Making ESL Courses Student-Ready: A Discussion of ESL Practices, Pathways, and Outcomes of Reform Approaches in California

Julia Raufman, Sarah Bohn, and Lisa Cook
CCRC, PPIC, Berkeley City College
Strengthening Student Success Conference, October 2018
Overview of Presentation

- Context on ESL/ESOL Landscape in Community Colleges
- ESL Sequences and Reforms in California Community Colleges
- ESL Reform Approaches in Practices
- AB 705 and ESL
About CCRC

CCRC has been a leader in the field of community college research and reform for over 20 years. Our work provides a foundation for innovations in policy and practice that help give every community college student the best chance of success.

Our areas of research include:

• College readiness and dual enrollment programs, and the transition from high school to college
• Developmental education and adult basic skills
• Non-academic support services, financial aid, and student engagement
• Online education and instructional technology
• Student persistence and completion, and transfer to four-year colleges
• Guided pathways, institutional reform, and performance funding
• Workforce education and training and the economic returns to higher education
PPIC Higher Education Center

- PPIC’s mission is to inform and improve public policy in California through nonpartisan, independent research

- PPIC’s Higher Education Center focuses on:
  - Expanding access
  - Improving outcomes
  - Managing finances

- Recent research on community colleges:
  - Developmental education placement and success
  - Career education programs, stackable credentials
ESL Landscape in Community Colleges
Postsecondary Enrollment Patterns Suggest a Growing Proportion are English Learners

- Immigrant and language minority students make up an estimated 25% of the 2.6 million community college students in California (Llosa & Bunch, 2011).

- An estimated 46% of the 91,000 students enrolled in the City University of New York’s community colleges are not native English speakers (City University of New York, 2011).

- As the United States gets more racially and ethnically diverse, the proportion of students who speak English as a second language is likely to increase.
Limited Research on ESL Enrollees in Community Colleges Suggests Poor Outcomes

- First and second generation students who enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses accumulate significantly fewer college credits compared to their peers who enroll in developmental English (Hodara, 2015).
- 62.5 percent of a sample enrolled in a large CA community college do not advance beyond the ESL course in which they first enrolled (Razfar & Simon, 2011).
- Approximately 8 percent of students who enroll in non-credit ESL courses transition to credit level courses within 7 years of their initial enrollment (Spurling et al., 2008).
- Language minority students who enroll in ESL courses in high school are significantly less likely to enroll at a four year institution compared to native English speakers (Callahan & Humphries, 2016).
Methodology

- Interviews with experts in the field of ESL from K-16 levels

- Literature identification
  - Search terms
  - Date limits
  - Databases
  - Journals

- Selection criteria
  - Date limits
  - Peer reviewed
  - Types of research
    - Descriptive work
    - Correlational studies
    - Rigorous outcomes studies

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<td>ESL institutional practice and policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
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Assessment and Placement for ELs in Community College

The ESL Test

RCC uses the Proficiency Test in English as a Second Language (PTESL). It is designed to measure a student's knowledge of the English language as well as the student's readiness to take college-level classes.

Is the ESL test right for you?

These questions were developed by the ESL faculty identify students who should take the ESL placement test. Think about the following questions:

- Did you earn a recommendation from the general English assessment test that stated you might want to try the ESL test?
- Did you graduate from high school in another country?
- If you graduated from an high school in the USA, did you take ESL there?
- Were you born and raised in another country?
- Do you speak another language at home?

If you can answer “Yes” to any of these questions, then it is a good idea for you to take the ESL test. If you can answer “No” to any of these questions, then the general English/Math/Reading test is probably best for you.

