

Developmental and Beyond!
How Integrating Reading and Writing Launches Students (of Color) Toward Success
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IRW Course Redesign: From Stand-Alone Reading Writing to Integrated Reading-Writing



	Traditional Developmental Classes	Integrated Reading Writing Class
One Level Below Transfer	<p>2 separate developmental classes (8 units total):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English 163: Techniques of College Reading (4 units = 3 lecture + 1 lab unit) • English 151B: Fundamentals of Composition (4 units = 3 lecture + 1 lab unit) 	<p>1 integrated reading and writing class (5 units total):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English 151RW: Introduction to College Reading and Writing (5 units)

Comparison of Traditional Developmental and Integrated Reading Writing Course Curricula

	Traditional Developmental Reading Course	Traditional Developmental Writing Course	IRW Course
Course Organization	Skills-based organization. <i>Example: Main idea vs. supporting details</i>	Rhetorical modes organization. <i>Example: Illustration paper</i>	Thematically organized around questions. <i>Example: Do social media isolate or connect us?</i>
Assigned Readings	Short articles and essays. <i>Example: "Me and My Shadow" a 3-page personal experience essay about the relationship between a blind person and her dog</i>	Short articles and essays. <i>Example: A 3-page survey of college freshmen that includes students' responses to questions about why they are attending college</i>	Articles, book chapters, and a book. <i>Example: "Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?" a 19-page Atlantic Monthly article incorporating research, interviews, and anecdotes</i>
Assigned Writings	Short answers to comprehension or inference questions and summary writing. <i>Example: Determine the topic and main idea of the article--Pick a sentence from the article that expresses the main idea AND write the main idea in your own words.</i>	Paragraphs and essays such as illustration, summary, or compare-contrast that refer to or model the readings. <i>Example: Three reasons for attending college most frequently cited are to get a better job, to learn more about things, and to make more money. Do you and people you know share these reasons for going to college?</i>	Essays, including critical response, synthesis, and argument papers that incorporate information from the readings. <i>Example: Is Facebook—or other social media—making us lonely, as Stephen Marche suggests in his article? Draw from the articles we have read and from your own experiences with Facebook to support your position.</i>
Other Work	Reading comprehension programs and activities. <i>Example: Students study the PQR3 (Preview, Question, Read, Recite and Review) and apply to textbook chapters supplied by the lab</i>	Grammar exercises assigned as lab work and short writing exercises. <i>Example: Students study a module on commas and take a test.</i>	Debates, presentations, and reading quizzes. <i>Example: Student groups present key concepts from one of the assigned readings on social media to the class</i>

Core Principles for IRW

Based on California Acceleration Project (CAP) principles¹, six key features of Ohlone's IRW class promote student success:

1. True Integration of Reading and Writing. The IRW course stresses engagement with texts that are incorporated into the writing assignments, as students must respond to the authors' ideas, use textual evidence to support their position on a topic, or anticipate and answer counter-arguments. Moreover, IRW students examine the readings to develop writing skills, such as idea development, paragraph organization, sentence variety, punctuation skills, and vocabulary.

2. College-level Material. "Backward design" means creating a developmental class that emulates the work done in transfer-level English. The difference is that reading and writing moves are made more explicit and broken down in the IRW class. Nevertheless, the readings in IRW are college-level, the writing assignments are essays that incorporate readings, and the thinking skills, such as argument and synthesis, are compatible with transfer-level composition.

