project manual—Reading Across the Curriculum: Proven Strategies and Solutions, Volume 2.

Evaluation of the project will be inherent within each of the activities and objectives of the project. Students will anonymously evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used in the classes; the content area instructors will evaluate training workshops and the strategies developed by the project directors; the participants at the 20 spring workshops and spring conference will assess the strategies and presentations; an evaluation sheet will be included in the project manual, and feedback via the Instructor Bank and annual regional renewal conference will ensure constant reevaluation and redesigning of the reading strategies long after the expiration of the grant.
Reading Across the Curriculum: Strategies for Improving Reading Skills in Content Courses

1. Specific Educational Program Being Addressed

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

1. Community college teaching will never again be the same. Not only will today's and tomorrow's students be older, more experienced, more diverse by race and ethnicity; they will further be characterized by their collective inabilities to read, write, speak, listen, figure, and study well enough to pursue regular college level courses. Worse still as a discernible outcome of their public school experiences, they are likely to have learned to hate to read.

Roueche, John - 1981-1982

Roueche is right! The eleven content area instructors involved in the 1985/86 project were amazed at the diversity of reading levels in their classrooms--many of them quite low--and their students aversion to reading. However, they were excited by the re-empowerment they gained in implementing the reading strategies researched and developed by the project directors. (The thirteen reading strategies and some sample instructor implementations and student evaluations are attached for your convenience and evaluation. Please read--excitement and innovation emanate from the evidence.)

The strategies and the project enabled the content area instructors and the directors to accomplish numerous goals:

(1) to identify students with low reading scores, the educationally disadvantaged; encourage their use of the reading strategies; and increase, thereby, student retention.
to be innovative by implementing reading strategies, not in a reading class, but in content area courses—an innovation that not only enables the students to comprehend difficult textbooks in specific content areas but also to transfer these skills to other college courses so that community college students can achieve their "educational goals and objectives." This achievement in turn enables community colleges to improve "accountability for effectiveness."

(3) to model and demonstrate reading strategies that students need to succeed in college. The report "Becoming a Nation of Readers: National Commission Report on Reading Supports Directed Instruction Practices" substantiates the reading strategies implemented in this project: "While questions during the preparation and discussion phases of a reading lesson are important, these do not substitute for active, direct instruction. In direct instruction, the teacher explains, models, demonstrates, and illustrates reading skills and strategies that students ought to be using. There is evidence that direct instruction produces gains in reading achievement beyond those that are obtained with less direct means such as questions."

(4) To develop students' critical thinking skills, their ability to organize ideas, and their ability to manage time and stress. A report on Vocational Education funded by AB3938 states that without exception all graduates listed "critical thinking, time management, organizational, problem solving, and stress management skills... as essential to their jobs."

(5) To design "non-traditional instruction" by teaching reading in content area courses. The Commission on Becoming a Nation of Readers (1985) also substantiates this approach in the recommendation "that such [reading] strategies be embedded in social science and science lessons and that teachers be given training in how to use these relatively 'new' direct approaches to teaching comprehension strategies."

(6) To facilitate staff development by having faculty teaching faculty in a non-threatening environment. Since it is particularly the faculty, in the final analysis, who must assume major responsibility for improving the quality of community college education and since the education of most community college instructors has focused on their content area, training instructors in how to teach their students reading strategies and study skills proved to be beneficial in the goals of promoting excellence in community college programs. [See Content Area Instructors' Evaluations]

Therefore, it is evident that the Reading Across the Curriculum project meets four out of the five purposes listed in the Education Code, Section 84381 Programs: (1) It is non-traditional to teach reading in content area courses. (2) It improves the teaching
abilities of community college faculty members, whose education has traditionally focused on content area, not on teaching reading strategies. And as will be evident in the evaluation forms, it has re-empowered and reinvigorated community college instructors. (3) It addresses the special learning need of educationally disadvantaged students by identifying students with low reading scores and making special efforts to encourage their use of the reading strategies and by accommodating handicapped and learning disabled students through the services of learning disability specialists. (4) It improves traditional instruction programs by improving students' abilities to read and comprehend traditional course materials and by training faculty to implement reading strategies using traditional course materials.

In addition, the project clearly supports three of the five objectives of the Board of Governor's Basic Agenda:

1. promotes excellence in community college programs,
2. assures access to and success in postsecondary education among all student groups, and
3. improves state and local accountability for the effectiveness of community colleges.

Because the Reading Across the Curriculum project has accomplished the goals and objectives enumerated above, because reports like Becoming a Nation of Readers declares the need for reading strategies that the project is already implementing, and because in many California community colleges 65 percent of the students' reading scores are below college level, the project participants feel it imperative that this project not only continue but have a multiplier effect. The purpose of the project --- to improve student reading skills by training content area instructors in reading skill strategies specifically targeted to their subject matter and textbooks --- would remain the same. However, the scope would not be limited to eleven content area instructors and five community colleges but be broadened to include a total of 52 content area instructors and 20 community colleges in 18 districts.

