

**OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
INITIAL ASSESSEMENT**

by

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OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report represents a review of the English Language Institute (ELI) at Oakland Community College (OCC) and an assessment of what further inquiry is needed to determine the overall effectiveness of the Institute. In addition, a review of the English as a Second Language (ESL) literature was undertaken in order to examine the possibility of establishing an ESL curriculum for credit at OCC. Important points identified in this study include:

English Language Institute at OCC

- ELI provides Intensive English training to foreign individuals with student visas through three seven week courses at the cost of \$700 per course. These courses provide intensive English training at different levels and candidates are assessed prior to enrolling in a particular course.
- In addition, ELI offers two six week courses for professionals, alien residents and people with tourist visas who wish to improve their English. The cost of these courses is \$225 each.
- The staff of ELI consists of one full-time advisor, six part-time faculty and one part-time student aide.
- Program revenue has grown from \$96,015 in 1987 to \$135,460 in 1989, a 41% increase.
- Between Fall 1988 and Winter 1990, ELI has served 412 students, the majority of which represent Japan and countries in the Middle East.
- It is estimated that one half to two thirds of F1 visa students completing ELI attend OCC.

English as a Second Language Programs

- ESL curriculum is offered for college credit and in most colleges and universities courses are offered through English Departments.
- Students who take ESL tend to be older and have multi-cultural, multi-level needs.
- Most ESL programs are designed to help students move into the college mainstream, improve retention and work with students whose learning is affected by their limited English ability.
- ESL curriculum develops listening, speaking, reading, grammar, and writing skills.
- Some community colleges in Texas, California and Illinois are offering Vocational English which focuses on technical vocabulary and the acquisition of vocational skills.
- Studies of ESL programs have identified the need for ESL by students who lack basic reading and writing skills due to language problems.
- Studies have indicated that ESL has a positive impact upon persistence, however, the impact is relatively low.
- Faculty in ESL programs tend to be disadvantaged in acquiring tenure, hiring practices, working conditions and in that they have heavier workloads.
- ESL programs have problems with data collection and assessment procedures.

English as a Second Language in Michigan

- Nine schools out of forty-five reviewed have ESL or ELI programs.

- Schools closest to OCC who offer ESL for credit are Wayne County Community College, Macomb Community College and The University of Detroit.
- All universities offering ESL or ELI require students to take the TOEFL prior to enrolling in their programs.

Recommendations

- Collect data relative to student goals and expectations prior to enrolling in ELI courses.
- Conduct follow-up studies of program completers in order to measure outcomes.
- Collect data relative to the viability of supporting an expanded ELI/ESL program.

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OVERVIEW

Introduction

This report represents a review of the English Language Institute (ELI) at Oakland Community College (OCC) and an assessment of what further inquiry is needed to determine the overall effectiveness of the Institute. In addition, a review of the English as a Second Language (ESL) literature was undertaken in order to examine the possibility of developing an ESL curriculum for credit at OCC.

Initiated by Dr. Paul Batty, Dean of Academic Affairs (Orchard Ridge), this initial assessment of the institute covers an extensive review of the literature, an examination of ELI / ESL at other community colleges and universities, a discussion of the OCC ELI program and an assessment of the program's service population.

Background

The institute serves Oakland and surrounding counties by providing initial English instruction to individuals whose native language is not English. The institute was originally designed to provide English skills in listening, speaking, reading and composition. The course work, which is not offered for college credit, requires the student to learn to read for comprehension, study grammar, practice speech patterns and listen effectively. There are two separate sets of courses, the first set is intended for alien residents, professionals and individuals with tourist visas to improve their English; the second set of courses is intended for people with student visas who wish to prepare for study in the United States.

For students who wish to improve their English skills, two six week courses are offered. The first course provides instruction in speaking and listening while the second provides instruction in writing and grammar. Each class meets in the evenings for two hours, Monday and Wednesday. Cost is \$225 for each six-week course. Prior to enrolling in these courses, candidates must pass the English Proficiency Test .