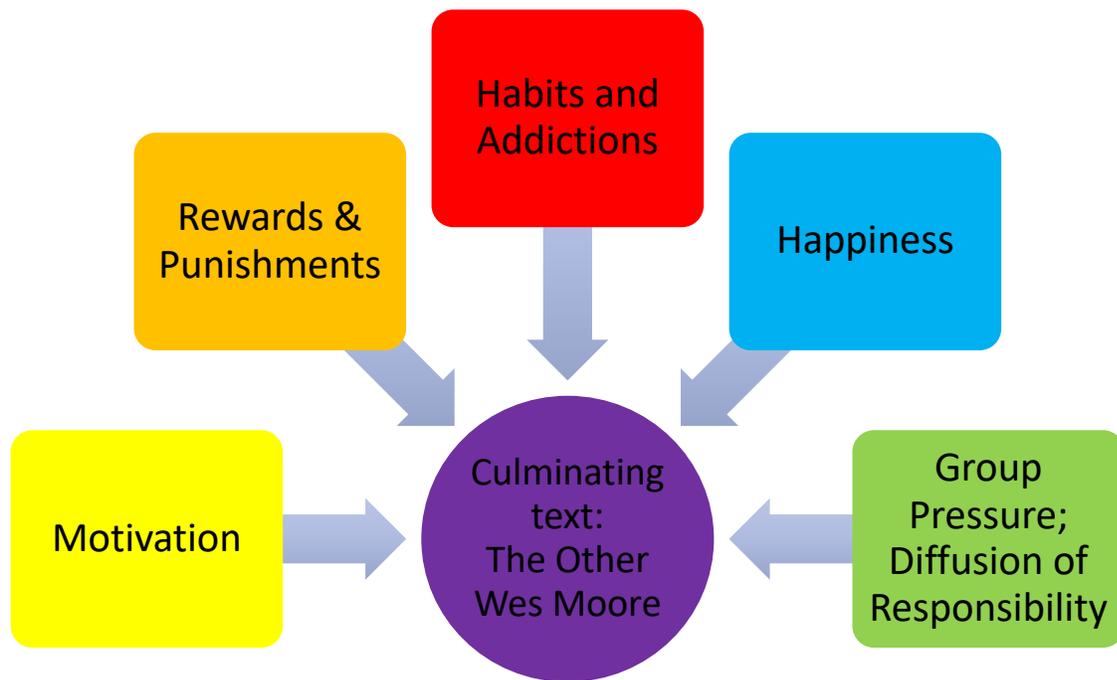
3. Intensive Writing and Extensive Reading. The more students engage in literacy tasks, the more likely they are to build fluency and competence. Since developmental students may have less experience reading, they need more reading time to catch up to their peers. Extensive reading is designed to give students strategies for tackling long texts, such as chunking and summarizing, or assessing and pacing the time needed to complete a reading. For writing, students must learn to compose long, sustained works.

4. Low-stakes, Collaborative Practice. Novices in any endeavor need support, encouragement, and guidance. They must understand what is expected of them, how to achieve those expectations, and how to persist through the predictable mistakes and setbacks that accompany learning. Low-stakes activities and collaborative practice allow students to try new reading, writing, and thinking skills without excessive judgment. This approach not only gives students confidence but also builds skills.

5. Intentional Support for Affective Needs. Students in developmental classes often struggle with confidence and motivation, sometimes due to years of bad experiences in school. IRW strategies and activities are designed to help students be successful, thus building their confidence and preparing them for even harder work.

6. Individualized Instruction. A significant and intentional difference between traditional reading and writing classes and the IRW class is elimination of the lab requirement. This allows for more focus in the classroom and more individualized instruction. The IRW instructor can work individually with students during or after class, to handle grammar or other writing issues. Moreover, rather than teach students skills before they read or write, instructors can teach skills students need *as* they read and write.

¹ Five core design principles advocated by CAP are 1) Backward design from college-level courses; 2) Relevant, thinking-oriented curriculum; 3) Just-in-time remediation; 4) Low stakes, collaborative practice; and 5) Intentional support for students' affective needs.

IRW Curriculum: Theme-Based Units

Theme-Based Units: Each unit focuses on a question, such as What Motivates Us? or What Makes Us Happy? that guides the students' reading, writing, and thinking.

