

Chapter 4

C: Standards based Student Learning: Instruction

C1: To what extent are all students involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve the academic standards and the expected school-wide learning results?

Across the disciplines at SRHS District Standards, ESLRs, and State Frameworks form our curricular content and instructional strategies.

Subject area texts are state adopted and align with the state frameworks. Standards and ESLRs are identified, incorporated into lessons, posted, and discussed in classrooms. Evidence that our curriculum matches state standards includes projects, research, and student analysis of rhetorical strategies. Departments are adapting more activities from teacher-centered to student-centered, allowing courses to be more “challenging, satisfying, rigorous and aligned” to subject standards and school-wide ESLRs (Focus on Learning Rubric).

All departments, at all levels of instruction, employ innovative methods and instructional strategies to meet the varied needs of our diverse student population. For example, curriculum is delivered using many techniques including lectures, guest speakers, inquiry, simulations, mock trials, paired activities, group activities, play-writing, and individual research, etc. In many courses, students continually do self-assessments and group assessments to develop strategies for improved performance. Courses at all levels, from sheltered instruction to AP classes have many hands-on activities that include both skill development and application of acquired knowledge in a practical setting.

Strengths

All departments:

- Use technology
- Clearly meet ESLRs and standards
- Promote community, citizenship and responsibility
- Offer challenging learning experiences
- Promote higher order and abstract/analytical thinking

Supporting Evidence

- Test results: STAR, CAHSEE, SBE and teacher-generated
- Survey results, WASC Overall Student Survey questions #2 and #4
- Photos
- Media center
- Science and technology labs
- Math contests
- Writing handbook and other student work to support lesson plans
- GATE
- AP classes
- Grading rubrics
- Project assignments and papers relating to lesson plans (available in each teacher’s classroom)

Key Issues

- No common planning time and
- Limited articulation among various peer groups
- Few opportunities for staff development specific for site needs
- Teacher-centered, rather than student-centered activities
- Increase in departmentally compartmentalized curricula
- GATE program lacks scope
- Large core class sizes
- Outdated technology and poor technical support

2: To what extent do all teachers use a variety of strategies and resources, including technology and experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom, that actively engage students, emphasize higher order thinking skills, and help them succeed at high levels?

From simple word processing programs found in all of labs, to digital cameras used in arts classes, SRHS teachers take pride using a variety of materials and technology to challenge students' thinking and improve instruction. Many instructors have also found ways to include creative projects, as well as some self-directed field trips to museums and art galleries.

The majority of SRHS teachers employ multiple strategies and resources to engage all students. Assignments are tailored to address each of the subject standards and Santa Rosa High School ESLRs. Teachers, both personally and through curriculum, exemplify the importance of the ESLRs in lessons designed to develop student responsibility, confidence, community, and experimentation to create results which are beyond "inside the box" outcomes.

Technology is used in many ways in all departments. In Mathematics teachers use technology, direct instruction, group activities, contests, field trips, and math-related research to actively engage students in problem-solving and critical thinking. In Science, teachers use video-microscopes, laser disk videos, Internet, lab simulation software and computer-based labs. Physics students are introduced to photo-gates, force sensors, motion sensors, and other experiences that are the cutting-edge technology. World Languages classes employ technology with PowerPoint projects, multimedia resources, Internet research, and on-line sites linked to the texts. The Spanish for Spanish Speakers classes use the Community Media Center to produce programs for Cable Channel 71 by writing (students write their own scripts in groups), directing (individual students are in charge of the entire production of skits), camera operation, and acting (students perform the skits, puppet shows, poems, and songs). These are all roles that prepare for potential career opportunities.

Teachers reflect on and constantly modify courses, to provide an instructional program that is challenging, satisfying and rigorous. Physical Education uses fitness equipment with digital technology, and students create personal fitness regimes. History and English participate in internet-based research. English classes often go to the computer lab to develop PowerPoint presentations as well. The Art Department includes lessons on digital arts and video production as well as working across the curriculum to critique peer work.

A wide range of vocational courses offer opportunities to explore potential careers or simply gain an appreciation outside of the “academic” core.

Students’ work demonstrates the extent to which current teaching practices provide all students with tools to gather and create knowledge. Opportunities are created to use those tools to research, inquire, gather, discover and invent knowledge of their own which promotes thinking and success at higher academic levels now and in the future.

Strengths

All departments:

- Use technology
- Clearly meet ESLRs and standards
- Promote community, citizenship and responsibility
- Offer challenging learning experiences
- Promote higher order and abstract/analytical thinking
- Employ highly trained, engaged, and creative staff

Supporting Evidence

- Test results
- Survey results, student survey questions #2 and #4
- Photos
- Media Center
- World Language cultural research projects, creative writing and skits, etc.
- Art gallery reviews
- Peer critiques
- Artist statements, personal project critiques, and performances in each field
- Science reports
- “Present-and practice” math lessons
- P.E creates challenging, skill-building experiences
- Theater arts students participate and win in festival competitions
- Theater students write, act and produce original one-act plays
- Agriculture students operate a vineyard
- Collaborative projects occur between the school and outside agencies such as the Santa Rosa Symphony
- Technology labs
- Math contests and “Pi” day
- Writing Handbook and other student work to support lesson plans
- GATE
- AP classes
- Grading rubrics
- Project assignments and papers relating to lesson plans
- Post-secondary acceptance rates

Key Issues

- Lack of common planning time and articulation among various peer groups
- Little support of staff development for research and collaboration
- Lack of instrument to track post-graduate outcomes
- Large core class sizes
- Updated technology and equipment