

## 1. Program Description

The English as a Second Language Program (ESL) currently offers 12 courses which encompass reading, writing, grammar, listening, speaking, and general communication. By fall of 2006, the program will offer 19 courses which will encompass all of the previously mentioned skill areas as well as the use of computers and the internet for studying English. A Certificate of Completion has been offered in ESL, but few students have chosen to apply for this. The function of the certificate itself and the required courses need to be revisited in light of the curriculum redesign. The goal of the ESL Program is to provide non-native learners of English with a strong foundation in English and American culture that they may then use in further academic studies, in the workplace, or to enhance their lives in America. The ESL program generally serves 500 to 600 students annually. Our students come from Fremont, Newark, Milpitas and the surrounding areas, all of which have demographics that include a large proportion of non-native English speakers from a variety of ethnicities. These demographics show the largest ethnic minorities to be Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latino. The student make up of ESL classes reflects the local demographics except for the Latino component which appears to be small in comparison to the Latino numbers in the local communities. The faculty have made recent changes in the curriculum which may help address the English language needs of the Latino community.

The ESL program serves students with a range of ages and educational accomplishments. Most of the students are residents or in process of becoming residents while very few are international students. Some students are just out of high school, but the majority are returning to school later—after their children have reached school age, after the loss of a job, or soon after their initial immigration to the U.S. All are in pursuit of better communication skills, but their goals are diverse. Some seek better English skills for the workplace, others plan to pursue a degree, and still others (perhaps the majority) do not yet have well-defined goals. They simply know they want or need to improve their English in order to live and/or work successfully in the U.S. The Ohlone College ESL program is relatively small compared to other community colleges in the Bay Area which have several more levels and some vocational ESL programs as well.

Since the previous program review there have been significant changes in the structure of the program and courses which come as a direct result of ESL/English/Foreign Language faculty discussions, research around English language learning, and information obtained from student surveys. The program has expanded to include four reading/writing levels and three listening/speaking levels. Students will now be able to study as full-time ESL students due to the 10-unit make up of the core level courses and a variety of 2-unit ESL electives such as “English Idioms”. Additionally, a new ESL lab offering will be available to students as an independent English study course through the Ohlone College English Learning Center. This course will be computer delivered using English Discoveries, an ESL software program with 12 levels of study in grammar, writing, listening, speaking, reading, and vocabulary.

The ESL program has had a significant impact on the college as a whole in several ways. First, the ESL faculty tend to be pedagogical risk-takers experimenting with a full menu of active and collaborative learning methods including the design and implementation of several learning communities combining ESL classes with content area courses. There have been learning communities of ESL reading classes and art classes, ESL reading/grammar/vocabulary classes with computer application classes, and currently an ESL

Communication Skills class joined with an Introduction to Acting class. A full-time learning community of ESL 184R (reading), ESL 184W (writing), Introduction to Psychology, Career Exploration and Planning, and Computer Applications will be implemented in Fall 2006. These integrated learning environments by their collaborative nature have engaged faculty outside of ESL in using some of the more innovative and active ESL learning styles, not only within the ESL learning community, but also expanding into the discipline classes of the other faculty involved. This has created a ripple effect which continues to flow outwardly among even the most traditional of instructors. It has also contributed greatly to the learning college initiative at Ohlone with ESL instructors offering their expertise through workshops and mentoring of other faculty. Furthermore, as the globalization of the college continues, ESL will be a critical component in providing the guidance and means for future international students to become proficient in English as they pursue their educational goals in the United States.

Currently the impact of the ESL program on the local community can be seen by the success the students who come to us have in their current and subsequent courses. The ESL success rate is at an average of about 70%. However, at present, the ESL program does not have a strong local community connection. The faculty would like to explore this further by investigating future local service learning opportunities, and community projects.

## **2. Relationship to Ohlone College Mission and Goals**

The ESL Program clearly directly supports four of the college goals.

### **The first is the goal to:**

*Promote appreciation for understanding of diverse races and cultures by expanding the diversity of college personnel, international education offerings and exchanges, cross-cultural curricula, and ethnic/cultural events.*

Faculty and native-born students are exposed to a rich palette of cultural ideas and traditions through our many ESL learning communities, projects, and interactions with faculty and native-born students.

### **The second is the goal to:**

*Develop across the curriculum the Learning College Model utilizing methods and technologies that hold the most promise for improving student course and program completion success rates.*

As explained in number 1 above, the ESL faculty are at the forefront of the use and spread of active and collaborative learning methods through learning communities, leading workshops, and the mentoring of other faculty.

