

College Profile 5: Adult ESL in the Community College
A Project of the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy

YAKIMA VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

16th Avenue and Nob Hill Boulevard

P.O. Box 22520

Yakima, Washington 98907-2520

www.yvcc.edu

by

Pamela Ferguson

Adult ESL Literacy Instructor

Department of Basic Skills

Yakima Valley Community College

A. THE COLLEGE AND ITS STUDENTS

1. The College

A total of 9,289 students enrolled at Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC) in the 2005-2006 academic year. Of those, 2,035 were degree and transfer students in Arts and Sciences and 3,744 were in Workforce Education (vocational and professional certificate and degree programs), both credit-bearing divisions of the college. Also included in the Workforce Education division are the Basic Skills programs (ABE/GED and noncredit ESL classes). Enrollment in Basic Skills programs was 3,032 (1,677 were ESL). The remaining 478 students had some other unspecified enrollment.¹ Thus, nearly three-quarters of the students (6,776 out of 9,289) at the college were in work-related or Basic Skills courses.² The college has two main campuses in Yakima and Grandview, with credit and noncredit classes offered at each.

2. Students

YVCC students are drawn from a county in which the indicators of poverty (median family income, percent of families living below the poverty level, percent of births paid by Medicaid, percent of adults over 25 years of age without a high school diploma, percent non-English speaking at home, percent of high school dropouts, and percent unemployed) in the population are all twice or more the percentages for Washington State as a whole.³ Thus, the county's residents are far poorer and less competitive economically than the average Washington State resident.

¹ These enrollment numbers are an unduplicated count.

² This data is from the YVCC Student Management System.

³ These and other facts come from Leahy, *Circle of Success Report*, Yakima, Washington, September 2005.

Yakima County is centrally located in rural Washington, a region dominated by large-scale agriculture. The county covers 4,296 square miles and has a population of 226,727. The overwhelming majority of seasonal agricultural workers (including both field workers and warehouse processing workers) are first-generation Mexican immigrants from poor, rural areas of that country. Most of them have low levels (three to six years) of first-language education and literacy. Because of the agricultural base of the local economy and the part-time, specifically seasonal, employment of its workers, the population employed in these areas is able to participate in education only on an intermittent basis.

A quarter of the students enrolled in credit programs at YVCC are identified as Hispanic, as are 69 percent of those enrolled in noncredit (ESL and ABE/GED) classes. Most of these Hispanic students are first- and second-generation immigrants from Mexico. (Noncredit ESL students are primarily first generation.) Because of the high percentage of this population at the college, YVCC has been officially designated a Hispanic Serving Institution by the federal government.

B. ESL PROGRAMS OFFERED

Noncredit ESL classes are offered in day and evening classes, on and off campuses. In addition to the two main campuses, the Basic Skills department has Learning Centers offering ESL and ABE classes in Ellensburg and Toppenish. There are day and evening ESL classes offered each quarter at 15 to 20 community sites (churches, K-12 schools, and community-based organizations/CBOs) throughout the service district, many in rural, isolated communities.

Approximately 10 to 25 percent of the total number (depending on numbers of classes offered each quarter) of ESL students receive instruction in day classes taught by full-time instructors on the two main campuses. The remaining 75 to 90 percent of ESL students enroll in evening campus and day and evening off-site classes taught by part-time instructors. ESL students have full student privileges at the college, meaning students have access to same services and facilities as credit students (e.g., college library, student ID card, guidance, and counseling, etc.).

Additionally, limited noncredit ESL classes are offered for LEP (limited English proficient) clients of the state Division of Social and Human Services (DSHS). VESL (Vocational ESL) classes in customer services for retail employment and precertified nursing assistance or health care employment are occasionally offered. YVCC does not offer credit ESL classes. At present, citizenship classes are not offered separately. Citizenship information is incorporated into the curriculum of the general ESL classes.

The noncredit day on campus (high-intensity transition) ESL classes and the off-campus and evening on-campus ESL classes will be the focus of this profile.

**ESL Class Enrollment (2005-2006 duplicated counts)
from the YVCC Student Management System**

<u>YAKIMA CAMPUS</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Evening</u>	<u>GRANDVIEW CAMPUS</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Evening</u>
Level 1	45	100	Level 1	33	138
Level 2	94	76	Level 2	42	71
Level 3	114	86	Level 3	42	53
Level 4	84	77	Level 4	47	16
Level 5	43	27	Level 5	19	5
Total	380	366	Total	183	283

<u>OTHER, OFF- CAMPUS SITES</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Evening</u>
Level 1	93	269
Level 2	100	166
Level 3	70	87
Level 4	42	35
Level 5	4	1
Total	309	558

**Summary of 2005-2006 Basic Skills (ESL & ABE) Enrollment
from YVCC Student Management System**
(see Appendices A, B, and C for State of Washington
and NRS data on enrollment)

	Day	Evening
YAKIMA CAMPUS ESL • duplicated count • unduplicated count	380 213	366 308
GRANDVIEW CAMPUS ESL • duplicated count • unduplicated count	183 132	283 242
OTHER, OFF-CAMPUS ESL • duplicated count • unduplicated count	309 281	558 501

YAKIMA CAMPUS ABE • duplicated count • Students enrolled in both ESL & ABE (duplicated count)	481 132	228 32
GRANDVIEW CAMPUS ABE • duplicated count • Students enrolled in both ESL & ABE (duplicated count)	57 63	87 0

C. NONCREDIT ESL PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

1. History of the Program

The Adult ESL program at YVCC began in the early 1980s with the resettlement in the area of some Southeast Asian refugees. The program was small and self-contained. Students did not routinely transition to any other classes at YVCC. There were no full-time instructors and only one or two part-time instructors. From the beginning of the program, language was taught around student-selected themes. From the early literature,⁴ it was clear to the instructors that adults learned best when the material taught was relevant and meaningful to their lives and the learning was experiential.

Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) funds became available to YVCC in the mid- and late 1980s to teach the required language component of the amnesty program. People who had been migratory agricultural workers were “settling out” in local communities as they applied for legal residency status. (Within the span of two U.S. Census counts, 1980 and 1990, demographics in the area changed dramatically. Communities that had been 80 percent non-Hispanic and 20 percent Hispanic became the reverse.) Instructors were hired quickly and the program grew exponentially. With the end of IRCA funding in the early 1990s, the state legislature directed the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to continue funding ESL classes out of its budget, and YVCC began to include funding for the classes out of its college operating budget.

The noncredit ESL classes have now become institutionalized at YVCC. The college president states:

As a community college, our mission is to address the specific educational needs of our community. One of the primary needs of our community is to provide literacy skills and English language skills to a growing population that is largely comprised of monolingual Spanish speakers from Mexico. We realize that we are the largest provider of this instruction in this community and that, without this

⁴ M. Knowles, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*, Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing, 1984.

service, most of these students would have few options for a better job and quality of life.

2. Course Content

At YVCC, the courses themselves are loosely tied to five of the state's six recommended levels across four skills, in listening-speaking and reading-writing pairs, called "competencies." There are state performance criteria that define what learners should be able to do to enter the following level in a sequence. However, the correlation between the content of CASAS tests, which determine level completion for state and federal purposes, and the content of the state competencies has not been specified in Washington State documentation until recently.⁵ As a result, this report describes the program at a time when CASAS scores and state completion levels *did not* correspond.

All ESL students (day and evening, on and off campus) receive instruction based on student-generated thematic curricula. The practice is for students in each ESL class to select themes or subjects (for example, finding medical care, the U.S. school system, or immigration issues) to study each quarter. (Theme selection is conducted in different ways by instructors, depending on learner proficiency.) Instructors develop curricula (within the guidelines of the state competencies) that incorporate appropriate level skills practice. Activities for language development within each theme can be vocabulary development, interviews, dialogues, picture prompts, or life experiences for class-generated and individually generated writing and reading exercises. A theme may continue for several class sessions, until the class and instructor decide to move on to the next one.

The concept of "teachable moments" is the backbone of this style: first, there is recognition by the instructor of the class need or desire, then the instructor develops curriculum to meet the needs. The instructor must adapt his/her plans to meet the class's evolution or emerging needs.

The use of this instructional approach at YVCC is based on adult learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of goal-oriented, relevant instruction. (The practice at YVCC is heavily influenced by the writings of Auerbach and Wallerstein.⁶)

YVCC has found that ongoing instructor training and peer mentoring are necessary to help part-time instructors develop skills in using this approach. (See the section on "Faculty.") Instructors also state that the students' enthusiasm when they recognize their own suggestions in use in the

⁵ As of the 2006-2007 academic year, new "ESL Standards" will be implemented in the state. The state is also redefining the stated ESL levels and corresponding CASAS scores to comply with federal NRS changes. The point spread between CASAS levels will be compressed, and ESL levels will be renamed. YVCC, state, and federal ESL levels will correspond from the 2006-2007 academic year into the future.

⁶ In particular, see: E. Auerbach, *Making Meaning, Making Change: Participatory Curriculum Development for Adult ESL Literacy*, McHenry, Illinois: Delta Systems, Inc., 1992; N. Wallerstein, *Language and Culture in Conflict: Problem-posing in the ESL Classroom*, Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1983; and N. Wallerstein and E. Auerbach, *Problem-posing At Work: English for Action*, Edmonton, Alberta: Grass Roots Press, 2004.

classroom is very affirming for both the students and the instructors. Instructors say that students develop responsibility for their own learning and that neither students nor instructors are bored by the material or classroom experience. Additionally, faculty strongly state that the student-generated thematic curriculum is, in their experiences, the most effective approach with low-literacy adult students. (See the section on “Effectiveness.”)

Thus, the program has deliberately amorphous, flexible, unspecified, and largely student-centered curricula, expectations, and outcomes. Promotion through the system depends to some extent each on the mastery of the state’s competencies as assessed by instructor-developed performance tasks, CASAS scores, and to a considerable degree on the *ad hoc* judgment of instructors.

D. SPECIAL FEATURES

Courses are offered both on and off campus, day, and evening, and in high-intensity and low-intensity modes for 10-week quarters.

