

**MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW  
SELF STUDY**

**FOR**

**Reading Program**

**2011 – 2012**

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**MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**Academic Program Review**

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## Middlesex Community College

### Academic Program Review

#### **SECTION I: INTRODUCTION**

*Using background and/or contextual information, please provide the reader with an overview/abstract of the program's evolution, progress, and direction. What is unique about this program? What does the future hold for the program? What are the major issues for this program? Connect us to your most recent program review where important, including information about previous findings, improvements, and unfinished items.*

The reading program at MCC has undergone many changes since its inception. In the early 1980s all reading instruction took place in the Center for Individualized Instruction (CII – currently Flexible Studies). In the mid 1980s, in addition to CII reading courses, the college began providing classroom sections of Reading Strategies, required of students who scored below the cut-off on college testing, and a recommended study skills course, Applied Learning Skills. A few years later another recommended course, Academic Reading, was added to the list of classroom offerings.

The Reading Strategies course had mandatory placement and exit standards for students and a voluntary Reading Lab to support student success. Beginning in 1989, to increase student success in passing the exit criteria and successfully completing the course, the Reading Lab component of the course became mandatory and, due to its dramatic success, has remained so to this day.

During the 1990s the state Board of Higher Education (BHE) mandated definitions for developmental courses and prohibited colleges from granting degree credit for them. Reading Strategies (Computerized Placement Test reading comprehension score of 44-62) was defined as developmental. Applied Learning Skills and Academic Reading (Computerized Placement Test reading comprehension scores of 63-75) were deemed quasi developmental and could offer degree credit to non-transfer students but not to students in transfer majors. Enrollment in these optional courses began to decline. It was also during this time that many college-level courses established reading prerequisites to help ensure that students had the requisite reading skills for success in their courses.

In the summer of 1996, the reading and English departments began to offer the *Summer Sprint* program to a select group of incoming developmental students, offering an eight-week summer program of developmental reading and writing (later expanded to include math) to students to enable them to complete the developmental work in these courses before entering MCC in the fall semester.

The *Sprint* program has been very successful and has continued to be offered to students each summer. In the 12 years since the program was developed, 89% of Sprint students have consistently achieved high rates of staying in college and doing well. As a group, Sprint students are more likely to complete their classes, compared to other students taking the same classes.

In 1997-1998, the Reading Department conducted a Program Review that coincided with a state-wide BHE initiative that was convened to examine developmental practices in the state undergraduate institutions, with the goal of setting consistent standards and policies among the various community colleges, state colleges, and the universities. Based on recommendations of the BHE committees and the Reading Department Program Review, the courses changed again. The CPT cutoff for developmental placement in reading courses at all state community colleges was set at 68. Following this requirement and based on the results of the Reading Department Program review, Reading Strategies split into two levels, Introduction to College Reading I (CPT placement of 44-55) and II (CPT placement of 56-67), based on the College Board Accuplacer reading comprehension scores (formerly the CPT). Basic Reading continued to be offered only in CII (for students placing below 44).

In the early 2000s, the Reading Department began offering Basic Reading sections in the classroom (CPT placement up to 44). A few years later, the three primary reading courses were renamed Preparation for College Reading I, II, and III and were offered in the classroom as well as CII (now Flexible Studies).

Applied Learning Skills is no longer offered at the College and was last taught in the spring of 2003. Academic Reading was last taught in the classroom in 1999. Jane Wiggins and Marilyn Black redesigned the course making it EN 2123, Academic Reading for Science and Health which was offered in Flexible Studies as an optional course for students who wanted to raise their Accuplacer scores to 75, a requirement for many programs in the health careers. It was last offered in Self-Paced Studies the summer of 2007. Concurrently, other departments have developed Explorations courses that incorporate reading and study skills and serve as bridges to other departmental offerings. We realize that teaching study skills in isolation is not as effective as teaching them in context. This is a more positive approach to student outcomes.

Currently, 27% of all incoming students place into Developmental Reading courses (based on the Fall 2010-2011 Middlesex Community College Factbook). The Reading Department at MCC consistently maintains standardized, college-wide exit criteria for all required levels of the reading sequence. Students must attain a C- or better course grade and must pass either the Accuplacer exam at or above the cut off, or a departmental paper and pencil exit exam. (See the appendix for specific course requirements.)

