Learning to Teach Integrated Reading and Writing: Evidence from Research and Practice

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Community College Research Center

A leading independent authority on two-year colleges based at Teachers College, Columbia University. Founded in 1996, CCRC conducts research on the issues affecting community colleges and works with colleges and states to improve student success and institutional performance.

Areas of research include:

- High school to college transitions
- Developmental education and adult basic education
- Student services and financial aid
- Online learning and instructional technology
- College completion and transfer
- College to career and workforce education
Today’s Presentation Goals

• Describe developmental English statewide redesigns

• Examine professional learning opportunities developed for integrated reading and writing course redesigns

• Introduce a conceptual framework for exploring integrated reading and writing courses

• Discuss the policies and process of redesign in North Carolina.
Research Context
Students struggle to transfer reading and writing skills to different contexts

Reading Class

Writing Class
Multi-level course sequence delays completion
Analysis of Statewide Developmental Education Reform (ASDER)

- Better align developmental and college curricula
- Deliver targeted instruction through non-traditional course structures
- Reduce the time needed to complete developmental requirements
- Utilize more accurate customized assessments, including diagnostic exams in math

Redesign Goals
Virginia’s ENF Progression Model

- **ENF 1** (8 Credit Hours)
  - Semester 1

- **ENF 2** (4 Credit Hours)
  - Semester 1
  - **ENG 111** (3 Credit Hours)
  - **ENF 3** (2 Credit Hours)
  - **ENG 112** (3 Credit Hours)

- **ENF 1** (3 Credit Hours)
  - Semester 2
  - **ENG 111** (3 Credit Hours)
  - **ENF 3** (2 Credit Hours)
  - **ENG 112** (3 Credit Hours)
North Carolina’s DRE Progression Model

Semester 1

DRE 096
3 credit hours
8 weeks

DRE 097
3 credit hours
8 weeks

Semester 2

DRE 098
3 credit hours
8 weeks

ENG 111
3 credit hours
8 weeks

Alternative to DRE 098

DRE 099
2 credit hours
Co-requisite

ENG 111

Co-requisite
RED/ENG Redesign Principles

• Reading and writing skills will be integrated.
• An accelerated format will allow students to complete Developmental English and Developmental Reading requirements within one year.
• The curriculum will be mastery based.
• The design will encourage the use of contextualized instruction.
• The focus of the curriculum will be preparation for writing challenges in the work place and in the academic environment (specifically ENG 110 and 111).
• The curriculum will be based upon modular units that cluster competencies to facilitate acceleration; students can bypass individual units if placement/diagnostic testing demonstrates mastery of the corresponding competencies.
• The curriculum design will incorporate fundamental competencies.
RED/ENG Redesign Principles

• Colleges will have flexibility in how they deliver the new curriculum.
• The curriculum will involve the use of technology, supplemental instruction, and learning communities; at the local level, implementation of these strategies may include pairing developmental and curriculum courses.
• Placement/diagnostic tools that include a writing sample will be developed and utilized.
• The redesigned structure will align with college readiness initiatives being created by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.
• Professional development will be available for faculty and student services staff to support implementation of the new curriculum.
Research Objectives
Research Questions

• What does integrated reading and writing look like?

• How can professional development opportunities support faculty learning to teach in an integrated context?
  – What professional development opportunities on teaching an integrated course are available for faculty?
  – What opportunities do faculty find helpful?
  – What are lingering tensions?
Methodology
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Fall Semester

Classroom Observation
Interview
Curricular Review
Student Focus Group
Phone Interview

Spring Semester

Classroom Observation
Interview
Curricular Review
Student Focus Group
Phone Interview
Conceptual Framework
(tentative)
Integrated Reading and Writing Cycle

Pre-reading

High Stakes Writing

Post-reading

Pre-Writing/Low Stakes Writing
What does integrated reading and writing look like?
What does integrated reading and writing look like?

Reading Assignments + Writing Assignments = Integrated Reading and Writing?
What does integrated reading and writing look like?

Professor S:

“One of the things that I have struggled with is the grammar piece. *I feel like I really don't have much time to spend on those sentence level concerns.*”

Reading Assignments + Writing Assignments = Integrated Reading and Writing?
What does integrated reading and writing look like?

Professor V:

“I did two papers that were not connected with anything that they read. A narrative paper and a descriptive paper, and those were the worst things that they wrote the entire semester. I need more models...which means more reading.”

Reading Assignments + Writing Assignments = Integrated Reading and Writing?
What does integrated reading and writing look like?

Integrated Reading and Writing
Process

• Discussion of the theory, research, and conceptual basis of integrating reading and writing

• Research of redesign models in other states such as Virginia, Maryland, California, Texas, and Florida

• Understanding the Common Core Standards for high school completion which will be in effect in NC in the Spring of 2013 so that our plan will parallel those “college ready” standards

• Development of overall and specific Student Learning Outcomes (SLO’s) for a Developmental English/Reading curriculum
Process (cont.)

- Discussion of course structure—possibly 8-week courses with some variations and options for colleges as delivery methods
- Establishment of competencies required before entering Developmental English/Reading; i.e., “the floor”
- Discussion of a Basic Skills course for students who place below the floor and ways in which colleges can develop that course
Book Journal

- Students select one of 10 non-fiction books (e.g., *Proof of Heaven*, *I am Malala*, *Born to Run*) and complete a series of journal assignments in response. Collectively, these journals address the course learning objectives.

