

The Instructional Program Review Narrative Report

1. College: MERRITT

Discipline, Department or Program: English as a Second Language

Date: March 24, 2010

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Stacy Thompson, Dean, Division 1.**

2. Narrative Description of the Discipline, Department or Program:

Please provide a general statement of primary goals and objectives of the discipline, department or program. Include any unique characteristics, degrees and certificates the program or department currently offers, concerns or trends affecting the discipline, department or program, and any significant changes or needs anticipated in the next three years.

The goal of the English as a Second Language Department is to help students communicate better in English, learn from, share and appreciate our diverse student body and become successful in academic, vocational and/or personal endeavors.

To this end, the English as a Second Language Department places high value on maintaining a rigorous program of study. English as a Second Language has six levels of classes plus a Pre-level 1 Basic English course. Our pre-level 1 Basic English courses are held on Saturdays at the Fruitvale site and during the week at the Grupo Maya Community site in the Fruitvale District. Levels 1 and 2 are held at the Fruitvale site. We have counselors and a financial aid assistant at the Fruitvale site to counsel students when they complete the beginning to intermediate courses. Students are then counseled to take Levels 3-6 to complete the ESL courses. At Levels 4-6, ESL students are able to take regular content courses.

Looking ahead, we anticipate offering our Pre-level 1 Basic English course as noncredit and implementing a series of noncredit vocational courses. We also see adding more content ESL classes such as ESL for Child Development, and ESL for Health Services and build linking communities with these departments..

3. Curriculum:

- Is the curriculum current and effective? Have course outlines been updated within the last three years? If not, what plans are in place to remedy this?
Curriculum is current and effective. Course outlines have been updated within the last three years with the exception of the following courses: ESL Speaking 1-4; ESL Writing 1-5; and ESL Grammar 1-2. They are all in the process of being updated through PEAC and will be current at the end of April 2010.
- Has your department conducted a curriculum review of course outlines? If not, what are the plans to remedy this?
A curriculum review of ESL course outlines has been done.

- What are the department's plans for curriculum improvement (i.e., courses to be developed, updated, enhanced, or deactivated)? Have prerequisites, co-requisites, and advisories been validated? Is the date of validation on the course outline?
Courses that have not been taught have been deactivated, and active courses are updated or are in the process of being updated. Course SLOs are written for every ESL course and are being added to course outlines in Curricunet. We have added a pre-level 1 Basic ESL course to help enrollment and retention in level 1 Speaking and Grammar. We have added 1 Basic ESL course on Saturdays to serve students who are unable to attend classes during the week. Entry to Pre-level 1 through level 2 courses is based on recommendation and placement test. Level 3 through 6 courses require prerequisites or entry through placement test. Date of validation is on all course outlines.
 - What steps has the department taken to incorporate student-learning outcomes in the curriculum? Are outcomes set for each course? If not, which courses do not have outcomes?
Student Learning Outcomes are in place for all ESL courses. We are in the process of submitting them on the course outlines through Curricunet which will be completed by the end of April, 2010.
 - Describe the efforts to develop outcomes at the program level. In which ways do these outcomes align with the institutional outcomes?
Institutional outcomes, Program outcomes and Student Learning outcomes are all developed and aligned.
 - Recommendations and priorities.
Our priority is to update course outlines and complete assessments for all SLO's.
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4. Instruction:

- Describe effective and innovative strategies used by faculty to involve students in the learning process. How has new technology been used by the department to improve student learning?

All faculty are trained in the latest teaching methodologies. We teach student-oriented classes and in-context learning. Students work in groups on projects and learn together. We use the following technology in the classroom: Laptop and LCD; audio and video equipment; and overhead projectors and transparencies. The ESL through Computer class has been very popular and students use email and Moodle to stay in touch with each other and the instructor.

How does the department maintain the integrity and consistency of academic standards within the discipline?

