DO STUDENTS WHO TAKE ESL COURSES HAVE HIGHER TEST SCORES IN ENGLISH 101?
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

A Thesis
Presented in Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree Master of Education in the
Graduate School Program of Marietta College

By
Debbie Stödberg, B.A.

Dr. William Bauer, Ph.D.

Marietta College
2006

Approved by:
Dr. William Bauer, Ph.D.

Adviser
Department of Education
ABSTRACT

This research is a study of international students from various parts of the world, particularly from mainland China. It is a comparison study designed to discover the impact of English as a Second Language (ESL) at Marietta College. This research was designed to find if international students who take ESL (English as a Second Language) classes at Marietta College, before they take English 101, have higher test scores in the English 101 classes than international students who only take English 101. It also includes short surveys designed to show how ESL relates to the Faculty and how the International students in the years 2005-2006 perceive the ESL classes. This study involves a random selection of international students from 1995 until December 2005. This research compares the number of ESL courses (0-1+) and the final grades in English 101. This project also included surveys of faculty, as well as the international students that were on campus for the 2005-2006 school years.

Initially there was no set ESL program established at Marietta College, but only programs such as English 060 or ESL teacher/tutors to support the new foreign arrivals. During the years 2000-2005, the international students were provided with an in-depth, well-managed ESL program of study to help enhance their learning experience. This research provides information about the impact of ESL on international students at Marietta College.
Dedicated to Billy Ray Dunn

Always an inspiration
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first person whom I am most grateful to for all his help, wisdom, and humor is my advisor Bill Bauer. With a smile on his face and kindness in his heart he has always believed in me even when I didn’t believe in myself. I am forever in his debt for all he has done for me. Next, I wish to thank Janie Rees-Miller, Director of International Programs at Marietta College, for first suggesting this research project. I have always considered her a teacher and a friend. A special thanks to Tina Perdue, who works for Marietta College in the records office, and to Debbie Madison who works as a programmer also at Marietta College. They were especially helpful in agreeing to assist me with my research. They were both helpful in gathering accurate, precise information all in the name of research. Special thanks I offer to my supervisor John Davis, who has always allowed me to take the courses that I needed to accomplish my degree.

The next group of people who are near and dear to me that I wish to acknowledge, is my family. Special thanks I give to my mother and father for their love and support; I don’t know what I would do without them, especially my Mom who has stood behind me all the way. I am grateful to my children Noah, Thomas, and Jessie who have listened as I’ve rambled on and on about how difficult it is to balance work, a home life, and college courses. Finally I would like to thank my understanding and loving husband, who has eaten more pizza and take out foods than anyone should, just so I would have the time to study, Johan, you are indeed a treasure.
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abstract</th>
<th>Dedication</th>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapters**

1. **Introduction**
   - 1.1 Statement of problem | 7
   - 1.2 Purpose | 8
   - 1.3 Research questions | 8
   - 1.4 Research hypotheses | 8-9
   - 1.5 Definition of terms | 9-10
   - 1.6 Limitations of the study | 10

2. **Literature Review** | 15-18

3. **Method** | 19
   - 3.1 Research design | 19
   - 3.2 Participants | 19
   - 3.3 Material | 19
   - 3.4 Procedure | 20-23

4. **Results** | 24
   - 4.1 Analysis of student survey figures and tables | 24-30
   - 4.2 Student comments | 31
   - 4.3 Analysis of professor survey figures and tables | 32-34
   - 4.4 Professor comments | 35
   - 4.5 SPSS interpretations and results | 36-38
   - 4.6 Microsoft Excel graph validation of study | 39

5. **Summary, discussion and recommendations** | 39
   - 5.1 Summary | 39
   - 5.2 Discussion | 40-41
   - 5.3 Recommendations | 42
   - 5.4 References | 43-45
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Having the right tools to perform any job will always give one an advantage. For international students studying in colleges across the United States, and other English speaking countries, that tool is proper command of the English language, which they gain from the English as a Second Language (ESL) classes that are available to them. Using a Quan/qual study, this researcher used 3 studies to determine the importance of ESL and the impact it has on students’ grades and performance at Marietta College.

The first part of the study was quantitative. In the first study, the researcher compared International students’ final grades in English 101 class to the number of ESL classes taken at Marietta College. ESL courses that were transferred were considered as no ESL courses taken, since they were not taken at Marietta College. The second part of the study consisted of a survey sent to faculty gathering comments and asking questions of their impression of ESL classes, and if they did or did not feel ESL had an impact on student grades. The last part of the research was a survey sent to on-campus students for the 2005-2006 school years at Marietta College. This last survey was the students’ impressions of what effect ESL has on their overall grade performances.