Classes in intensive English for prospective university and college students run for seven weeks at a cost of \$700 per course. The seven week intensive English program consists of three courses which provide instruction in speaking, listening, reading, composition and grammar each taught at a different level. Students attend five-hour classes, Monday through Thursday during the day. Students on student

visas who want to prepare for the Test Of English As a Foreign Language (TOEFL) usually enroll in the intensive English classes. However, others who wish to quickly improve their English may also apply. Applicants are initially assessed to determine which course level they need to take. Some students require all three courses which results in a total cost of \$2,100. Students do not receive college credits for either the six or seven week courses.

ELI started at OCC in 1983 on the Orchard Ridge campus. Initially, the institute was part of the college curriculum and offered two nontransferrable credits. Its purpose was to serve the community of non-English speakers and to prepare foreign students for taking the TOEFL to study in the United States. Currently, the institute is not part of the college curriculum and is self-supported by fees charged. However, the institute still maintains its initial purpose. Recently, there has been a growing concern regarding whether the institute needs to be expanded to adequately serve the non-English speaking members of the community who are citizens of the United States.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English as a Second Language, as discussed in the literature, pertains to curriculum that is offered for college credit. Intensive English programs are programs offered at a college or university for the purpose of preparing non-native speaking individuals to pass the TOEFL and/or to acquire English for the workplace. Most of the literature on ESL programs emerges from those areas of the country that primarily work with Spanish-speaking populations such as Florida, New York, California and parts of the southwest. The following review of the literature covers program characteristics and goals, skills taught, issues of retention and issues/problems related to ESL programs.

Characteristics/Goals

A 1987 review of college and university ESL programs found that most were housed in English Departments. They are designed to meet the needs of students with limited English ability who are having difficulty in basic reading and study skills. Most of the literature comes from the Southwest, California and New York and primarily describes Hispanics. The literature suggests that students in ESL programs tend to be older and have multi-cultural, multi-level needs. In 1987, the Center for the Study of Community Colleges reviewed the class schedules of 95 randomly selected two year colleges and found that ESL accounted for 30% of all foreign language classes and had risen to 43% by 1986 (Center for the Study of Community Colleges, 1987). The Center found that the goals of ESL programs are to help students move into the college mainstream, improve retention and work with students whose limited English speaking ability hinders their learning.

A typical faculty member in an ESL program views his/her role as not only teacher, but mediator of the culture and support person. The faculty member provides an individualized approach to instruction and wants to be a part of the college curriculum.

Skills Taught

Students in ESL programs are taught listening and speaking skills in conversational settings. In addition, they are taught English grammar, reading, writing and conversation. El Paso Community College in Texas attempts to integrate ESL grammar, reading and speech into a comprehensive language development program (Menges & Kelly, 1982).

Some community colleges in Texas, California and Illinois are offering a curriculum in Vocational English which prepares a student in English as a Second Language as it relates to cultural awareness and vocational skills (Menges & Kelly, 1982; Coad, 1982; San Francisco Community College, 1979). These programs concentrate on providing English fluency for the workplace. They were developed specifically for immigrants and refugees of mainly Hispanic and Indochinese descent. The strengths of a Vocational English as a Second Language program are that it promotes student comprehension, clarifies technical vocabulary, and assists students in the acquisition of vocational skills.

Retention

Research indicates that the most significant factor related to persistence is successful experience in reading and/or writing (Kangas and Reichelderfer, 1987; Dallas, 1982). Colleges are faced with students who lack the basic skills to survive in college level studies. In addition, students should have personal and cultural support for their educational goals. Thus, the ESL curriculum has been developed as a support service to retain students with limited English ability.

In 1988, a study was conducted at Miami Dade Community College to determine the success rate and compare demographic characteristics of students who had ESL credits (Belcher, 1988). The results of the study indicated that students who were enrolled in ESL courses were more likely to have left college and less likely to have graduated. Of the ESL enrollees, 16% finished the fourth level of the program with satisfactory grades. Less than 30% were able to pass the reading and writing basic skills assessment test. Another Miami-Dade study of graduates in Florida community colleges indicated that only 4% of all graduates had taken ESL credits (Morris, 1987).