For classroom sections of Preparation for College Reading II (ENG 055) and Preparation for College Reading III (ENG 060), the department has required a weekly 50-

minute Reading Lab component to provide small group instruction with a professional tutor trained in reading. Reading Lab attendance and participation is mandatory in these courses and counts as 25% of each student's course grade.

For many years we have worked to ensure that students are accurately placed into courses and that they are not moved into courses at the end of the semester for which not yet prepared. Pretesting on the first day of class allows the instructor to move a student higher or lower in the reading sequence, based on the students' needs. Post testing at the end of the semester ensures that students are ready to move into the next level of the sequence or to move into college-level classes if they have mastered the skills necessary for college-level reading.

We have also implemented a number of policies or strategies to help students complete the developmental reading course requirements in the shortest amount of time possible. Reading Refresher sessions are offered to incoming students to help them maximize their scores on the CPT. We have had good success with these sessions (see appendix for details). Additionally, the built-in pretesting on the first day of class allows a student to bypass a level of reading or to exit to college-level courses if appropriate. Finally, in Preparation for College Reading II (ENG 055), students who achieve a course average of A- or higher at the end of the semester, but who are unable to pass the CPT with a 68 or higher, may take a Challenge Reading Test to enable them to bypass Preparation for College Reading III and begin their college-level course work.

Looking forward, we have several issues to confront. We have the dual goals and sometimes competing goals of ensuring that students have the reading competencies they need for success in their college-level courses while moving them through the curriculum in a timely fashion. Although Massachusetts community colleges have established a 68 Accuplacer reading comprehension score as the cut off for developmental reading, nationally many community colleges have set a higher bar of 77 to 83. While we do not recommend raising the bar, we realize that a 68 score places students at approximately a tenth grade reading level while many college-level textbooks are written at a 16+ grade level. We are acutely aware that students will need continued reading support as they progress into their content area classes. Teaching reading is the responsibility of all instructors at the community college level. Professional development for content area instructors in Reading Apprenticeship and reading and study skills strategies is a first step and can assist in closing this gap. Secondly, our reading courses are currently taught in isolation from the writing and the content-area courses. We would like to establish more ambitious learning goals to provide students with an even richer education in literacy through integrating the curriculum by blending reading, writing, and reasoning. Finally, we want to explore ways to increase students' time on task to help them acquire the necessary reading skills in fewer semesters.

We are currently researching successful models and methodologies in reading which include programs such as MyFoundationLab (by Pearson), Reading Apprenticeship, Accelerated Learning Pilots, Learning Communities, and Supplemental Instruction. Our goal is to ensure that students move through the reading sequence as quickly as possible and have the skills necessary for success in college level coursework.

We are working with a developmental Think Tank committee to plan and restructure our developmental courses.

## **SECTION II: PROGRAM MISSION AND SUPPORT OF COLLEGE'S STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **1. State the mission of the program.**

The Reading Department courses prepare students to succeed with college-level coursework. We provide students with skills and strategies to improve their literacy and expand their creative and critical thinking. The progression of courses continues to develop these skills with an increased emphasis on inferential and analytical literacy. The Reading Department supports the broader college mission to provide a strong foundation of basic skills and an exposure to liberal arts to prepare students for college transfer, professional development, employment, and lifelong learning.

### **2. Middlesex Community College's Strategic Directions are listed below. Describe how your program is actively supporting, or intends to support, one or more of these directions.**

- *Foster greater college engagement through improved communication, personal connections and collaborative partnerships.*
- *Empower all members of the college community to be educators, mentors, advocates and life-long learners.*

Fall 2012 members of the Reading Department plan to visit various departments at the college and model and distribute the reading strategies used and recommended by the Reading Apprenticeship Program. Teachers will be empowered to teach reading in their disciplines to promote and foster better comprehension of their texts. This collaboration will be ongoing in various venues.