Marietta College Background Information

Marietta College is one of the oldest independent colleges in the State of Ohio. Located in South-Eastern Ohio on the banks of the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers, Appalachian area of the United States, it was chartered in 1835 and can trace it’s
Impact of ESL 7

beginnings to the Muskingum Academy, which began in 1797 as the first institute of higher education in the Northwest Territory. Marietta, the city, was founded in 1788 and was the first organized, permanent settlement in the Northwest Territory. The college was established for the education of youth in various branches of knowledge. Marietta has a long history of offering traditional liberal arts courses to its students and has adjusted its curriculum to meet the changing times.

The present day college is a co-educational, predominantly residential, undergraduate institution with a full-time enrollment of approximately 1300 students. In addition to the traditional undergraduate education, the college also offers 5 Masters Degree Programs, as well as a Physicians Assistant Program. The college currently numbers among its students men and women from 42 states and 12 foreign countries, although more than half of the students come primarily from Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and other Midwestern states and the East Coast. The student to teacher ratio is 12 to 1 and a ratio of women to men of 1 to 1.

Marietta College’s Mission Statement (2005) states that they will “provide students with an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to critical analysis, problem-solving, and the leadership skills required to translate what is learned into effective action.” The college goes beyond their mission statement and at the center of a Marietta College education lays the “Nine Core Values” (2005) that form the foundation for all the College does. The Ninth core value is: Internationalization and states:

We are living in what has been called the “global village,” a term which embodies a recognition that economic growth and political stability in the 21st Century will come through cooperative efforts among the nations of the world. Marietta College students will be prepared to thrive in a diverse, global society. In 1995, years before the “Nine
Core Values” were developed, Marietta College realized the importance of having a diverse campus community and began an intense recruitment program in mainland China as well as other countries in that region of the world. This paper is a brief follow-up of the development of the impact of the ESL program.

For international students who are studying in the United States, the process of entering college is more involved as one would imagine. For U.S. English speaking students SAT/ACT scores help to fill the application requirements, but for international students, whose first language is not English, colleges look at their TOEFL (or TOEFL, pronounced “toe-full”) scores. The on-line encyclopedia, Wikipedia, describes the TOEFL as The Test Of English as a Foreign Language This test is used to place potential individuals into college. It is required for non-native applicants at many American and English speaking colleges and universities (Wikipedia, online encyclopedia, 2005).

Having a TOEFL score above 133 does help insure acceptance into most U.S.A. college, however, additional help through ESL courses is beneficial to new college students arriving in the U.S.A. ESL courses can help bridge the gap for students. These specially designed for foreign speaker English classes can help with grammar, pronunciation, and help answer questions, or clear up misunderstandings that students may experience in their regular classes.

When students in China study English in China, there is a misunderstanding: the higher the scores they got in TOEFL, GRE or GEMT, the higher their skills will be in English. As soon as Chinese students arrive in the U.S.A, they find that the English they learned in China is far from effective, especially for communicating with native English speakers (Zhou, 2005, p.4).
Statement of the Problem

In 1995 Marietta College, began to recruit students from mainland China, mostly from the Beijing and Inner Mongolia areas. The first group of 15 students could speak English, but some had low TOEFL scores and lower level courses such as English 060 were developed to help the students in their courses of study.

For the first 3 or 4 years of the China recruitment program, there was no established ESL program available to the students. There were various ESL teachers that assisted the students, but the program was in the early stages of development. Because of general requirements for all students, international students were required to take English 101 or Speech 101 after they took the English 060 class. The problem was that these first groups of students did not have the benefits of a well developed ESL program and this study compared the English 101 tests scores to determine there were higher scores because of the advantage of ESL classes. This study also compared information provided by the International students, and the faculty showing positive support for the ESL programs.

ESL courses can teach students many aspects of the English language including, grammar, slang, pronunciation, and intonation. ESL can also help answer questions about the U.S.A., Americans and various forms of culture shock that students from foreign countries may experience. Advanced levels of ESL can help students produce college-level papers and presentations as well as assist with advanced work in graduate programs.
The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to show the value of ESL classes and perhaps expand this department to meet the growing needs of international students who are moving beyond undergraduate programs and into graduate levels of education at Marietta College. This research model could be useful information for other ESL programs at other colleges and universities, as well as for future programs developed at Marietta College.

Research Questions

Are students who take ESL better prepared for English 101? Are they better prepared for other classes that require writing and English skills? Do ESL classes help improve test scores? How does the faculty at Marietta College view the ESL courses? What aspects of the program do the present day International students feel is beneficial to them?

