

ESL REPORT STRUCTURE

This report is summarized in the Executive Summary—the first, most concise tier of information. The next tier of the report, following the Summary of Major Findings, gives more information on each finding. Finally, the third tier of the report has full detail and additional tables at the Office of Research website.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Spring 2008 ESL Report concludes the Basic Skills Series of reports produced from 2004 to 2008 at City College of San Francisco. The ESL Department is the largest at the College. The report focuses on the enrollment, persistence and success of 38,095 noncredit students and 6,666 credit students who comprised the study cohort.

Considerations and Caveats

This quantitative study relied primarily on Banner data from 1998 to 2007. Because of complexity of the ESL program, the scope of that analysis was extensive. Thus, many other data sources and potentially interesting subtopics were infeasible to pursue. We have therefore used measures of success which can be calculated from available data, i.e., progress through the levels of a course sequence, transition from credit to noncredit, degrees, certificates and transfer.

There are limitations of this approach, particularly with regard to noncredit. Students enroll in ESL classes for many purposes, at different stages of life, and with widely varying previous schooling. They may fulfill their own goals and leave without our knowledge of those goals, or their degree of progress or eventual proficiency. CCSF noncredit programs are valued by the College and the community for the quality and flexibility they offer the non-traditional student. For some students in those programs, a transition from noncredit to credit, undertaken at an appropriate time, can help them to achieve their goals. Unfortunately, the College lacks various kinds of data which would be pertinent in assessing whether a transition to credit is of interest to, or would be feasible for, certain students. Our summary here suggests a need to 1) do further study of many important questions regarding noncredit student success, and 2) collect such data as would be required.

Summary of Major Findings on Credit and Noncredit ESL

Placement and Enrollment

1. 80% of noncredit students started in “Beginning” levels 1-4 or Literacy and 53% of credit students placed into the lowest credit ESL levels 110 through 130.
2. From 1998/99 to 2006/07, credit enrollment declined 26% and noncredit 9%.
3. In noncredit, enrollment in citizenship classes decreased 36%, while enrollment in vocational ESL classes increased 170%.

Persistence and Success

4. In progressing level to level, Asian students moved up one noncredit level in about 152 attendance hours; 86 hours for Latinos; a median of 108 for all.
5. Of noncredit students starting in “Beginning” (levels 1-4), 9% advanced to “Intermediate” or above (5-9).
6. 45% of credit ESL students started in noncredit ESL and these students generally did as well as those who started in credit ESL.
7. 8% of noncredit students transitioned to credit.
8. 53% of credit students reached ESL 160, which was the highest level at that time.
9. 43% of all CCSF students who earned degrees or certificates had taken ESL.
10. ESL students transferred to universities at about the same rate as all credit students.

What May Help Success

11. Success in noncredit was increased by enrollment in focus classes, accelerated classes and courses outside of ESL.
12. Matriculation services (placement testing, orientation, counseling) were associated with success both in noncredit and credit.

How this Report Came to Be

The findings you see here are based on an ESL study conducted in 2007-08 by Steven Spurling and Sharon Seymour. That study for a primarily internal CCSF audience was in turn developed from the national Pathways and Outcomes Report (2008) by Sharon Seymour, Steven Spurling and Forrest Chisman, underwritten by CAAL, the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy. Since the CAAL Report contained such rich detail, a workgroup (Bob Gabriner, Greg Keech, Susan Lopez, Joanne Low, Sharon Seymour, and Steven Spurling) was formed to produce something relatively succinct that would inform the CCSF community about selected ESL program data in the last decade or so.

Except where otherwise stated, most data are from credit and noncredit students who first enrolled between 1998-2000 and were tracked seven years forward from the starting year. Data on degrees are from the same cohort, but tracked forward until 2006. Data on enrollment changes by ethnicity are from the CCSF Decision Support System. The study cohort consisted of 38,095 noncredit students and 6,666 credit students. For full details, the original study may be accessed at [url] and the CAAL Report is available from <http://www.caalusa.org>

These findings, in the context of the caveats expressed above, will help to guide the future of the CCSF Department and ensure that students' experiences at CCSF are optimally successful. This report is the final report in the Basic Skills Series produced by CCSF from 2004-2008.