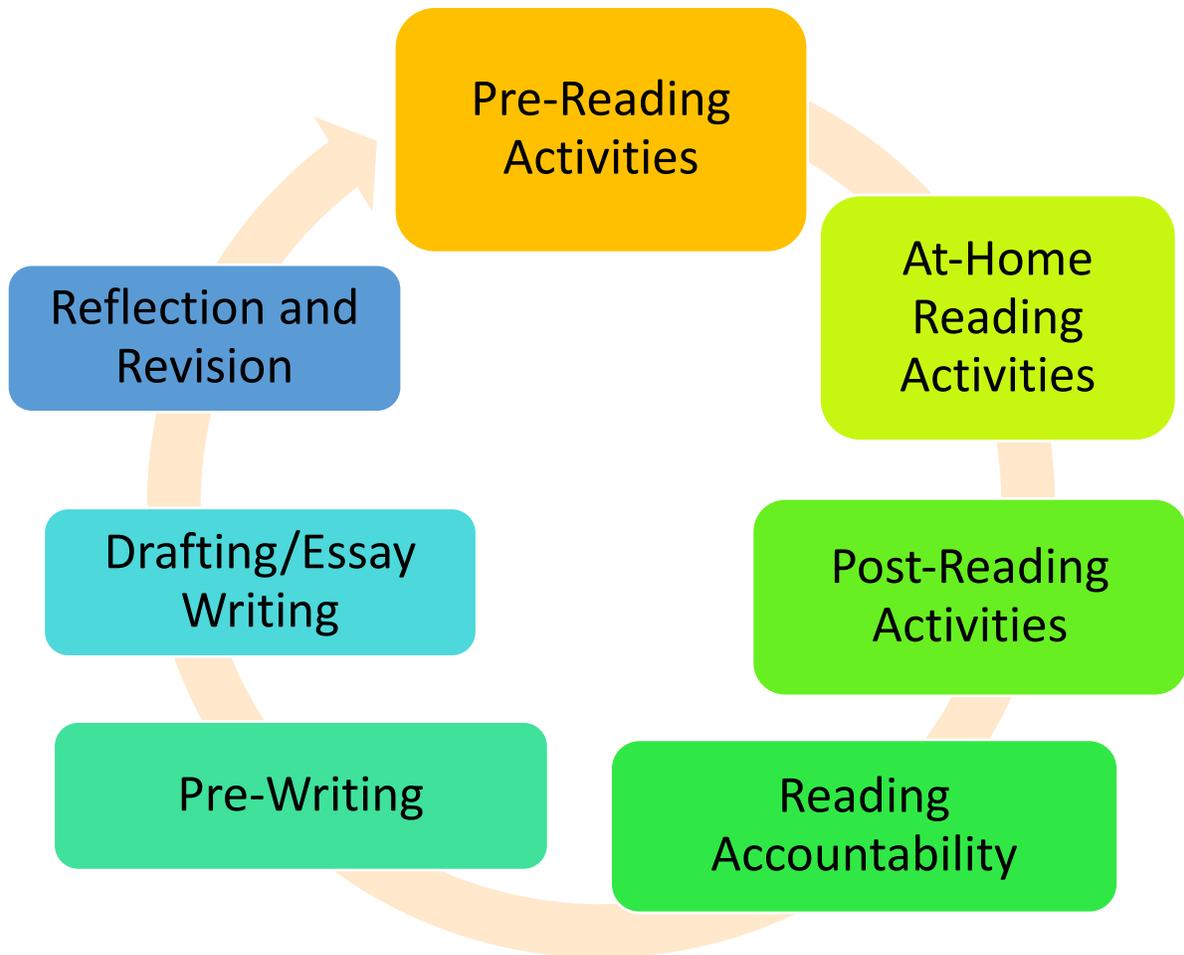
Reading in Depth: Readings, graphs or data, videos or podcasts in the unit are related to that theme so students read and think in-depth about a topic. Readings are chosen to present conflicting or diverse points of view. For instance, in the Addiction unit students are exposed to a neurochemical explanation for addiction (that chemicals create dependency) vs. research suggesting environment drives drug addiction.

Writing Extensively: Students freewrite on the topic to tap into background knowledge, annotate the texts looking for main ideas, write responses to the texts, prewrite to develop original ideas and formulate support for ideas, draft and revise an essay on the topic.

Connecting Texts: Texts connect within each unit, but also texts from previous units can be related to texts in subsequent units to create more complexity. For example, when reading *The Other Wes Moore*, students can apply concepts such as intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation and growth vs. fixed mindset (from the Motivation unit) or how social factors cause addiction (from the Habits and Addiction unit) to the two Wes Moore's lives to explain their success or failure.

Selecting Texts: Readings are chosen for academic rigor, real-life relevance, and connection to students' lives. For instance, readings about diffusion of responsibility are grounded in Darley and Latane's research on the bystander effect, the Kitty Genovese murder, and connected to peer pressure and teen bullying.