**SECTION III: STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT**

**Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)**

3. Identify your Program Student Learning Outcomes – what should graduates of your program be able to do with the cumulative knowledge, skills, abilities and ways of thinking they have developed as a student in your program? As appropriate, consult professional standards and articulation agreements/vertical alignment with transfer institutions as you develop your PSLOs.
- Students who successfully complete ENG 060 are able to read freshman-level college textbooks using vocabulary, literal comprehension, inferential comprehension & critical reading and study reading skills as appropriate.
  - Students who successfully complete ENG 060 are able to pass the CPT reading test with a *minimum* score of 68 and/or successfully pass a written departmental exit exam with a minimum score of 70% on the Townsend Press Form A. Achievement of these scores on either/both of these tests indicates that a student is able to read independently or read at an instructional level at which s/he may need additional support.
4. Provide your program’s timeline for ongoing, annual assessment of its PSLOs.

2011-12	Pass exit tests
2012-13	Read freshman-level college textbooks
2013-14	
2014-15	
2015-16	
2016-17	
2017-18	

5. If applicable, discuss any changes you have made to your PSLOs since your last program review.

N/A

6. Map the way in which your program currently provides opportunities for students to progress towards achievement of each Program Student Learning Outcome, by noting in which courses the outcomes are **Introduced (I)**, **Developed (D)**, and where students are expected to demonstrate **Competency (C)**.

**Note:**

- **This is an exercise to create a map of what “is”, not what “should be”. It is an opportunity for faculty teaching in your program to think about and articulate which program learning outcomes their course(s) currently supports, and to what degree. Once this map of “what is” has been created, as a group you can identify gaps that you want to address to better enable student achievement of your goals for their learning (see question 7 below).**
- **At the Competency level, PSLOs and ISLOs should be reflected within the course outcomes on all syllabi for that course.**

**Curriculum Map:**

PSLO	ISLO supported by PSLO	RDG 050	RDG 055	RDG 060
Pass exit tests	Critical Thinking, Personal & Professional Development	I	D	C
Read freshman texts	Critical Thinking, Personal & Professional Development		I/D	C

7. Does your Curriculum Map suggest a need to make changes to the **availability** and/or **sequencing** of opportunities for students to develop and achieve any PSLO within the program? If so, please explain.

Based on our research from other colleges as well as conversations with the MCC Developmental Think Tank, we recommend integrating reading and writing in a six credit course, and offering accelerated models as appropriate. Combining reading and writing will encourage deeper learning and better prepare students for the reading and writing demands of college level coursework.

Currently we have three reading levels. In our Think Tank, we are considering a model which reduces this number of reading levels. This may decrease the number of semesters students spend in developmental reading courses.

8. Referring back to your Curriculum Map for each PSLO, please provide at least one course-level student learning outcome (SLO) from a syllabus from every course that supports that PSLO at a Competency level. If no such course-level SLO is available, discuss how this will be addressed within the program. Also discuss how your program can or does ensure consistent opportunities among all sections of each Competency-level course for students to demonstrate their achievement of your program goals for student learning.

PSLO	Course Supporting at Competency Level	Course SLO
Pass exit tests	RDG 060	Apply reading skills and strategies learned in the course to successfully pass the exit exam
Read freshman texts	RDG 060	Learn how to approach and comprehend textbook readings.

9. Referring back to your Curriculum Map, are there any ISLOs not supported to Competency levels within the program? If so, please describe how students in your program experience adequate opportunities to develop and achieve Competency with this (these) outcome(s), or please provide a plan for how this will be addressed. N/A

<p><b>Written and Oral Communication</b> For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written assignments</li> <li>• Oral presentations</li> <li>• Use of relevant information literacy skills</li> <li>• Effective use of technology</li> </ul>	<p><b>Critical Thinking</b> For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis</li> <li>• Synthesis</li> <li>• Evaluation</li> <li>• Creative thinking</li> <li>• Development of logical conclusions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Quantitative Literacy</b> For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation</li> <li>• Representation</li> <li>• Calculation</li> <li>• Application/Analysis</li> <li>• Communication of quantitative information</li> </ul>	<p><b>Multicultural and Global Literacy</b> For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intercultural knowledge</li> <li>• Global issues</li> <li>• Interactions that build diversity awareness</li> <li>• Diverse forms of creative expression</li> <li>• Aesthetic Appreciation</li> <li>• Historical, political, and economic perspective</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Responsibility</b> For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Civic engagement</li> <li>• Social justice</li> <li>• Ethical frameworks</li> <li>• Social policy frameworks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Personal and Professional Development</b> For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement of academic goals</li> <li>• Career Readiness</li> <li>• Self Assessment</li> <li>• Responsibility for learning and personal development</li> <li>• Professionalism</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Wellness</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> </ul>

## Assessment

Please assess one PSLO as part of this program review. You will be sent an Assessment Update form each year in order to continue assessing your PSLOs.

