

Readiness with a Purpose: Foundations of College English
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This paper introduces a remediation initiative being implemented in the state of Delaware to eliminate the need for postsecondary remediation in ELA and coordinates with the theme of Developmental education: data and evaluation of pilot programs.

Introduction

The Readiness with a Purpose: Foundations of College English program has been implemented in the state of Delaware for three years; we are currently in our fourth year and continue to develop partnerships with our high schools. The information that follows provides the history of the program that also specifies the goals, target audience, and processes for implementation. Based on data collected so far, the program and course is addressing the readiness gaps in ELA for Delaware high school students. The policies, processes, and sustainability measures are strong and need to continue to be implemented and monitored. The program has multiple data collection avenues and those are outlined here as well. Based on three years of data, we have made several recommendations for strengthening the program as well as changes/adjustments made due to the move to virtual/hybrid learning.

Program Description

In the Spring of 2016, the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), Career and Technical Education (CTE) work group and Delaware Technical Community College (DTCC) partnered to address college-readiness in English Language Arts (ELA) for Allied Health program of study (POS) students. The Readiness with a Purpose program was initially funded through a Strada Education Network grant; districts/schools now use Perkins V funds for participation. The team initially consisted of CTE leadership from DDOE, a team of English

faculty from DTCC, and an Instructional Designer. The program now has one co-lead from DDOE and one from DTCC.

The project is aimed at juniors enrolled in Delaware high schools that offer the state-model Allied Health POS who, based on PSAT/SAT scores, do not demonstrate college-readiness in ELA. The benchmark used is a score of 480+ on the evidence-based Reading and Writing portion of the test.

Students enrolled in Allied Health POS are offered Anatomy and Physiology I (A&PI) through dual enrollment (DE), allowing them access to college-level course work while still enrolled in high school. A prerequisite for A&PI is college readiness in ELA. Based on the 2016 Delaware College Success report, “25% of Delaware students who enroll in an in-state higher education institute require remediation in English” (DDOE, 2016, p.3). Therefore, the Readiness with a Purpose program supports students not demonstrating ELA proficiency by allowing them to enroll in the Foundations of College English course during their junior year. Successful completion of the course, according to DTCC’s grading standards, will allow Allied Health POS students to take A&PI through DE during their senior year.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, DTCC formed a team of English faculty and one Instructional Designer to develop the course following the competencies and objectives of the college’s developmental English course: ENG 090. DTCC English faculty focused on reading content, writing assignments and associated materials. The Instructional Designer focused on creating folders and organizational schemas to allow for easy navigation of [course content](#) for both teachers and students.

Project leads then established a course code through DDOE to create continuity for reporting and assessment purposes. As a “walk through Schoology,” the course content was

shared with districts and schools who offer the Allied Health POS who also have students scoring below the benchmarks for ELA. LEAs, CTE directors, and ELA leaders from districts/schools were encouraged to ask questions about implementation, reporting, professional learning, funding, and advisement.

Interested parties then presented Delivery Plans that required LEAs to think through implementation. Plans were reviewed by program leads and feedback was provided. Initially, the primary questions centered on funding, impacts to master schedules, and teaching assignments. Course structure, including competencies, objectives, and assessments, was shared with all Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) in the state of Delaware to ensure recognition and acceptance of the program. The course is a preparatory course designed to provide reinforcement in writing skills and improve reading fluency and comprehension skills. Reading and writing activities are integrated to provide continuity and practical application.

The structure for professional learning (PL) was then developed. The PL is required of any teacher assigned to teach the Foundations of College English course. The initial development team from DTCC was consulted on the PL content to ensure completeness. They were also brought in as presenters for the first PL session.

The program team created a communication plan to ensure fidelity of course content. This plan requires face-to-face meetings with teachers at the conclusion of the first unit of content for the course with conference calls for subsequent units. Several evaluation tools were created prior to implementation: a survey for teachers on PL and teacher and student surveys to be distributed at the conclusion of the course.

Program Goals

Readiness with a Purpose: Foundations of College English proposes to:

- Increase demonstration of College and Career Readiness for ELA among Delaware high school graduates and
- Increase the number of students accessing college-level coursework while still in high school.

Strategies/Activities

The four Strategies/Activities used to achieve the goals of the Readiness with a Purpose program and Foundations of College English course are presented in two categories: 1) increasing enrollment and 2) improving the course through enhanced professional learning that includes instructional strategies. The first 3 activities (Participation and Marketing, Funding, and Advisement and Enrollment) contribute to the goal of increasing enrollment, while the 4th (Professional Learning) is focused on improving the course.