Test Details

Number of questions:

- 100 Total
- 5 background questions
- 20 listening questions
- 75 grammar and reading comprehension questions
- Time Limit: Approximately 1-1/2 hours
Traditional ESL Course Sequences in Community Colleges

FIGURE 4. English as a second language sequences.
Source: Hodara, 2015
## Traditional ESL Course Content Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Prefix &amp; Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Lab</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL 064</td>
<td>Listening/Speaking IV</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFL 073</td>
<td>Reading III</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Reading IV</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFL 092</td>
<td>Composition II</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>EFL 093</td>
<td>Composition III</td>
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<td>EFL 094</td>
<td>Composition IV</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL 111</td>
<td>English for Internationals I</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL 181</td>
<td>EFL Lab 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>
“Resource-Oriented Frameworks” in Community College ESL Programs

- Four areas of practice that move from deficit to resource-oriented approaches (Bunch & Kibler, 2015):
  - Support for academic transitions in college
  - Integration of language and academic content
  - Accelerated access to mainstream, credit-bearing academic curricula and coursework
  - Promotion of informed student decision-making

- Instructors and lower-level ESL students experienced challenges with accelerated ESL courses (Scordaras, 2009).
EL Student Experiences in Community College

- Dimensions of institutional culture can have negative impacts on EL student identity:
  - Multilingualism is perceived as a liability, not an asset.
  - Students resist being grouped into a homogenized ESL student category.
  - Institutional labels and representations impact how ELs negotiate their identity as learners.

- Use of curricular materials from which students can draw personal connections positively influences how students engage with instructors and peers.
ESL Sequences and Reform in California Community Colleges

Sarah Bohn, Bonnie Brooks, Laura Hill, Olga Rodriguez

Supported with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the College Futures Foundation, and the Sutton Family Fund

October 2018
Overview

- Research study
- Data and methods
- ESL student demographics
- ESL course sequences
Research Motivation

- Every year thousands of new students enroll in ESL coursework at CCCs
  - some solely to improve their English
  - others also in pursuit of career credentials or a college degree

- Crucial to establish the value of ESL for long-term student outcomes and to shed light on the most promising ESL sequences

- Imperative to understand ESL student trajectories and success given statewide AB 705 efforts
Research Questions

- How many and which students do ESL programs serve?

- What course sequences are in use by the state’s community colleges? How many colleges offer non-traditional sequences?

- Are non-traditional ESL course sequences associated with improved student outcomes?
Data Sources

- PPIC-developed database of individual college ESL sequences, collected from course catalogs and websites
  - Over 2,600 courses (credit and non-credit)

- Longitudinal student-level database maintained by the Chancellor’s Office (COMIS)
  - All students who enrolled in one of the 114 campuses, 2009-forward
  - Rich information on student background, financial aid, course-taking, completion, transfer
ESL student backgrounds vary by their course of study

- **All ESL students**: 30% Hispanic, 20% Asian, 10% White, 20% Other
- **In Non-Sequence Courses Only**: 40% Hispanic, 30% Asian, 10% White, 20% Other
- **In Sequence Courses**: 50% Hispanic, 20% Asian, 10% White, 20% Other

Legend:
- **Other**
- **White**
- **Black**
- **Asian**
- **Hispanic**
Student immigration status also varies substantially.
Students in sequences to transfer English are substantially younger.

- All ESL students
- In Non-Sequence Courses Only
- In Sequence Courses

- 50-75
- 36-49
- 25-35
- 18-24
- <18
Challenge: Appropriately identifying and classifying ESL sequences

- Identify pre-requisite courses to transfer-level English, properly coding levels-below

- Indicate skill area: reading, writing, grammar, etc

- Indicate curricular approach:
  - Traditional ESL
  - Integrated
  - Contextualized
  - Compressed
  - Accordion
  - Corequisite
Length of sequences to transfer-level English
Tracking where students enter ESL sequences...