For 20 years the Peralta ESL Committee (PEAC) has met monthly to implement prerequisites and/or recommendations for each ESL course, develop SLO's and review textbooks. Also, as a committee, PEAC works on updating ESL course outlines guaranteeing input from faculty of all 4 colleges. Merritt College faculty participates in ESL workshops and conferences. In addition, we meet regularly with faculty from other community colleges in the state and attend TESOL and CATESOL conferences. Thus, the integrity and consistency of academic standards are maintained.

- Discuss the enrollment trends of your department. What is the student demand for specific courses? How do you know? What do you think are the salient trends affecting enrollments?
Throughout the years we have tried to offer high level ESL courses on the Merritt campus without much success. We have seen through enrollment trends that we are able to fill our Pre-level 1 to Level 2 courses, but not our Level 3-6 courses. Students tend to go to Levels 3-6 at other colleges. With counseling at Fruitvale, students now understand that they can return to Merritt to take other classes when they have completed ESL. The evening courses are mostly filled with working adults while the morning courses are usually filled with women who have children.

	Fall						
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	CODE	Comments
Quantitative Assessments							
1. Enrollment (duplicated)	420	365	405	565	385		
2. Sections (master sections)	15	16	18	21	17		
3. FTEF	4.7	5.2	5.6	6.0	4.8		
4. FTES	58.8	53.5	60.0	83.1	51.2		
5. FTES/FTEF	12.5	10.3	10.7	14.0	10.7		
6. Student Success	54.6%	61.7%	70.5%	67.4%	75.3%		
7. Program Cost (Cost methodology is under development. Please complete the remaining items. This step to be completed later.)	Good English Skills are essential for getting a degree, a certificate in a vocation and/or acquiring a job. Therefore, ESL is, if not mandatory, highly recommended.						

- Are courses scheduled in a manner that meets student needs and demand? How do you know?
The evening courses at Fruitvale and Grupo Maya sites fill the students' needs since these students all work during the day time. Until spring 2010, we have had low productivity in our day classes. We are currently concentrating on only offering Pre-level 1-Level 2 ESL classes at our 2 community sites and having students finish Levels 3-6 at our sister colleges. This semester, all of our classes are full and therefore productivity will rise.

- Recommendations and priorities.

Our Fruitvale site has only 2 classrooms available and Grupo Maya has one. We would like to find more classroom space and implement a series of noncredit courses. We'd also like to extend

assistance in the Learning Lab on campus for ESL students who are already taking content courses.

5. Student Success:

- Describe student retention and program completion (degrees, certificates, persistence rates) trends in the department. What initiatives can the department take to improve retention and completion rates?

* Please note that the data below includes a category for African-Americans. This is actually the category for African nationals. African Americans are native speakers of English and do not take ESL classes. This discrepancy is in each of the 3 graphs!

Student Retention Rate by Ethnicity <i>Students who are retained and do not drop or withdraw</i>		
Ethnicity	Baseline Fall 2004-07	Fall 2008
Asian	75%	87% (15)
African American	67%	74% (119)
Filipino	69%	75% (4)
Hispanic/Latino	74%	80% (49)
Native American	90%	67% (3)
Other	85%	50% (2)
White	92%	97% (66)
Unknown	81%	86% (22)
College Average	75%	82% (280)

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Student Course Completion Rate (SCCR):Ethnicity		
Ethnicity	Baseline Fall 04-07	Fall 08
African American	48%	80% (5)
Asian	65%	59% (34)
Filipino	0%	33% (3)
Hispanic/Latino	55%	45% (318)
Native American	50%	0%
Other	63%	0% (3)
White	65%	30% (10)
Unknown	83%	75% (8)
Average	56%	46% (381)