Research Hypotheses

Null – International students that take ESL classes before they take English 101 classes do not have higher test scores in English 101 than students who just take English 101 classes.

Alternative – International students that take ESL classes before they take English 101 classes have higher test scores in English 101 than students who just take English 101 classes.
Definition of terms

AUDIT - in academics is the completion of a course of study for which no assessment is completed or grade awarded; especially audit is awarded to those who have elected not to receive a letter grade for a course in which letter grades are typically awarded. This technique is often employed by individuals who wish to take a specific course without the risk of under-performance resulting in a poor or failing grade. (Wikipedia, online encyclopedia, 2006)

CULTURE SHOCK – is a term used to describe the anxiety and feelings (of surprise, disorientation, confusion, etc.) felt by an individual caused by coming into contact with an entirely different social environment, such as a foreign country (Wikipedia, online encyclopedia, 2005)

ENGLISH 060 – Basics of English Composition – A review of the basic principles of grammar, usage, and mechanics; basic principles of exposition; preparation of paragraphs and essays.

ENGLISH 101 – The study and writing of expository essays with attention to the development of research and analytical skills. Required of all first-time students without advanced placement standing in composition, this course must be taken until a score of C or better is achieved.

GPA – Grade Point Average - a measure of a student's academic achievement at a college or university; calculated by dividing the total number of grade points received by the total number attempted

GRADUATE - a student who has received a degree and is working on acquiring an advanced degree.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT – are students usually in early adulthood, who study in foreign schools. While some international students already possess an excellent command of the local language upon arrival, some find their language ability, considered excellent domestically, inadequate for the purpose of conveying oneself fluently in rapid conversations.

L1 – Language One (native language) The language that one learns from birth through their family members.

L2 – Second Language. The study of Language - the language learned through school, friends, travels that is not their native (first language) language (George Yule, Cambridge University Press)

LIBERAL ARTS – the studies (as language, philosophy, history, literature, abstract science) in a college or university intended to provide chiefly general knowledge and to develop the general intellectual capacities as opposed to professional or vocational skills.

RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE – providing living accommodations for students, such as housing and a food service.

SLANG – vernacular vocabulary not generally acceptable in formal usage. It is notable for its liveliness, humor, emphasis, brevity, novelty, and exaggeration.

(encyclopedia.com, 2005)
TOEFL - The Test of English as a Foreign Language (or TOEFL, pronounced “toe-full”, or sometimes just “toffle”) evaluates the potential success of an individual to use and understand Standard American English at a college level. It is required for non-native applicants at many American and English speaking colleges and universities. (Wikipedia, online encyclopedia, 2005)

UNDERGRADUATE – a student at a college or university who has not taken a first and especially a bachelor’s degree.

W - WITHDRAW – A “W” on a student transcript indicates that a student has voluntarily withdrawn from a class and will not receive a grade for that course. The student will also have a future opportunity to retake the same course usually in order to improve a failing grade.
Limitations of the Study

The first limitation that could affect scores as well as student potential is the human factor. Some students may be lazy or procrastinate their work, and this could have a direct effect on test scores overall. Some test scores may not reflect the true ability of the students involved, or some students may not do well on tests because of the pressure and suffer from test anxiety. This could be especially true for new students who have just arrived in the United States and are adjusting not only to teaching styles, but also a different culture, foods that may not agree with them, having problems sleeping due to jet lag, or a difficult roommate. This study only includes international students at Marietta College over a 10 year period of time from 1995-2005. The only students who were included in this study were those who have completed the course.

Other limitations to consider are personalities of the students, if they were introverts or extroverts which would directly affect their English usage. Involvements with other students, having an American room mate, joining Greek organizations and membership to campus clubs/organizations, would also have input to the development of international students language development.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This researcher reviewed literature with a concentration on ESL research methods and styles and the impact that it had on student performance especially at the college level. Additional research articles providing background information about TOEFL and culture were also considered. This research project is narrowed specifically to international students at Marietta College; however the literature reviewed is more of a broader nature in various environmental settings with relatively the same spectrum of results in regards to the positive effects of ESL on L2 learners' outcomes. (L2-those whose native language is not English)

Culture is another area that can have an impact on student performance and needs to be considered. What is Culture? According to Bruce and Rafoth (2004), “If you were to ask twenty people for a definition of culture, you would get twenty different answers. One person believes that culture is simply everything – the food, the clothing, the visual arts, the customs and beliefs. But another person defines culture more narrowly as opera and ballet. One popular notion says that culture is like an iceberg; it is only the top 10 percent that is visible, and the other 90 percent is submerged. The part we see – the customs, the clothing and food, the social customs – is only 10 percent.” How does this affect grades? If a course syllabus states that 20 percent of the grade is based on class participation, and the student is from a country where the teachers lecture and the students are required to only take notes, the result could be quite a difference in grades because of culture differences/beliefs. (Bruce, Rafoth, 2004)
TOEFL scores also play an important role in the placement of students either in a regular freshman level course or into an ESL class if students’ scores were lower than acceptable. However TOEFL scores can sometimes be unpredictable in determining the true English level of a student. “When students in China study English in China, there is a misunderstanding; the higher the scores they get in TOEFL, GRE, GEMT, the higher the skills they have in English (Ning, 2005). Students are sometimes placed without the added benefit of ESL class because their TOEFL scores are high.