### **The third goal is to:**

*Develop strategies to increase the proportion of full-time students including learning communities, cohort groups, enhanced facilities and improved course availability.*

Beginning Fall 2006 with the offering of two five-unit core ESL courses and several 2-unit ESL elective courses at each level, for the first time ESL students will have the option of studying ESL on a full-time basis. Additionally, we have been the trendsetting department in the area of learning communities.

**The fourth goal is to:**

*Provide continuous learning for all personnel associated with the District and promote an organizational structure that is adaptable, collegial, and supportive of the Learning College Model.*

One of the ESL program's full-time faculty is currently the Learning Communities Coordinator and the Co-Facilitator of the Faculty Learning Community on Basic Skills. Both roles contribute greatly to the learning of faculty and staff around learning communities and active and collaborative learning techniques.

**3. Program Student Learning Outcomes—**

The student will . . .

1. Demonstrate the confidence and listening/speaking skills necessary to participate successfully in spontaneous aural/oral exchanges with native speakers of English in a variety of personal, professional, and/or academic settings.
2. Demonstrate reading comprehension of English texts intended for developmental (or higher level) English courses.
3. Respond appropriately to written or spoken English by writing paragraphs or short essays that communicate his/her ideas clearly.

**Process used to determine these outcomes:** discussion among full-time faculty

**4. Assessments to measure program student learning outcomes:**

In order to work toward these program-level student learning outcomes, we plan to develop new assessments (tests or other measures) at the course level for all of our listening/speaking and reading/writing courses. Although we need to investigate the legality of such measures ("exit tests?"), we want to adopt some measures to ensure continuity among students' performance and teachers' expectations at each level of our program. For example, although each teacher currently plans, creates, and grades each of his/her own students' exams and projects independently, these new level-specific tests or other assessment measures would be required of all sections of each course. Students who did not pass the level-specific assessment test/measure would not be permitted to proceed to the following course. Teachers and students, of course, would be made aware of this expectation from the beginning of the course. To ensure objectivity, these tests or other assessment measures would be evaluated by a faculty member(s) other than the one teaching the course.

E-Portfolios may soon be another means of assessing a student's progress and/or performance in the ESL program. Although they are not as reliable as testing because of the outside editing and help that may occur in the process of creating artifacts to be included, they could potentially provide a valuable summary of what an individual student has done at Ohlone College. Depending on the type of data they contain, they may also provide an alternative

means of evaluating the entire program. They will at least provide faculty with another means of subjective evaluation of individual students and the program as a whole.

Additionally, we will create a program capstone course to replace the current 3-unit classes at the fourth level. This course will involve some type of a semester-long investigation around a topic of interest chosen by the student in conjunction with the instructor. The student will spend the semester researching, reading, and writing on the chosen topic in preparation for a final presentation to a panel consisting of ESL and non-ESL faculty and possibly several community members as well. The student will be asked to explain more about the topic in a question and answer session to follow the presentation portion. The final project will be one that allows the student to demonstrate his/her mastery of the ESL program student learning outcomes in all of the skill areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening in a more authentic type of assessment task. The full-time and adjunct ESL faculty will begin working on this capstone course to have it ready and in place no later than fall of 2007.

### **Types of Assessment Data to be collected**

Student satisfaction surveys

Level-specific writing and speaking tests for all ESL students

Ratio of part-time to full-time students

Course completion and success rates in ESL

Course completion and success rates of ESL students in non-ESL courses

Number of students progressing from one level to the next

Transfer rates

International student enrollment in ESL

E-Portfolios

### **5. Assessment of Program Through Review of the Teaching Learning Process**

Since our last program review, there have been significant changes in our core curriculum as a result of our reflection on the teaching-learning process. In Spring 2001, the department decided to combine many of its three-unit single-skill courses into six-unit integrated skills courses, which included reading, writing, listening, speaking, and grammar (ESL 181 and 182). After trying this approach, which had been based on recent trends and research related to language learning, the faculty determined that although the six-unit classes were preferable to the previous three-unit classes in some respects, there were some significant drawbacks to the fully-integrated design. For example, it became quite difficult to determine when certain students who were strong in some skills yet weak in others were ready to progress to the next course in the sequence. Furthermore, it became a significant pedagogical challenge to adequately address all of the language skills and keep them in balance in a single course. Thus, in Fall 2005 the department decided upon the program design to be implemented in Fall 2006: ESL 181 will become ESL 181LS (five units of listening and speaking) and ESL 181RW (five units of reading, writing, and grammar); ESL 182 will likewise become ESL 182LS and 182RW. In this new structure, we hope to retain the benefit of increased student contact hours but avoid the difficulties of placing students in and moving them to appropriate courses when their listening/speaking skills do not match their reading/writing skills. In Spring 2005, we added a new level to our ESL program with similar four-unit courses—ESL