2. As indicated above, this Reading Across the Curriculum Project is an extension, with a multiplier effect, of last year's project. The multiplier effect is exciting for two reasons. This project, which has already demonstrated its effectiveness, focuses on the major problem confronting California community colleges--the ill-prepared student--and provides instructors with teaching strategies to combat this problem. Second, this project will have an impact on approximately 15,000 students and 52 content area instructors from 20 colleges within 18 districts. And since the total cost of the F.I.I. project is $85,100, this means that the cost for each college involved is approximately $4,255 and that the cost per student is approximately $5.67, a small price for improved literacy.

3. This project is a consortium of 52 content area instructors from 20 colleges within 18 districts. Cosumnes River College will provide the project directors and administrators of the project. The 11 content area instructors in this year's project will help supervise
and train 41 additional instructors from a total of 20 community colleges. Each of the five colleges and the four colleges they are responsible for are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead College</th>
<th>Participant College</th>
<th>No. of Instructors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butte</td>
<td>Butte</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shasta</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lassen</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feather River</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yuba</td>
<td>Yuba &amp; Woodland Center</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Santa Rosa</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mendocino</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Redwoods</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marin</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sierra</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lake Tahoe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Los Medanos</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCC</td>
<td>SCC</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chabot- Livermore</td>
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<td>San Joaquin Delta</td>
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<td>Columbia</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modesto</td>
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<td>Napa</td>
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<td>Solano</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
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Other participants include an area dean supervisor, an assessment specialist, learning disability/styles specialist, reading instructors, clerical assistants, and one or two outside consultants.

4. Other sources for this project include investigating and researching successful reading strategies through the Center for Reading Studies, the Coalition for Literacy, the Council for Advancement of Experimental Learning, and the Western College Reading Association.
2. Specific Problems Being Addressed

SPECIFIC PROBLEM

1. According to the 1984 Commission on Higher Education and the Adult Learner, "25,000,000 to 45,000,000 adults in the United States are functionally illiterate--the equivalent of the combined populations of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland." Obviously, this illiteracy is not an East Coast phenomena.

Recent assessment statistics at Cosumnes River College reveal the following:
   64% of CRC students read below college level
   50% of CRC students read at/below tenth grade level
   35% of CRC students read at/below eighth grade level

While these students are specific to Cosumnes River College, assessment throughout California community colleges reveal that this is not a problem endemic to CRC but a problem pervading most of the California community college system.

Many California community colleges have attempted to solve their students reading problems by scheduling a reading course and content area course back to back. While this solution has produced excellent results, it is virtually impossible to schedule a reading course to coincide with every content area course. Second, the number of students reached is limited.

Another solution to solve student reading problems in content area courses is to provide student tutors or learning resource center assistance; however, the limitation of this solution is that strategies used to solve reading problems are being conducted by people who are not experts in the content area field and thus the reading skill improvement is not fully integrated into the content area instruction.

A third solution, which most community colleges provide, is to offer reading courses. However, many students do not elect to take advantage of the reading courses offered on campus, and reading is not integrated with the students' area of interest, which often proves to be a helpful motivating factor.

On the other hand, the Reading Across the Curriculum Project provides the opportunity for integrating reading skill improvement with content area instruction. Therefore, the results will be two-fold: improved reading skills which can be applied to other classes and improved understanding of content area materials.

2. The desired outcome of this project is to improve student reading skills within content area courses by having 11 mentor instructors train 41 content area instructors from 20
colleges in strategies and techniques to improve the discrepancy gap between student reading skills and textbook reading levels.

3. The project will focus on 52 content area instructors from 20 campuses within 18 college districts. These instructors will in turn educate the faculty on each of these respective campuses through a series of hands-on spring workshops in which the instructors will share strategies they have successfully implemented to improve student reading skills in their content area courses. If 30 instructors attend each of the 20 workshops, approximately 600 instructors will have received hands-on training in reading strategies. In addition, through the spring conference, the project will train in hands-on sessions at least 300 additional California community college instructors and/or deans. Finally, Volume 2 of the project manual, which will be disseminated to all California community colleges, the Instructor Bank, and an informal annual regional renewal conference of participants will continue the innovation begun by the Reading Across the Curriculum Project.
3. Population To Be Served

POPULATION SERVED

1. This project is designed to assist 52 content area instructors in improving student reading skills within their classrooms. Therefore, this project will have an impact on approximately 15,000 students from 20 colleges within 18 districts.