Much of the research for educational linguistics has been the classroom. Sociolinguists have used various means to obtain information such as audio- and videotape recordings, surveys and interviews with students, teachers and other personnel. They have also relied on ethnographic observations to gain insights into the language use which helps to shape educational experiences in these settings (Mesthrie, 2000). This will not come as a surprise to many in the field of linguistics since it is as ever evolving as the human race itself. Through classroom observations new methodologies are created and other teaching tools developed to better enhance the classroom experience.

Interactions outside of the classroom also help international students become better rounded. The best way for these interactions is language. Language is a tool for social interaction, and it should not be surprising to learn that it can be affected by different social contexts. The study of language in social contexts termed sociolinguistics focuses on the relationship between linguistic behavior and social situations, roles, and functions. Rather than concentrating on individuals, sociolinguistics is centered on the speech community, defined as any group of people who share some set of social conventions or sociolinguistic norms, regarding language use (O’Grady, 2005). For international students studying on an American College Campus this can be a new
challenge in itself, especially when culture shock enters into it. Not only does the new student have to become familiar with American customs, foods and social interactions but also the uniqueness and slang of a language. The speech community of the mid-west, where Marietta College is located, will be distinctively different from that of students studying in California schools.

ESL classes can help students reach their full potential according to Gunn. Learning to use words appropriately and in proper context is a challenge to students. Students discuss issues such as this and other “informal”, or “improper” word usage they encounter with L1 speakers when in ESL class. Gunn goes on to say, “ESL teachers look for different means to reconcile grammar and communication to further student development of communicative competence, to individual students in authentic conversations and language situations” (Gunn, 2003)

ESL classes help students by getting them ready for college courses. ESL students who do not meet certification requirements may be unable to earn a college degree, for these reasons it is of a high priority for ESL educators to develop instructional programs that facilitate and hasten the transition of students into college life (Kasper, 1997). Kasper has reported that students enrolled in content based ESL courses obtain significant higher scores on measures of reading (Kasper, 1997). Although the ESL courses are of a more general area, they are designed with the students needs first. If students are struggling with writing they are always directed to the writing center for additional assistance. There are other benefits since Marietta College is a small liberal arts college located in a small town in the mid-west, individualized assistance by any of the professors is not unusual. Student to professor ratio is generally 15 to 1. The small
classroom sizes also give students the added benefit of being able to consult with all those involved in their learning experiences.

George Braine’s research about mainstream vs. ESL is the closest to what this researcher did with this project. Braine’s research compared student grades and preference in English Comp I and ESL Comp I classes. Braine found that students preferred the ESL Comp I 75-81% of the time, and 95% of the students were very satisfied with the ESL class they had taken. Students also said that they felt comfortable and at ease in the ESL class. Students felt less self conscious of their accents and had more confidence to participate in class (Braine, 1996)

The importance of a well established ESL program helps build a strong learning foundation for L2 learners not only by teaching basic English skills such as grammar and pronunciation, but also teaches confidence so that students can interact with L1 students and class participation. Finding the right teaching strategy will help ESL students find success in their language learning. The importance of getting it right cannot be overstated. If the student is unable to correct himself/herself, or respond to reformulation, we need to focus on the correct version in more detail (Harmer, 2001).

More than 90% of the international students in this study are from Asian countries, China in particular, because of this Fu’s research is quiet relevant. Fu states that Chinese students, who learn basic English sentence structure after they have had some English experiences, will gain a good conceptual understanding of the English language and compose fewer awkward English sentences in their writing. Swick agrees with Fu and says, “Writing in any language is a difficult skill to acquire. Therefore, as an ESL student you should approach writing in English carefully. In order to write well, you want to first have an understanding of grammatical structures, vocabulary, and tense
usage. You practice them until you can use them with relative ease. Then you are ready to practice writing original material.” (Swick, 2004)

