

Student Retention Project
Shoreline Community College
ESL Evening Program
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Student Retention Project

Introduction

Student retention in the ESL evening program is especially challenging because of the demands on students in their work and personal lives. Most of our students work fulltime or have family responsibilities during the day; therefore, finding time to attend class and do homework is not easy for them. Although attending class two times per week is often all these students can handle, this schedule does not provide the continuity and intensity that students often need to experience significant improvement in their language skills in one quarter. This lack of continuity and progress in their English language skills may also contribute to lack of retention in evening ESL classes.

We began our focus on ways to increase retention by looking at a PowerPoint presentation from CA TESOL provided by Bill Sperling. This presentation helped us focus on retention in several ways. The following is a short synopsis.

Instructional Endeavors:

The focus of lessons should meet students' needs. Specific lessons should include:

- Needs Assessment - at beginning of the quarter
- Goal Setting
- Identifying Support and Strategies for staying in school (people, resources, skills)
- Understanding Positive - Negative Forces in students' lives
- Enhancing Contact with Role models (in family, in community, in school)

Administrative and Program Endeavors:

- Communication with Missing Students
- Recognition of Student Progress
- Enhancement of Class Community

Community Collaborations:

- While many communities have a substantial network of agencies and organizations available to assist those in need, many of those who could benefit, our students, aren't even aware of the existence and/or relatively easy access to this support system.

Student Retention Project Activities

Our group created and piloted new class materials and program activities that we believe will enhance our ability to identify and meet students' needs and expectations and thereby retain students in our program. These activities were created with the evening students in mind, but are in no way limited to that group. We hope these materials will be useful to any program or class that chooses to use or adapt them.

Teaching Materials

1. Student Needs Assessment
 - a. Beginners - level 1 - Zoe Malamouli
 - b. Low - levels 2 and 3 - Zoe Malamouli
 - c. High - levels 3 and 4 - Zoe Malamouli
 - d. Level 3 Example Survey - Lauren Wilson
 - e. Level 4 Example Survey - Lauren Wilson

2. Goals Setting
 - a. Summary of lessons for teacher - Daphne Cuizon
 - b. Matching Activity - Daphne Cuizon
 - c. Goal Setting - levels 1 & 2 - Daphne Cuizon
 - d. Goal Setting - levels 3 & 4 - Daphne Cuizon
 - e. Action Steps - levels 3 & 4 - Daphne Cuizon

3. Negative and Positive Forces in Student's lives - Lauren Wilson

Program Activities

1. Calling Students who have stopped attending - Susan Hottinger

2. Student Certificate Ceremony - all instructors

3. Community Services presentations - organized by Lynette Peters, Cecelia Martinez, Ruth Duffy, and Lauren Wilson.

4. Development of ESLL level Exit Tests - 4 comprehensive grammar tests, one for each quarter - created by Katie Culbertson
List of possible writing prompts for ESLL level 4 - Lauren Wilson

THESE MUST BE KEPT SECURE - Please see Lauren Wilson for copies.
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- Please check (✓) only 4 pictures:

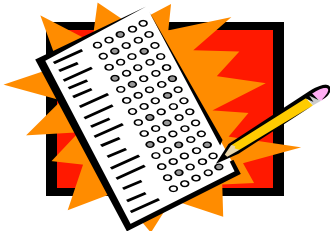
I NEED ENGLISH FOR:



CONVERSATION ___

WORK ___

SHOPPING ___



HOMEWORK & TESTS ___

DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT ___

CHILDREN & SCHOOL ___



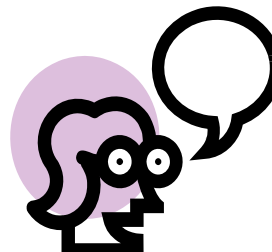
TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL ___

USING THE PHONE ___

SIGNS AND LABELS ___

- Please check (✓) only 2 pictures:

I NEED THE MOST HELP WITH:



LISTENING ___

WRITING ___

SPEAKING ___

READING ___

*NEEDS ASSESSMENT
for ESL students (levels 2-3)*

Student's name _____

Level _____

PLEASE CHECK (✓) ALL ANSWERS YES OR NO

Do you need to use English...

