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Student Migration from ESL  
Noncredit to ESL/English  
Credit Courses:  
A Baseline Comparison of  
Prior Noncredit ESL Students  

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2004/05 – 2007/08

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March 2010                      Version 2

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to provide baseline data and information on student enrollment patterns and student outcomes for noncredit ESL students who migrated into credit ESL or English courses. This information may be used to develop strategies for recruiting, matriculating and retaining noncredit ESL students into college credit courses. Three groups of students were examined in this report<sup>1</sup>:

- 1) *Prior Noncredit ESL Student Group* – This group included students who first enrolled in a Continuing Education noncredit ESL course and later enrolled in a City/ECC, Mesa, or Miramar credit ESL or English course. These students were the primary focus of this study. Where appropriate they were compared to two additional groups of students.
- 2) *Credit-Only ESL/English Student Population* – This group of students included students in college credit ESL/English courses who had not migrated from noncredit ESL courses.
- 3) *General College Population* – This group included all students enrolled in any credit college course.

To provide the groundwork for future studies, a Fall 2007 baseline student profile of *prior noncredit ESL students* enrolled in credit ESL/English courses was examined and compared to the *credit-only ESL/English student population* and the *general college population*.

Noncredit and credit enrollment patterns of the *prior noncredit ESL student group* only were measured by ESL/English course level from 2004/05 to 2007/08 and at several key points in their education: 1) at the beginning of their education in noncredit or credit courses, measured via the first ESL/English course(s) taken, and 2) at the culmination of their education in noncredit or credit courses, measured via the last ESL/English course(s) taken. The top 5 noncredit and credit ESL/English courses were also contrasted at the milestones.

Finally, student outcomes of all three comparison groups were examined<sup>2</sup>. Successful course completion and retention rates were analyzed by college and by ESL/English course level.

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<sup>1</sup> Tutoring courses were excluded from all analyses. Noncredit English courses were excluded from all analyses due to the small number of noncredit English courses offered. Students who were concurrently enrolled in both noncredit and credit ESL/English courses in their first college credit course were excluded from the *prior noncredit ESL student group* and the *credit-only ESL/English population*.

<sup>2</sup> Student outcomes for the general college population may not match the 2008 Prior Noncredit Report. In this report college affiliation was determined by the college offering the course rather than the student's campus of record.

## STUDENT PROFILE

A student profile of each comparison group is detailed in this section, including gender, ethnicity and age. The profile is based on an unduplicated headcount of students enrolled in the Fall 2007 term.

Females were overrepresented and males underrepresented in the *prior noncredit ESL student group* (63% female and 37% male) compared to the *credit-only ESL/English student population* (53% female and 47% male) and the *general college student population* (52% female and 48% male; see Table 1).

Asian/Pacific Islander students (44% compared to 17%) and those students who reported their ethnicity as “Other” (8% compared to 3%) were overrepresented in the *prior noncredit ESL student group* when compared to the *credit-only ESL/English population*, while Filipino (0% compared to 7%), Latino (21% compared to 28%), and White students (18% compared to 29%) were underrepresented in the *prior noncredit ESL student group* when compared to the *credit-only ESL/English population*.

Asian/Pacific Islander students (44% compared to 13%) and those students who reported their ethnicity as “Other” (8% compared to 3%) were overrepresented in the *prior noncredit ESL student group* when compared to the *general college population*, while Filipino students (0% compared to 6%) and White students (18% compared to 38%) were underrepresented in the *prior noncredit ESL student group* when compared to the *general college population*. African American and American Indian students were represented relatively proportionately across all comparison groups.

The mean age of the *prior noncredit ESL student group* was higher than both the *credit-only ESL/English student population* and the *general college population* (32, 23, and 27 respectively).