183RW and 183LS—which we plan to retain. At this time, we still have two single-skill courses at our fourth and highest level--ESL 184W (writing) and ESL 184R (reading). For now, these courses have been kept at three units each, in order to make it easier to integrate them into learning communities. We intend to make further changes in our fourth level in the coming semesters as a result of our discussions in the current program review process (as mentioned in the above capstone course description).

The ESL program has been fortunate in that many of the ESL classes are held in smart classrooms with student computer access allowing for a variety of technology-mediated instruction techniques to be employed. Such techniques allow students to use ESL websites, record and send audio files via Web CT, send papers and receive mark-ups and corrections in electronic format, and participate in online forums and discussions. Use of these and other technology-assisted methods in the classroom teach students how to access and make best use of the rich amount of material available to a learner of English on the internet and how to use current technology to expand the English learning environment beyond the classroom into the students' homes. Additionally, students who arrive at Ohlone's ESL program with minimal computer skills are rapidly developing computer literacy necessary for survival in today's society.

#### **Current Areas of Concern:**

- In the past two semesters we have seen lower enrollments in our upper level ESL courses (at the 183 and 184 levels). Although we do not have any hard evidence on this, anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that many ESL students have bypassed one or more of these courses by taking the English Placement Test and placing into English 151A or 151B. Legally, of course, they have the right to do this, but we do not believe it is best for most of the students, and we hope the trend does not continue. It may be that these students saw the shift from a three-level to a four-level ESL program and resisted the change, interpreting it as one that would slow them down in their educational pursuits.
- While the trend toward learning communities is clearly an invaluable thing for some students, it should also be remembered that many of our students (because of family and work-related obligations) do not have the time or desire to be involved in a full-time learning community.
- With the implementation of the new 16-week semester, many of our students, a large portion of whom are mothers who must take children to school in the morning (often around 8:30) and pick them up in the afternoon (often around 2:30) will have a harder time finding classes that fit into their schedules.
- With Mark Lieu in full-time reassignment to the statewide academic senate, the two remaining full-time ESL faculty have found it increasingly difficult to carry out other departmental responsibilities. Although one part-time instructor has been offered a 60% load to help staff classes for Fall 2006, we believe it would be very valuable to have an additional full-time faculty member in ESL. This need will increase with Vicki Curtis's increasing involvement in the development of learning communities, the new Newark campus, and the possible development of an intensive English institute.

## **6. Assessment of Program Improvement Since Previous Program Review**

<b>Recommendations made in 2001</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
Consolidate ESL assessment, orientation, and registration into block schedule	Done. Modified over time, especially when testing instrument changed	Continue to develop the process as needed using new testing instrument: Compass.
Develop a student survey to assess student needs and goals	Done multiple times. Results: 1) students goals are diverse. 2) some students would like to be able to take 12 or more units of ESL.	Continue to survey students periodically to determine their satisfaction with the program.
Develop an ESL editing course for transfer level English	None until recently, due to need to focus on major curriculum redesign	A course is currently being developed and may be offered beginning Spring '07.
Work with other departments to explore development of VESL classes for vocationally-oriented ESL students, including grant projects.	Discussions took place on this in 2002 and/or 2003, but it was determined that our ESL enrollment did not justify vocation-specific ESL courses.	We will take a second look at the viability of this with the development of the new Newark campus and the special programs being planned there.
Develop the first two levels of a multiple level integrated skills program	Done, but then redesigned again.	We will continue to re-evaluate our course structures and levels as we implement our new curriculum.
Develop a training venue for faculty and staff on techniques for more effectively serving ESL students	We have not done this yet, but still recognize the value of doing it.	We plan to work with the Teaching/Learning Institute to offer training where needed.
Develop 1-unit courses on idioms, selected grammar topics, and reading skills, and evaluate for online feasibility	Several 2-unit courses, including English idioms, verb tenses, etc., have been written and will be introduced in the 2006-2007 academic year.	We will continue to design new courses and adapt existing ones based on students' needs and desires.