**PSLO:** Students who successfully complete ENG 060 are able to pass the CPT reading test with a *minimum* score of 68 and/or successfully pass a written departmental exit exam with a minimum score of 70% on the Townsend Press Form A. Achievement of these scores on either/both of these tests indicates that a student is able to read independently or read at an instructional level at which s/he may need additional support.

### **10. Assessment Planning:**

What in particular would you like to know with regard to student achievement of this PSLO? How can you get that information?

- How many students successfully pass ENG 060 with a C- or better?
- Is there a difference in successful course completion between the two campuses?
  - Of the students receiving incompletes, how many of them were able to successfully complete them the following semester?
  - Do more students pass the written test than the CPT?

### **11. Assessment Process:**

Describe the process by which this PSLO was assessed for Competency. Include in your description as appropriate:

- Which courses contributed evidence of student learning and achievement?  
Assessment of ENG 060 contributed evidence of student learning and achievement.
- Which assignments/projects/exams/activities within those courses generated the evidence?  
We used the CPT and the written exit exam (for all reading classes) for the assessment.
- Was there additional information/data incorporated into this assessment re: question 10 above?  
We examined three years of data to determine our assessment.
- How was a sample selected from the full sets of contributed evidence?  
To assess successful course completion, Enrollment Services Research Planning examined three years of data from 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011. To assess student success on the written test and the CPT, Elise Martin evaluated a random sampling of 8 sections per year. A sample was selected of day and evening courses from both campuses.
- What criteria were used to assess student learning and achievement?  
Students had to achieve a grade of C- or better, and either pass the CPT with at least a score of 68 or pass the exit exam with a 70%.
- Which faculty members assessed the evidence, and how representative are they of the faculty teaching in the program?  
Three full-time faculty members assessed the evidence. We are a small department with a total of eleven members who teach reading.
- How you created a block of time to conduct the assessments of student learning  
At the end of each semester, all reading faculty members teaching ENG 060 send the reading coordinator pre- and post-tests and course grade information for each section of ENG 060 that is taught.

## 12. Assessment Results:

What did your program learn about student achievement of this PSLO?

Overall course success rate of ENG 060 for both campuses was approximately 75%, including students who withdrew from the course. This course completion rate includes students who initially received incompletes (I). Over the course of these six semesters, 122 out of 1335 enrolled students received incompletes in ENG 060 (approximately 9%). Fifty-four percent of those students were able to successfully complete the course and pass the exit exams within a semester.

Seventy-six percent of the students in Bedford were able to successfully complete ENG 060 as opposed to 74% of the students in Lowell. However, there was also a notable difference between campuses in the number of students who received an incomplete. Of 122 total students receiving incompletes, 91 were at City Campus.

From the Office of Academic Affairs' selected sample, we learned that 77% of the students (excluding Ws) in ENG 060 passed the written Townsend Reading Test, 41% passed the CPT, and 36% passed both (see Appendix).

## 13. Closing the Loop:

What curricular and/or instructional changes are planned within the program as a result of this assessment work (if any)? Please consult current research/best practice in the field to inform these changes, and note that information here. (These changes should be noted as part of your action plan in **SECTION VII**, the Summary section of this document.)

College Reading III has been successful in enabling the majority of students to pass the exit criteria. We are currently exploring alternative models to further enhance and accelerate student success. The sources we are consulting include Massachusetts Community Colleges Developmental Education Best Policy and Practice Audit, Chabot College in California, and Baltimore City Community College's Best Practices in Developmental Education Educational Task Force Report (June 2010). We also plan to investigate and address the cause(s) for the significantly higher incomplete rate for students on the Lowell campus.

## SECTION IV: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

**14.** The following instructional practices and strategies have been described as high impact educational practices. Please discuss them in the context of your own program. Feel free to discuss additional high impact practices not mentioned here. Have you done any research within your program to determine the actual impact on student success that these or other high impact practices are having? If you are finding these high impact practices to be effective strategies for engaging students and increasing student success, how will you scale such practices up and out to support more students within your program? (This information should be noted as part of your action plan in **SECTION VII**, the Summary section of this document.)