Table 1. Profile of students in Fall 07 college credit courses

		Prior Noncredit ESL Students in Credit ESL/English Courses		Credit-Only ESL/English Student Population		General College Population	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Gender	Male	130	37%	4,949	47%	22,534	48%
	Female	222	63%	5,630	53%	24,143	52%
	Unknown	0	0%	2	<1%	9	<1%
Ethnicity	African American	31	9%	916	9%	3,843	8%
	American Indian	0	0%	75	1%	421	1%
	Asian/Pac Islander	156	44%	1,763	17%	5,915	13%
	Filipino	0	0%	736	7%	2,816	6%
	Latino	72	21%	2,992	28%	10,543	23%
	White	62	18%	3,038	29%	17,493	38%
	Other	28	8%	363	3%	1,488	3%
	Unknown	3	1%	698	7%	4,167	9%
Mean Age		32		23		27	

Source: SDCCD Information System

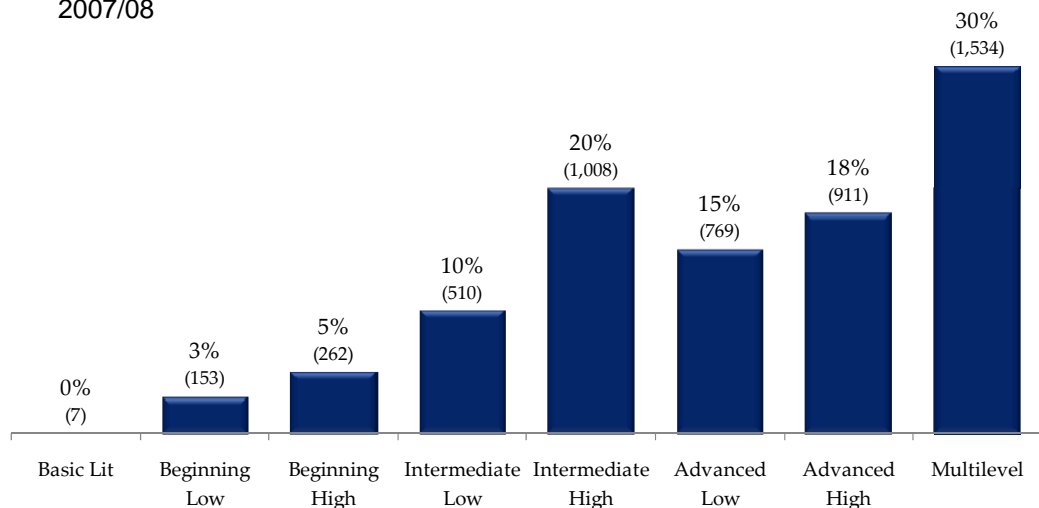
## ESL/ENGLISH ENROLLMENT DISTRIBUTION: PRIOR NONCREDIT STUDENTS

Noncredit and credit enrollment by the primary group of focus in this report, the *prior noncredit ESL student group*, was examined to identify the distribution of their enrollment in ESL and English courses by course level.

### Noncredit Enrollment

Between 2004/05 and 2007/08, the greatest numbers of noncredit ESL enrollments by *prior noncredit ESL students* were within courses in the Multi-Level course range (30%), followed by the Intermediate High range (20%), and the Advanced High range (18%; see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Enrollments in noncredit ESL courses by course level: 2004/05 to 2007/08



Course enrollment by *Prior noncredit ESL students* was further measured at two points: first noncredit ESL course(s) taken and last noncredit ESL course(s) taken<sup>3</sup>. The greatest changes in the distribution of enrollments were within the Intermediate Low and Advanced Low course levels (see Figure 2). Eighteen percent of the enrollments by *prior noncredit ESL students* in their first noncredit course(s) were in the Intermediate Low course level. The percentage of enrollments in this course level fell to 11% in their last noncredit course(s) (7% decrease). Fourteen percent of the enrollments by *prior noncredit ESL students* in their first noncredit course(s) were in the Advanced Low course level. The percentage of student enrollments in this course level increased to 20% in their final noncredit course(s) (6% increase).

<sup>3</sup> Summer 2004 to Spring 2006 noncredit ESL enrollments were measured among students in their first term taking noncredit ESL courses. First-term noncredit students were tracked out six possible terms to determine the last term of ESL course enrollment within a 2-year timeframe. Course enrollments by students continuing their noncredit ESL coursework past 6 terms were excluded from the last course cohort (17% of the first-course cohort). Forty-one percent of the students took their first and last course(s) in the same term.