Credit and Noncredit ESL Program Profiles¹

	<i>At Ocean Campus</i>	<i>Over age 35</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Latino</i>	<i>All Other Ethnicities</i>
<i>ESL Noncredit</i>	1%	60%	58%	36%	6%
<i>ESL Credit</i>	93%	25%	70%	17%	13%

Note: The table above shows 2005 DSS data, not the cohort.
A complete description of the ESL program is available at [url]

Placement and Enrollment

1. 80% of noncredit students started in “Beginning” levels 1-4 or Literacy and 53% of credit students placed into the lowest credit ESL levels 110 through 130.

- 56% of noncredit students started in either Level 1 or Literacy.
- 10% started in noncredit Level 5 (Low Intermediate) or higher.
- In credit, only 27% started in levels 110 or 120.
- 42% started in credit level 140 or higher.
- Noncredit levels 5 and 6 are about the level of ESL 110 in credit, the first level of the credit sequence. Large portions of the noncredit and credit sequences do not overlap.

¹ The noncredit program is free of charge, lifeskills-oriented, and features open entry/ open exit and convenient neighborhood locations. The credit program offers most sections at Ocean Campus. It is academically-oriented and traditionally structured (fees charged; grades and units awarded).

**Approximate Correspondence of Levels of Proficiency
In Noncredit and Credit Sequences**

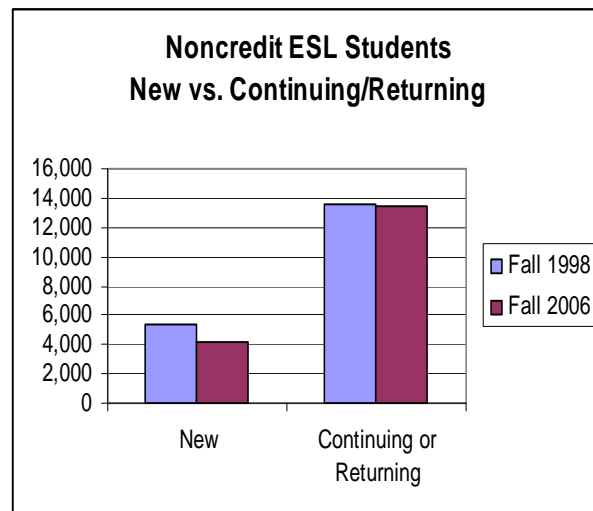
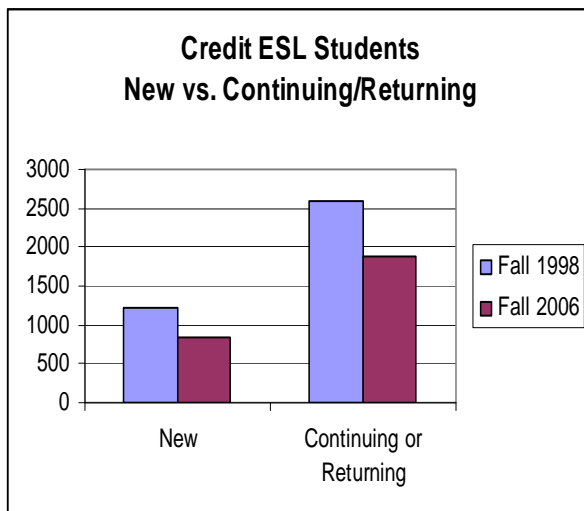
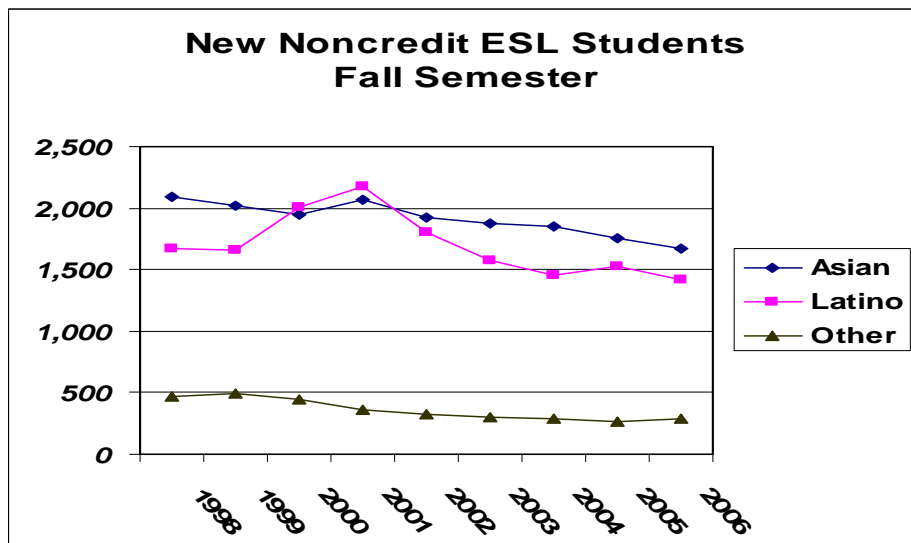
<u>ESL Noncredit</u>	<u>ESL Credit</u>
<i>ESL Literacy</i>	
ESL 1 (Most Common Starting Level in Noncredit)	
<i>ESL 2</i>	
<i>ESL 3</i>	
<i>ESL 4</i>	
<i>ESL 5</i>	<i>ESL 110</i>
<i>ESL 6</i>	<i>ESL 120</i>
<i>ESL 7</i>	<i>ESL 130</i>
<i>ESL 8</i>	ESL 140 (Median Starting Level in Credit)
<i>ESL 9</i>	<i>ESL 150</i>
	<i>ESL 160</i>
	<i>ESL 170*</i>

