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[How We Are Studying First Year Writing at SJSU](#)

Below is a list of our projects and goals at SJSU as we study our First Year Writing program through its post-remediation transition:

1. A five-year longitudinal success data study to collect quantitative measures of student progress through the curriculum: This includes entrance test scores, course grades in all writing courses at SJSU (entry-level, second semester, and GWAR/disciplinary workshops). It includes also GPAs throughout the student's career samples concurrent to the semester of completing the writing courses and completing the degree. This study measures these data points for students entering on pre-Stretch and post-Stretch curricular pathways to measure the relative success of the curricular paths against each other. The five-year study thus takes in 10 years of data, 5 prior to and 5 years following the pilot and implementation of Stretch/DSP to allow for comparative study of program success.
2. Complementing this quantitative data and contextualizing it are data we have gathered about language backgrounds through a survey we have conducted each fall for the past 4 years, as well as exit surveys about DSP and course satisfaction. This survey is based on Dana Ferris's in-depth language background survey, accounting for a full range of language backgrounds in a multilingual writing community. All of these survey data can be parsed along a full range of other educational and socio-economic data used to define meaningful cohorts for assessment: test scores (or multiple measures), race, class, age, gender—and language background.
3. Further context is provided by several qualitative data sets: DSP reflection and choice surveys and ePortfolios. The surveys help us to understand student confidence and comfort as they work through our self placement modules, which position them to try out college reading and writing for themselves and study their course options to make a choice. Grounded in the theory of learning transfer rather than placement, these modules give us a wealth of data to study. We are currently doing 1) word frequency analysis on the students' writing files to map values among the students entering our program, and 2) focus group readings and discussions of portfolios with faculty, staff, and administrators at SJSU to map campus values as well. Understanding the alignment of these values will help us to guide the campus through a transition from a post-remediation to a multilingual learning community.
4. The DSP *Reflection on College Writing* portfolios are the first portfolios students produce. They also produce a reflection portfolios at the end of their first and their second writing courses, provided they take both with us in the First Year Writing Program. These portfolios are archived as are the scoring guides instructors have generated in assessing them. We are thus building a robust assessment practice and archive. The development of a permanent archive will require external grant funding.

5. Along with all this assessment work we are also training faculty in the Stretch cohort through a considered 5-year plan of professional development. This learning is part of what we hope to measure as we see the study roll out. All of this professional and program development has been archived as well—though only in so far as we have had resources to offer people to do the work.
6. Our assessment goal is to develop practices that adequately and sustainably contextualize quantitative measures with qualitative data to feed back into our instruction lessons learned about how students and faculty actually work together to make learning happen.