- **FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS AND EXPERIENCES**
- **COMMON INTELLECTUAL EXPERIENCES**
- **LEARNING COMMUNITIES**
- **WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSES**
- **COLLABORATIVE ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS**
- **UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH**
- **DIVERSITY/GLOBAL LEARNING**
- **SERVICE LEARNING, COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING**
- **INTERNSHIPS**
- **CAPSTONE COURSES AND PROJECT**

Several of the reading courses offer service learning for their students. A learning community linking reading and writing will be offered in the Fall 2012. Also, we will be piloting ENG 055/060 ALP sections during the academic year 2012-2013.

**15.** Were any of the courses in this program reformed as a result of MCC's recent Title III "Strategies for Success" grant? If so, please discuss the perceived program impact of that curriculum reform work, along with the use of DegreeWorks and Early Alert intervention, on students in your program. Are there teaching and learning strategies that have been found to be particularly effective? Have co-curricular activities been embedded in course content that have strengthened student learning? How is the program bringing these strategies to scale in all sections of these courses and other courses? (Include in your action plan in the Summary section as appropriate.) In Question #20, you will be asked to discuss course completion comparison between reformed and non-reformed sections of the same course.

N/A

**16.** Discuss any new strategies being implemented within your program to support student success not mentioned above. This could include efforts to establish consistent expectations for students, scaffolding learning within sequential courses, inclusion of experiential learning, collaborations with Academic Support Services and/or other support areas, curriculum revision, pedagogical sharing and innovation, etc.

- Reading Apprenticeship reformed courses, a series of reading strategies to improve comprehension by the instructor modeling techniques of successful readers (see question #25).

- Fall 2013 plans are underway to combine Basic Writing with Preparation for College Reading II and III.
- 17.** Do all students in your program, regardless of campus, day/evening, and/or modality of instruction, have equal access to the high impact practices and student success strategies that your program offers to at least some of its students? If not, discuss how you can increase equity for all students in your program. (Include in your action plan as appropriate.) For students with weaker skills, additional support is available in the Reading Lab and with individual instructors.

Although instructors use different textbooks and methods, our entrance and exit exams are consistently followed.

- 18.** Discuss the program's ability to facilitate student learning with regard to staffing, facilities, equipment, etc. Be specific about deficiencies and/or needs and their impact on student learning. (Include in your action plan as appropriate.)

The reading department is a small department with a dedicated staff of full-time and part-time instructors. The course instructors have used a variety of materials and approaches with relatively strong success regarding course completion. The college has been supportive of the department by providing opportunities for professional development. Department meetings are productive and helpful.

Student success in the reading courses has been strongly supported and enhanced by the required weekly Reading Lab for our courses ENG 055 and ENG 060. We believe the mandatory lab component staffed by professional reading instructors has had a strong impact on student retention and success. The small group instruction gives students the opportunity to better master the reading strategies that are taught in the larger classroom settings. It also gives them an opportunity to connect with the Reading Lab instructor and the other students in a more personal way. We believe the Reading Lab component has been a major factor in keeping students enrolled in the course, helping them pass the exit criteria, and contributing to the overall retention rate.

The Reading Lab has also provided continuing support and instruction for students, with a C- or higher course average, who are unable to pass the exit measures at the end of the semester. These students receive grades of "incomplete." Rather than having to retake the entire course, these students work with the Reading Lab instructors on an individual basis to improve their reading strategies and successfully pass the exit criteria. Some of the students are able to complete their "incompletes" over the January intersession or during the summer. Others require a full semester to develop their skills.

At the end of each semester, students evaluate the Reading Lab through an anonymous online survey (Survey Monkey). Fall of 2011 yielded some interesting results, as we were able to compare the standard Reading Lab in which small groups of students worked closely together with the Reading Lab instructor followed by computer reinforcement of the skills. We were able to compare their responses to those of a class of students who completed the Pearson (MyFoundations) Pilot project in which students worked independently on the computer in an individualized program without small group work or the assistance of Reading Lab instructors.

## **Fall of 2011 Reading Lab Survey Monkey Results**

At the end of each semester, students evaluate the Reading Lab through an anonymous online survey, Survey Monkey. We selected several questions from the Fall 2011 survey to examine students' perceptions of the relevance of the Reading Lab to their class success and their perceptions of its pertinence to their success in other classes.