1. On-Campus Day (High-Intensity Transition) Classes

The two main campuses offer daytime high-intensity transition classes of 12 hours (Levels 1 and 2), 16 hours (Level 3), 20 hours (Level 4), and 25 hours (Level 5) a week, four days a week for Levels 1-4 and five days a week for Level 5, for ten weeks a quarter. These classes provide both high-intensity (how much) and long-duration (how long) of instruction.⁷

One goal of the program design is to take optimum advantage of the limited time students have available for language acquisition with increased hours of class and exposure to different instructors and teaching styles. (Most of the students in these classes are seasonally or partially employed, work afternoon or night shifts, and/or have children in school during the daytime hours of the classes.) Instructors believe they can keep students’ attention and focus on their learning for more rapid progress through the class levels with these high-intensity classes. The longer-term goal of the practice is to transition ESL students into ABE classes.

Daytime classes on these two campuses lead ESL students to a full transition into ABE classes. Students generally take the complete block of classes offered at each level. They then form a supportive cohort and usually progress as a group through class levels at one level per quarter.

In the high-intensity transition classes, in addition to ESL classes emphasizing language development in the four skill areas of listening and speaking (emphasized in Levels 1 and 2) and reading and writing, starting with Level 3 students also take:

- Level 3: A math class taught by an ESL instructor (covering whole numbers in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, with an emphasis on the language of math in English and on word problems);

⁷ Some of the original impetus for intensity of instruction came from information in the *Mainstream English Language Project (MELT)* of the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, 1985.

- Levels 4 and 5: ABE math classes taught in English by ABE instructors (with training in ESL) and ABE computer basics classes taught in English by an ABE instructor;
- Level 5: ABE corrective reading classes taught in English by ABE instructors (with training in ESL) and an ABE career development class taught in English by an ABE instructor.

Levels 4 and 5 students are enrolled in all of the ABE classes offered by the college (except ABE writing classes) while they are simultaneously supported by language development in ESL classes. With the generally low levels of first language literacy in the student population, the experiences of students and instructors indicated that writing was the most difficult of the language skills for these ESL students to master. Therefore, Levels 4 and 5 ESL students attend an ESL two-hour reading and writing block and only enroll in ABE writing classes when they become an all-ABE student (indicated by instructor assessments of their learning and CASAS scores). After completing Level 5, ESL students are routinely transitioned into all-ABE classes.

To monitor each student's class schedule and progress, an ESL and an ABE student personal learning plan is kept for each student and attached to the student's registration file. Each class instructor records information for class assignments, instructor assessment of student learning and progress, and CASAS scores for each student. Every instructor has access to this information. At the end of each quarter, each student meets individually with one of the instructors for review of the student's progress and goals. The instructor then recommends a class schedule for the following quarter.

For the most part, ABE instruction at YVCC is typical of ABE class instruction elsewhere. That is, the ABE instruction is more teacher-generated, content-driven, linear, and sequential in nature than is ESL instruction at YVCC. Nevertheless, the instructors say that good instruction for ESL students is good instruction for ABE students as well, (i.e., the instruction includes the use of visual aids, demonstrations, small group activities, role-playing, and other forms of practice in classes). Several full-time ABE instructors have been cross-trained in ESL and now teach both ESL and ABE classes. Through training and ESL class observations, the ABE instructors state they have become more sensitized to the needs of ESL students (for greater clarity and a slower pace of instruction, specific vocabulary development, attention to grammar points, etc.).

One instructor who teaches both ESL and ABE classes states:

Success breeds success! One of the difficulties with ESL is that it is not easy for students to "see" their learning. It is not like math where one can say, "Now I know how to add fractions and before I didn't." They know that they can say, read, and write more, but it is often hard to verbalize [that] specifically. I think high-intensity [classes] help with our attendance and drop out rate. For one, we are asking for a large time commitment. This is not a five-hour-a-week program in which you can miss several classes. The students' initial commitment is high and then students have such a variety of instructors and classes that they "feel" it when they miss. They also feel their growth much more quickly. Increased time on

task equals increased rate of growth. Students see others moving at a fast rate, and see success all around them. They know it is possible for them too.

2. Rationale for Implementing the High-Intensity Transition Classes

The question is, of course, why do this? As stated earlier, YVCC has no credit ESL program—a traditional path of transition to further education for ESL students at many community colleges. ESL at YVCC originated as a stand-alone program. As the program grew with the rapid demographic changes in the service district, it became apparent to instructors that these students needed a place to go after they completed ESL classes. (At the time, the college had no plan or policy for addressing the needs of these students.) Most of the students were not prepared, even after completing ESL classes, for success in developmental education classes or college-level classes or in pursuing higher-paying work.

The instructors at YVCC gradually implemented a model of transitioning ESL students into ABE classes. ABE classes were available to ESL students and classrooms and instructors' offices for both programs were located together, which facilitated collaboration. No additional resources were needed, nor administrative sanction needed, to provide further educational opportunities for the ESL students with their enrollment in ABE classes. Transition of ESL students started originally with placing them in an ABE family literacy class and next in an ABE math class.

Because this model is instructor-implemented and driven (though now also fully endorsed and supported by administrators), the ESL and ABE instructors have developed a shared philosophy of education, an understanding of the similarities and differences between the ESL and ABE programs, and high levels of trust in each other's abilities to assess and place students in appropriate classes. (It is also important to note that the full-time instructors who work in the day on-campus classes have longevity in doing so. All of them share 11 to 26 years of experience working together.) There is continual referral of students back and forth across the programs. ABE and ESL faculty collaborate on scheduling classes, so that appropriate ESL and ABE classes are available to the ESL students.