*ESL 170 was added to the sequence after the period of the study.
This correlation of levels was originally developed by CATESOL.
It is only a rough correlation, however, because of the differences in the curricula and purposes of the noncredit and credit programs.

2. From 1998/99 to 2006/07, credit enrollment declined 26% and noncredit enrollment declined 9%.

- The 26% enrollment loss in credit was 1,405 students. 81% of that loss (1,138) consisted of Asian and White non-Hispanic students, and students of unknown ethnicity.
- Fall enrollment in credit from 1998 to 2002 stayed fairly constant, but fall 2002 enrollment declined 8% from the previous fall, beginning a downtrend in ESL credit enrollment which would last five years.
- In credit, there were similar declines of both new and continuing students.

- In noncredit, by contrast, only the number of new noncredit students decreased, with virtually no loss in continuing students.
- With the decline in new students, continuing students have become a greater percentage of noncredit, especially in the spring semester.
- New noncredit students declined 20% from fall 1998 to fall 2006. New Asian student enrollment declined more than Latino (-20% vs. -15%). A greater decline among Asians than among Latinos was generally the case throughout credit and noncredit ESL.
- At the noncredit enrollment peak, Latino new student enrollment led Asian.
- A sharp decline in “Russian” noncredit students from former-USSR countries (e.g., White Non-Hispanic down 66% at John Adams) relates to sharply lower enrollment of “Other” students.



3. During the same period (1998/99 to 2006/07), noncredit enrollment in citizenship classes decreased 36%, while enrollment in vocational ESL classes increased 170%.

- In response to strong community demand for more VESL classes in the 1999 CCSF listening sessions, the number of sections offered more than tripled from 14 in Fall 1998 to 47 in Fall 2006.
- CCSF Citizenship enrollment diminished in tandem with a national decline in naturalization rates among Asians and Latinos. The decrease was dramatic for legal resident Mexicans, whose naturalization rate decreased by half over about two decades. http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ntz_rates508.pdf

Persistence and Success

4. In progressing level to level, Asian students moved up one noncredit level in about 152 attendance hours, compared with 86 hours for Latinos, and a median of 108 for all.