Students were asked to rate questions with a response of: not useful, somewhat useful, good, very good, or excellent

For all questions, the percentage represents the students who answered with good, very good, or excellent:

### *College Reading Survey Fall 2011*

Question #4---Instruction in the lab enhanced (helped) my progress in the reading course.

Bedford students: 94.4%

Lowell students: 97.8%

### *Pilot Program MyFoundations Lab Fall 2011*

Question #3--- The computerized practice in the Pilot Program added value to my progress in the College reading course.

Pilot Program-MyFoundations Lab: Lowell students: 63%

### *College Reading Survey Bedford Fall 2011*

Question #14--- Going to the Reading Lab helped me acquire the skills needed in other classes.

Bedford students: 89.7%

Lowell students: 92%

### *Pilot Program MyFoundations Lab Fall 2011*

Question #7--- Participating in the Pearson Pilot Program helped me acquire the skills needed in other classes.

Pilot Program-MyFoundations Lab: Lowell students: 53%

It appears that students believe that Reading Lab enhances and advances student success in the course. The lower percentage of satisfaction from the Pilot Program responses may be due to the individualized nature of the Pilot which minimizes the opportunity of interaction with a professional tutor and other students.

Despite the success of the Reading Labs, both labs would benefit from more computers and quiet space. With the advent of more computer programs such as Pearson, we need to be sure there are enough for every student. In addition, the Bedford Reading Lab is small and noisy, as it is a shared space with the Writing Lab.

## SECTION VI: EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

19. **LOCAL:** Based on a review of other college catalogs, list the colleges in our general area that have similar programs and comment on significant differences from the ones we currently offer that bear further exploration. If appropriate, discuss steps that MCC could take towards implementing these best practices in this program. Also if appropriate, include steps in action plan of Section VII, Summary.

Northern Essex CC uses the following structure:

There are only two levels of reading at NECC: Basic Reading and College Reading.

Accuplacer score of-

34-52.9 Basic Reading required

53-67.9 College Reading required

If a student tests between 60-67.9 he or she will be sent a letter from the Assessment Center giving them the opportunity to take the Nelson Denny H Reading Test. If the vocabulary and comprehension percentile are both over 40%, and if added together they are more than 101, then they have “tested” out of College Reading and no longer have a Developmental Reading requirement.

At the beginning of the semester all College Reading students are given an opportunity to take a “Challenge Test” if they feel they were “misplaced” into College Reading. At the end of the semester, students need a C- or better to move into the next level course.

Bunker Hill CC:

Bunker Hill has two reading levels. Reading Skills 1 is the most basic course, and Reading Skills 2 is the next level. Students must pass an exit test to move up to Reading 2 and must also pass an exit exam to complete the course. The exam emphasizes the ability to outline. There are makeup exams for those who cannot pass the first exam. If needed, students must retake the course.

Roxbury CC:

There are two levels of reading at RCC. However, they combine Developmental Reading with Writing Level I and II and are worth 4 credits each. Students who score 0-44 on the CPT are placed in Reading and Writing I, 45-67 into Developmental Reading and Writing II. Another course offered is Pre-College Reading for those who need more work on their reading before moving into graduation credit-bearing courses and score between 30-67 on the CPT. No post-testing is given; instead, students must earn a grade of C. Students move up based on the recommendation of their instructors.

Each of these programs offers something to consider for comparison with our reading courses. Based on conversations with faculty from NECC, we are aware that much content in their reading courses comes from college textbooks. We think that the expansion of college textbook reading within our courses would enhance student readiness for their content area courses. Also, we closely match exit procedures with Bunker Hill CC. Requiring exit standards and offering multiple opportunities for exit exams constitutes best practice. Finally, we are interested in the combined developmental Reading/Writing course that RCC offers. Based on discussions with our developmental Think Tank, this model may help us design our future courses.

- 20. NATIONAL BEST PRACTICE:** Based upon research on institutions beyond our geographical area that have exemplary programs or are known for their ‘best practices,’ discuss significant similarities or differences at MCC and identify areas that bear further exploration. If appropriate, discuss steps that MCC could take towards implementing these best practices in this program. Also if appropriate, include steps in action plan of Section VII, Summary.