ESL students have become a large percentage of the students enrolled in the ABE classes. As a result, ABE instructors see the need to serve these students, both in ESL and in ABE courses. One instructor said, "They are our 'bread and butter' now." Both ESL and ABE instructors state that they are committed to blurring the lines of distinction between the ESL and ABE programs to focus more on students' needs and less on categorizing students by programs.

3. Off-Campus and On-Campus Evening (Low-Intensity) Classes

Most of the ESL classes at YVCC are offered off campus (some during the day, but mostly in the evening) at over 15 community centers, including public schools, two satellite campus facilities, and a church. There are also evening classes at all levels on campuses. Off-site and campus evening classes are low-intensity classes of six to eight hours a week. Although the intended administrative plan is for off-campus classes to be limited to Levels 1 to 3, because of their

isolation in rural areas, the classes are often multilevel and serve students with abilities above these levels.

To address some of the deficiencies of off-campus instruction (evidenced by low numbers of students receiving CASAS pre- and/or posttesting and low completion rates), hours of instruction of each of these classes will be increased in the next academic year. Professional development opportunities for instructors and instructional support will also be increased. A transition program from ESL to ABE classes also will be developed for evening classes on the two campuses, with the goal of transferring as many Level 4 and 5 students as possible from off-campus to on-campus day and evening transition (high- or low-intensity) classes.

4. Tuition

Students are required by the state legislature to pay \$25 in tuition each quarter, whether they enroll in one (i.e., low-intensity) or several (i.e., high-intensity and/or transition) classes. There are, however, tuition waivers granted upon student request and proof of one of several indicators of low income. Enrollment is open until the sixth week of the ten-week quarters.

5. Placement

By state mandate, students entering noncredit ESL classes are given ESL CASAS appraisals and pretests in listening and reading. (In campus day classes in Yakima, students placing into Level 4 are also given an ABE math appraisal and a pretest and are asked for a writing sample. In addition to these, Level 5 students are given an ABE corrective reading placement test.) Instructors assess test scores, first language education levels stated by the student, and speaking abilities in simple face-to-face conversation with each student to place students in appropriate classes.

Careful attention is given to testing and to student comfort levels in the first few weeks of the quarter. Normally, there are a couple of students in each class who need to be moved up (usually), or down (occasionally). The program has found it better to place a new student conservatively and then to quickly move the student to a higher-level class if appropriate, reasoning that it can be demoralizing for students to be moved to a lower-level class. Once re-placed, students then generally stay in their classes until the end of the quarter.

Also by state mandate, ESL CASAS posttests in listening and reading are given to ESL students after 40 hours of instruction or at the end of the quarter. Instructors also assess progress with instructor-designed, class-based performance tasks related to the state's core competencies for ESL Levels 1 to 5. Promotion within or exit from the program is by instructor decision, based on CASAS scores and performance tasks measured against those competencies.

6. Summary

This is the shape, focus, and scope of the college's ESL program: student-centered, community-oriented, noncredit (high-intensity and low-intensity, day and evening) classes for Mexican immigrants. It is a popular program, as attested by its long waiting lists. These waiting lists range

from 20 to 35 students per site across the program, though the campus-based classes are the most sought after.

E. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

YVCC has a number of technology resources and initiatives that benefit ESL students:

- Dedicated ESL/ABE computer labs with technical support are available on the two main campuses.
- ABE computer basics/technology classes are available for Levels 4 and 5 students on the two main campuses during the day. The administration plans to expand these class offerings to the evening programs on campuses also.
- Class Levels 3 through 5 on the two main campuses (days and evenings) have access to the labs during ESL class times, at the discretion of the instructor, and with computer lab assignments integrated into the thematic instruction of the class.
- Computers in ABE labs on the two main campuses are accessible to ESL transition students (Levels 4 and 5) as well as to ABE students for independent use.

F. ARTICULATION & TRANSITIONS

YVCC's articulation between the ESL and ABE programs and student transitions between the programs is discussed earlier under "Program Characteristics."

Further, the administration at YVCC has recognized the large demographic of noncredit ESL students at the college and the success of the Basic Skills programs in transitioning these students into ABE classes. An administrative initiative for the year 2005-2006 was to implement means of facilitating transition of students from ABE into Workforce Education programs. It is recognized that these are students who will likely need to work continually and they will therefore "stop in" and "stop out" of certificate and degree programs. The intention is to develop career ladders that will enable students to qualify for a series of progressively higher-paying jobs over time. A full-time ABE instructor (an RN with an MA in Education) was hired to develop and teach classes to prepare students for entrance into allied health programs.

There are also several *collegewide* YVCC initiatives to increase student transitions, from which ESL students may benefit. These include:

- In 2005 the board of trustees added to the institutional vision statement, "YVCC provides coordinated services to help students become college ready," thereby endorsing changes in college activities.
- The college has moved from a model of "high-risk students" to "high-risk courses" (defined by a 30 percent or higher rate of Ds, Fs, or Ws given to students in the class) and is working to reduce the barriers those classes present to students. For example, an ABE

instructor teaches math and biology study skills classes that support the academic classes. Also, tutoring is offered for high-risk courses, with tutors imbedded in classes and having available extra hours both online and onsite. There is video supplementary instruction available for several high-risk courses, with credits that can be applied to either four-year degrees or vocational programs.

