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THE POWER OF ACADEMIC LEARNING COMMUNITIES

ABSTRACT: *Kingsborough Community College's Intensive ESL Program, a collaborative, interdisciplinary program, was designed to help entering ESL students acquire proficiency in academic English while at the same time succeeding in credit-bearing college courses. Corollary to this primary goal, other important objectives of this program are to improve the retention and graduation rates of ESL students and to facilitate their integration into the social and academic life of the college as a whole. We have found that students who become part of an active, student-centered learning community have a greater chance of succeeding in college than those who do not. This article will explore the nature and structure of learning community programs and what makes them so effective in contributing to the success of entering college students, ESL and non-ESL alike.*

Throughout the United States basic readers and writers who wish to attend college are faced with the challenge of grappling with academic course material while striving to improve their reading and writing skills in order to meet college requirements. Many students in this situation have performed poorly in courses or have had to withdraw. Eventually, many have dropped out of college altogether because their level of academic English was not sufficient to see them through their courses successfully. The high attrition rate for such students holds true whether they speak English as a first or second language. Although this article will focus on a program developed specifically for ESL students, similar programs for native speakers of English have also been successful (Tinto, Love, & Russo; Tinto).

The program on which this article is based was conceived in the early 1990s, when administrators at Kingsborough Community Col-

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lege, where we teach, expressed concern over the amount of time it took ESL students to complete their required English courses. Regulations governing New York State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) were changing, and it was feared that students would use up their financial aid before they had completed their non-credit ESL and English courses. Professor Robert Viscount, who was director of ESL at the time, worked with a faculty committee to develop a content-based program for ESL students in their first semester of college study, which—it was hoped—would accelerate students' progress in English while also enabling them to succeed in credit-bearing courses.

The resulting program, known as the Intensive ESL Program, was begun in the spring of 1995. In this collaborative, interdisciplinary program, students acquire proficiency in "academic English" by taking credit-bearing courses while receiving language support in ESL and speech courses. In each cohort of this full-time program, students attend all classes as a group and earn 8 regular college credits as well as 8 "equated credits" for the required ESL course. (Equated credits enable students to be considered full-time and thus eligible for financial aid but do not count toward graduation.) Based on regular CUNY (City University of New York) assessment measures, entering students are placed in one of three different levels. Students are required to be in class five days a week from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., with an hour off each day for lunch (see Appendix 1 for a typical block schedule). Students in the Intensive Program spend 8 hours per week with the ESL instructor; they also receive 4 hours of tutorial instruction each week from tutors who regularly attend courses in the program, thus serving as valuable liaisons among all the program components. (The tutoring program is administered by Kingsborough's Reading and Writing Center. Tutors, most of whom have a B.A. or M.A. degree, participate in weekly seminars with one of the Center's academic directors as well as in monthly meetings of Intensive ESL Program faculty.)

Depending on the students' ESL level, they take different credit-bearing courses—for example, Introduction to Sociology, Introduction to Psychology, Popular American Culture (a history course), Speech, and Student Development (courses that are taught by counselors and provide an orientation to college life as well as career counseling). All faculty members, counselors, and tutors in the program attend regular meetings and work closely together to develop an integrated approach to the students' course work in each of the blocks (see Babbitt and Mlynarczyk).

The primary goal of the Intensive Program was to accelerate students' learning of academic English (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) so that they could complete the ESL course sequence more quickly than was previously possible. Because of the intensive nature of the program, students have the opportunity to skip one or more

ESL levels. Corollary to the major goal are three other important objectives: to enable students to succeed in credit courses in their first semester in the college; to improve the retention and graduation rates of ESL students; and to facilitate the integration of ESL students into the social and academic life of the college.

During the years of its existence, the Intensive ESL Program has been extremely successful in achieving these goals. Students in this program achieve higher pass rates for ESL courses, with many skipping one or more ESL levels after passing the regular Kingsborough assessments of reading and writing (see Appendix 2 for sample results). Moreover, the students do extremely well in the academic courses that are part of the program. But what has intrigued us even more than the high pass rates and good grades in the academic courses is the special classroom atmosphere in these classes. Students are so much more active and engaged in their learning than are students in regular, unlinked ESL courses. After we and other colleagues teaching in the program had had similar positive experiences semester after semester, we came to the conclusion that there was something about the program itself that created a special classroom chemistry, enabling students to be more active and efficient learners.