IRW Instructional Cycle



Description of IRW Instructional Cycle

Pre-Reading Activities. In-class activities, such as watching a short video or TED Talk, freewriting or completing a survey, build “schema” and activate students’ background knowledge of and interest in the topic. Instructors provide guidance as to what to pay attention to, key terms that might be unfamiliar, and strategies to help students tackle challenging sections.

At-Home Reading Activities. Students apply assigned reading strategies outside class (such as annotating, chunking, paraphrasing, marking quotes) or complete journals, discussion questions, or short writing assignments after reading. Such assignments build accountability for reading and help students prepare for class.

Post-Reading Activities. In-class activities help students process, clarify, and engage with ideas and information from the readings. These activities include small-group and whole-class discussions, in-class writing, debates, games, and presentations. Metacognitive conversation is woven throughout to increase students’ awareness of strategies for approaching academic reading, reasoning, and writing.

Reading Accountability. Some measure is built into the class (a quiz, graphic organizer, debate, Canvas post, etc.) to make students accountable for the more difficult aspects of the major readings. Students move from informal or group discussion to explaining their understanding of the readings using their own words and are assessed on their efforts.

Pre-Writing. Students practice articulating and supporting their own points (using their own reasoning and logic as well as information from the reading). Students respond to counterarguments posed in the readings and by other students.

Essay Writing. Students build a formal argument in response to a prompt. Good prompts require critical, nuanced thinking about the ideas in the readings. In contrast, poor prompts allow students to rely mostly on personal experience (rather than the text) or focus only on text without developing their own perspective. Students give and get feedback on their writing from classmates and from the instructor through all stages of the writing process from prewriting and drafting to revising, editing, and proofreading.

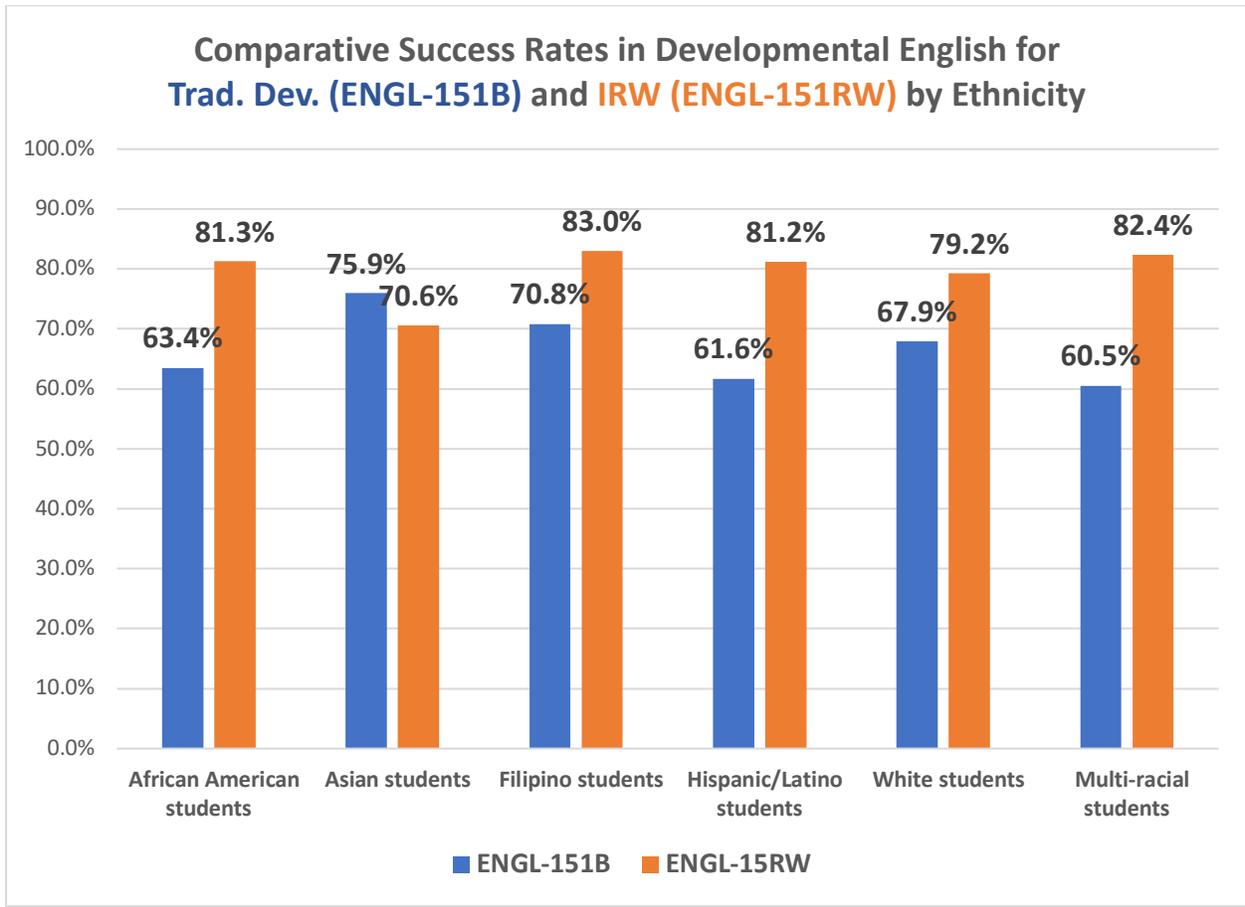
Reflection and Revision. Students have an opportunity to revise all or parts of their essay and reflect on their writing process after they receive a graded paper. This reflection and revision allows students to better understand and build on their strengths as writers and to improve their areas of weakness.