- Asians advanced more levels on average than Latino students.²
- Students who attended more hours and enrolled for more terms advanced more levels in the program, as one might expect.
- But the average time students took to advance each level decreased for students who (perhaps learned quickly and) advanced more levels.

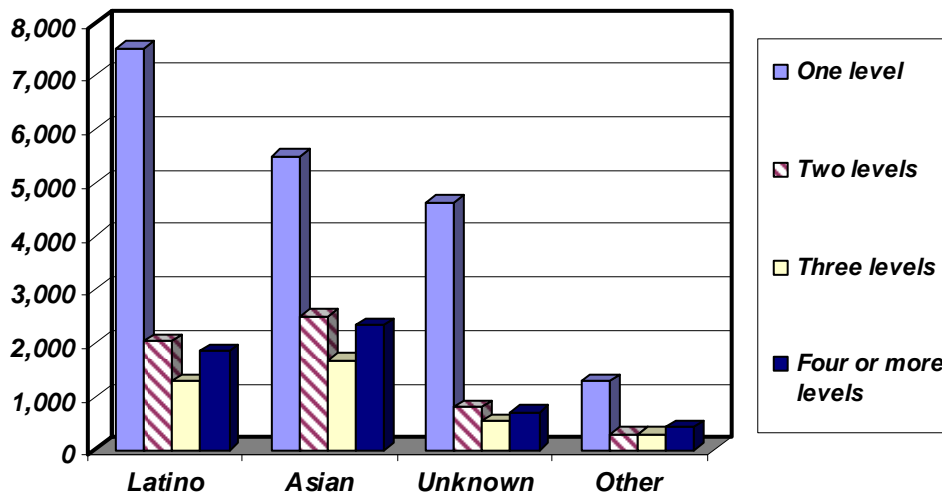
5. Of noncredit students starting in “Beginning” (levels 1-4), 9% advanced to “Intermediate” or higher (5-9).

- Success in noncredit ESL was measured in part by level advancement.
- “Beginning” is a broad designation from Low Beginning to High Beginning, and at CCSF consists of a four-semester course sequence for students who are semi-literate or literate in their native language.
- Many students who are not sufficiently prepared for beginning levels start instead in Literacy, a pre-beginner level for students who are not literate or are pre-literate in their native language or whose language is non-roman-alphabet.
- Many students dropped noncredit classes (did not reenroll within the seven years of the study) before they had persisted long enough to be able to advance very far.
 - 46% of students (20,106 out of 43,595) enrolled only one term in the seven-year period.
 - That 46% includes 13% who dropped out with fewer than 8 hours accumulated.
 - 40% of noncredit students persisted 3 or more terms.
 - Students who first enrolled in Literacy and Beginning Low were more likely to persist for multiple terms than more advanced students.

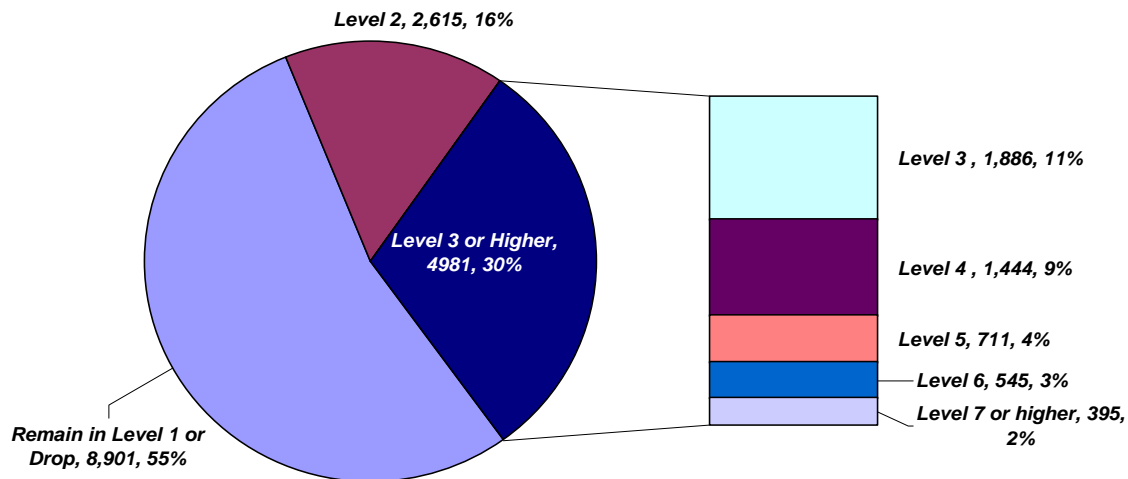
² **Important Notes:** The hours of attendance could have been completed in one or multiple sections, in one or multiple semesters. The median 108 attendance hours for level advancement is equivalent to 60% of the instruction in one 180-hour class. Speakers of Asian languages need to “cover more territory” in learning English because their languages are not closely related to English. In contrast, Spanish and English are both Indo-European languages. It was not possible to separate the impacts of culture, age, previous education, employment status, native language and other differences between the Asian and Latino student populations which may have impacted attendance, persistence and level advancement.

