

PROGRAM REVIEW 2008-2011

Division: **Learning Resources: Student Success Center (SSC)**
Department or Program: **The Listening & Speaking Lab (LSL)**
Name and Title of Preparer(s): **MaryAnne Ifft, LSL Coordinator**

I. Description and Mission of the Program

Basic Skills X Transfer Career/Technical **Other** **-Life Long Learning**

A. Brief description of program and mission statement

The *Listening & Speaking Lab* (LSL) was created in 2002 by the Language Arts division with the mission to provide a safe and supportive environment for ESL learners to improve their speaking and listening skills outside the regular classroom. It was recognized, at the time, that the college was providing some support for students to develop their basic writing skills but not providing adequate support for our students to become proficient speakers of English.

Through a wide range of activities including ½-unit small group electives, stand alone workshops, tutoring sessions, and recording sessions, along with the use of interactive software programs, our basic skills students gain confidence and fluency in their ability to use English in and out of the classroom. We record about 400 student visits each week in LSL as students move from one program to another to practice their English.

Much of the actual instructional work in the LSL is performed by Teaching Assistants (hereinafter referred to as TAs). As in other SSC programs, students depend on the work of TAs. These classified hourly employees facilitate learning for students in individual and small group settings and are regular members of the classified bargaining unit at De Anza. Working up to 16 hours weekly, they provide excellent attention to students at a very low cost to the district. Up to 47 TAs have worked in LSL and other SSC programs, but their numbers are down to only 33 because of the current hiring freeze.

LSL is used primarily by ESL and Speech students but is open to all De Anza students who not only seek to improve their communication skills but who also want to make friends across different cultures. In addition to the programs listed above, The Listening & Speaking Lab hosts the Language Exchange program (LEP) every quarter as well as providing a home base for the Cross Cultural Partners program (CCP).

B. Summary of the program's main strengths

Through our small group and individual support programs, we fulfill De Anza's mission to challenge "students of every background to:

Develop their intellect, character, and abilities;
Achieve their educational goals; and,
Serve their community in a diverse and changing world."

We provide practice opportunities and confidence building activities vital to the academic success of at-risk students enrolled in ESL and Speech classes

Community building helps second language learners feel more identified with De Anza as a *community* college -- a place that welcomes them. They move more confidently into their academic classes -- less invisible and less afraid of failure.

We make an effort to link students across different departments and programs by using Speech student volunteer tutors, connecting students taking World Languages to our ESL students (LEP), promoting CCP, and offering support to students from other programs like Child Development and Health Technologies.

Over the past seven years, we have expanded our popular small group ESL elective program in response to student demand. About 40% of students enrolled in our credit classes (ESL 210, 211, 213, 216, 223, 224) in Winter '09 were international students.

C. A summary of the program's main areas for improvement

LSL needs to find new sources of funding to properly staff our learning center in response to DeAnza's growing need to identify and better serve students at risk:

- At De Anza, we have a growing population of second language learners seeking support outside their regular classrooms. According to 102 students surveyed in Winter '09, about 60% have been in the United States less than 2 years. This population is particularly at risk as they struggle to adapt to a new culture and college environment.
- LSL needs to continue to expand our outreach to programs like Health Technologies and Child Development to help students get the language support they need through our programs.
- To accommodate the growing numbers using LSL, we need a larger space in a facility shared with the other Student Success Center programs to ensure easy access for basic skills students.

D. Expected outcomes

The success of second language learners in college and in real life depends significantly on their oral communication skills. Through our emphasis on informal English practice sessions, we work to secure the following outcomes:

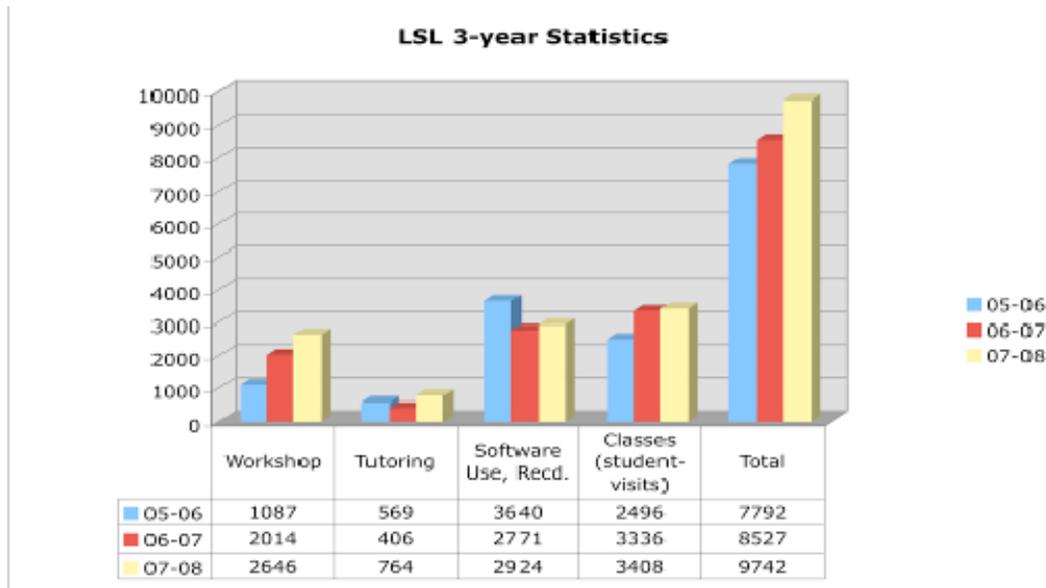
When our students leave De Anza to transfer to a university, to enter the job market, or to work within their own families and social communities, the confidence and speaking communication skills they have developed in LSL enhance their ability to take on these new challenges more successfully.

II. Retention and Growth

A. Access, growth, and retention for all students

The retention rate in our credit classes was 91% in 2007-08, and the number of students enrolled grew 49% between 2005 and 2008.

- See the attached institutional research for the full data on our ½-unit classes. (ESL 210, 211, 213, 216, 223, 224)
- The following graph shows the significant growth in *all* our programs over the past 3 years. Our credit classes represent about 35% of the total number of recorded student visits. We anticipate 11,500 student visits by the end of 2008-09.



B. Access, growth and retention for targeted populations

We achieved 100% retention and success of the targeted students in 2007-08. See the attached institutional research for more detailed information.

C. How the program addresses the basic skills needs of De Anza students

The basic skills students we serve in the Listening & Speaking Lab are primarily ESL students. Most of the students come from the low-intermediate to the low-advanced levels of the ESL program (ESL 234, 244, 251, and 261).

In addition, we get referrals from Language Arts programs such as EWRT and have students coming to us from other divisions across campus because they cannot understand class lectures or keep up with required assignments.

The LSL faculty and teaching assistants come from diverse backgrounds, are trained in ESL pedagogy, and offer a variety of programs that recognize the many different learning styles and needs of our learners.

Through collaborative group work and the sharing of ideas and personal experiences, students are motivated to improve their communication and vocabulary skills.

III. Student Equity

A. What progress or achievement has the program made toward decreasing the student equity gap?

Based on the 100% success rate of the targeted populations enrolled in our credit classes, we did not have an equity gap in 2007-08.

Having said this, however, it is valid to keep in mind that every second language learner faces an equity gap as he or she struggles to accomplish academic and personal goals in American society. All of our programs are designed to narrow and close this gap.

B. In what ways will the program continue working toward achieving these goals?

We continue to improve upon what we offer in LSL based on what we learn from students every quarter, both through informal focus groups and written feedback. Unfortunately, what the students tell us is that they want more of what we are now offering – at more and at different times than we are currently able to provide due to staffing limitations.

We also hope, given the time, to work more with individual instructors, in and out of the ESL department, to target at-risk students and provide them the support they need.

C. What challenges exist in the program in reaching such goals?

The biggest challenge over the last year has been the very tight budgetary and staffing constraints. We have had to contend with both a freeze on hiring Readiness Teaching Assistants and a dwindling Foundation account at the same time as the number of students using our programs continues to rise. (We estimated 4,000 student visits in the winter of 2009.)