Figure 2. Distribution of noncredit ESL course enrollments: first and last noncredit courses by course level

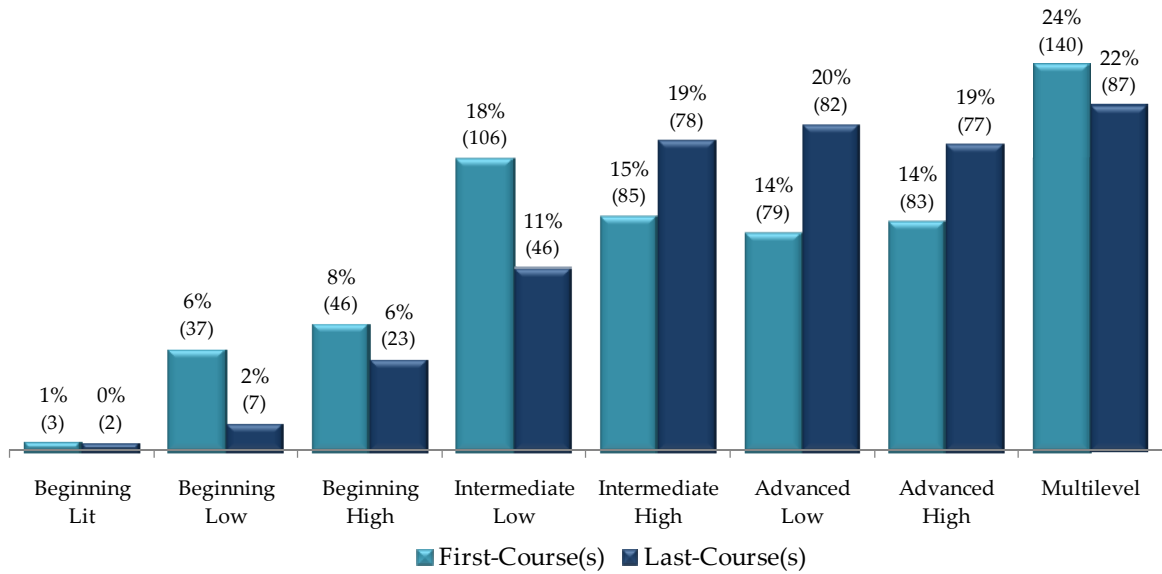


Table 2 provides the top 5 noncredit courses taken by the *prior noncredit ESL student group* in their first and last noncredit ESL courses. *Prior noncredit ESL students* in their first noncredit ESL course(s) chose ESLA 434 (Intermediate Low) and ESLA 415 (Multilevel) most frequently (18% and 15%, respectively). *Prior noncredit ESL students* in their last noncredit ESL course(s) chose ESLA 436 (Advanced Low) most frequently (20%), followed by ESLA 437 (Advanced High; 18%).

Table 2. Top 5 Noncredit ESL courses taken by Prior Noncredit ESL students

Prior Noncredit ESL Students in <u>First</u> Noncredit Course(s)			Prior Noncredit ESL Students in <u>Last</u> Noncredit Course(s)		
Course	Course Level	%	Course	Course Level	%
ESLA 434	ESLA Intermediate Low	18%	ESLA 436	ESLA Advanced Low	20%
ESLA 415	ESLA Multilevel	15%	ESLA 437	ESLA Advanced High	18%
ESLA 436	ESLA Advanced Low	14%	ESLA 435	ESLA Intermediate High	17%
ESLA 437	ESLA Advanced High	14%	ESLA 415	ESLA Multilevel	13%
ESLA 435	ESLA Intermediate High	13%	ESLA 434	ESLA Intermediate Low	11%