- 4% of literacy students (207) advanced to level 5 or higher; 17% (844) to level 3 or higher.
- Advancement varied by ethnicity; as a result, Asian students took more levels than Latino students, as seen in the graph that follows.

Number of Noncredit Levels Taken 1998/99-2006/07



**How Far Did 16,497 CCSF Level 1 Students Progress in 7 Years?
(Last Level Taken)**

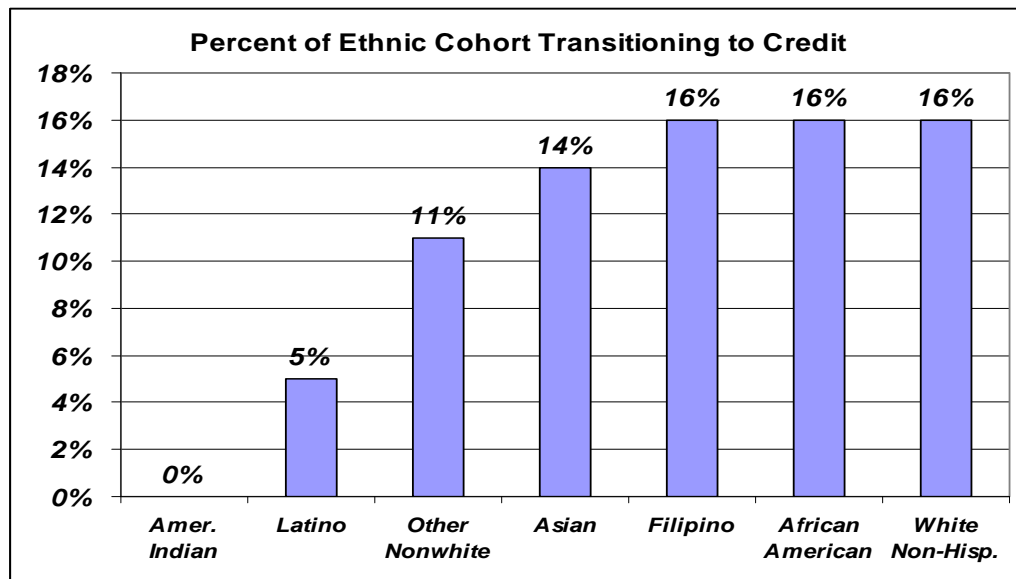


6. 45% of 6,666 credit ESL students started in noncredit ESL and these students generally did as well as those who started in credit ESL.

- The implication of the 45% is that credit ESL depends heavily on noncredit ESL as a major feeder program.
- Having made the transition to credit, former noncredit students who started lower in the noncredit program did just as well in their credit classes (a variety of classes, not just ESL) as students who started higher in the noncredit program.
- The GPA and course passing rate of students transitioning to credit equaled or surpassed that of other credit ESL students and other CCSF credit students. The fact that they had started at a lower level of English proficiency originally did not impede their eventual progress; in fact, those who took 7 or 8 levels of noncredit ESL before transitioning averaged the highest GPA (2.7-2.8) and passed 69-75% of units taken.