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| To talk with friends & neighbors? | yes _____ no _____ |
| At your children's school? | yes _____ no _____ |
| At the park or community center? | yes _____ no _____ |
| On the telephone? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To leave messages on an answering machine? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To call 911? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To ask for directions? | yes _____ no _____ |
| At the bank? | yes _____ no _____ |
| At the post office? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To go shopping? | yes _____ no _____ |
| At restaurants? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To pay bills (e.g. electricity bill) | yes _____ no _____ |
| To understand movies, radio and TV programs? | yes _____ no _____ |
| Read newspaper and magazine articles? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To use the Internet | yes _____ no _____ |
| To find an apartment or house? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To talk about housing problems? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To talk to doctors, nurses and dentists? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To fill out medical forms? | yes _____ no _____ |
| At the drugstore? | yes _____ no _____ |
| At your job? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To look for a job? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To get a better job? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To read information from your child's school? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To talk with your child's teacher? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To help your child with his/her homework? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To get a driving license? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To understand police officers? | yes _____ no _____ |
| To apply for U.S citizenship? | yes _____ no _____ |

In English, I need the most help with... (please circle only 2)

SPEAKING READING WRITING GRAMMAR PRONUNCIATION

NEEDS ASSESSMENT
for ESL Level 4 and/or higher

Student's name _____

Level _____

Check (v) one space for each item below:

	A	B	C
	I'm not interested in learning more about this	This is easy for me	I need work on this
Talk about my personal information/ work history	_____	_____	_____
Participate in conversations (social, professional)	_____	_____	_____
Understand American values and beliefs	_____	_____	_____
Use legal and tax services	_____	_____	_____
Fill out forms (medical forms, job applications)	_____	_____	_____
Write personal and business letters/e-mails	_____	_____	_____
Use a computer and the Internet	_____	_____	_____
Express opinions on current affairs	_____	_____	_____
Get information about community services and community events	_____	_____	_____
Report a 911 emergency	_____	_____	_____
Call in sick or late for school or work	_____	_____	_____
Read and talk about a child's report card	_____	_____	_____
Leave messages on an answering machine	_____	_____	_____
Find out about college programs after ESL	_____	_____	_____
Study to become a U.S citizen	_____	_____	_____

	A	B	C
	I'm not interested in learning about this	This is easy for me	I need work on this
Make decision about purchasing large items (e.g. a car)	_____	_____	_____
Understand household utility information and bills	_____	_____	_____
Discuss landlord and tenant rights	_____	_____	_____
Read a rental agreement	_____	_____	_____
Get banking information and choose accounts	_____	_____	_____
Complain about a product or service	_____	_____	_____
Fill out medical history or insurance forms	_____	_____	_____
Find health care services	_____	_____	_____
Communicate with medical personnel	_____	_____	_____
Understand safety procedures at work/ report workplace accidents	_____	_____	_____
Look for job opportunities	_____	_____	_____
Make a good impression in a job interview	_____	_____	_____
Write a resume and cover letter	_____	_____	_____
Communicate with supervisors and other employees	_____	_____	_____
Understand employee rights and responsibilities	_____	_____	_____
Identify own learning goals	_____	_____	_____
Use dictionaries and encyclopedias	_____	_____	_____

LEVEL 3 Survey

What do you want to practice this quarter?

I would like to practice writing in English.

- Paragraphs and other writing for school
- Letters and other writing for my life
- Stories and other creative writing
- Other? _____

I want to practice using English for my daily life.

- Going to the doctor
- Applying for jobs
- Job interviews
- Expressing opinions
- Speaking politely
- Other? _____

I want to practice English school skills.

- Study skills
- Using a dictionary
- Using a library
- Other? _____

I want to practice English reading skills.

- Reading newspaper stories
- Reading about American Culture
- Reading better and faster
- Other? _____

I want to practice my speaking and listening in English.

- listening to stories and conversations
- speaking with my classmates
- listening to real life English, such as radio and TV
- Other? _____

LEVEL 4 Evening Program Survey

Level 4 Survey

I would like to plan the class this quarter to carefully address your interests and needs. Please take some time to fill this survey out. It will help me a lot!