- Learning Community (LC) classes are targeted each quarter for developmental students. Research shows that these classes help second-language and first-generation-college students. One LC class combines Speech 100, Reading 085, and English (writing) 075.
- Trainers were brought to YVCC to work with academic faculty on the use of language- and culturally-appropriate texts. Some instructors consequently changed the content and sequence of their courses.
- In 2005, the vice-president of instruction called for an all-day collegewide symposium, asking for programs to highlight their transition activities at the meeting. The ESL to ABE transition practices were featured.
- Online preparation for the ASSET (college class placement tests) is available.
- Counseling services are now available in several formats, through face-to-face, special programs, online assistance, and a new advising center. The goal is to provide multiple access points and to intervene on behalf of students if they identify that they need help.
- Affinity groups are supported through the Office of Student Retention and Recruitment. As part of this initiative speakers are brought to campus, and students receive support to attend conferences. There is training for student leaders and support funds for clubs.

G. FACULTY

1. Faculty Description

At YVCC, there are three full-time ESL instructors, each with an MA in TESOL, two full-time ESL/ABE instructors, one with an MA in reading and one with a BA in education, and 25 to 30 part-time ESL instructors per quarter, all with a minimum of a BA. At present, most of the ESL part-time faculty have teaching degrees in Elementary Education and have little experience teaching adults. Some of these faculty members have TESOL endorsements.

The minimum hiring qualifications for a part-time ESL instructor are a BA and three years of teaching experience or a certificate or endorsement in ESL or TESOL. A full-time instructor is expected to meet these standards and have an MA in TESOL. Preferred qualifications for both include at least two years of experience teaching adults. The qualifications for faculty are recommended by the department chair, approved by the dean, and finally determined by the human resources department.

The pay and benefits for full- and part-time faculty members are determined by the negotiated agreement between the YVCC administration and the local chapter of the American Federation of Teachers. All faculty members have union affiliation, with nonvoting members paying a reduced agency fee. Faculty salaries in ESL and ABE are at the same levels as all other faculty at the college, including those instructors teaching credit-bearing classes, and workloads are the same as well. (This parity issue became a negotiation point between the administration and the union in 1994. Prior to that time, ESL and ABE faculty were paid 60 percent of other faculty salaries.)

2. Staff Development

Over the years of the growth of the ESL program, there have been multiple changes in college administration at all levels and in financial support for staff development. An added difficulty in providing ongoing staff development is the large size of the college service district, which extends approximately 90 miles in every direction from the Yakima Campus. In the absence of alternatives, full-time and several part-time faculty have been a steady influence on staff development for instructors. The three full-time ESL faculty have been at the college for 21, 18, and 11 years respectively. They each have a strong theoretical basis and practical classroom experiences to draw upon in providing staff development. Consequently, they have provided much stability to the program.

3. Peer Mentoring

As a result of changes in administration and fluctuations in funding, instructors have relied on each other for support in managing teaching or classroom issues through informal networking, classroom observations, and formal workshops. The staff development philosophy used by the instructors is the same adult learning theory used with students: topics are selected by the learner (here the teacher), the process is goal- and relevancy-oriented, and the learning is experiential—often involving problem solving.

Intensive support for instructors new to the program is necessary for them to implement the student-generated thematic curricular approach and integrate that with the state competencies in their classrooms. Instructors also require support in developing assessment tasks for students. Managing the state requirements for registration of students and CASAS testing also requires ongoing coaching. New part-time instructors have received 10 to 20 hours of class observation time with an experienced instructor and then have been mentored by an experienced instructor. ABE instructors have received release time for a quarter to observe ESL classes and be peer-mentored by an ESL instructor.

In interviews with part-time faculty, some say they would not have survived without this peer guidance, especially those teaching ESL for the first time. They report seeking out long-time instructors, observing several ESL instructors teaching various levels, asking questions, and gathering materials. However, those instructors who have been peer mentors over the years report that they become “burned out” at times from the repetition of continually helping new part-timers become oriented to the program.

The current Basic Skills director plans to institutionalize staff development through ongoing workshops and peer mentoring, with instructor assignments and commensurate pay for instructors (as teacher/mentors and as participants). Instructors expect that this formalized plan for staff development activities and appropriate compensation for instructors involved in those activities will be beneficial to the morale of all involved.

H. MANAGEMENT

There is one director of basic skills (ESL and ABE programs). She has authority to recommend the hiring of part-time instructors. The number of full-time faculty in various categories is recommended by the director and approved or denied by the dean of workforce education and, ultimately, the college president. The director also supervises support staff, manages budgets, recommends class schedules and sites, and collaborates with CBOs on behalf of the college. She reports to the dean of workforce education. Faculty members are supervised by the dean. The department (defined as full-time faculty) recommends courses and schedules to the director, who must get final approval from the dean.