7. 8% of noncredit students transitioned to credit.

- Although younger on average, Latino students were far less likely to transition to credit (5%) than students of most other groups. It is unknown how much of a factor residency status may be in the low Latino transition rate.
- Age is somewhat of a factor in transition to credit. 17% of students aged 16-19 transitioned to credit vs. 3% of students aged 50+. However, from 8-11% of students aged 20 to 49 transitioned, and the impact of age was minimal on the rate of transition in that broad range.
- It was found that students at higher noncredit levels were more likely to transition to credit classes than students at lower levels.
- Students transitioning from Level 7 or 8 usually had started in 7 or 8, or somewhere above level 1.



The chart does not indicate that 14% of transitioning students were Asian (etc.); rather, that 14% of those who were Asian transitioned from noncredit to credit.
 "African American" in the chart refers to Black immigrants born outside the US who took ESL classes.

- About a third of students transitioning from Levels 3 or 4 started as low as Literacy or Level I.
 - Once they got to credit, 88% of students took academic transfer courses and 74% took credit ESL courses (most took both).
 - Comparing the 8% of noncredit who transition to credit (“forward look”) with the 45% of credit ESL students who started in noncredit (“backward look”), we see that noncredit is a very important feeder program because of its relatively much larger size. Future research may find socioeconomic and educational attainment differences, as the noncredit program is targeted to more economically marginal groups.
- 8. 53% of credit students reached ESL 160, which was the highest level at that time.**
- 3,082 students reached level 160, the former CCSF graduation requirement course.
 - This percentage (53%) refers to enrollment, not course success in the final course.
 - These statistics include students who placed at any level and advanced to 160, as well as those who placed in that level initially.
- 9. 43% of all CCSF students who earned degrees or certificates had taken ESL.**
- ESL students’ success in earning degrees, certificates, and transfer is a source of pride for the College. In terms of their **percent of awards**, ESL students earned 29% of all certificates and 48% of all degrees at CCSF.
 - The **percent of former noncredit students earning awards** is also impressive. 25% of students transitioning from noncredit to credit earned degrees or certificates, as did 25% of credit-origin ESL students.
- 10. ESL students transferred to universities at about the same rate as all credit students.**
- The rate of transfer to four-year colleges and universities was 21% for credit ESL students, nearly as high as the 23% for the general student population.³
 - 16% of noncredit-origin credit students transferred to four-year institutions.

What May Help Success

- 11. Success in noncredit was increased by enrollment in focus classes, accelerated classes and in courses outside of ESL.**
- Many noncredit ESL students also take classes in the Business and Transitional Studies Departments.
 - Enrollment in intensive ESL classes and in focus ESL classes was also shown to improve retention and progress in noncredit. (Intensive classes cover two noncredit levels in a single course. Focus classes are typically classes that focus on a single skill, e.g., pronunciation or listening.)
 - The most common of these options was taking focus classes and the least common was enrolling in an intensive class (fewer sections offered, compared to focus classes).

³ A match of CCSF students was done with the National Student Clearinghouse to ascertain the number and percent of students who appeared at a four-year institution after the student’s last term at CCSF. The denominator was all new CCSF credit students in the 1998-2000 academic years while the numerator was all students who enrolled in four-year universities following their last terms here.

- 12% of noncredit ESL students enrolled in focus and courses outside of ESL; ultimately, those students made up one third of all transitions to credit ESL.
- The positive effect of those courses (focus, intensive, or non-ESL courses) was additive. Noncredit ESL students who took all three kinds of courses had more success than those who took two, who in turn had more success than those who took one.

12. Matriculation services (*placement testing, orientation, counseling*) were associated with success both in noncredit and credit.

- Regardless of the noncredit level in which they started, students were more likely to transition to credit if they had received all three matriculation services than if they had received none.
- The Learning Assistance Center and Early Alert were other enhancements associated with greater success in credit.