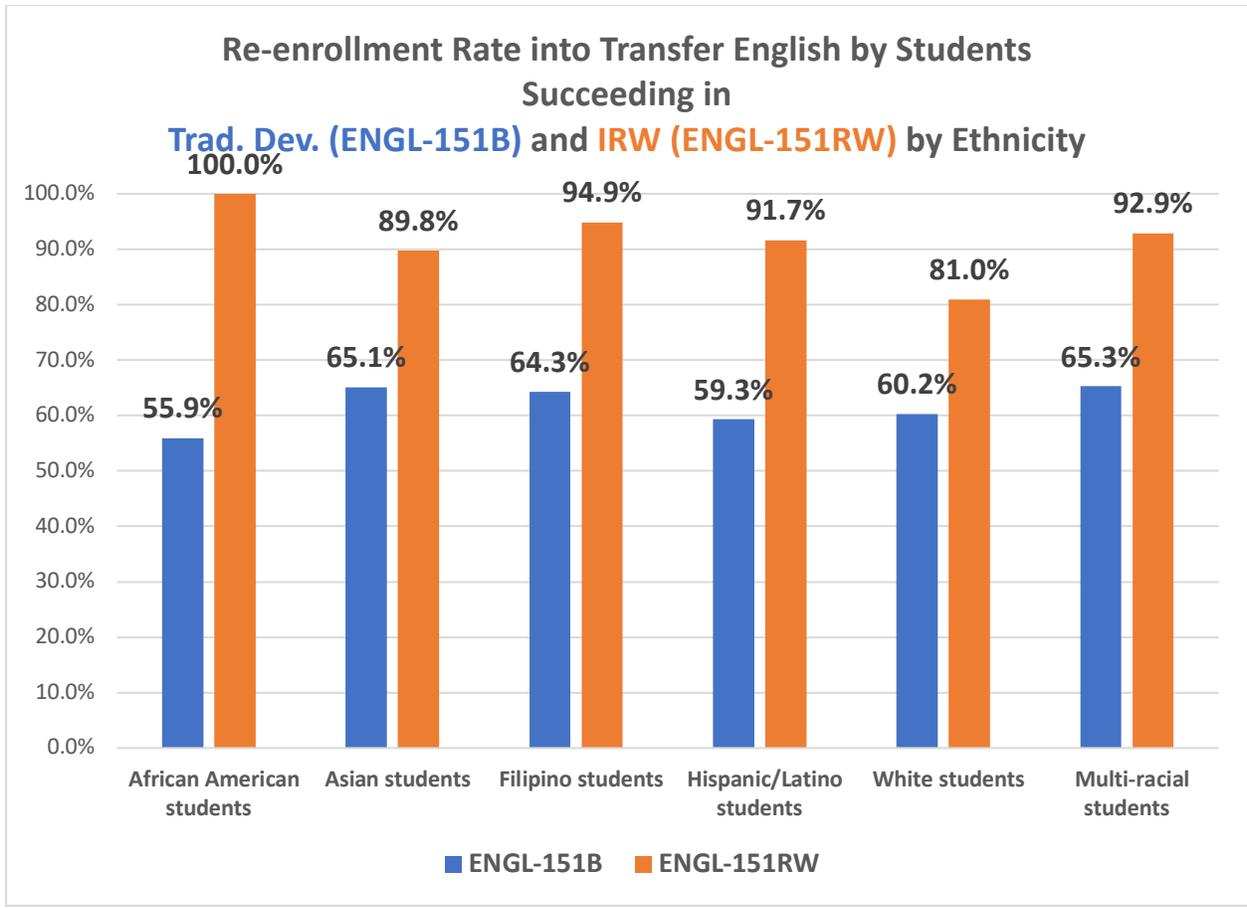
NOTE: While this instructional cycle might appear to foreground reading strategies before writing activities, in fact writing to understand the reading and reading to develop writing skills are interwoven throughout each unit. Moreover, the instructional cycle was immensely helpful for envisioning how we would integrate reading with writing in the classroom.