Use this question, along with #24, to make your case as appropriate for any program innovations, improvements, changes, etc you would like to make –

According to the Massachusetts Community Colleges Developmental Education Best Policy and Practice Audit, there are several organizational structures which are recommended for developmental education programs. Instructors should identify and implement strategies for assisting students with learning skills (understanding textbook organization, note taking, study methods) and should integrate these into the curriculum and course activities. In the best DE programs, training and on-going, long-term professional development is a priority. In addition, the use of well-trained tutors, as opposed to untrained or marginally-trained tutors is what separates successful tutoring programs from the rest. Also recommended were active learning strategies. Examples include problem solving groups, collaborative learning, small group work and other forms of active learning. Another best practice promotes and provides structured opportunities for collaboration and faculty sharing of instructional strategies on a routine basis, and regular meetings of faculty and support staff is also recommended.

Baltimore County Community College has an accelerated learning program (ALP) for its developmental writing students. MCC is currently modeling its ALP on this program, and a reading ALP is being piloted for the fall of 2012. The ALP model is to promote retention. BCCC advises institutions to build gradually, starting with a small pilot. Non ALP courses should continue to be offered to students as they may not be able to handle two reading courses at once, either for financial or emotional reasons. Once ALP has grown and is part of the program, BCCC advises faculty to meet three times a semester; have orientation sessions for faculty; ALP instructors receive one additional reassigned time to compensate instructor for developing a faculty handbook.

At Chabot College in California, a different method is being advanced. Chabot believes that having separated reading and writing courses produces shallow learning and students can be lost in the developmental pipeline. At this institution, the belief is that reading and writing should be integrated, leading to much deeper academic literacy. (These courses are graded Pass/Fail.)The following is an excerpt from their catalogue which indicates a number of different options for students who need strengthening of their reading and writing skills. The courses numbered 101a and 102b are for lower level writers and readers; beyond those, there is a variety of options for strengthening writing, including acceleration.

From their catalog:

Developmental Courses:

**101a Reading, Reasoning, and Writing I** -4 units

Academic reading, critical thinking, and writing expected in transfer and associate-degree classes. First semester of a two-semester sequence. Strongly recommended: participation in the English placement process.3 hours lecture, 2 hours individualized instruction.

**101b Reading, Reasoning and Writing II** -4 units

Second semester study of academic reading, reasoning, and writing skills. Preparation for academic reading, critical thinking, and writing expected in transfer and associate-degree classes. Prerequisite: Successful completion of English 101A. 3 hours lecture, 2 hours individualized instruction.

**102 Reading, Reasoning, and Writing –accelerated course -4 units**

Preparation for academic reading, critical thinking, and writing expected in transfer and associate-degree classes. Strongly recommended: participation in the English placement process. 3 hours lecture, 2 hours individualized instruction. (This one semester accelerated course leads directly to College English.)

**107 Introduction to English Grammar - 3 units**

Basic components and rules of English grammar, syntax, and punctuation. Includes parts of speech, sentence patterns, sentence purpose, sentence construction, and sentence level errors in conjunction with writing. 3 hours.

**115 Faculty-student tutorial: Writing and Reading across the Curriculum -½–3 units**

*(See also General Studies 115; English 115 and General Studies 115 may be repeated for a combined total of 3 times)* Self-paced, individualized instruction in reading and writing effectiveness. 2–6 hours laboratory.

In addition, Chabot College has several offerings for students who have diagnosed learning disabilities. Reading, Writing, Problem-Solving and Study Strategies are a few of the options available to these students, ranging from 2-4 units per course.

Baltimore City Community College created a Developmental Education Task Force to research best practices in developmental education and make recommendations for their school. They examined eighty-eight colleges involved in Achieving the Dream. They also reviewed books (Hunter Boylan's **What Works: Research-Based Best Practices in Developmental Education** and Robert McCabe's **Yes We can!**).