A study was conducted at Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to determine if ESL courses assist students and increase their success rate (Rosenberg, 1983). The sample consisted of 263 students who were enrolled between August 1978 through June 1982. Results indicated that the average age of the students was between 17 and 22 years old, 56% were enrolled in liberal arts programs, and a majority were academically successful in that only 4% had a grade point average of less than 1.75. However, 63.6% of the students in the sample did not graduate or transfer from Kirkwood nor were they currently enrolled as of June 1982.

A 1988 longitudinal study was conducted at San Jose City College, California with 1,000 students who were in the ESL program between Fall 1982 and Spring 1987. Findings indicated that 21% of the students had more than twelve years of education in their home country, 24% of the students were continuing their education at SJCC in fall 1987, nearly 2% earned an associates degree and 4% transferred to four year institutions (Gosak, 1989).

Other studies have looked at entry-level test performance such as the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) and whether students took ESL courses. Losak in 1983 looked at 4,318 students tested during the Fall 1980 term and found that 37.5% passed the test and 65.5% of the total tested were still enrolled the following Winter term (Losak, 1983). The students who took ESL courses were characterized as academically under prepared. In 1985, Belcher looked at the performance of ESL students on the CLAST during the Fall of 1984. Performance on the test was lower for those students who entered college and enrolled in ESL courses. However, performance by ESL students was not related to the number of ESL credits they had taken and there was no difference in the performance of ESL students with or without college prep work (Belcher, 1985).

In general, retention data does not indicate large increases in persistence among students who are enrolled in ESL programs. However, the type of students who are at risk tend to have English language problems in addition to poor academic preparation.

Problems/Issues

The literature indicates that ESL faculty tend to be disadvantaged in reference to hiring practices, heavier work loads, working conditions and tenure (Bolton, 1987). They have problems with credibility and status as they interact with other English faculty. In addition, there has been a stigma of only being compensatory for the disadvantaged attached to bilingual education. According to the United States Bureau of the Census, in 1980 there were between 4 to 6.5 million residents of the United States who did not speak English well or did not speak it at all.

ESL programs tend to have problems with data collection and assessment procedures. Some educators question whether one program can adequately serve the needs of a population which has a variety of language, educational and cultural backgrounds.

PROGRAM REVIEW

ELI at OCC is directed by Helen Habib, Foreign Student Advisor under the supervision of Dr. Paul Batty, Dean of Academic Affairs. The institute's objectives are to provide a public service, recruit students and maintain self-sustained funding. The staff, in addition to Ms. Habib, consists of six part-time faculty and one part-time student aide. Its revenue has grown from \$96,015 in 1987 to \$135,460 in 1989, a 41% increase. In 1989, there was a net surplus of \$45,300. Marketing of the program is solely supported by word of mouth.

The Institute serves a college-wide function for foreign student recruiting, admissions, advising, activities and non-credit class programming. In addition, the Institute is responsible for the administration of the TOEFL and the OCC English Proficiency Test. Foreign students are provided intensive English instruction for the purpose of pursuing further education in the United States and for use in the work place. Students with student visas typically register for the seven week intensive English courses. Professionals, U.S. residents and tourist who wish to improve their English register for the two six week courses. The cost of the program varies depending on a student's proficiency in English. For one course an individual may pay \$225 or as much as \$700. The regular college course at OCC is \$35 per credit hour.

Serving a diverse population, students who attend the Institute have come from over thirty different countries. Since 1987, the Institute has served 412 students, a majority of which were from the Middle East and Japan. Table 1 shows the number of students by country and semester they attended the institute from Fall 1988 through Winter 1990.

There is no empirical evidence as to the success rates of OCC students on the TOEFL after completing ELI courses. In addition, there is no formal mechanism for tracking whether these students continue their education at OCC or at other institutions. It is estimated that about one half to two thirds of F1 visa students from ELI attend at least one semester at OCC. Furthermore, there is no current data available on the ethnic composition of the Detroit Metropolitan area. Nor is there data available on the number of people for whom English is not their native language.