2. In addition, through the medium of 20 spring workshops, the project manual, and the master instructors reaching out to their respective campuses and other colleges, the project has the potential of reaching most community college instructors and students.
4. Objectives

OBJECTIVES

1. To continue to research methods to improve students' skills in reading college level textbooks in all content areas.
   Timeline: 6/15/86 - 8/30/86
   Budget: F.I.I. $27,800
   Local 7,650

2. To evaluate and assess student reading levels and reading problems with nationally standardized pre- and post-tests.
   Timeline: #1 Semester: 9/3/86 - 9/6/86
             1/13/87 - 1/16/87
   #2 Semester: 2/3/87- 2/6/87
             6/12/87- 6/15/87
   Budget  F.I.I. $ 500
   Local 44,675

3. To utilize the talents of 11 mentor instructors, (1) to train 41 selected content area instructors to solve the discrepancy gap between student reading abilities and college textbooks; (2) to train 41 instructors in evaluating and selecting textbooks; (3) to train 41 instructors in reading strategies to improve critical thinking; and (4) to train 41 instructors in several formulas for determining textbook reading levels.
   Timeline: 6/15/86- 6/1/87
   Budget  F.I.I. $29,600
   Local 22,750

4. (1) To disseminate successful reading strategies developed by the 52 content area instructors in a spring conference attended by California community college instructors and administrators and selected high school instructors; and (2) to develop an ongoing community college innovative Instructor Bank, utilizing the skills of instructors involved in project. The Instructor Bank will consist of a telephone network of all participants and an informal annual regional renewal conference of all participants to encourage the sharing of successful strategies, cross discipline interaction, and intra and inter college communication and validation.
   Timeline: 5/1/87
   Future Budget  F.I.I. $27,200
   Local 20,150
5. Workplan Narrative

ACTIVITIES

Objective #1

To continue to research methods to improve students’ skills in reading college level textbooks in all content areas.

The research and implementation will include the following:

1. Reviewing and publishing successful strategies and techniques for enhancing student reading skills resulting from initial Reading Across the Curriculum F.I.I. Project 1985/86.

2. Investigating, researching and publishing successful reading improvement techniques found in colleges and organizations throughout the country including the following: Center for Reading Studies; Coalition for Literacy; Commission on Higher Education and Adult Learning; the Council for the Advancement of Experimental Learning; Degrees for Reading Power, College Board Western College Reading Association; Center for the Study of Learning and Teaching Styles, St. Johns University; Community College Leadership Program, University of Texas; and El Paso Community College District.

3. Supervising and directing the 11 1985/86 F.I.I. mentor instructors who will train, inspire and coordinate 41 content area instructors to participate in project.

4. Selecting and publishing successful strategies/materials to use in 20 project workshops.

5. Evaluating and publishing new strategies resulting from project workshops.

6. Developing uniform instruments to evaluate workshops and reading strategies.

Personnel
Project directors, 11 mentor instructors, 41 new project participants.

Materials
Supplies, postage, publications, and media supplies.

Equipment
Computer time.

Facilities
Provided by CRC and 20 participating campuses.

Evaluation
Eleven mentor instructors under direction of project directors will prepare uniform instrument to assess workshops and reading strategies.
Objective #2

To evaluate and assess student reading levels and reading problems with nationally standardized pre- and post-tests.

Activities

1. At the beginning of the project, evaluate reading levels of students in the classes of 52 content area instructors through the Nelson-Denny and/or TASK standardized reading test. This evaluation will involve approximately 15,000 students in the fall and spring semesters from 20 colleges in 18 districts.

2. Analyze results of standardized tests for specific reading problems such as comprehension and learning disabilities.

3. Identify those students who are high risk due to low reading scores.

4. Accommodate through specialized testing handicapped and learning disabled students.

5. At the end of the project, evaluate the reading levels of students in the classes of 52 selected content area instructors through the Nelson-Denny and/or TASK standardized reading tests.

Personnel

Project directors, 52 content area instructors, Assessment coordinators, Clerical assistants, Enabling and learning disabled specialists.

Equipment

Computer terminal time, Telephone.

Materials

Testing instruments, Statistical analysis.

Facilities

Provided by CRC and 20 host campuses.

Evaluation

1. Directors and 11 mentor instructors evaluate validity and usefulness of pre- and post-test scores.

2. Content area instructors compare and evaluate pre- and post-test scores in relationship to poor progress, grades and attrition. They evaluate attrition according to poor reading test scores.

Objective #3

To utilize the talents of 11 mentor instructors, (1) to train 41 selected content area instructors to solve the discrepancy gap between student reading abilities and college textbook reading levels; (2) to train 41 instructors in evaluating and selecting textbooks; (3) to train 41 instructors
in reading strategies to improve critical thinking; and (4) to train 41 instructors in several formulas for determining reading levels of their textbooks.