Undergraduate students in the United States colleges are required to take several general level courses and this is also true at Marietta College. One of the implications of this structure of education is the greatest demand on students’ language skills occur during the first 2 years of their academic careers, when they are expected to read large amounts of various types of academic text, write many assignments and take numerous tests and exams. (Hinkel, 2004)

From all the literature reviewed it is apparent that a strong ESL foundation is essential for the development of L2 learners English reading and writing skills as they continue with their studies at a higher education level in the United States. Not only does a strong ESL foundation help them with the reading and writing basics of English but also helps them develop confidence and other such skills so that they can cross the cultural barriers that could hold them back.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Research design

This research project was a Quantitative study with qualitative elements. It was a comparative study of grades. The Quantitative study involved the number of ESL courses (0-3) with the final grade received in English 101 class. The comparative study was determined using an SPSS data processing program. The qualitative portion of the research was a short survey completed by professors at Marietta College and a short survey completed by the International Students on campus during the 2005-2006 school year.

Participants

The subjects for this study were international students at Marietta College. The international student population at Marietta College makes up about 5% of the general student population. The majority of the international students are from Asian countries with the majority of those being from mainland China in the Beijing and Inner Mongolian areas. The male to female ratio is about 6 males to 4 females. There were approximately 250 students initially involved in this research project, after processing half were randomly selected. All international students involved in this study were new, first time freshmen students at Marietta College. Any students that may be transfer students, with transfer credits, are from Asian colleges and not transfer students from United States colleges.
Material

The tools used for this project were a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with final grades of the students from English 101 class and the number of ESL courses they attended. The quantitative part of the project is shown in tables and figures included in this paper. A software program, SPSS, and Microsoft Excel software program were used for processing the data collected. The final qualitative material used for this project were 2 short surveys consisting of 4 questions each asked of professors at Marietta College and on-campus International Students. A sample of these qualitative survey sheets are shown in the tables and figures included in this paper on pages 23-24.

Procedures

The first step in this research project was submitting a permission form to the Human Subject Committee at Marietta College. Once permission was obtained to collect information about the student, the next step was to contact Janie Rees-Miller, Director of International Programs, and an expert in the field of ESL. The research design for this project was discussed with professor Rees-Miller. It was determined that this would be a Quantitative study with elements of qualitative input, and a comparative design.

The third step in this process was to contact the Marietta College Records Office to begin collecting the data. The researcher worked together with Tina Perdue in the Records Office, and Debbie Madison in Data Processing. It was determined that students’ scores from the beginning of the international recruitment program, 1995, until present day 2005 would be collected. The scores that would be collected would be any and all ESL classes and final grades as well as any and all English 101 test scores. It was decided that ESL and English 101 classes taken at other schools would also be gathered with the other information, although any ESL courses taken at other schools would be
considered as 0. Not all of this gathered material was used in this study; the additional unused information was kept and filed, and perhaps used later for another possible study.

It was determined that 10 years of data would be too much information to process, and a smaller sample would be sufficient to find out answers to the question of the impact of ESL at Marietta College, a random sampling of data was gathered. The random sampling gathered was: All students with 0 ESL classes and final English 101 grades, and every 3rd student with 1+ ESL classes and final English 101 grades would be used. This provided the project with an even dispersal of students with varying backgrounds and educational opportunities over a 10-year period of time. This long period also allows for student changes and development which can happen as cultural changes occur. Changes in teaching programs could also affect student participation and involvement. The manner in which these test scores were compared was as follows:

- Number of ESL classes 0 or 1+
- Final test scores from English 101

Information collected from the professor survey section, and the student survey sections of the project were processed in bar graphs located in the results section of this research paper.
### Table 1 – Sample of Comparative Study – type of testing that was used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students Arrive in USA</th>
<th>ESL Class</th>
<th>English 101 grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students Arrive in USA</th>
<th>ESL Class</th>
<th>English 101 grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>No ESL Class</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2 – Questions that were asked of Marietta College Professors

Instructions: I am working on research for my education 640/690 class with Professor Bauer and I need your assistance. Please fill out this form ONLY if there are written papers/essay(s) required for your class. Fold over and place in campus mail – If you have any questions please contact Debbie Stodberg X4564. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Questions are regarding international students – *ESL – English Second Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I can tell from student’s work if they have taken an *ESL class</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can see a difference in students work after they have taken an ESL class</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who take ESL class participate more during class</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that ESL classes overall have a positive impact on student performance</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any Comments?
Table 3 – Background information and questions that were asked of International Students 2005-2006 school year at Marietta College

1. Which Class are you presently? (Circle one please)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Sophomore</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Senior</th>
<th>Graduate Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. What ESL courses did you take (circle all that apply and include any that you are taking this semester)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESL 101</th>
<th>ESL 102</th>
<th>ESL 201</th>
<th>ESL 202</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3. In which year did you take your last ESL course?