TABLE 1
ELI STUDENT COUNTRY OF ORIGIN BY SEMESTER
(Fall 1988 through Winter 1990)

Country/Region	F88	W89	Sp89	Su89	F89	W90	Total
Africa	0	0	0	0	1	4	5
China/Taiwan	1	2	1	0	11	6	21
Eastern Bloc	1	0	1	1	6	3	12
Europe	5	2	1	0	5	4	17
Greece	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
India	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
Indonesia	0	0	0	0	3	2	5
Israel	1	1	0	0	4	2	8
Japan	26	12	17	1	29	10	95
Middle East	30	43	10	3	33	38	157
Mexico	1	2	2	0	10	3	18
Philippines/Korea	7	1	0	0	2	4	14
Puerto Rico	0	0	1	0	1	2	4
Russia	0	1	1	1	1	0	4
South America	9	7	4	0	8	7	35
Turkey	0	1	0	0	2	9	12
Total	82	72	39	7	116	96	412

Source: OCC, English Language Institute

Table 2 represents the number of ELI students who attended the institute from Fall 1988 through Winter 1990 by city. It is apparent from this table that ELI draws students from several cities outside of Oakland county.

TABLE 2
 ELI STUDENT GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN
 (FALL 1988 through WINTER 1990)

City -----	# of Students -----	Percentage -----
W. Bloomfield/Bloomfield Hills	75	18.2
Farmington Hills/Franklin	72	17.5
Dearborn	44	10.7
Detroit	37	9.0
Rochester Hills/Troy/Sterling Heights	30	7.3
Southfield	26	6.3
Livonia	24	5.8
Birmingham/Ferndale	22	5.3
Northville/Canton/Novi	22	5.3
Royal Oak/Oak Park/Clawson	19	4.6
Madison Heights/Hazel Park/Warren	14	3.4
Westland/Inkster	8	1.9
Outline Area	7	1.7
Auburn Hills/Pontiac/Milford	6	1.5
Redford/Wayne	4	1.0
Gross Pointe/St. Clair Shores	<u>2</u>	<u>.5</u>
Total	412	100.0

Source: OCC, English Language Institute

COLLEGE PROGRAMS

A review of forty-five Michigan community college and university catalogs was conducted to determine the type of ESL curriculum provided by other schools. Only nine schools indicated in their catalog the availability of ESL or Intensive English programs. It should be noted that OCC did not always list the English Language Institute in the college catalog which may be the case with other institutions. The nine programs that were found are described below.

Aquinas College, Grand Rapids - English as a Second Language is offered through two four-hour credit courses in the Foreign Language Department. The curriculum concentrates on speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Courses are designed for international students who need to improve their English skills. In addition, students must take the TOEFL prior to enrolling in the courses. Cost of the program is the same as the college's standard tuition.

Calvin College, Grand Rapids - Non-credit intensive English training for non-native speakers is offered through the Academic Support Department. The program covers grammar, vocabulary development, and instruction in writing so that students may be ready for English 100 at the college. Students must take the TOEFL prior to enrolling in this program. Cost of the program is the same as the college's standard tuition.

Ferris State University, Big Rapids - An Intensive English program through Student Development Services is offered so that students can benefit from their educational experience in the United States. The program offers five levels of course work covering grammar, reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Students do not receive degree credit but their grade point average in the program is averaged in with their other course work. Students must take the TOEFL prior to enrolling in this program. Cost of the program is the same as the university's standard tuition.

Grand Valley State University, Allendale - English as a Second Language course work is offered for non-graduation credit through the English Department. The curriculum covers vocabulary, speaking, listening and composition skills. Students must take the TOEFL prior to enrolling in this program. Cost of the program is the same as the university's standard tuition.

Hillsdale College, Hillsdale - A remedial English course for three hours credit is offered for foreign students through the English Department. The course includes English comprehension, speech, reading and writing. Students must take the TOEFL prior to enrolling in this course. Cost of the program is the same as the college's standard tuition.