Faculty members are supported by a program assistant, registrars, office assistants, and instructional technicians. Most of these support staff work on campuses. Off-campus faculty have varying degrees of support. All off-campus instructors are part-time faculty. They work very independently. Sometimes the only contact they have with the college is when they submit their weekly attendance record. All program support staff report to the director, but their job descriptions are determined by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. The budget is prepared by the college president, with input from the vice presidents and deans, and approved by the board of trustees.

I. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial support takes many forms at YVCC and includes the following:

- Waivers are available for students for the \$25 per quarter tuition mandated by the state.
- Facilities, utility costs, and custodial services are provided, but the dollar amount is not easily obtained as the costs are not broken out by program but are part of the collegewide facilities operating budget.
- The amount allocated to ESL by the college from its general operating funds is in excess of federal, state, and other grant funds specifically designated for ESL/ABE received from sources external to the college. These figures show that the college contribution is nearly double college-external funds for ESL/ABE.
- The college general operating funds are a mixture of income from the state FTE reimbursement and tuition funds paid by credit students. The state FTE reimbursement received by the college is generated by both credit and noncredit students (including noncredit ESL students). The amount of funding allocated to any

particular college program (including noncredit ESL) is not proportionally related to the amount of FTE reimbursement received by the college due to enrollment in that program. Rather, it is an allocation decision made annually by the college budget committee (vice presidents and deans) approved by the college president, and then by the board of trustees.

- The following summary compares funds specifically designated for ESL with college general operating funds allocated to that program in 2004-2005.

	Total Amt.	% ESL	ESL \$
Basic Skills Grant (federal and state)	\$360,395	62.6	\$225,607.27
EL Civics Grant (federal and state)	\$131,756	100	<u>\$131,756.00</u>
	Total		\$357,363.27
College Contribution to ESL (from general operating funds)	Total		\$656,620.60

The policy associate of the state Office of Adult Basic Education adds:

Last year [2005-2006], we awarded \$9,096,736 in state and federal funds for [all state] ABE, ESL, EL/Civics, GED Prep, etc. Our providers served 50,386 (federally reportable) students. That comes out to be \$180.54 per learner in grants. That does not include match and FTE money and money from other sources, which included at least \$27,578,689. Adding it all together, it turns to be \$727.89 per learner. If one were to include the entire amount fiscal services “estimates” to be in the pot, including FTE money generated by basic skills students, it comes out to \$1,389 per student. However, the \$727.89 is all that is shown on the annual financial status reports.

While many community colleges in Washington State reportedly have pulled college financial support away from noncredit ESL programs in recent years due to budgetary constraints, YVCC has continued and increased financial support to the program since the demise of IRCA funding.

J. EFFECTIVENESS

1. Difficulties of Measuring Effectiveness

The state measures for student attainment have changed multiple times in the last 10 years. Most recently, CASAS testing was state mandated and implemented in 2003. The state emphasis in the first year was testing (appraisal, pre- and posttests) of every student within 45 hours of instruction. (The CASAS organization itself recommends testing students only after 100 hours of instruction.) The NRS data from these reports showed significant drops in student progress from level to level with the implementation of CASAS testing. (NRS data before this time reflected the results of the state’s emphasis on authentic assessment measures designed by instructors.) At first, all test bubble sheets had to be mailed to YVCC by instructors and then to Olympia for scanning and entry into the state database. Packets of tests were “lost” and/or never entered into the system. In 2004, it became possible to scan tests at the main campus and enter this data into the state system from there.

However, implementation of CASAS testing has continued to be problematic for YVCC. Off-campus and evening classes lack testing equipment, state-required secure storage for testing materials, sufficient assistance, and instructors practiced in CASAS test-giving procedures. Most of the students are unpracticed in test-taking skills for standardized tests and bubble sheet entry. Off-campus and evening classes tend to have more transient student populations, with students coming and going during the duration of the quarter. Tracking sufficient hours for gains and giving multiple tests to students on fluid entry and exit become even more difficult tasks for instructors to negotiate.

From Washington state data collected in fall 2005, it appears that students in off-campus and evening classes receive fewer hours of instruction and have significantly lower numbers of posttested students and subsequently also have lower numbers of level completers than students in on-campus day classes. Thus, any program data collected by the state or by NRS is significantly compromised by the programwide deficiency of CASAS pre- and/or posttesting of all students.

2. Outcomes Based on State Data

The extent of these difficulties in measuring effectiveness is demonstrated by data from the state's Web-based Adult Education Reporting System (WABERS). A snapshot of WABERS program data for YVCC for the fall quarter of 2005 indicates that 11 percent of students at off-campus/evening sites and 50 percent of students at on-campus/evening sites received CASAS posttests. Of these students, 7 percent and 25 percent respectively completed a level that quarter, as measured by the CASAS posttest. Posttesting of students off-campus/days was 26 percent and of students on-campus/days was 61 percent. Of these students, 16 percent and 32 percent respectively completed a level that quarter, as measured by the CASAS posttests. Fall quarter 2005 data from the college's NRS report indicate that students off-campus/evenings had 30 median hours of instruction and students on-campus/evenings had 48 median hours of instruction. Students off-campus/days had 29 median hours of instruction and students on-campus/days had 71 median hours of instruction. (See Appendix B for NRS Tables from the data years 2004-2005 and Appendix C for the same in 2005-2006.)