Please use \checkmark and * to show your answers. \checkmark means it's important. * means it's very, very important! You may mark as many as you want to.

Which skills are the most important to you?

- reading
- writing
- grammar
- speaking
- listening

Which life areas are most important to you?

- SCHOOL: My ability to take college classes in the future
- JOB: My ability to be successful at a job with English
- COMMUNITY: My ability to participate in the life in my community with English

Which topics are the most important to you? You may mark more than one.

- American culture
- job skills
- family and parenting
- health and exercise
- technology and computers
- news and current issues
- being a citizen/resident in the USA
- Others _____

What knowledge, resources or services would help you the most?

- Financial skills and counseling
- Childcare or parenting information
- Health information and services
- Job skills and counseling
- Personal counseling
- Technology skills and training
- Other? _____

What do you want to practice this quarter?

I would like to practice writing in English.

- Paragraphs and other writing for school
- Letters, emails and other writing for my life
- Applications or writing for a job
- Other? _____

LEVEL 4 Evening Program Survey

I want to practice English reading skills.

- Reading articles and newspaper stories
- Reading about American Culture
- Reading better and faster
- Other? _____

I want to practice using English for my daily life.

- Communicating with a doctor
- Applying and interviewing for jobs
- Expressing opinions
- Speaking politely
- Communicating with my child's teacher
- Other? _____

I want to practice college study skills.

- Study skills
- Using a dictionary
- Using a library
- Other? _____

I want to practice my speaking and listening in English.

- listening to stories and conversations
- speaking with my classmates
- listening to real life English, such as radio and TV
- Other? _____

Is there anything else you would like me to know about your needs for this quarter?

Thanks!!!

Goal Setting

These goal setting exercises are designed for students to reflect about 'why' they are taking ESL classes and help them focus on a chosen direction in their family, work, and/or community.

The first exercise is the Goal Setting Matching Activity in which students can match general goals and specific goals. Some of the goals overlap so there can be more than one answer. This activity is to get students to begin to differentiate between general goals and specific goals as well as to provide them with ideas about their own goals.

The goal setting exercise for levels 1 & 2 help students to categorize various goals into the areas of home/family, community and work. They must then choose 3 goals that interest them. As a class, the teacher can find out which category is the most popular.

The goal setting exercise for level 3 & 4 focuses on practicing writing specific goals by continually asking the question, "Why do you....?" until the goal becomes very specific. This would also make a good pair activity with one student asking the questions until he/she can't ask anymore. This exercise concludes with the student choosing one goal and an action step to go with it.

The Action Step exercise is aimed to get students to take action. What are goals for if you don't take action? Using the 7 goals from the previous exercise, students have to think of one action they can take now or within the week. The focus is to begin those "baby steps" towards realizing their goals. Although there may be many steps to take, all that is required is to write just ONE action step. It's usually the first step that is the hardest to take. As with a baby, students will realize that they will stumble along the way but they'll pick themselves back up again and take another step.

Goal Setting-Level 1 & 2

Directions: Discuss each word or phrase below and put them in the various categories. Then circle three which are important to you. Are there any others you want to add?

“I want to _____.”

1. communicate at the post office
2. get a driver’s license
3. communicate at the bank
4. get a job
5. go shopping
6. communicate at the doctor/hospital
7. help children with schoolwork
8. understand TV/radio
9. fill out a job application
10. pay bills
11. communicate with the police
12. talk to my boss
13. speak at a job interview
14. read a recipe (cooking)
15. apply for citizenship
16. go to college
17. write a resume
18. talk with my co-workers

Home/family	Community	Work

**Goal Setting –Writing clear, specific goals
Levels 3 & 4
Why do you...?**

Directions: When making goals, it is important to make them as specific as possible. When you have a general goal, keep on asking yourself, “Why do you...?” until you reach a specific goal.

For example: Goal: I want to learn English.

Question: Why do you...want to learn English?

Answer: Because I want to be able to speak well.

Question: Why do you... want to speak well?

Answer: Because I want to talk with my boss.

Question: Why do you ...want to talk with your boss?