Macomb Community College, Mt. Clemens - Four courses in English as a Second Language are offered through the Learning and Academic Assessment Center. The courses cover reading, conversation, basic grammar and composition. Credits earned for these courses can be applied to a General Studies Degree only. Students are usually placed in these courses based on the placement test scores in reading and writing. Cost of the courses is the same as the college's standard tuition.

University of Detroit, Detroit - The American Language and Culture Program is provided for students who wish to improve their English proficiency. This program is administered through International Services and only undergraduates may receive college credit for course work. Students first must be admitted to an academic program at the University of Detroit or other approved institution, but are not required to take the TOEFL. The program consists of three levels of intensive English and the curriculum includes listening and speaking skills, writing, and reading. The results of the English Placement Test determines which level a student begins. Cost for the

intensive English program is \$2,300. The individual ESL courses are \$540 per three credit hour course.

Wayne County Community College, Detroit - Five, three credit hour courses in English as a Second Language are offered through the English Department. The curriculum includes grammar, composition, reading, listening, pronouncing and speaking. Students are placed in the classes based on the college's placement tests. The cost of the courses is the same as the college's standard tuition.

William Tyndale College, Farmington Hills - A non-credit remedial English course is offered through the English Department which provides an introduction to grammar and writing. Attention is also given to students who have spelling and vocabulary difficulties. Students must take the TOEFL prior to enrolling in this course. Cost of the courses is the same as the college's standard tuition.

SUMMARY

The literature does not describe the benefits of ESL curriculum for credit versus intensive English programs. Most of the studies reviewed indicated that ESL programs were initiated to assist residents and citizens of the United States who are not proficient in English so that they may take advantage of higher education. English proficiency, although a factor in the retention of non-native speakers, is not the primary support needed by these students since they also lack basic academic skills.

The curriculum for ESL is standard in that grammar, reading, writing, listening and speaking skills are taught. However, in California, Texas and Illinois, there has been a move to teach Vocational English to assist students in the workplace who are immigrants and refugees.

The current program at OCC is experiencing growth in the number of students it serves. It is primarily serving individuals who are planning to study in the United States while most students come from Japan and the Middle East. The largest percentage of students who attend the institute live in Oakland county and Dearborn. There are three neighboring colleges who offer ESL for college credit as part of the college curriculum while OCC offers intensive English separate from the curriculum. Most colleges and universities that offer ESL or ELI charge the standard tuition rate for these programs.

It is recommended that four steps be taken in order to address the issues of measuring the overall effectiveness of the ELI program and determine the possibility of establishing an ESL curriculum for credit at OCC. In terms of measuring effectiveness the following two steps are suggested:

1. Develop an instrument that will collect pertinent data on ELI students prior to enrolling in ELI courses. This instrument would gather information on such items as: student goals, student expectations, educational history and how the student learned of the Institute. Such information will form the foundation for measuring outcome effectiveness as well as information vital to any future marketing of the institute.
2. Develop an ongoing follow-up survey of program completers. This survey will measure the extent to which student goals and expectations were attained, thereby establishing a key component in the overall effectiveness of the Institute.

In terms of considering expansion of the ELI program into an ESL curriculum it is suggested that the following two steps be taken prior to such considerations:

1. Collect current and accurate data on the ethnic characteristics of people who live in the greater Detroit Metropolitan area. Specific data on the number of people for whom English is not their native language is needed in order to determine the viability of an expanded program.
2. Survey other colleges and universities who currently offer ESL programs to determine how their programs are designed, structured and funded. This information will also be valuable in determining the viability of an expanded ELI/ESL program at OCC.

Hence, the ELI program has been successful in terms of maintaining self-supportiveness. However, in measuring outcomes there has been a lack of data available to accurately establish the Institute's impact upon the students it serves. It is difficult to consider expansion without knowing the true effects of the program. Therefore, it is suggested that measures of effectiveness be established prior to any serious considerations of transforming the ELI program into an ESL curriculum.

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