IV. Budget Limitations

A. Limited Funding and Critical Resources

We recognize that these are very difficult times and that we may need to make some changes to keep our programs going next year. For that reason, there are no monetary figures attached to the following critical needs.

- The Listening & Speaking Lab needs a permanent faculty coordinator funded for at least three-quarters of a fulltime load. With the number of students using our programs, we cannot operate otherwise. As it is, the coordinator's time, which could be better spent creating new programs and improving outreach, is spent doing tasks that teaching assistants and administrative staff could do.
- LSL has no permanent staff although we do enjoy the services of one very talented classified employee who works with us 10 hours a week for 10 weeks each quarter.
- We need to replace the RTAs (Readiness Teaching Assistants) that are leaving this year if we are to continue to offer our ½-unit classes and support programs at current levels. We have lost about 30 RTA hours over the past year. In Spring '09, we will have 45 RTA hours, down from 55 in Winter '09, and 75 in Winter '08.
- The Foundation account that was set up for our programs 7 years ago will only pay operating expenses for one more year, if that. We have taken good care of this money but we definitely need help with fundraising next year.

B. Describe the consequence to students and the college in general if the program were eliminated or significantly reduced.

The feedback we get from the growing numbers of basic skills students who are using LSL attest to the fact that although their regular classes are valued, they do not provide enough individual support and small group practice opportunities needed for success.

Students will tell you, without hesitation, that the services provided in LSL are absolutely vital to their success and that there is no other comparable resource available either at De Anza or at any other school in the area. The LSL is an integral part of the Basic Skills Initiative and must be protected, even in hard times, if the college is to fulfill its pledge to "offer instruction and student services most critical to preserving student access, retention and success."

V. Additional Comments: Hear the Student Voices

The Chancellor's Advisory Council has said that we should try to make decisions "with a long term view." I think if we keep that principle in mind, and do some creative problem solving, we can find our way through the rough patch we find ourselves in today. The students in LSL are inspiring me to try a little harder each day.

I believe that it is important to close by letting students speak for themselves and for all of us to find a way to hear their voices and bring them into the decision making process. They deserve to be heard, after all is said and done, because this is a conversation about their futures.

The following commentary by an ESL student is representative of the sentiments expressed by many of our students. Haekyung posted her essay online.

If someone asks me, "Where is your favorite place at De Anza?" I will answer without hesitation, "My favorite place at De Anza is ATC 304, Listening and Speaking lab." Although there are many reasons I like the Listening and Speaking lab, I want to talk about three good things I obtained from activities there.

First, I learned a lot using the software programs at ATC 304. Because I am not a native English speaker, I sometimes have wrong pronunciation and strong Korean accent. For last three quarters, I have finished two software programs, "New Dynamic English" and "Propower." Now I am practicing with "Longman Interactive." In addition to these programs, there are many other good programs on the computer at the Listening and Speaking lab to improve our English skills.

Second, there are many workshops in the lab. Even though we live in America and attend a community college, it is very hard to talk to other people in English outside the class. When I was in my first quarter, I wanted to practice English speaking. I heard about conversation workshops from one of my friends. As soon as I heard about them, I registered as many workshops as I could. I practiced English conversation with other ESL students, also shared our cultural differences and made good friends with each other. For last three quarters, my speaking skills have improved a lot with the help of conversation workshops.

Third thing I like is tutoring. Before presentation, I have had tutoring service at the Listening and Speaking lab. All tutors are very kind. They seem to be angels who want to help us improve our English skills. A week ago, I got tutoring about my speech class presentation. She advised many good points and corrected my wrong pronunciation and intonation. This friendly and direct help caused me to be a better speaker of English.

Besides the above three things, there are other activities at the Listening and Speaking lab such as CCP (Cross Cultural Partner), many half unit classes, and Language Exchange program. I think ATC 304, Listening and Speaking lab, is the heart of learning English for ESL students in De Anza College.

Thank you very much."— **Haekyung Choi**, ESL student

.Friends of LSL: <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/friendsoflsl/>