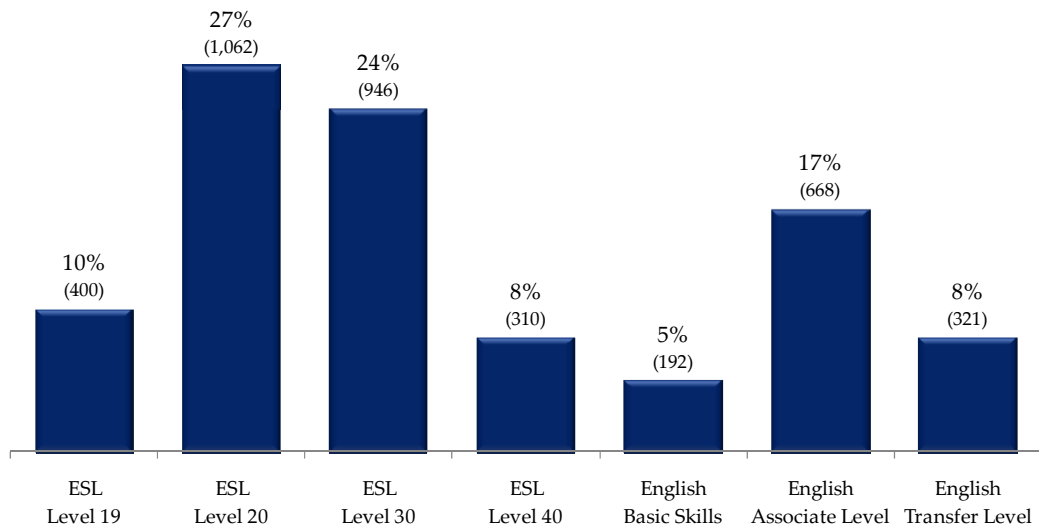
Source: SDCCD Information System

## College Credit Enrollment

The enrollment distribution of the primary group, *prior noncredit ESL students*, was also examined in credit ESL/English courses. Credit course levels were divided by the colleges into four ESL levels and three English levels. Students in credit ESL courses took courses at levels 19, 20, 30 or 40, based on their assessment skill level. English course levels ranged from basic skills to Associate level to Transfer level. (Note that the Associate Level has since become Basic Skills.)

Between 2004/05 and 2007/08, the greatest number of credit ESL/English enrollments by the *prior noncredit ESL students*, were within ESL Level 20 (27%), followed by ESL Level 30 (24%), and English Associate Level (17%; see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Enrollments in credit ESL and English courses by course level: 2004/05 to 2007/08



Course enrollments by *Prior noncredit ESL students* in credit ESL/English courses were measured at the first-course and last-course milestones<sup>4</sup>. The greatest changes in the distribution of enrollments occurred within the lowest and the highest course levels (see Figure 4). ESL Level 19 encompassed 27% of the course enrollments by *prior noncredit ESL students* in their first college credit course(s). ESL Level 19 fell to just 11% of the enrollments by *prior noncredit ESL students* in their last college credit course(s) (16% decrease). Enrollment in

<sup>4</sup> Summer 2004 to Spring 2006 credit enrollments were measured among students in their first term taking credit ESL/English courses. First-term credit students were tracked out six possible terms to determine the last term of ESL/English course enrollment within a 2-year timeframe. Course enrollments by students continuing their credit ESL/English coursework past 6 terms were excluded from the last course cohort (19% of first-course cohort). Twenty-nine percent of the students took their first and last course(s) in the same term.

English Associate level and transfer level courses encompassed a small portion (7% and 3%, respectively) of the course enrollments by *prior noncredit ESL students* in their first college credit course(s), but increased to 15% and 12%, respectively, of the enrollments in their final college credit course(s) (8% and 9% increase, respectively).