Percent of ESL Sequence Students

Levels Below Transfer Level English

Starting Level

One Two Three Four Five Six Seven Eight or More
and following them through college-level English and beyond

![Bar chart showing the percent of ESL Sequence Students levels below transfer level English.](chart)

- **Percent of ESL Sequence Students**
- **Levels Below Transfer Level English**
  - Starting Level
  - Enrolled in Transfer-Level English
Challenge: Identifying ESL sequence design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Sequence</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Curriculum separates skills instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>Combined instruction in two or more skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextualized</td>
<td>Skills taught for vocational or specific major track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compressed</td>
<td>Combines two or more levels into single course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accordion</td>
<td>Allows students to skip levels, depending on performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corequisite</td>
<td>Provides support during transfer-level English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Traditional and integrated sequences

**Traditional**

- Introduction to College and English Skills
- Intermediate Reading
- High Intermediate Reading
- Advanced Reading
- Freshman English Composition and Reading

**Integrated**

- Introduction to College and English Skills
- Intermediate Reading and Writing
- High Intermediate Reading and Writing
- Advanced Reading and Writing
- Integrated College Reading and Writing
- Freshman English Composition and Reading

ESL Developmental English

Transfer-level English
Accordion sequence, also with compressed courses

1A: High Beginning Reading, Writing and Grammar
1B: High Beginning Reading, Writing and Grammar

2A: Intermediate Reading and Writing
2B: Intermediate Reading and Writing

3A: Advanced Reading and Writing
3B: Advanced Reading and Writing

With a “B”

1A: High Beginning Reading, Writing and Grammar
1B: High Beginning Reading, Writing and Grammar

2A: Intermediate Reading and Writing
2B: Intermediate Reading and Writing

3: Compressed/Accelerated Composition for ESL

With a “B”

ESL

Transfer-level English

Freshman English Composition and Reading
Types of ESL Pathways across the CCC

- Traditional
- Integrated
- Contextualized
- Compressed
- Accordion
- Corequisite

Number of Colleges

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

Traditional  Integrated  Contextualized  Compressed  Accordion  Corequisite
Most enrollment is in traditional and integrated sequences
Enrollment in non-traditional sequences is low, but growing.
Next steps

- Refine descriptions of course sequences and provide landscape of reform across the system
- Assess how student goals relate to course-taking patterns
- Evaluate long-term student outcomes across all types of ESL course sequences
Thank you!

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

Sarah Bohn (bohn@ppic.org; 415-291-4413)

Thank you for your interest in this work.
ESL/ESOL Reform Approaches in Practice
Methodology for Qualitative Analysis

- Site visits at two colleges in CA

- Interviews with administrators, ESOL and English faculty, and college staff
- Student focus groups and classroom observations of ESOL, developmental English, and college-level English courses
- Survey administered to students enrolled in advanced ESOL courses
ESOL Reforms in Peralta District

- 11,500 total students enrolled at college
- 96% of survey respondents born outside of U.S.
- Survey data shows most students had intention of earning an Associate’s degree.

- 7,000 total students enrolled at college
- 90% of survey respondents born outside of U.S.
- Survey data shows most students had intention of transferring to a four-year college.
Rationale for Accelerated, Accordion Sequence District-wide

- Moving from sequential course pathways to accordion model
  - “And so we were trying to figure out how could you design a curriculum that allows people to demonstrate sort of mastery to some degree and should you demonstrate that you move up, but also allows more time.”

- Integrating advanced content even at lowest level
  - “...the whole point of the accelerated model is higher challenge earlier on, higher challenge with appropriate support. So we are not waiting, we are not teaching them the ABC’s and, you know, basic conversation and then expecting them to go to English 1A and write a research paper.”
## Accelerated Accordion Model

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<tr>
<th>Subject Area/Emphasis</th>
<th>High Beginning</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>High Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening-speaking</td>
<td>283A</td>
<td>283B</td>
<td>232A</td>
<td>233A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>232B</td>
<td>233B</td>
<td>50A</td>
<td>50B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>284A</td>
<td>284B</td>
<td>215A</td>
<td>216A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>215B</td>
<td>216B</td>
<td>217A</td>
<td>217B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading-Writing</td>
<td>285A</td>
<td>285B</td>
<td>222A</td>
<td>223A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>222B</td>
<td>223B</td>
<td>52A</td>
<td>52B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Less Difficult  → More Difficult
Changes to Assessment and Placement

• Guided self-placement

• “So they do the writing sample, they do the multiple choice tests, and then we get the results and we interview them individually and sometimes when we talk to them it changes things. When we find out their goals it may change things. So it’s a process.”
Curricular Changes to ESOL Courses

- “When we did the redesign, we came up with what we call the six strands that we wanted to integrate in all of our classes and technology was one component. And it was to adjust the digital divide specifically. So it is really exciting to see students come in who don’t have that background. And they learn it and it’s very empowering.”