College SCCR Average:60%

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Student Retention Rate: Ethnicity Students who receive a grade other than w		
Ethnicity	Baseline Fall 04-07	Fall 08
African American	52%	80% (5)
Asian	73%	71% (34)
Filipino	0%	67% (3)
Hispanic/Latino	66%	55% (318)
Native American	100%	0%
Other	70%	33% (3)
White	70%	30% (10)
Unknown	83%	88% (8)
Average	66%	57% (381)
College Retention Average: 72%		
Student Successful Course Completion Rate (SCCR): Gender		
Gender	Baseline Fall 04-07	Fall 08
Female	57%	50% (230)
Male	53%	38% (132)
Not Supplied	0%	58% (19)

Retention rates in ESL have been below the college average. Some of the reasons are: ESL students often lead more transient lives than native speakers because they are not originally from California. They may have family relations in other states and countries; may drop out of school more for economic and social reasons: E.g., lack of income due to job loss, lack of childcare, lack of financial aid, discrimination, or dire family circumstances that demand immediate attention, and/or unexpected moving to other states or returning to home country in the middle of the semester.

In addition, and more from a pedagogical point of view, “mastering” course objectives in language learning is not always observable and measurable at the end of a semester. SLOs are often more observable in years to come when a student becomes more fluent and finally can incorporate the lessons learned in the past. Especially at the first two levels, we in ESL urge struggling students (and who doesn’t struggle learning a new language at the beginning and low-intermediate level?) to repeat classes and build a strong base, so they will be successful in the higher levels when materials become much more complex. It is well-known among ESL professionals, that college level ESL course outlines state unrealistic goals: the content that is supposed to be mastered in one semester may indeed be mastered in theory. E.g., Students will master the meaning of subject and object pronouns in theory; however, since they are at the beginning level of language learning, they will not be able to actually use all these pronouns

correctly in their communication. (Remember, they have not yet mastered the language as a whole!) Language learning is quite different from other studies: 1) Learning a language takes much longer and 2) course outcomes are not immediately observable and measurable at the end of a semester which may be the reason for students failing at exams. Asking our beginning level students to repeat is pedagogically sound teaching practice. The end result is that ESL retention seems lower than the college average, which really demonstrated data is not always a reliable factor in making educated decisions.

May it be known therefore, that low retention is not due to a lack of quality of teaching: We constantly update teaching methodology in order to challenge, motivate and inspire our students. We use technology in our classrooms and have added an ESL through Computer class to help ESL students become more computer literate. Recently (spring of 2009) we have added counselors and a financial aid assistant (all of whom speak Spanish and who are sensitive towards the needs of non-native speakers.) As of spring 2010, we have improved the ESL curriculum and now offer a seamless Beginning to Intermediate ESL Program at Fruitvale/Merritt. At the end of this program, students will receive a certificate of completion, and we hope they will be sufficiently motivated to continue their studies on campus.

- What are the key needs of students that affect their learning? What services are needed for these students to improve their learning? Describe the department's efforts to access these services. What are your department's instructional support needs?
ESL students' key needs are childcare, financial aid and an overall feeling of belonging. Last spring (2009) the Latino Center was launched at Merritt College. With more administrative support, the services that the center offers will help ESL students enroll in appropriate classes and continue studying towards a certificate, and give them the overall support they need.
- Describe the department's effort to assess student learning at the course level. Describe the efforts to assess student learning at the program level. In which ways has the department used student learning assessment results for improvement?
All ESL course outlines have SLOs. Last spring (2009) we started the SLO Assessment process. As of spring 2010, we have assessed 5 ESL courses and are in the process of assessing 5 more by the end of spring 2010. ESL Faculty works closely with SLOAC on campus and participates in Assessment Workshops across Peralta campuses. Since ESL is not really a "field of study" it is not seen as a full program; however, now that we have a small but effective beginning to intermediate ESL program at Fruitvale, we can start assessing students at the beginning to intermediate program level. Faculty involved in SLO assessment meet regularly and share their assessment tools, methods and outcomes. These discussions lead to fresh and new ideas and methodologies for instructors to implement in their classrooms. E.g., we have come to the conclusion that most students are kinesthetic learners and learn best when they are able to do things. We have included more "project" based exercises in classes: interviews; reports; skits; puzzles; internet quizzes and vocabulary games. The students seem to learn better by "doing" and SLOs are also best assessed through projects and other "in context" exercises such as reports, interviews, research, and readings and responses.
- Recommendations and priorities.
We want to continue filling our classes and improving our productivity as we are doing this spring 2010 semester. In 2-4 semesters, we will have quantitative results that will show our ESL program is viable and strong. At that time, we hope to add a level 3 to our program.

