CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
AND
FOOTHILL - DE ANZA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

#88-0005
FISCAL YEAR | ID NUMBER | COLLEGE | DISTRICT
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1988-89 | 88-0005 | Foothill | Foothill-DeAnza

PROJECT TITLE

Reading Across the Curriculum

FUNDING CATEGORY & AWARD | ELIGIBLE PROGRAM | PROJECT CATEGORY
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Grant = $17,449 | E --- Improvement of Trad. Instruction Prog | Implementation Model

PROJECT PRODUCT | PROJECT TOPIC #1 | PROJECT TOPIC #2 | ACADEMIC SUBJECT
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Resource Materials | Basic Skills | Reading | English

PROJECT DIRECTOR | PROJECT SUPERVISOR
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PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

College instructors nationwide agree that information provided by textbooks is vital in most content courses, yet many students are unable to process that information textbooks present it. Students can read, but the format, approach, and complexity of most texts is overwhelming for them.

The Reading Across the Curriculum movement recognizes this problem and is seeking to help remedy it. Much developmental work on the movement has been done in the San Francisco Bay region, and Foothill College has held one workshop at which reading instructors worked with content area instructors on ways to facilitate students' reading of their text materials.

The college staff will continue the work begun at the locally sponsored workshop. In five individualized courses they will develop ten modules, one at the beginning and intermediate levels for each course. The results of these efforts will be shared through LARC, NCCCRA, and the Western Colleges Reading and Learning Association.
This project seeks to fulfill the objective of educational excellence as mandated in the Board of Governors’ 1987-88 Basic Agenda. We will focus on basic skills, developing a program that will use nontraditional methods of instruction and will help to improve teaching abilities of faculty members. Working with students who have difficulty reading and processing college-level materials, we seek to bridge the existing gap between current reading programs and content area courses. The Reading Across the Curriculum Project will address this gap in three ways: 1) developing content area materials for five individualized lab courses; 2) developing ten thematic reading-across-the-curriculum units for individualized lab courses and for the traditional reading classes; 3) setting up an on-going liaison between content area instructors and reading instructors, using presentations, workshops, and videos. Using this multi-faceted but focused approach, students will learn techniques for reading diverse and demanding content area materials and will have opportunities for structured practice in that skill in ways that foster reading flexibility and critical thinking.
Reading Across the Curriculum

1. Specific Educational Program Being Addressed

Educational Program Addressed

Our Reading Across the Curriculum Project will combine three sorts of programs. First, the central part of the project will develop materials for individualized, non-traditional instruction. Second, we will design materials to improve the traditional instructional programs that are already in place. Third, we will augment these student-focused efforts by working with faculty members, seeking to improve teaching abilities in reading, a field for which most have little formal training.

Basic Agenda

Our project follows Objective B--Educational Excellence--as outlined by the Board of Governors' 1987-1988 Agenda. In working toward this excellence, we will focus on basic skills instruction.
2. Specific Problems Being Addressed

The Problem: Background Information

College instructors nationwide disagree on a number of things, but on two points they are in vehement agreement: first, information provided by textbooks is vital in most courses; second, many students are unable to process that information as textbooks present it. The issue is not that "Johnny can't read." The problem is more complex than that. Students can read, but the format, approach, and complexity of most texts is overwhelming for them.

Colleges in the San Francisco Bay area, like colleges and university across the nation, have tried to meet this problem in a variety of ways: we offer general reading courses, we have reading labs, we have reading tutorial services. Our reading courses, have, in general, followed a format of drill work on isolated skills--units on context clues, on main idea, on outlining, on paragraph patterns. Our reading labs, too, isolate these skills, generally in pre-packaged materials in which mastery has been tested almost exclusively by multiple choice formats. These efforts have made their mark, but we are having to face some startling--and disconcerting realities. Foremost among these is that the skills often don't transfer to content area classes. Students who pass context clues quizzes in their reading courses read the high-interest, non-academic prose of SRA Reading Kits, and they can pass the multiple choice quizzes. But they can't read a history text and sort out the important from the tangential, the essential from the merely interesting.

The Reading Across the Curriculum movement recognizes this problem and is seeking to help remedy it. A spate of texts has appeared on the market. They improve on the old ones in their focus on academic prose instead of articles on UFO's and the like, which have very little in common with the materials faced by students in their texts. Reading texts have also tried to move away from the multiple choice format which tests test-taking ability as much as it does comprehension. Here in the Bay area, experiments have gone beyond the use of new texts. At schools as disparate as Contra Costa Community College and the University of California at Berkeley, new content area reading courses have been established. These involve small faculty student group discussions of texts--whether in psychology, anthropology, or history--with reading instructors attending the lectures for the target class as well as reading the materials carefully. Here at Foothill College we have had a workshop in which reading instructors have worked with content area instructors on ways to facilitate students' reading of their texts.

But one workshop is not enough. Nor can most of the community colleges in the area afford the high costs of the small corollary reading classes being offered at Berkeley and elsewhere. We would like to address the problems our students face in reading for their other courses, and we have a three-step plan for beginning to do so.
3. Population To Be Served

Population Served

The population served will at first be small but has the potential of reaching the entire college enrollment. Students who enroll in the specially designed Academic Skills courses and those whose instructors participate in the initial training sessions will be those first served. As the program grows and more instructors become involved, more students will be served.
4. Objectives

Objective 1.
Development of Content Area Materials for Five Individualized Courses.