In addition to these strategies and activities, there are several contextual conditions necessary for reaching the goals of the program. The contextual conditions include:

- Implementing a pay for performance model of funding to provide four opportunities for districts and/or schools to provide ongoing support,
- Maintaining signed MOUs with IHEs in Delaware to accept completion of Foundations of College English course as demonstration of CCR,
- Ensuring access to LEAs to market the project,
- Ensuring access to guidance counselors to provide information about the course and PL,
- Ensuring availability of PL for teachers,

- Maintaining a shared communication model to establish continuity and maintain fidelity of the Foundations of College English course, and
- Developing and implementing a shared transcript model to communicate completion of the Foundations of College English course to IHEs.

Evaluation findings

The program includes several points for data collection. We have collected enrollment and completion data for three school years (presented in the table below), we survey teachers at the conclusion of PL, we interview teachers at the conclusion of the first unit of instruction of the course, and we survey teachers and students at the conclusion of the course. [Analysis of data](#) collected suggests the Foundations of College English course as a compelling model for remediation at the high school level.

Enrollment and completion data for three years of implementation

The following table summarizes the enrollment and completion data for the first three years of the Readiness with a Purpose program: Foundations of College English course and includes percentages. With just three years of implementation, the Foundations of College English course has seen 543 students demonstrate college and career readiness who otherwise would not have. The course has been offered in nine Delaware public high schools representing five districts within the state. During the first three years of implementation of the Foundations of College English course, 734 students have been enrolled and 543 have successfully completed which accounts for a 74% success rate.

Three years of enrollment and completion data for the Foundations of College English course

ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION RATES TO DATE			
Total number of students enrolled in the course	Total number of students who passed the course	Total number of students who failed the course	Percentage of success rate for students enrolled in the course
Year 1 =220	172	48	78%
Year 2 = 361	246	115	68%
Year 3 = 153	125	28	82%
734	543	191	74%

Changes/adjustments for the 2020-21 school year

Based on findings and analysis of data thus far, several changes and adjustments have been made to the program. Those changes include adding the new Pay for Performance funding model to increase participation, including guidance counselors in the PL for the program, and changes to PL for teachers. The changes to PL for teachers have been implemented for the 2020-21 school year and the data collected is presented here as are plans for the longitudinal study moving forward.

In an effort to increase completion rates, and as indicated in the analysis of enrollment and completion data, a professional learning (PL) series has been developed and implemented with current Foundations of College English instructors to provide information and modeling opportunities for Self-Regulated Strategy Instruction (SRSI), an instructional strategy that has proven results when working with struggling writers at both the high school and postsecondary level.

The content for this enhanced PL will also be incorporated into the required PL for teachers who are new to the Readiness with a Purpose program and Foundations of College

English course so that these instructional strategies become a salient part of the program moving forward.

Grading and assessing student work will also be addressed in PL moving forward. Teachers assigned to teach the Foundations of College English course will participate in rubric normalizing activities. Student samples taken from the ENG 090 course taken through DTCC will be used for Foundations of College English instructors to practice grading using the rubric associated with the course during PL. Normalizing activities will include independent grading of student samples with course rubrics followed by comparison of scores assigned. Depending on the size of the PL group this will be conducted as one large group or several small groups that then report out based on the comparison discussion. Based on differences in scores the discussion will focus on competencies and what mastery of those competencies looks like in student products. If necessary, the rubrics will also be reviewed for clarification of meaning and expectation associated with criteria descriptors on the rubric.

To assess grading norms among current Foundations of College English teachers, a student learning outcomes assessment is scheduled for the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year. All participating Foundations of College English teachers will be asked to submit student samples for the final assignment of the course to program leads. All identifying information will be removed from the samples including student, teacher, school, and district information. Samples will be collected and scored by a team comprised of the program lead and teachers of the Foundations of College English course. The assessment process will ensure at least three graders to account for inter-rater reliability. The unit four rubric will be used to assess each student sample. The rubrics from each scorer of that sample will then be compared. This process

will be conducted for each sample. Finally, a master rubric will be created to show the overall results of the scores for all submitted samples.

Conclusions and a Path Forward

The conclusion drawn for the Readiness with a Purpose program and Foundations of College English course evaluation is that the program and course is addressing the readiness gaps in ELA for Delaware high school students. The policies, processes, and sustainability measures are strong and need to continue to be implemented and monitored to ensure the effectiveness of the program and course.

The ongoing collection of data is a strength of the program; the information provided through the numerous surveys is providing insight for program needs to provide resources and ongoing communication with all audiences associated with the program and course.

The plans for continued assessment and evaluation are strong and will sustain the program moving forward. Based on the data gathered and the analysis provided, it can be concluded that this program will serve as a model for remediation at the high school level and can be implemented more broadly for Delaware high school students.

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