3. Outcomes Based on College Data

Because of the limits of WABERAS and NRS data, YVCC reviewed various program data from 2001 to 2006 to determine the effectiveness of its ESL program. (The tables with these data follow.)

- Movement/retention data of day and evening students within two program years on the Yakima campus were compared. Level completions were determined by instructors using performance-task assessment compared to the state core competencies for ESL, as well as CASAS scores. The particular goal of the data review was to determine the effectiveness of the day ESL high-intensity classes and of the transition of ESL students into ABE/GED classes.

- Data was also collected which compared transition rates to ABE of Levels 4 and 5 ESL students in high-intensity transition classes (day) and regular (evening) classes over a five-year period.
- Data from ABE instructors on ESL (or former ESL) student completion rates in their ABE day classes on the Yakima Campus during one quarter was collected.

**ESL Students in High-Intensity Transition Classes (Day)
and in Regular Classes (Evening) – Yakima Campus**

	2003-2004		2004-2005	
	Day	Evening	Day	Evening
Total Students	184	468	207	481
% of all YVCC noncredit ESL students who were enrolled in classes at the Yakima Campus in the years indicated	14%	35%	15%	34%
% (of day and evening students at the Yakima Campus in the years indicated) who completed two or more levels and were retained two or more quarters during that year ⁸	27%	17%	38%	19%
% (of day and evening students at the Yakima Campus in the years indicated) who enrolled in ESL Levels 4 and 5 during that year	30%	12%	25%	17%
% (of day and evening students at the Yakima Campus in the years indicated) who also enrolled in ABE classes during that year	23%	2%	26%	4%
% (of day and evening students at the Yakima Campus in the years indicated) who enrolled in developmental education (below 100 level) classes during that year	20%	2%	20%	3%
% (of day and evening students at the Yakima Campus in the years indicated) who also enrolled in credit (100 level or above) classes during that year	1%	1%	1%	less than 1 %

The data above is from queries of the YVCC Student Management System. The table clearly indicates that the students in high-intensity transition day classes completed more class levels, were retained for more quarters in the year, and transitioned to both ABE and developmental classes at higher rates during the data comparison years than did students in low-intensity

⁸ Class completion rates for a single level would be higher, because some students who were eligible for advancement stayed for only one semester.

evening classes at YVCC. The transition rates became equal when comparing numbers enrolling in college-level classes during the same years. However, if all of these students were tracked beyond the span of each data collection year, it is possible that differentiation might be seen in these rates also.

**Levels 4 and 5 ESL Students Who Transitioned to ABE Classes
from High-Intensity Transition (Day) Classes
and Regular (Evening) Classes – Yakima Campus**

	2001-2006	
	Day	Evening
Total students enrolled in ESL Levels 4 and 5 during 2001-2006	472	414
Students who transitioned from ESL Levels 4 and 5 to being solely enrolled in ABE during 2001-2006	344	101
Percent of students who transitioned from ESL Levels 4 and 5 to being solely enrolled in ABE during 2001-2006	73%	24%

The data above is from queries of the YVCC Student Management System. The table reflects data collected on Levels 4 and 5 students over a five-year period. Students who enrolled in the high-intensity transition classes moved into ABE classes at more than three times the rate of Levels 4 and 5 students enrolled in regular (low-intensity) ESL classes.

**A Snapshot of Former ESL Students in ABE Classes
Winter Quarter 2006**

ABE Class	Total Numbers of Students in the Class	Numbers/Percent of ESL (or Former ESL) Students	Numbers/Percent of ESL (or Former ESL) Level Completions	Numbers/Percent of ABE Students	Numbers/Percents of ABE Completions
Math 3	41	31 students / 76%	7 students / 23%	10 students / 24%	3 students / 30%
Math 4	Data not available	---	---	---	---
Reading 3	32	16 students / 50%	5 students / 31%	16 students / 50%	3 students / 19%
Reading 4	17	8 students / 47%	4 students / 50%	9 students / 53%	7 students / 78%
Writing 3	Data not available	---	---	---	---
Writing 4	32	3 students / 9%	2 students / 67%	29 students / 91%	12 students / 38%
Computer Basics	37	28 students / 76%	19 students / 76%	9 students / 24%	6 students / 67%
Career Development	26	14 students / 54%	8 students / 57%	12 students / 46%	6 students / 50%

The data above is from instructors' class records. (The data from one instructor was not available.) From the data collected in this quarter, it is apparent that ESL and former ESL students completed the ABE class levels at higher rates, in most classes, than did native-speaking ABE students. Instructors state that this quarter was not, in their experiences, atypical of ESL student success in ABE classes.