|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|

4. What is your first language?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESL classes have helped my English writing skills</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESL classes have helped my English speaking skills.</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL classes have helped me build confidence in speaking with native English speakers.</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have found the ESL classes very useful overall.</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any Comments?
Chapter 4

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The findings of the student survey were collected through email and Marietta College campus mail by the researcher. The results of the survey sent to the professors were only collected through the Marietta College campus mail. The results of the surveys were tabulated in bar and pie graphs using the Excel software program. SPSS version 13.0 was also used to prove the validity of the research and answered the question that students who take ESL classes at Marietta College usually receive higher grades in English 101 class than students who do not take ESL at Marietta College.

There were no negative responses from students regarding their experiences in the ESL classes, and overall a general feeling that ESL had a positive effect on their academic performance. The research sent out 54 surveys, one to each International student registered for the 2005-2006 school year, of this 15, or 28%, were returned. The results to the student survey questions are as listed in the following figures:
Figure 1. Figure 1 bar graph shows the results of the first question asked on the student survey. The first question asks: ESL classes have helped my English Writing Skills.

Question 1.
ESL Classes have helped My English Writing Skills.

Number of Students

Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

Students Response

Figure 2. Figure 2 bar graph shows the results of the second question asked on the student survey. ESL classes have helped my English speaking skills.

Question 2.
ESL Classes have helped my English speaking skills.

Number of Students

Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

Student Response
Figure 3. Figure 3 bar graph shows the results of the third question asked on the student survey. ESL classes have helped me build confidence in speaking with native English speakers.

![Bar graph showing student responses to Question 3](image)

**Question 3.**
**ESL classes have helped me build confidence in speaking with native English speakers**

Figure 4. Figure 4 bar graph shows the results of the fourth question asked on the student survey. I have found the ESL classes very useful overall.

![Bar graph showing student responses to Question 4](image)

**Question 4**
*I have found the ESL classes very useful overall*
Most of the students that responded to the survey were graduate students. Low response by freshmen could be they have only been in the United States for a few months and are adjusting to college life.

Figure 5. Figure 5 is a pie graph indicating the breakdown of the students participating in the survey according to grade levels. Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior and Graduate Students
Figure 6. Figure 6 is a bar graph showing what ESL courses the participating students are presently taking or when was the last semester they took an ESL class.
73% of the international students’ native language was Chinese; this is due to intense efforts over the last 10 years to recruit students from mainland China. In more recent years Marietta College has begun to branch out more recruiting in other areas of globe.

Figure 7. Figure 7 is a pie graph that shows the native languages of the international students participating in the student survey. 73% of the students participating in the survey spoke Chinese as their native language. English was the native language of 13% of the students turning in surveys, and 7% Portugese and 7% Turkish account for the rest of the languages of the students who participated in the survey.
Figure 8. Figure 8 is a pie graph that shows the last year participating students took an ESL class. This graph indicates that 46% of the students took their last ESL course in the 2004-2005 school year.
Student Comments:

ESL Classes have been Helpful/Useful

ESL classes help me to improve my speaking English but not enough. The better way is to talk with native English speakers all day.

I am one of the first International graduate students and ESL gives me a great help on how to do the research and teaches me how to make good use of academic resources. I like this course!

Besides teaching us language, ESL gives us a chance to get used to American colleges courses, instructors, and teaches part of the American culture.

I took the reading and writing class. We learned grammar and how to write a normal paper. What we practiced combined different abilities together and makes us skillful.

At the beginning, I felt so shy to speak English with American students. ESL 201 helped me to be confident when I speak or do some presentations in public and ESL 202 taught me how to write research papers. It helps me to write a paper of high quality.

Yes, It’s helpful. However, personal factor is the most important thing. That means good students can speak and write English very well even if there is no ESL class.

Other Responses

I have never taken an ESL course. I have been learning since I was 11 years old so it was very helpful.

It’s really necessary to take ESL 202 to practice my writing skills; however, I think there are too much assignments in this class, which take me much of time and energy.

I think when talking about “Speaking with native English speakers”, ESL 202 should do more things or some changes. My experience was I felt free to speak English in ESL, but felt nervous to speak English in my major class. The reason is there are all international students in ESL and I felt free because we were in the similar level in English.
Fewer professors responded to the survey than expected, this could be due to the timing on the part of the researcher, since the surveys were sent out during finals week. The researcher sent out 150 survey forms to all faculty, including adjuncts, of the 150 surveys sent out only 28, or 19%, were returned. Seven of the returned forms were marked NA (not applicable) per the instructions which read: Please fill out this form ONLY if there are written papers/essay(s) for your class, OR if there is enough direct class participation – otherwise write NA over the entire form. Overall the professors see value to the ESL program and feel ESL does help students to advance in their studies.