- “...when we designed our curriculum it was totally backward design from the transfer level. [Writing assignments] are geared toward the final like midterm and final project...and its summary and response with expository thesis driven text is our main thing...we also changed to teaching non-fiction in class as opposed to fiction.”
Hybrid ESOL Course Structure

- Use of hybrid course offerings
  - “...so our current model is that normally the reading/writing class is our six unit classes. So typically they would meet face-to-face twice a week for three hours each...our hybrid model it’s 60% face-to-face and 40% online. So we meet face-to-face twice a week for the first two or three weeks of the semester. And then after that we only meet face-to-face once a week.”
Thank you!

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AB 705: ESL PLACEMENT AND CURRICULAR DESIGN

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OCTOBER, 2018

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AB 705: THE INTENT OF THE LAW

- Erase barriers to equitable outcomes
- Increase student success and completion
- Maximize access to and completion of transfer-level course work
WHAT THE LAW SAYS FOR CREDIT ESL

Education Code §78213 (d)(1)(B) states that colleges “must maximize the probability that... a student enrolled in ESL will enter and complete degree and transfer requirements in English within three years.”

Implementation Deadline: Fall 2020
AB 705 (1) (a) (7)

- Instruction in English as a second language (ESL) is distinct from remediation in English.
- Students enrolled in ESL credit coursework are foreign language learners who require additional language training in English, require support to successfully complete degree and transfer requirements in English, or require both of the above.
INITIAL STEPS COLLEGES CAN TAKE FOR CREDIT ESL STUDENTS WITH A GOAL OF DEGREE/TRANSFER

- **CURRICULUM**
  - Develop a streamlined pathway to and through transfer-level English with targeted support for ELLs

- **PLACEMENT**
  - Maximize the probability that students will complete transfer-level English within six semesters
  - Place students with four complete years of high school performance data directly into college-level English with varying levels of support by HS GPA.

- **DATA COLLECTION**
  - Collect data for students by educational goal and background
CURRICULUM: PATHWAY TO TRANSFER-LEVEL ENGLISH

- Students transition from highest level of credit ESL directly into transfer-level English
- Skills are integrated
- Credit ESL and English composition faculty have shared goals and knowledge of curricular needs
- Transfer-level ESL courses are articulated to meet GE Breadth Area C2 at CSU
- Corequisite model transfer-level English taught by ESL faculty
PLACEMENT: START THINKING ABOUT DIFFERENT GROUPS OF STUDENTS

- ESL Students coming from high school with four years of transcript data
- ESL students coming from high school with less than four years
- ESL students with no high school data
  - Immigrants
  - Refugees
  - F1 visa holders

(Chancellor’s office to release further guidance on placement for the last two groupings in December)
START GATHERING DATA

• Who is taking stand alone courses vs. course sequences? How and when are students directed to one or the other?

• How many students who start in credit ESL complete transfer-level English in three years? Are there differences for different groups?

• How many credit ESL students stop out after successfully completing a level? Are there differences for different groups?

• How many credit ESL students have an educational goal of degree or transfer?
• How will students with less than four years of high school data be directed appropriately to ESL or English? What factors would we look at to determine which is better?

• What would a “transfer-level +” or co-requisite model transfer-level English course for ELLs look like? Does anyone have one?

• How will students’ educational goals be considered in placement?

• What is the role and impact of credit stand alone courses on students’ attainment of their educational goals?
THANK YOU!

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Activities for Discussion
Sample ESL Course Structure
Questions for Discussion (cont.)

• How do these reforms compare to what is being implemented at your own colleges?

• What challenges could arise in reforming your college’s ESL programming?