English as a Second Language in California’s Community Colleges

April 30, 2019

Olga Rodriguez, Sarah Bohn, Laura Hill, Bonnie Brooks

Supported with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the College Futures Foundation, and the Sutton Family Fund
ESL programs can facilitate economic and social mobility for non-native speakers

- Every year, thousands of new students enroll in ESL coursework at California’s community colleges
  - Some simply want to improve their English
  - Others are pursuing career credentials or a college degree

- Given statewide reforms to “credit ESL,” we need to know more about ESL programs and outcomes for degree-seeking students
Reforms to ESL programs are well under way

- Assembly Bill (AB) 705 requires colleges to reform credit ESL programs so that they do not deter or delay educational progress
  - Colleges must maximize the probability that a student in credit ESL will enter and complete transfer-level English within three years
  - Utilize assessment and placement policies that are in line with maximizing probability
  - Achieve full implementation by Fall 2020

- Students affected:
  - Those with goals to seek a degree or transfer
  - Those who are enrolled in courses that will lead to transfer-level English
One-third of ESL students are degree-seeking

General ESL population

- 53% Non-sequence
- 47% Sequence

- 34% Sequence, degree-seeking
- 13% Sequence, not degree-seeking
Degree-seeking students are demographically diverse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Asian (47%)</th>
<th>Latino (23%)</th>
<th>White (19%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship status</td>
<td>Permanent resident (38%)</td>
<td>Student visa (25%)</td>
<td>US citizen (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education status</td>
<td>Foreign HS diploma (41%)</td>
<td>US HS diploma (33%)</td>
<td>Other/Unknown (15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many colleges are moving away from traditional 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 (UC:CSU, DA)
- Freshman English Composition and Reading

**ESL**
- Developmental English
- Transfer-level English
Some ESL sequences are lengthy…

- Percent Levels below transfer-level English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels below transfer-level English</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9+</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
...but most students start only a few levels below transfer-level English
Students who start ESL sequences at higher levels are more likely to complete transfer-level English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels Below Transfer</th>
<th>Six-Year Progression in ESL Sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 levels below</td>
<td>Enroll: 100, Complete: 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 levels below</td>
<td>Enroll: 69, Complete: 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 levels below</td>
<td>Enroll: 54, Complete: 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 levels below</td>
<td>Enroll: 41, Complete: 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 level below</td>
<td>Enroll: 32, Complete: 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer-level English</td>
<td>Enroll: 28, Complete: 23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Enroll and Complete:
- 0% 20%
- 20% 40%
- 40% 60%
- 60% 80%
- 80% 100%
Three key ESL features increase the likelihood of students completing transfer-level English:

- **Transferable ESL**: 20.4 percentage point increase
- **Integration**: 11.2 percentage point increase
- **Direct to transfer-level English**: 11.5 percentage point increase
Recommendations

- Several ESL reforms seem especially promising
  - Shorter ESL sequences
  - Transferable ESL courses
  - Integrated approaches to teaching English skills
  - Direct pathways from ESL to transfer-level English

- Connections between non-credit and credit ESL should be seamless

- Monitoring assessment and placement policies will ensure accuracy, effectiveness, and equity

- All ESL students should be encouraged to pursue a degree or transfer
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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:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.