

Developmental Software Survey Results

By Kathy K. Stein / Sul Ross State University

We have all been trying to determine how to best meet the needs of our developmental education students and how to provide them with the most effective curriculum using the most efficient media. In Texas, we have also been dealing with pressure from the Legislature to integrate more technology into our developmental education programs. I don't know how many booths I have stopped at when at conferences to discuss reading software, to look at online math products, or to examine writing programs. Like many of you, I have asked about pricing, questioned the support technology needs of the various program works, previewed programs that are available, and, in general, attempted to do due diligence in selecting software for my institution. Even still, despite all of my research, I find that speaking with colleagues who have actually used one of the programs was the best way for me to come to a decision about whether or not to explore further the possible adoption of a specific software.

However, knowing whom to ask about a particular software program was the problem. I didn't know who was using one of Pearson's *MyLab*..., or the Townsend Press site, or ALEKS, or any of the many other programs out there. Another situation that I found myself in is that, as a TxCRLA officer, colleagues would often ask me which institutions were using which software and could I connect them with people in the field who were having success with a particular product. Due to these situations I decided to survey the field, find out what everyone is using, and who was willing to share their experiences with the different programs with their colleagues.

To that end, I applied for a **CRLA, College Reading and Learning Association**, research scholarship to investigate how institutions are integrating software into their developmental education programs. I created a survey on SurveyMonkey and sent the survey out to the LRNASST Listserv and the CASP Forum Listserv in fall of 2012. I asked questions about the type of institution, contact information, the software used, in which courses the program was used, how the program was paid for, if texts were used in addition to the program, and if additional technology such as a designated server was required to use the program. I now have the results of that survey and they are available to you on the CASP web site at

www.CASP-Texas.com.

Before you go to the web site, let me share some of the results. Eighty-eight individuals responded to survey. Of those 88 respondents, 68 were from Texas institutions. The 88 respondents represented 49 institutions. I took the information that was shared and created four files: math, reading, writing, and integrated reading and writing. As is always the case when looking at survey results, figuring out what the results mean is not as easy as it might first seem. First, not all institutions wanted to identify themselves. So as you look at the files, know that if an institution name is missing, then it's because that was the institution's decision. Also, some responders were okay with sharing information about the program(s) they use, but they were not willing to act as contacts to discuss their experiences with others. That is perfectly okay; we're glad to have information about the program(s) they are using.

As might be expected, the math file is the largest file. The integrated reading and writing (IRW) file had the fewest responses, and the majority of those responses were that their IRW course(s) is still being created and the software decision is still being made. Pearson products are heavily represented in the survey results. In the majority of cases, the students are responsible for the costs of the software/online program. Technological support for the computer labs is an issue at many institutions.

As mentioned, these four files are available at www.CASP-Texas.com. If you would like to add information from your institution to one or more of the files, please send me the appropriate information (kstein@sulross.edu) and I'll update the files as needed. Thanks to all who participated in the initial survey and thanks to those of you who will be sending me information in the near future. Oftentimes, we, in the field, are our own best sources of information, so let's share all that we can.

Dr. Kathy Stein is a leading educator who is currently the Director of the Center for Academic Excellence, the Academic Learning Center, and the SRSU Honors Program at Sul Ross University. She is a Past President of TxCRLA, the current Membership Chair, and also serves as Secretary of CRLA, the College Reading and Learning Association.