Activities

1. Two-a-day workshop sessions: Eleven mentor instructors together with project directors will meet in two all day workshops to plan implementation of training sessions for 41 additional instructors. Activities will include the following:

   A. Scheduling of 20 mini workshops on host campuses.
   B. Problem solving on pre- and post-test implementation.
   C. Determining which strategies for improving reading skills will be presented to the 41 additional instructors.
   D. Requesting 41 instructors to identify reading problems and possible solutions.

2. Two intensive two-day workshops in which the 11 mentor instructors train the 41 additional content area instructors in reading strategies; these intensive two-day workshops will be broken down into teams of two mentor instructors training 8-10 additional content area instructors.

3. Monthly 3 hour trouble shooting sessions: Eleven mentor instructors and project directors will evaluate project progress and disseminate new successful reading strategies.

4. Twenty campus workshops (January - June 1987): There will be approximately 20 regional workshops at participating colleges: Butte, Yuba, ARC, CRC, SCC, Shasta, Lassen, Feather River, Santa Rosa, Marin, Sierra, Lake Tahoe, Los Medanos, Chabot, San Joaquin Delta, Modesto, Solano, and Napa.

5. Planning sessions for final publication and spring conference.


Personnel
Fifty-two content area instructors, Project directors, Learning disability specialists, Learning style instructor, Textbook editors, Local high school instructors, Community college instructors, deans, and other interested educators.

Materials
2. Videotapes.

Equipment
Video recorders, Video cameras, Television set.

Facilities
Local facilities for final spring conference.

Evaluation
1. Comparison of pre- and post-test scores.
2. Student evaluations of reading improvement techniques employed throughout the semester.
3. Fifty-two participating faculty evaluations of reading strategies employed.
4. Conference and workshop participants evaluations.

Objective #4

1. To disseminate successful reading strategies developed by the 52 content area instructors in a spring conference attended by California community college instructors and administrators and selected high school instructors.

2. To develop an ongoing community college innovative Instructor Bank, utilizing the skills of instructors involved in project. The Instructor Bank would consist of a telephone network of all participants and an informal annual regional renewal conference of participants to encourage the sharing of successful strategies, cross discipline interaction, and intra and inter college communication and validation.

Activities

   
   A. Panel discussions presented by 52 project participants.
   
   B. Dissemination of Volume 2 of project manual to all conference participants and to all 106 community colleges. Manual will include the following:
      (a) How to determine reading levels of textbooks
      (b) Textbook selection criteria
      (c) Strategies for improving reading skills in content areas
      (d) Instructor Bank and network
      (e) How to identify high risk students in content areas and retain them

2. Report to Chancellor's Office summarizing and evaluating project.

Personnel

Project directors, Fifty-two project participants, Keynote speakers.

Materials

Project manual, Conference program, Conference evaluation.

Equipment

Videotapes, Television set, Video recorder.

Facilities

Local facilities.

Evaluation

Conference participants will evaluate strategies used in overall project and conference.

Project manual will include self-addressed evaluation sheet and form to request to be put on mailing list.
6. Expected Outcomes

EXPECTED IMPACT AND TRANSFERABILITY

1. The impact of this project on other disciplines is inherent within the very purpose of the project: to improve reading skills and therefore understanding of content materials in as many disciplines as possible. The project also improves the teaching quality of content area instructors by providing them with new skills and techniques that enable their students to improve their reading skills. In addition, this project revitalizes instructors who have been struggling with a declining reading level in their content area classes. It also identifies high risk students, encourages those students to utilize the reading strategies, and increases, thereby, their retention.

2. The participating instructors’ excitement generated by the reading strategies clearly attests to the continued implementation of these strategies in the classroom and a sharing of these strategies among colleagues long after the expiration of the grant.

   In addition, the manual will provide opportunities for implementation of the reading strategies at other community colleges.

3. The Instructor Bank and regional annual renewal conferences ensures ongoing innovation and excellence in community colleges.
7. Evaluation Plan

EVALUATION PLAN

The procedures and outcomes of this project will be evaluated by project directors. The project directors will compare pre- and post-test reading scores at completion of the project in order to ascertain whether or not students reading levels, as indicated on standardized tests, have improved.

Conference and workshop participants will evaluate workshops and strategies presented for improving students' reading skills in content area classes.

The project manual will include a self-addressed evaluation sheet for assessment of the project manual and its strategies for improving reading skills in content area courses. In addition, the project directors will send to the Chancellor's Office a report briefly summarizing and evaluating the Reading Across the Curriculum Project.
8. Dissemination Plan

INFORMATION FOR DISSEMINATION

The project manual --- *Reading Across the Curriculum: Proven Strategies and Solutions*, Volume 2 -- will be disseminated to all spring conference participants, 106 community colleges, and Chancellor’s Office.

Additional copies of the manual will be available at cost upon request.
9. Budget Narrative

[NO “BUDGET NARRATIVE” ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]