- Example: Find a scholarly article related to the book and write a summary/response essay of that article, using citations.
Quote Book

• Students write “mini-essays” about quotes they select from class readings. In each they address their rationale for choosing the quote, its meaning and significance in the text, and its connection to their own life.
Source Integration Essay

• Students write a “reflective research paper” that is related to the theme of the class (i.e., success and struggle).

• Using a minimum of two course readings and three outside readings, students present their definition of struggle and what it will take for them to overcome their own struggles.
Preliminary Findings
Professional learning opportunities to support curriculum design

- Blackboard forum
- Cross-discipline training
- Implementation workshop
- Group grading
- Syllabus review
- Syllabus template
- Peer group campus implementation meetings
- Textbook committee
- External speakers
- Common assessment
System-wide workshops introduce “nuts and bolts” of course structure reforms

Professor P:

“The school provided, I think, adequate to very good pre-knowledge about these classes. We went to a series of workshops. They were bi-monthly or maybe even monthly about how the English redesign was going to work. And into that we were given a curriculum guide. We developed what we suppose were the official course outlines for the ENF1 class, and from that we were set to go.”
External experts respond to faculty needs

Professor S:

“So it was much more in-depth and then the other ones to that we had…so we had some in the VCCS they have sort of regional teaching centers and so we participated in the Northern Virginia one so there were people from Lord Fairfax and also [another college in system] and we were able to bring in some speakers for those as well. Those were helpful but I think those were designed…you know we designed them based on faculty needs at the time…the VCCS said here the person in charge of this center you have these funds and they worked with some of the faculty, that person worked with some of the faculty to basically select a speaker on the needs of faculty so it was still…it was more the organization happened at the local level in terms of deciding what was going to take place.”
Cross-discipline trainings support curriculum development

Professor V:

“We had reading instructors and writing instructors. Not that writing instructors didn’t teach reading, and reading instructors didn’t teach writing, but that was the primary focuses of those courses. So, what we did was, I worked with another instructor…she and I developed two sessions of instructions… We took all the writing instructors and then I gave them a crash course in terms of reading. How they could take an existing activity that they already did, and add a little more reading to it. Structure that so it’s actually reading instructions and not just go home and read. [Other instructor] did the writing half so she took the reading specialist and talked about how to use rubrics how to look at different things. For example, when I assign writing assignments in my old courses I was mostly just looking for comprehension. I wasn’t always looking for sentence structure, unless it was glaring stuff. My primary focus was, did they comprehend what they read as opposed to how finally crafted is this essay. Now that we needed to do both, that was [other instructor’s] goal. It worked really well.”
Tension: Designing integrated curriculum while learning outcomes stay separate

Professor S:

“I would say overall I think one of the challenges with these courses right is we have all those student learning outcomes we have to cover that are written in an isolated format, this discrete list of skills and so it really is up to the instructor to figure out how to integrate them given the timeframe that we have and I think you have to integrate in order to cover them all. I think that…integration almost becomes a tool in that way as well as it being beneficial to the students.”
ENF Statewide Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of developmental English coursework, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the use of pre-reading, reading, and post-reading skills with college-level texts.
2. Pre-write, draft, revise, edit, and proofread college-level texts.
3. Expand vocabulary by using various methods.
4. Demonstrate comprehension by identifying rhetorical strategies and applying them to college-level texts.
5. Analyze college-level texts for stated or implied main idea and major and minor supporting details.
6. Demonstrate critical thinking skills when reading and writing college-level texts.
7. Write well-developed, coherent, and unified college-level texts, including paragraphs and essays.
8. Identify, evaluate, integrate, and document sources properly.
## DRE Statewide Student Learning Outcomes

**Goal 1:** Students will demonstrate the use of reading and writing processes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcome</th>
<th>DRE 097 Competencies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate the use of pre-reading, reading, and post-reading strategies.</td>
<td><strong>Pre-reading Strategies</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Apply a variety of previewing strategies to comprehend texts.&lt;br&gt;• Activate prior knowledge using text markers (titles, headings, etc.), graphics, and textual aids (objectives, questions, etc.).&lt;br&gt;<strong>During Reading Strategies</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Annotate, highlight, and underline texts to identify important vocabulary, main ideas, supporting details and examples, and other key pieces of information.&lt;br&gt;• Use context clues and affixes to comprehend complex texts and expand personal vocabularies.&lt;br&gt;• Distinguish between connotative and denotative meanings and between informal language and Standard Written English.&lt;br&gt;• Employ metacognitive strategies (I) to monitor comprehension.&lt;br&gt;• Identify stated and implied main ideas (I) and details in complex texts and student writing.&lt;br&gt;• Recognize organizational patterns in complex texts.&lt;br&gt;<strong>Post-reading Strategies</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Respond, in writing, to complex texts using text-to-text connections. (I)&lt;br&gt;• Paraphrase texts or portions of texts. (I)&lt;br&gt;• Summarize complex texts. (I)</td>
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Professor V:

“But what we found was some books said they were integrated, but they really weren’t. It was like two chapters on reading five chapters on writing and never the two shall meet. So that’s why we really wanted to look carefully at it. The publishers were kind of behind the eight ball in this game. There were not a lot of really solid choices. We had a discussion about do we use two different books? Can we find one book that suits our need? Do we have a separate vocabulary book? Do we do vocabulary at all? So, those were all the questions. Do we use a software program as well?”
Questions?

• What do you think of our framework?
  – Do any of these tensions resonate with you? If so, how have you resolved these tensions?

• What models of professional development have you found useful specifically in the context of integrated reading and writing?

• Given the tensions presented, what are the implications for the intended outcomes of integrated reading and writing?

• What types of professional development would optimize the integrated reading and writing model?
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