APPENDIX A

WABERS Statistics Report [from the State of Washington Web-based Adult Basic Education Reporting System]

Yakima Valley Community College
Spring 2006

Federally Reportable

Federally Reportable	Not Federally Reportable	Total All Students	Percent Federally Reportable
1,969	786	2,755	71%

Not Federally Reportable

Total Not Federally Reportable	Ethnicity Not Reported	Gender Not Reported	Birth Date Not Reported or under 16	No Goal	Less than 12 Hours	No Pretest
786	5 1%	4 1%	2 0%	21 3%	513 65%	451 57%

CASAS Testing

Number of Students Pretesting	Number of Student Posttesting	Percent Posttested	Completed at Least One Program Level	Percent Completed Level
1,969	979	50%	519	53%

Entering Educational Functioning Level	Number of Students Pretesting	Number of Student Posttesting	Percent Posttested	Completed at Least One Program Level	Percent Completed Level
ABE 1	34	18	53%	14	78%
ABE 2	75	25	33%	18	72%
ABE 3	201	78	39%	47	60%
ABE 4	412	176	43%	60	34%
ESL 1	103	55	53%	45	82%
ESL 2	471	234	50%	126	54%
ESL 3	293	176	60%	121	69%
ESL 4	194	121	62%	69	57%
ESL 5	120	72	60%	15	21%
ESL 6	2	0	0%	0	0%
GED 1	52	23	44%	4	17%
GED 2	12	1	8%	0	0%
Total	1,969	979	50%	519	53%

WABERS Tables 4
[from the State of Washington Web-based Addult Basic Education Reporting System]

Educational Gains and Attendance by Educational Functioning Level All Students
Program Year Ending June 30, 2006
As of July 11, 2006

Entering Educational Functioning Level	Total Number Enrolled	Total Attendance Hours	Number Completed Level	Number Who Completed a Level and Advanced one or More Levels	Number Separated Before Completed	Number Remaining With Level	Percentage Completing Level
ABE Beginning Literacy	1,330	140,693	447	197	464	419	33.61 %
ABE Beginning Basic Education	3,318	318,774	1,129	424	1,213	976	34.03 %
ABE Intermediate Low	5,039	424,374	1,486	333	2,045	1,508	29.49 %
ABE Intermediate High	8,829	650,314	1,688	1,467	4,191	2,950	19.12 %
ASE Low	2,866	170,018	289	1	1,555	1,022	10.08 %
ASE High	743	38,246	1	1	453	289	0.13 %
ESL Beginning Literacy	2,321	264,700	1,127	274	572	622	48.56 %
ESL Beginning	9,971	1,147,270	4,057	1,034	3,073	2,841	40.69 %
ESL Intermediate Low	7,644	971,600	3,493	843	2,209	1,942	45.70 %
ESL Intermediate High	4,960	673,499	2,054	263	1,605	1,301	41.41 %
ESL Low Advanced	4,131	506,042	953	894	1,695	1,483	23.07 %
ESL High Advanced	245	23,998	35	31	132	78	14.29 %
Total	51,397	5,329,528	16,759	5,762	19,207	15,431	32.61 %

Appendix B
NRS Table 4, 2004-2005

Federal Table 4							
Educational Gains and Attendance by Educational Functioning Level							
Yakima Valley Community College - as of Spring 2005							
Entering Educational Functioning Level (A)	Total Number Enrolled (B)	Total Attendance Hours (C)	Number Completed Level (D)	Number Completed a Level and Advanced 1 or More Levels (E)	Number Separated Before Completed (F)	Number Remaining Within Level (G)	Percentage Completing Level (H)
ABE Beginning Literacy	42	2,953	11	9	26	5	26.19%
ABE Beginning Basic Education	90	6,002	26	10	40	24	28.89%
ABE Intermediate Low	211	15,325	54	8	105	52	25.59%
ABE Intermediate High	420	30,078	51	41	221	148	12.14%
ASE Low	68	3,271	2	0	51	15	2.94%
ASE High	16	776	0	0	15	1	0.00%
ESL Beginning Literacy	117	7,710	42	15	52	23	35.90%
ESL Beginning	576	41,942	193	38	241	142	33.51%
ESL Intermediate Low	381	30,720	126	30	159	96	33.07%
ESL Intermediate High	212	21,422	86	19	70	56	40.57%
ESL Low Advanced	128	12,445	36	28	49	43	28.13%
ESL High Advanced	4	217	0	0	3	1	0.00%
Total	2,265	172,861	627	198	1,032	606	27.68%

Appendix C
NRS Table 4, 2005-2006

Federal Table 4							
Educational Gains and Attendance by Educational Functioning Level Yakima Valley Community College - as of Spring 2006							
Entering Educational Functioning Level (A)	Total Number Enrolled (B)	Total Attendance Hours (C)	Number Completed Level (D)	Number Completed a Level and Advanced 1 or More Levels (E)	Number Separated Before Completed (F)	Number Remaining Within Level (G)	Percentage Completing Level (H)
ABE Beginning Literacy	34	2,733	14	8	12	8	41.18%
ABE Beginning	75	5,123	18	7	38	19	24.00%
ABE Intermediate Low	201	13,311	47	10	101	53	23.38%
ABE Intermediate High	412	28,981	60	45	207	145	14.56%
ASE Low	52	2,816	4	0	32	16	7.69%
ASE High	12	511	0	0	9	3	0.00%
ESL Beginning Literacy	103	7,526	45	11	31	27	43.69%
ESL Beginning	471	35,501	126	23	192	153	26.75%
ESL Intermediate Low	293	28,359	121	26	94	78	41.30%
ESL Intermediate High	194	22,697	69	17	82	43	35.57%
ESL Low Advanced	120	11,613	15	13	51	54	12.50%
ESL High Advanced	2	80	0	0	2	0	0.00%
Total	1,969	159,251	519	160	851	599	26.36%