Answer: Because I want to change my work schedule.

Specific Goal: I want to speak English well because I want to talk to my boss about my work schedule.

Practice changing these general goals into specific ones and share them with a partner.

1. I want to learn English.

Specific: _____

2. I want to get a good job.

Specific: _____

3. I want to go to college.

Specific: _____

4. I want to improve my life.

Specific: _____

5. I want to speak English well.

Specific: _____

6. I want to learn to write in English.

Specific: _____

7. I want to help support my family.

Specific: _____

Now, choose one goal and write down one action you can take right away to bring you one step closer to your goal.

Action Steps

Action steps are the actions you can take to make your goals a reality.

Example: Goal: I want to improve my reading in English.

Action: I will learn one new word a day.

Directions: For each of the seven goals you wrote on the previous exercise, write one action step that you can take now for each goal. Share/work with a partner.

Goal #1 _____

Action Step: _____

Goal #2 _____

Action Step: _____

Goal #3 _____

Action Step: _____

Goal #4 _____

Action Step: _____

Goal #5 _____

Action Step: _____

Goal #6 _____

Action Step: _____

Goal #7 _____

Action Step: _____

How do you see yourself 1 year from now? _____

How do you see yourself 5 years from now? _____

Negative and Positive Forces in our lives

Pre-reading vocabulary: Do you know these words? Match the vocabulary with the meanings to the right.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. positive means ___ | a) situation |
| 2. negative means ___ | b) stop doing something |
| 3. conditions means ___ | c) good |
| 4. demands means ___ | d) quality of staying focused on something |
| 5. lack of means ___ | e) supportive words or actions |
| 6. confidence means ___ | f) not enough |
| 7. encouragement means ___ | g) bad |
| 8. give up means ___ | h) requirements |
| 9. persistent means ___ | i) feeling of ability or success in something |

Coming to school is not difficult for some students because they have supportive family members, a flexible work schedule and few other responsibilities. However, many students attend classes despite various issues that make it very hard for them. In fact, these barriers, or negative forces, can make them give up on school altogether. Read about two students and the negative and positive forces in their lives.

Maya is 35 years old. She has lived in the USA with her family for 3 years. She is often tired after working all day and her children often need her help with homework or after school activities. Her husband doesn't really understand her desire to study either. He sometimes jokes when she is struggling with her own homework, "you are too old to learn anything." Unfortunately, Maya doesn't have good memories of school from her childhood. It was never easy for her to learn in school, and her grades (marks) were often fairly low. But she really wants to improve her English because she believes that it may help her be a better mother and community member.

Jun is 19. One year ago his family immigrated to the USA. Jun had just finished high school. Now his father is very sick and Jun is the only child who can take care of him while his mother works in his uncle's store. He wants to be a good son, but his dream is to study engineering. He's worried that he's losing his chance because people from his culture are only college students in their 20s. After that, they start their home and work life. Jun's friend and a former teacher have encouraged him to enroll in college classes because they noticed his ability with numbers, but Jun is afraid to discuss this with his parents.

Write down the problems that Maya and Jun have that make it difficult for them to be students. What reasons do Maya and Jun have to go to school?

	Problems	Reasons to go to school
Maya		
Jun		

Negative and Positive Forces in our lives

Directions: Now, think about the positive and negative forces in your own life. Mark the ideas that are true for you.

Negatives: The reasons I don't come to school, don't do my homework, and maybe give up:

1. **Life Demands**
 - conditions at home
 - Special child care needs
 - work demands
 - Transportation
 - health (self or family member)
 - lack of time/feeling too tired
 - age
 - weather
 - moving
 - lack of income
 - Other: _____
2. **Relationships**
 - Unsupportive family members, friends, coworkers, or bosses
 - Unsupportive community or welfare workers
 - religious beliefs
 - fears about letting other people down by failing in a program
 - Other: _____
3. **Negative self**
 - thinking negative thoughts
 - own laziness
 - lack of own confidence in ability to be successful
 - Other: _____

Positives: The reasons I keep coming to school, doing my homework, and being persistent:

1. **Relationships**
 - friends, family, coworkers or bosses
 - God, church or place of worship
 - Community groups and community workers who give encouragement and support
 - support groups
 - Children
 - Other important people in our life
 - Other: _____
2. **Goals**
 - Helping one's children
 - Getting a better job
 - Becoming a better person
 - Moving ahead in life
 - Attending college or some other academic goal
 - Obtaining citizenship
 - Other: _____
3. **Teacher/Students**
 - Individual teacher
 - Fellow students
 - Combination of the two
 - Other: _____

Program Actions

1. Calling Students Who Have Stopped Attending

During Spring Quarter 2009, Susan Hottinger experimented with how best to contact students who had not shown up in class or had disappeared from class without letting the instructor know why.

Summary:

During the third and fourth week of spring quarter, I made several attempts to contact “no show” students. I had minimal success. In many cases, I wasn’t able to reach the student due to a wrong number or no answer. In some cases, I left messages and only a few of those were returned. Of the students that I was able to talk with, I invited them back to class. A few said that they would come, but we didn’t see them. Some told me that they were too busy with work, were taking care of a sick family member, or were sick themselves.

During the eighth week, I began calling students who had stopped coming. This time, I was able to connect with most of the students. Having the teachers verify the students’ phone numbers at the beginning of the quarter contributed to my being able to reach them. Although no student made a firm commitment, most said that they wanted to attend summer quarter. I gave them the start date of summer quarter and advised them to come in to register with Debby Hunter.

Even though the students that I contacted weren’t able to come back this quarter, I’m hopeful that they will come back summer. I feel making personal contact with the student is beneficial. The students I spoke with were appreciative of my call.

Tips for those who do this in the future:

When phoning students, keep in mind the FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) regulations. Do not discuss any information about a student with anyone other than the student it is in regards to. If you need to leave a message, leave only your name, school name, and a phone number where you can be reached. Don’t leave any information about why you are calling.

Future idea:

Another idea we may want to pursue for next quarter is to send these students a postcard asking them to come back to class.

2. Student Certificate Event

At the end of the quarter, students will be presented with a certificate of participation from the program by their teacher in a program event joining classes together on the last night of the quarter.

3. Community Services Presentations

In winter and spring quarters, evening level 3 and 4 students went to a special presentation organized by Lynette Peters (Women's Center) and Cecelia Martinez (Multicultural Center), Ruth Duffy, and Lauren Wilson. These presentations were opportunities for evening students to learn about services available to them at the college and in the community. The spring presentation was given by Penny Lara of PeoplePoint, an organization offering an array of services to community members.

Evening Program Possible Writing Prompts for ESLL Evening 040 -
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Fall – Skills and Abilities, Transportation issues

- 1. Write a letter to a friend or family member about the advantages (good things) and/or the disadvantages (bad things) of living in the United States. Focus on three.**
- 2. What three skills are most important to you in your life or work? What are the reasons they are important to you in your life or work? (cause/effect)**
- 3. Write an accident report based on a picture that your teacher provides you. Use the attached form. (life-skills, past tense)**

Winter – Health, Rights and Responsibilities

- 1. What are three ways your health has changed since you were younger? (Present perfect)**
- 2. Have you had any health problems in your life? Describe the health problem and what you did to deal with it. (Past tense)**
- 3. What are three important responsibilities you have in your life? Explain and compare each responsibility (modals, compare/contrast)**
- 4. Fill out a health questionnaire. (see attached) (life-skills)**

Spring – Consumer News and Views, Rules and Laws

- 1. Write a letter of complaint (see attached)**
- 2. Write your opinion about a law that you think should be changed in the USA or in your native country. What are three reasons you think it should be changed?**

Summer – Career Paths, Money Matters

- 1. Write a letter of interest for a job (see attached)**
- 2. How did you get your job in the USA? Explain the process (way) you got your job in a paragraph.**
- 3. What are three ways people can manage their money better?**

Evaluation

Skills	1 – low	2 – not passing	3 – passing	4 – high passing
Form				
Organization				
Content/Meaning				
Sentence structure				
Verbs				
Word forms and Noun phrases				
Vocabulary Use				
Punctuation/Spelling				

↑
borderline