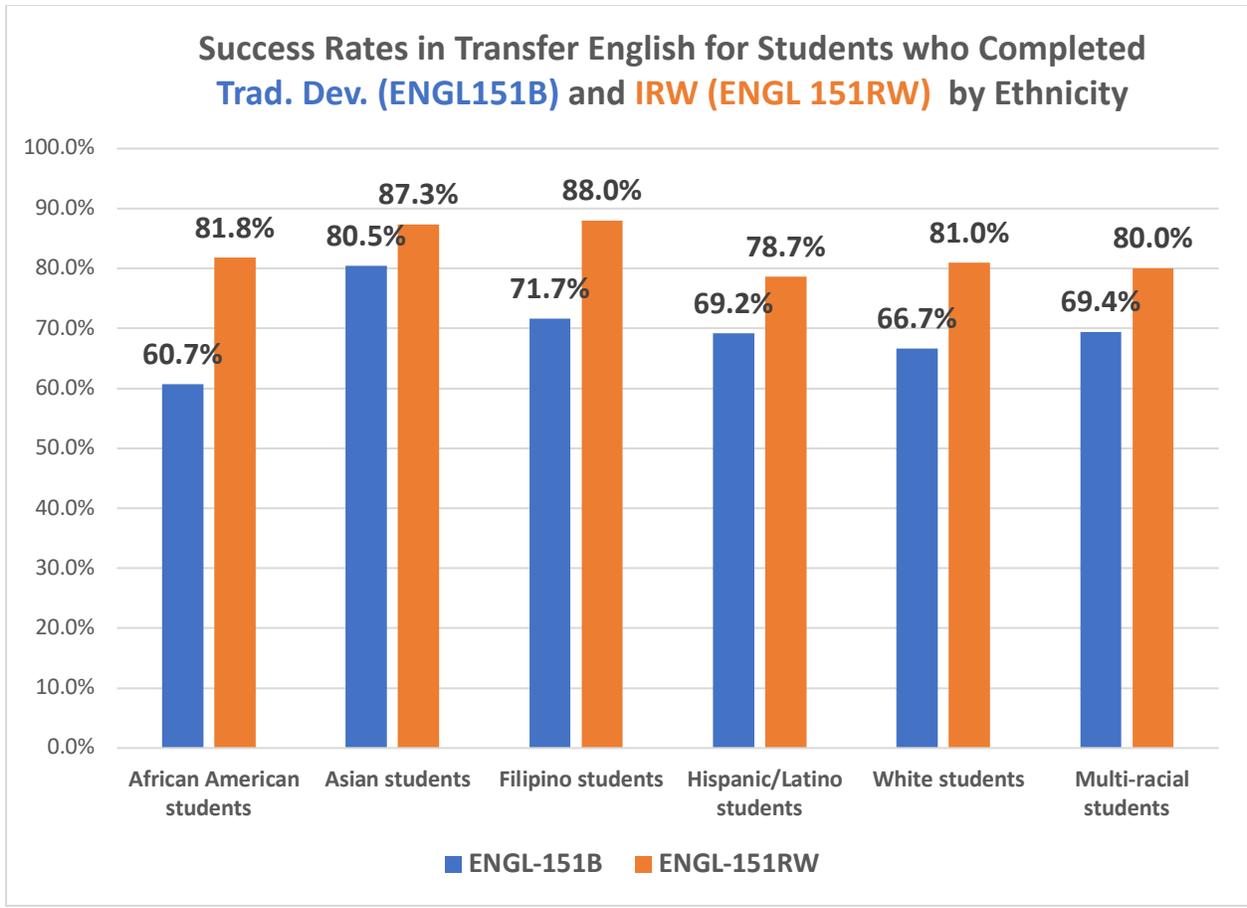
Example of the Instructional Cycle in an Integrated Reading Writing Course

