

English Department
Summary of Findings
2008 - 2009

I. ESLRs Gunn has chosen to emphasize:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts, principles, processes, facts, and skills in the disciplines of language arts, history-social science, mathematics, science, physical education, visual and performing arts, foreign language, career-vocational education, and health/practical living skills. (**“Content”**)
2. Effective communication through listening, speaking, and writing. (**“Communicate”**)
4. Ability to integrate knowledge among disciplines. (**“Connect”**)
6. Critical and creative thinking to solve problems. (**“Critical/creative thinking”**)

II. Evidence we used:

“Representative student work that shows a range of student performance levels.”
Essays and reading logs of varying degrees of “mastery” from freshman/sophomore and junior/senior courses.

III. Summary of findings:

- A. Strengths and relevant ESLRs and Framework Standards (key to abbreviations below):

1. Teacher awareness of student growth and “scope and sequence” of student learning. In keeping with department philosophy, nearly all teachers teach all grades and all levels of courses. (ESLRs 1, 2, 4, 6; all standards)

Features of our program that facilitate include:

- a. cross-grade grouping (9/10 and 11/12)
- b. twenty-to-one ratio for freshmen and sophomores
- c. opportunity for accelerated studies (“advanced,” honors)
- d. semester-long courses allow students to experience as many as eight English teachers. Teachers often discuss individual student’s needs and strategies for “differentiating instruction”

2. Commitment to helping students become better readers, writers, speakers and critical and creative thinkers. (ESLRs 1, 2, 4, 6; all standards)

Features of our program that facilitate this include:

- a. Teachers read student work and comment extensively (Writing 1, 2).
Even when “reader money” was available, most English teachers turned it down, viewing the reading and assessment of their students’ writing one of the best teaching and learning tools we have.

- b. cross-grade grouping (9/10 and 11/12)
- c. twenty-to-one ratio for freshmen and sophomores (all standards)
- d. opportunity for accelerated studies (“advanced,” honors) (all standards)

3. Helping students make an effective, smooth transition from 8th to 9th grade and from high school to college. (ESLRs 2, 4, 6; all standards, especially Listening and Speaking)

- a. cross-grade grouping (9/10) (this often makes English act as an ad hoc homeroom)
- b. twenty-to-one ratio for freshmen and sophomores
- c. opportunity for “accelerated” study in “honors” and AP course

- d. work with college essays and personal statements
- e. write college recommendations for a high number of students
- 4. Encourage student choice and their pursuing their interests. Encourage students to connect work to other subjects and “real life.” (ESLRs 4, 6; all standards)
 - a. self-selection of “general” or “advanced” in 9/10
 - b. extensive list of “elective” courses for 11/12
 - c. freedom in selection of paper topics
 - d. Gunn’s only three truly “interdisciplinary” courses – “Dramatic Literature in Performance,” “Shakespeare in Performance” and “American Studies.”
- 5. Students gain an understanding of and ability to develop a thesis and sustain a focus (ESLRs 1, 2, 6; Writing 1, 2 and WOC)
- 6. Students use primary texts to prove points (ESLRs 1, 6; Reading 2, 3)
- 7. Students develop critical thinking skills – “reading between the lines” (ESLRs 1, 2, 6; Reading 1, 2, 3)
 - a. class discussions
 - b. reading logs
 - c. integration of supplemental material (e.g., outside reading, multimedia)
 - d. opportunities for students to express their learning in many ways
- 8. Encouraging students to take risks (in thinking, writing, speaking) (all standards)
 - a. many activities and learning opportunities in a class period
 - b. differentiated instruction
 - c. in some classes a more “relaxed” environment for students to “be themselves”
 (ESLRs 2, 4, 6)
- 9. Mastering and enriching student vocabulary (ESLRs 1, 2; Reading 1)
- 10. “Inter-rater reliability” – consistency of assessment (ESLRs 1, 2; all standards)
 - a. department meetings spent “calibrating”
 - b. ERB rubric

B. Areas for Growth and Framework Standard Involved:

- 1. Continue to improve the transition from 8th to 9th and from high school to college. (All standards)
- 2. Continue to address strategies to closing the achievement gap. (All standards, especially: Reading 1, 2; Writing 1; Written and Oral Conventions 1)
- 3. Continue to motivate non-reading students. (Reading 1,2,3)
- 4. Continue to teach the use of best evidence. (Writing, 1,2; WOC 1)
- 5. Help students continue to make personal connections to the literature without compromising academic and intellectual rigor. (Reading 2,3; Writing 1,2;)
- 6. Continue to articulate skills we are teaching and testing, from lower- to higher-order thinking. (All standards)
- 7. Continue to examine standards for teaching and assessing skills in and mastery of mechanics. (Writing 1,2,3; WOC 1)

CALIFORNIA READING/LANGUAGE ARTS FRAMEWORK ABBREVIATIONS

Reading:

- 1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development – WV
- 2.0 Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials) – RC
- 3.0 Literary Response and Analysis – LRA

Writing:

- 1.0 Writing Strategies – WS
- 2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics) – WA

Written and Oral English Language Conventions:

- 1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions – WOC

Listening and Speaking:

- 1.0 Listening and Speaking Strategies – LSS
- 2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics) – SA