Figure 4. Distribution of credit ESL/English course enrollments: first and last courses in credit by course level

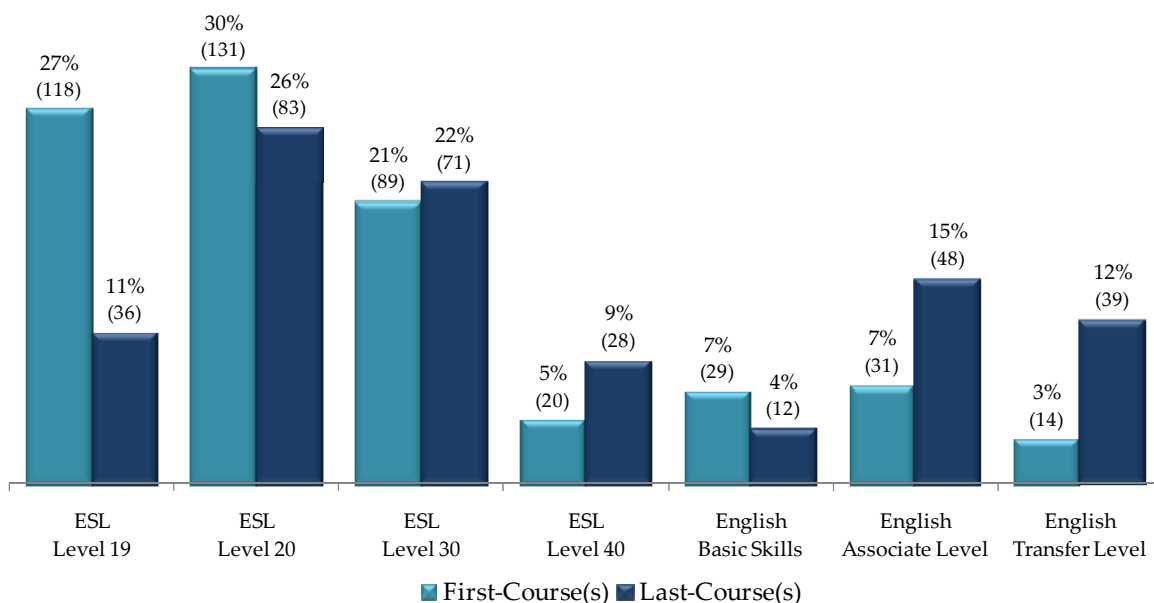


Table 3 provides the top 5 college credit ESL/English courses taken by the *prior noncredit ESL student group* in their first and last college credit ESL/English courses. *Prior noncredit ESL students* in their first college credit ESL/English course(s) chose the lowest level course, ESOL 019, most frequently (27%). *Prior noncredit ESL students* in their last college credit ESL/English course(s) chose ESOL 019 (11%) most frequently, followed by ESOL 020 and ENGL 051 (10% each).

Table 3. Top 5 credit ESL courses taken by Prior Noncredit ESL students

Prior Noncredit ESL Students in <u>First</u> Credit Course(s)			Prior Noncredit ESL Students in <u>Last</u> Credit Course(s)		
Course	Course Level	%	Course	Course Level	%
ESOL019	ESL Level 19	27%	ESOL019	ESL Level 19	11%
ESOL020	ESL Level 20	12%	ESOL020	ESL Level 20	10%
ESOL021	ESL Level 20	10%	ENGL051	Associate Level	10%
ESOL022	ESL Level 20	9%	ESOL021	ESL Level 20	9%
ESOL030	ESL Level 30	7%	ESOL030	ESL Level 30	9%

Source: SDCCD Information System



## STUDENT OUTCOMES

Student outcomes were examined among all three comparison groups: the *prior noncredit ESL students* in credit ESL/English courses, the *credit-only ESL/English student population* and the *general college population*.

### Successful Course Completion Rate

Among all colleges, the Fall 2007 success rate<sup>5</sup> of the *prior noncredit ESL student group* was higher than the *credit-only ESL/English student population* and the *general college population* (72%, 65%, 64% respectively; see Table 4).

Greater variation occurred across colleges among the *prior noncredit ESL student group* (73%, City/ECC; 68%, Mesa; 75%, Miramar) and the *credit-only ESL/English student population* (61%, City/ECC; 68%, Mesa; 65%, Miramar). The *general college population* showed less variation across colleges (63%, City/ECC; 63%, Mesa; 66%, Miramar).