We look forward to continue working closely with the Latino Center and offer needed services to non-native speakers that will help them stay motivated in college.

6. Human and Physical Resources (including equipment and facilities)

Describe your current level of staff, including full-time and part-time faculty, classified staff, and other categories of employment.

Currently we have three contract fulltime and three adjunct instructors teaching eight sections per semester. In addition, we currently offer two summer sections. At our Fruitvale site we have a fulltime Program Specialist who helps with recruitment, outreach and registration. We also have 3 part time counselors who come down from the main campus on different days to counsel students. Soon we will have a financial aid assistant.

Describe your current utilization of facilities and equipment.

The facility where we teach is located at 1900 Fruitvale Ave. in the heart of the Latino district in Oakland. We serve the people who live in this area. At present we use 2 classrooms at this location; however, since fall 2008 we have added a classroom at another location in the Fruitvale area: Grupo Maya at 2501 International Blvd. where we teach pre-level 1 Basic English.

Are the human and physical resources, including equipment and location, adequate for all the courses offered by your department (or program)? What are your key staffing and facilities needs for the next three years? Why?

Lack of space continues to be our biggest problem. We are searching for more space in the community where we can offer ESL classes. In addition, our existing classrooms at Fruitvale and Grupo Maya are too small to hold the maximum number of students that can enroll in class. (40). Best teaching practices can not always be implemented when students are seated in such a tight space. Not all classrooms have updated equipment that allows a laptop to be connected to a computer projector, secured cabinet, or large screens for projection. We need more “smart” classrooms. Additional equipment has been ordered through Measure A, but hasn’t arrived. Since we are not located on campus, we are in need of a functioning copy machine

- Recommendations and priorities.
 1. *Guaranteeing that the Measure A money is spent on “smart” classroom equipment*
 2. *Adding a classroom at Fruitvale or elsewhere in the Fruitvale area.*
 3. *Access to secure storage space for equipment.*
 4. *A listening lab*
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7. Community Outreach and Articulation

For vocational programs:

N/A

- Describe the department’s connection with industry. Is there an Advisory Board or Advisory Committee for the program? If so, how often does it meet? Is the program adequately preparing students for careers in the field? How do you know?

- Have students completing the program attained a foundation of technical and career skills? How do you know? What are the completion rates in your program?
- What are the employment placement rates? Include a description of job titles and salaries. What is the relationship between completion rates and employment rates?
- What industry trends are most critical for the future viability of the program? How do you know? What are the implications of these trends for curriculum development and improvement?

For transfer programs:

- Describe the department's efforts in meeting with and collaborating with local 4-year institutions. Is the program adequately preparing students for upper division course work? How do you know?
N/A
- Describe the department's effort to ensure that the curriculum responds to the needs of the constituencies that it serves.
The ESL curriculum corresponds to the constituents that it serves. The needs of our students are language needs to function better in their daily lives as well as in academic settings. Most of our students are not proficient in English; many are at the beginning levels. To that end, we focus on the beginning to intermediate levels of ESL. ESL students study English in order to enter content classes and finish a certificate program or AA degree. A smaller percentage of students may transfer. The main goal for our students is to improve their work situation and thereby their lives.
- Recommendations and priorities.
To add ESL / Vocational courses and/or Linking Communities with ESL / Childcare, ESL / Medical Assistant Program and ESL / CIS.