Responses to the Professors surveys are as follows:

Figure 9: Figure 9 shows the professor response to question 1 on the survey. I can tell from student’s work if they have taken an ESL class.
Figure 10. Figure 10 is a bar graph that shows the professor response to question 2 on the professor survey. I can see a difference in students work after they have taken an ESL class.
Figure 11. Figure 11 is a bar graph which shows the results of question 3 asked on the professor survey. Students who take ESL class participate more during class.

![Question 3](image)

**Question 3**
Students who take ESL class participate more during class.

Figure 12. Figure 12 is a bar graph showing the results of the last question asked on the professor survey. I believe that ESL classes overall have a positive impact on student performance.

![Question 4](image)

**Question 4**
I believe that ESL classes overall have a positive impact on student performance.
Faculty Comments:

**Cannot tell who has taken ESL and who has not**

I have had several International students in my classes – Sorry I can’t respond above – I don’t know if the students have taken an ESL class/s

I am not informed as to whether my int’l students are in, or have taken, an ESL course. It would be nice to know.

It is impossible to tell whether students have taken an ESL class or not. It is, however, easy to tell the difference between a freshman Chinese student and a senior based on a short conversation.

There is no way for me to know if they have taken an ESL class or which ones. I answer #4 based on what I hear from International students after they leave MC. While here many resent them.

**Other Responses**

Have not had any foreign students.

In order to see a “difference” in students’ work you must see a “before” and not just an “after ESL”. I think, therefore, I am unable to answer questions 1-3

I have had ESL/international students in my classes, but their written work has not been done in English

In my first semester I have had 3 international students. However, I do not believe that any of them had ESL classes, but I do not believe it was necessary in their cases.

How do I know if a student has taken an ESL class?

**Noticeable difference with ESL**

I see a huge difference in English 101 between students who have and have not taken ESL 202.

I believe there should be a minimum grade C in ESL classes or they have to retake like Comm101 or ENGL 101

I can see a difference in student’s work after they have taken an ESL class only if I have had the student in a previous course. Also, I cannot prove any cause and effect relationship between ESL and the improvement. Any improvement may be due more to a good room mate than ESL or faculty mentoring.
The results of the SPSS software program are as follows:

Table 4. Table 4 shows the number of students selected overall in the survey. There were 112 students in ESL classes and in English 101. Minimum number of ESL classes was 0 and Maximum number of ESL classes was 1. Minimum grade number in English 101 was 0=F, Maximum grade number in English 101 was 4=A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESLCLASSES</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.5000</td>
<td>.50225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG101GRADE</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.5982</td>
<td>1.18899</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of students participating in this research was 112. There were 56 students from each group selected. The students were selected over a 10 year period of time from 1995-2005. All of the students who had not taken ESL at Marietta College or had transferred in ESL classes were used and counted as 0 ESL classes taken at Marietta College, which were 56 students. Students who had taken ESL at Marietta College were randomly selected counting every other one until the number 56 was reached. The researcher wanted to use an equal number of students in each group and still maintain a random selection.

Numbers used in the SPSS program were as follows:
ESL classes: 0 = No ESL classes taken at Marietta College
1 = 1 or more ESL classes taken at Marietta College

English 101 Final Grade:
A = 4
B = 3
C = 2
D = 1
F = 0

Statistics: Number of participates in ESL Classes & English 101 Final Grades were 112 each.

Table 5. Table 5 indicates that of the 112 students in this research, every student was listed in ESL class and in English 101.
Frequency Tables

Table 6. Table 6 shows the breakdown of students in ESL classes – 56 students had taken 0 ESL classes at Marietta College and 56 students had taken 1 or more ESL courses at Marietta College.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESLCLASSES</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.00</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Table 7 shows the breakdown of final grades in English 101 as follows:

11 - Grade F – 9/8%
7  - Grade D – 6.3%
29  - Grade C – 25.9%
38  - Grade B – 33.9%
27  - Grade A – 24.1%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENG101GR</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.00</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Descriptives

Table 8. Table 8 shows 112 students participated in ESL class and also in English 101. The minimum number of ESL classes attended at Marietta College was 0 and the maximum number of ESL classes was 1 which equals 1+ ESL classes taken at Marietta College. The minimum final grade in English 101 class was 0 which equals F and the maximum grade in English 101 was 4 which equals A.

Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESLCLASS</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>0.50225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG101GR</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.5625</td>
<td>1.20645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13. Figure 13 is a bar graph that shows the overall comparison of ESL classes taken at Marietta College vs the final grade in English 101 class. This graph shows that students who take ESL at Marietta College have higher grades in English 101 than students who do not take ESL at Marietta College. This graph also shows that students taking ESL at Marietta College receive more A grades and fewer F grades than students who do not take ESL at Marietta College.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if international students who take ESL classes at Marietta College have higher final test scores in English 101 than international students who do not take ESL at Marietta College.

After compiling all the data from the surveys, tests scores and ESL courses from the records office, the researcher believes the ESL courses at Marietta College contribute a great deal academically to the success of the international students. Overall the surveys showed positive response from students’ responses and the only negative response was from a student who felt there was too much homework in the ESL classes. The professor response was equally as positive, however, those participating in the survey felt that additional information was needed. Overall the professors also felt that the ESL classes had a positive impact on student learning.

Test scores and ESL courses taken at Marietta College were collected from the records office and tabulated using the SPSS program and Microsoft Excel program. The test scores showed a strong positive correlation between students who take ESL at Marietta College and higher final grades in English 101. It also showed that students who take ESL at Marietta College receive more A grades in English 101 than students who do not take ESL at Marietta College. Students who do not take ESL at Marietta College receive more F grades in English 101 than students who take ESL at Marietta College.
Discussion

When reviewing the information provided by the records office containing English 101 Grades and the number of ESL classes taken at Marietta College, there were several other issues that should be addressed. The first issue was the number of students who transferred in ESL classes from other schools and then withdrew from English 101 before actually taking the English 101 class for a grade. The main reason that students withdraw from a class is because they cannot keep up with the workload or because they are receiving failing grades, which can hurt their GPA (Grade Point Average) over time.

The next issue was the number of students auditing English 101 courses before actually taking the course for a grade. When a student audits a course they can participate fully in the class but have the option to refrain from taking tests and will not receive a grade in the class. The reason international students may choose to do this might be because it would be a good practice session before they actually take the course and receive a grade. The disadvantage of this would be that it is time consuming on the part of the student, especially since no grade is received at the end of an audited course.

The last subject to discuss were the number of English 101 courses students had taken before receiving a passing grade and students who continued to take English 101 courses until they reached an A grade. The researcher has several thoughts regarding these phenomena such as: Could the importance of having high grades be of such a concern to international students, that other courses are repeated in an effort to reach the 4.0 of perfection in academic work? Since the researcher has first hand knowledge that international students, especially in the earlier years of the study often times take course and majors which their parents have selected for them, perhaps they were retaking courses in order to receive the A and overall the 4.0 to please their parents?
Further Research

There are many areas of research which can be explored when teaching international students. Additional research regarding other effective tools for teaching ESL such as using the computer, inter-campus activities, or the advantages of having an English speaking room mate could give additional insight into what works effectively when teaching non-native speakers. Further studies specific to this research paper, could be a paper for their English 101 class before they have taken ESL classes, at the beginning of the semester, and at the end of the semester to compare the grades using ESL class as the treatment. This would differ from this research paper because the investigator would be looking only at 2 sets of English 101 scores and comparing them against each other. Since the present day 2006 ESL program at Marietta College is a well-developed program, this researcher believes there would be a dramatic difference in grammar, as well as noticeable increase in vocabulary when comparing 2 sets of English 101 grades.

Research could also be done using only ESL classes. An example of this type of research could be an essay at the beginning of the ESL classes and at the end of the semester. This kind of research could be better controlled because it would limit the variety of teaching styles. Essays would be of a similar format and development, and even the environment would be less threatening because of the familiarity of other international students experiencing the same pitfalls.
Recommendations

There are several points of recommendation the researcher has considered with this project. The first consideration would be the questions asked on the survey. The student surveys were adequate and provided enough information and demographics regarding the students who participated. The researcher had requested advice from an expert in the field, Professor Rees-Miller, when developing the student survey. The professor survey was sent through campus mail before the student survey was developed. The researcher should have had an expert in the field review the professor survey but did not. The professor survey needed additional information such as:

- What subjects they taught
- If they have the same students in courses so they can comment accurately
- What department (English vs Math)
- How long have they been teaching at Marietta College
- Other experiences with International students
- Have they taught in a foreign country
- Have they ever traveled abroad and what country

Another recommendation the researcher would suggest would be the timing of the surveys. The student survey was sent out at an appropriate time, however the professor survey was sent out during finals week which didn’t allow enough time for the faculty to respond to the survey. The beginning of the semester would have been a better choice on the part of the researcher and perhaps a larger percentage would have responded.
References