College-Wide Recommended Best Practices (gleaned from BCCC):

One common theme is that no single set of practices will be effective with every student. There was a broad consensus that a holistic approach to developmental education is best. A variety of best practices in Developmental Education were recommended:

- 1) The most successful programs are highly coordinated. It is recommended that either an administrator be appointed to serve as the overall head of all adult and developmental education efforts or a coordinated program with a faculty member as Developmental Education Program Coordinator on release time and/or salaried. The program coordinators for developmental English, reading, math, GED and ELL coordinators will work with an overall coordinator.
- 2) The college should establish a permanent Developmental Education Committee. The committee will plan, develop and coordinate developmental courses, programs, and services at the college.
- 3) The college should require students testing into developmental courses to complete an orientation that is scheduled before the start of classes. This orientation should include an introduction to developmental education, faculty, tutors, and a tour of the available learning support resources on campus. (This is very similar to what we do in the summer Sprint Program.)

4) Learning Communities are recommended, as they contribute to retention and improved student grades. Students learn more from courses that are integrated into a community than they do from isolated courses. Some examples given are pairing developmental reading and writing with college-level courses. These courses encourage students to apply the skills being taught in a developmental course to the college level course.

5) In terms of instructional approaches, the developmental education faculty should develop courses using a variety of formats, delivery modes, and innovative approaches. These include self-paced courses and accelerated courses.

6) Developmental courses need to improve skills and teach students to learn how to learn. A successful program provides their students with training in learning strategies, as developmental students are often unable to monitor their own comprehension.

7) Both integration of labs and integrated learning assistance/support are recommended. More time on task and support for a course is critical. Labs should also have computers so students can utilize computer-assisted instruction.

8) Finally, common exit tests should be developed and/or used for English and reading courses.

- 21. EXTERNAL CONSULTANT** (if applicable): After you have completed the self study and received feedback from an external consultant, please summarize that feedback, in terms of program strengths, areas needing improvement, and useful recommendations. Include a copy of the external consultant's report in the Appendices for this program review, and incorporate relevant information into the Summary section on the next page.

N/A

## SECTION VII: PROGRAM EVALUATION SUMMARY

- A. Program Strengths  
(Bulleted List with reference to the question(s) numbers in the program review where this strength is explained.)
- High completion rate in reading courses – Q. 12
  - Dedicated full-time and part-time instructors – Q. 18
  - Student satisfaction with Reading Lab Instructors – Q. 18, 23
- B. Program Action Plan for Improvements, Budgetary Implications, Timelines.  
Program Review is both evaluative and forward-thinking, offering the opportunity to set future directions for the program.

<b>Action Items</b> (Reference the question in the program review where this need is explained.)	<b>Proposed Plans for Improvement</b> (Bulleted list of suggestions.)	<b>Financial Needs to Make Improvements</b>	<b>Proposed Timelines for Implementation</b>
Q. 6 - Students completing ENG 060 will be tracked for the subsequent semester to evaluate their progress in their academic program.	Evaluate student progress.		Spring 2013
Q. 13 – Investigate and address the cause(s) for the significantly higher incomplete rate for students on the Lowell campus.	Examine the students who have received an incomplete to try to determine factors that differ from the Bedford population.		Fall 2012 and on
Q. 16 - Expand Reading Apprenticeship	Increase the use of these techniques in reading courses		Fall 2012 and on
Q. 2, 16 - Expand Reading Apprenticeship	Increase the use of these techniques college wide in content area classes	Professional Development funds	Fall 2012 and on
Q. 16 - Online Reading Apprenticeship Training sessions for faculty	Attendance at ALP Conference(s)	\$450/pp	Summer 2012 and on
Q. 13 - Run Accelerated Learning Program	New Initiative	Fund future ALP faculty to	2012-2013

courses (ALP) in reading on both campuses for ENG 055 and ENG 060		attend conferences	
Q. 14- Run a linked thematically based Reading and Writing Learning Community	Run a pilot to inform future course design		Fall 2012
Q. 13 & 20 - Redesign reading courses to incorporate writing and reasoning skills within a six credit course based on further exploration of Chabot College models	Work with the developmental Think Tank on course redesign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss ways to accelerate student progress</li> <li>• Discuss ways to provide more support for students who need more time on task to meet exit criteria</li> </ul>	Professional Development funds	Courses in place for fall 2013
Q. 18 – Expand space and equipment in Reading Labs	Discussions with Academic Support		Fall 2013
Q. 19 – Expand textbook reading in reading courses.	Reading instructors will compile a list of recommended textbook readings for the department to use in reading courses		Spring 2013