Overview of Reading and Writing for Unit on Addiction	
<p>Core readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Angie Bachmann” by Charles Duhigg (from <i>The Power of Habit</i>) • “Rat Park” by Lauren Slater (from <i>Opening Skinner’s Box</i>) <p>Related readings for “Bachmann”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How the Brain Gets Addicted to Gambling” (in <i>Scientific American</i>) • “The Evolving Definition of Pathological Gambling in the DMS-5” (from the National Center for Responsible Gambling) <p>Related readings for “Rat Park”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Rat Park” cartoon version by Stuart McMillen • “Big Mystery: What Causes Addiction?” by Michael Segell (NBCNews.com) <p>Essay Prompt</p> <p>Do you think Bachmann should be responsible for her gambling debts? Or was Bachmann unable to control her behavior because of her addiction? Was Harrah’s casino in any way responsible for her losses by encouraging her to gamble? In your essay, explain to what degree Bachmann is responsible for her gambling debts.</p>	
Examples of Reading and Writing Activities for Unit on Addiction	
Pre-Reading Activity	Students freewrite and discuss questions about addiction, such as What causes addiction?
At-Home Reading Activity	Students read a chapter from Charles Duhigg’s book <i>The Power of Habit</i> that details, via anecdotes and research, how Angie Bachmann went into debt gambling; students must chunk, annotate, and write one-sentence summaries of the chapter, look up key vocabulary, and mark confusing passages.
Post-Reading Activity	Students “jigsaw” the chapter by reviewing their notes and annotations in groups; each group presents to the class: a summary of one section of the reading; an explanation of a confusing passage; a review of key vocabulary; a connection they made to the text (text to text, or text to self); a quote that sums up an important idea
Reading Accountability Activity	Students are assigned positions and engage in a debate as to whether Angie Bachmann is responsible for her debts or whether the casino is responsible for Bachmann’s debts drawing on multiple texts for support.
Pre-Writing Activity	Students review their notes and complete a graphic organizer that will help them determine to what degree Bachmann is responsible for her gambling with evidence for that position and including counter arguments.
Essay Writing Activity	Students bring a draft of their essay to class and engage in peer review, focusing on key questions such as, Have they accurately explained the ideas in the readings? Have they presented an interesting argument? Do they have sufficient evidence to support their view? Have they raised and dealt with counter arguments?
Reflection and Revision Assignment	After students receive their essay with instructor feedback, they may revise their paper and/or write about what they felt was strong or weak in their reading and writing, and what they will do differently in future papers.