Table 4. Student success in credit courses by college

College Offering Course	Prior Noncredit ESL Students in Credit ESL/English Courses	Credit-Only ESL/English Student Population	General College Population
	%	%	%
City College/ECC	73%	61%	63%
Mesa College	68%	68%	63%
Miramar College	75%	65%	66%
<b>All Colleges</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>64%</b>

Source: SDCCD Information System

### Successful Course Completion Rate by ESL/English Course Level

Success rates among the *prior noncredit ESL student group* were the highest in ESL Level 30 and Transfer Level courses (80% each) relative to all other ESL/English course levels (see Table 5). The *credit-only ESL/English student population* exhibited the highest success rate in ESL Level 19 courses (87%) compared to all other ESL/English course levels.

Table 5. Student success in ESL/English credit courses by course level

Credit ESL/English Course Levels	Prior Noncredit ESL Students in Credit ESL/English Courses	Credit-Only ESL/English Student Population
	%	%
ESL Level 19	65%	87%
ESL Level 20	72%	75%
ESL Level 30	80%	76%
ESL Level 40	75%	82%
Engl Basic Skills	70%	57%
Engl Associate Level	61%	62%
Engl Transfer Level	80%	66%

Source: SDCCD Information System

<sup>5</sup> *Success Rate* is the percentage of census enrolled students who complete a course with a grade of A, B, C, or CR out of total census enrollments. (Tutoring courses are excluded).

## Course Retention

Among all colleges, the Fall 2007 retention rate<sup>6</sup> of the *prior noncredit ESL student group* was higher than the *credit-only ESL/English student population* and the *general college population* (87%, 84%, 81% respectively; see Table 6).

The *Prior noncredit ESL student group* (87%, City/ECC; 87%, Mesa; 86%, Miramar) showed little variation in student retention across colleges. The *credit-only ESL/English student population* (86%, City/ECC; 84%, Mesa; 82%, Miramar) and the *general college population* (81%, City/ECC; 80%, Mesa; 83%, Miramar) showed more variation in student retention across colleges.

Table 6. Student retention in credit courses by college

College Offering Course	Prior Noncredit ESL Students in Credit ESL/English Courses	Credit-Only ESL/English Student Population	General College Population
	%	%	%
City College/ECC	87%	86%	81%
Mesa College	87%	84%	80%
Miramar College	86%	82%	83%
<b>All Colleges</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>81%</b>

Source: SDCCD Information System

## Course Retention by ESL/English Course Level

Retention rates among the *prior noncredit ESL student group* were the highest in English Basic Skills level courses (93%) relative to all other ESL/English level courses (see Table 7). The *credit-only ESL/English student population* exhibited the highest retention in ESL Level 19 courses and ESL Level 40 courses (93% each) compared to all other ESL/English level courses.

Table 7. Student retention in ESL/English credit courses by course level

Credit ESL/English Course Levels	Prior Noncredit ESL Students in Credit ESL/English Courses	Credit-Only ESL/English Student Population
	%	%
ESL Level 19	89%	93%
ESL Level 20	86%	90%
ESL Level 30	87%	87%
ESL Level 40	87%	93%
Engl Basic Skills	93%	80%
Engl Associate Level	86%	89%
Engl Transfer Level	85%	80%

Source: SDCCD Information System

<sup>6</sup> *Retention Rate* is the percentage of students who complete a course with a grade of A, B, C, D, F, CR, NC, I or RD out of total census enrollments (Note: Tutoring classes are included).

## CONCLUSIONS

Several general conclusions can be made from this baseline report of ESL students who migrate to credit courses.

- Students who migrated from noncredit ESL/English courses to credit ESL/English courses differed in their student profile from students taking only college credit ESL/English courses or the general college population, both of which had relatively similar student profiles.
- *Prior noncredit ESL students* showed some progress and movement through both their noncredit course sequences and their credit course sequences. Enrollment in lower-level courses was greater in their first term taking a noncredit or credit course and lower in their last term taking a noncredit or credit course. The reverse was true among higher-level noncredit and credit course enrollments.
- Finally, *prior noncredit ESL students* in credit ESL/English courses showed greater course success and retention than the two comparison groups.