**ACTIVITY:**
For divisions which require a substantial amount of reading, instructors would be asked to submit representational samples in five areas—reading, vocabulary, spelling, writing, and listening/test-taking— in addition to information on thinking and conceptual skills required, to be used in the existing Academic Skills Program. We will design one at the beginning/intermediate level and one at the high intermediate/advanced level for each skill. These modules would include a variety of tasks to assess mastery, primarily methods that involve critical thinking and active reading.

**TIMELINE:**
1st six months of project (January 1989-June 1990)

**BUDGET:**
Funding required: 10 hrs. per week x 27.00/hr. x 10 weeks x 2 quarters = $5,400. Assembly costs: $200 clerical + $100 printing costs = $300 TOTAL: $5,700

Objective 2.
Development of Ten Thematic Reading-Across-the-Curriculum Units

**ACTIVITY**
Ten thematic units comprised of sample readings from a wide range of disciplines would be created along with exercises that assess comprehension; these exercises would involve critical thinking and active reading processes. The units would be used in existing reading courses, both classroom and laboratory.

**TIMELINE:**
2nd six months of project (July 1990-December 1990)

**BUDGET:**
Funding required: $5,400 salaries (see above) + 150 assembly costs (clerical 100; printing 50)

**TOTAL** 5,550

Objective 3.
Ongoing and Systematic Interaction between Reading Instructors and Content Area Instructors

**ACTIVITY:**
Workshops, demonstrations, booklets, and videos will be developed and presented for each division that requires substantial amounts of reading. These activities will present and discuss specific reading techniques that optimize reading efficacy in the targeted field of study.
TIMELINE: on-going (January 1989-December 1990)

BUDGET

Funding required: 5 hrs per week x $27 x 12 weeks x 4 quarters =
$5,400 in salaries

300 assembly costs (clerical 200: printing 100)

1,000 video costs

TOTAL $6,700
5. Workplan Narrative

Activities

1) Development of Content Area Materials for Individualized Courses

Here, we would incorporate content area materials used at the community college level--chosen by the instructors who teach those courses--into five existing Academic Skills areas. For instance, in Vocabulary Improvement, web would use high-frequency words from various disciplines, chosen by the instructors in those disciplines, to supplement/replace generic vocabulary materials being used at present. For Reading Improvement, we would gather samples from content area textbooks, again selected by content area instructors, and have students work on those, responding to them in ways other than multiple-choice reviews: we might have students map articles from an anthropology text, underline and make margin notes in a history text, or paraphrase an art history selection. For Test Taking, we would use actual essay or multiple choice questions that have been used in the past in our content area courses. The overall goal for this part of the project, then, would be to use actual content area materials for student instruction and practice in reading. Thus students who sign up for Zoology would be allowed (and in some cases encouraged) to sign up for a corollary independent Academic Skills class that would help the students process the information presented to them in the course textbook.

2) Development of Thematic Reading-Across-the-Curriculum Materials

This would be appropriate either for existing reading courses or, in some cases, for reading lab material. In teaching students how to vary their approach to different materials, we would develop ten thematic units using selections from several content areas, such as a family unit using selections from psychology, sociology, biology, history, art, Language Arts. Packets of these articles would be available under the individualized Reading Improvement lab course or could be implemented in the classroom reading courses as an alternative to the more generic (and thus less effective) material available now.

3) Provision of Systematic Interaction between Reading Instructors and Content Area Instructors

We would like to go beyond the necessarily simplistic approach we have had to take thus far with content area colleagues. We would develop a series of workshops and present them to separate divisions; thus we could tailor each presentation to the division, keeping in mind the varied approaches that are appropriate in different fields. After receiving this training, participants could offer training and advice to their colleagues. We would put together handouts and packets of suggested activities and
approaches: presentations would also be put on videotape for instructor use.
6. Expected Outcomes

Prospects for Wider Impact

This project would obviously have an impact on instruction and student learning at Foothill College. The possibilities for change, however, go beyond our school. We are a member of three organizations that are actively involved in student learning: LARC, the Learning and Retention Consortium NCCRA, the Northern California Community College Reading Association; and WCRLA, the Western Colleges Reading and Learning Association. Through these organizations, which meet regularly, we would be able to share our project strategies and results with over 50 community colleges and universities.
7. Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Plan This project will be evaluated using the following methods:

• Pre/post reading assessments in content area courses following the proscribed reading treatments will be compared to pre/post reading assessments in control courses (not using the proscribed reading treatments) with matched instructor. Three courses per quarter will be assessed.

• Using informal surveys, students participating in courses with experimental reading treatment will be asked to evaluate their success in the course as compared to similar courses. Three courses per quarter will be assessed.

• Using informal surveys and analyses, content area instructors participating in workshops, presentations, and other training projects will evaluate usefulness of the methods in terms of classroom procedures and student outcome. Five instructors will be surveyed each quarter.

• Five Academic Skills courses which incorporate new content area materials will be evaluated against matched courses which do not. Students in the experimental and control course will be pre/post tested, will evaluate through informal surveys the materials as to their usefulness, and will be monitored as to attendance and retention.

If Reading Across the Curriculum is deemed successful, it will be aligned with a successful and ongoing "Writing Across the Curriculum program and a newly developed retention project designed to implement strategies for better performance in the classroom in content areas. Both of these more established programs have support from the administration, the Academic Senate, and the Improvement of Instruction Committee.
8. Dissemination Plan

[NO “DISSEMINATION” ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]
9. Budget Narrative

[NO “BUDGET NARRATIVE” ACCOMPANIES THIS DOCUMENT.]