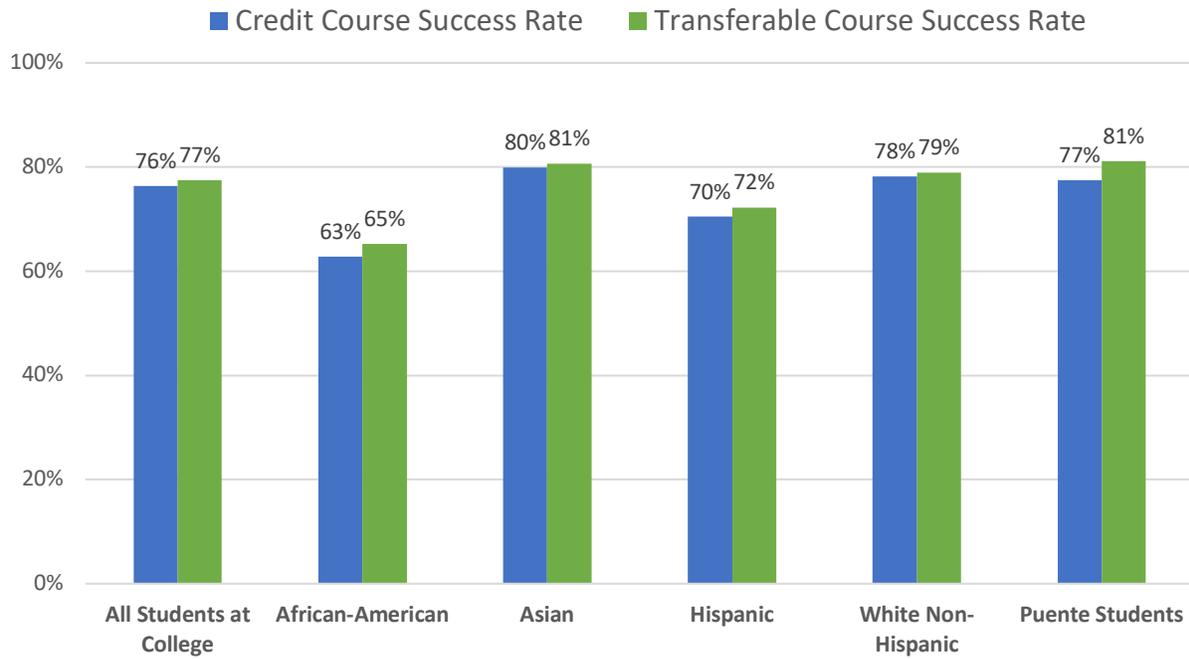
Evidence of Success in IRW: Data







2016-17 Academic Year²



Evidence of Success in IRW: Student Comments on the IRW Class

At the end of the semester, students in IRW are asked to reflect on their growth and experiences as readers, writers, and learners in their IRW class. They are provided with a variety of prompts, which might ask them to reflect on their motivation or success, how the IRW English class compared to other English classes, what they most enjoyed about the class, or what they learned. Students typically are not graded on this assignment, but awarded points for completion. The student comments below come from these ends of the semester reflections.

Student Comment on Stand Alone Reading and Writing Classes vs. IRW (Principle 1)

- “I am so happy I was able to take this [IRW] class, as opposed to taking separate reading and writing classes like I did last semester. What I have enjoyed the most was how straight-forward this course was. There were no pop-quizzes or regular tests. Just an essay at the end of each unit that would sum-up everything we have learned from the articles we read.”

Student Comment on College Level Material (Principle 2)

- “I really did enjoy this type of English class [IRW] more than the other English classes I had in the past. The other classes would be such a waste of time and would teach irrelevant topics/readings to us. I really felt like I was dumb in those classes, they were just horrible and boring. I felt that we were never going to really use any lessons ... in real life scenarios. I highly prefer [IRW] English classes that involve critical thinking and reading because I feel they are more relatable...It was challenging at some times but it was a good type of challenge.”

Student Comment on Extensive Reading (Principle 3)

- “[IRW] is going to have students read a lot of articles. I recommend not to procrastinate when it comes down to reading these articles because you’re going to have about four articles that you’ll have to read before the next day of class. I believe that the readings in [IRW] are very interesting. A lot of articles and books that I’ve read throughout high school were completely boring to the point where I had no motivation to put in any effort in actually understanding what I was reading. I can honestly say that the articles that I’ve read in this class really grabbed my attention and because they grabbed my attention, they were very understandable.”

Student Comment on Low Stakes, Collaborative Practice (Principle 4)

- “I really enjoyed the whole [IRW] class, but what I really enjoyed was some of the class activities we did. Vocab games, working in groups to come up with good quotes and sentences was really fun for me and it really helped me out in my writing and how I word things.”

Student Comment on Support for the Affective Domain (Principle 5)

- “I doubted myself a few times because I was never certain whether my essays were convincing enough, but the grades I received on each one showed me how complex my writing has gotten. I like how focused the class was on improvement. You did not expect us to write award-winning novels on our first paper and told us that growth was a much more important take-away from this class.”

Student Comment on Individualized Instruction (Principle 6)

- “I also appreciated all of the extra help that was offered to us, such as: an outside tutor and how available you made yourself to accommodate our needs. I really enjoyed having the option during class time to have our peers edit our essays or just work on our own. The class time we were given to work definitely motivated me to better my essays and not wait the last minute to work on them.”

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