In our search for possible explanations for this positive classroom atmosphere, we discovered that recent educational research has confirmed an age-old concept: students are more motivated and more effective learners when they are members of a well-functioning learning community. In the United States, university-based learning communities were developed in the 1920s by Alexander Meiklejohn, who instituted a "great books" program at the University of Wisconsin's Experimental College. In the 1930s John Dewey influenced the pedagogy of learning communities through his work to encourage active student-centered learning (Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews, and Smith). Since then, learning community experiments have been developed at many institutions including the University of California at Berkeley (Tussman) and Evergreen State in Washington (Jones). Most learning community programs fit the following widely accepted definition:

> Learning communities, as we define them, purposefully restructure the curriculum to link together courses or course work so that students find greater coherence in what they are learning as well as increased intellectual interaction with faculty and fellow students. Advocates contend that learning communities can address some of the structural features of the modern university that undermine effective teaching and learning. Built on what is known about effective educational practice, learning communities are also usually associated with

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collaborative and active approaches to learning, some form of team teaching, and interdisciplinary themes. (Gabelnick et al. 5)

One important aspect of this definition is its concern with adapting the structural features of the university. As more and more college students have to juggle work and family responsibilities as well as school-work, the fragmentation of the typical college program has become increasingly problematic. Many of today's college students, who take a series of unrelated courses, each with a different group of classmates, perceive their educational experience as lacking in coherence or community. Learning community programs go a long way toward alleviating such problems. Another significant aspect of learning communities emphasized in the above definition is the importance of active student-centered pedagogy. A third aspect is the crossing of departmental lines to encourage faculty collaboration and an interdisciplinary approach to learning.

The building of learning communities has been the subject of recent research. Three learning community programs for native speakers of English have been studied by the Collaborative Learning Project (Tinto, Love, and Russo). The learning communities studied were the Freshman Interest Group (FIG) at the University of Washington; the Learning Community Clusters at LaGuardia Community College of the City University of New York; and the Coordinated Studies Program at Seattle Central Community College. The goal of the Collaborative Learning Project was to examine the three learning community programs to see if they enhanced student achievement at their colleges, and if so, in what ways.

The results of both the qualitative and quantitative evaluations of these programs showed significant benefits of the collaborative learning approach. According to Tinto, Love, and Russo, students "reported greater personal involvement in a range of academic and social activities and greater perceived developmental gains" (11). A comparison of students in the collaborative programs with control groups in traditional programs showed a statistically significant higher rate of persistence into the next academic year (66.7 versus 52.0 percent the following fall semester at Seattle Central Community College) as well as superior performance in terms of grade point average (3.14 versus 2.98 percent at the University of Washington) (Tinto, Love, and Russo 10).

The Rationale for ESL Learning Communities

Kingsborough's Intensive ESL Program differs from the three programs studied by Tinto and his colleagues in an important respect: our program was specifically designed to enhance and accelerate the

achievement of our English as a Second Language population. The academic, social, and emotional problems that loom large for non-ESL college students are compounded for ESL students when we consider the new linguistic and cultural environment these students suddenly find themselves in. Culture shock is inevitable, and for many, the period of adjustment to life in the United States is lengthy and difficult. Problems of language learning — sociolinguistic as well as psycholinguistic — abound. Sociolinguistic issues, dealing with the social and cultural aspects of language learning such as language attitudes, and psycholinguistic issues, involving language acquisition (which in turn is influenced by sociolinguistic factors), play an important role in ESL students' achievement not only in ESL classes but in all college classes and in all aspects of college life (Brilliant, Lvovich, and Markson). Kingsborough's Intensive ESL Program seeks to meet students' needs by facilitating their entry into their new academic, social, cultural, and linguistic worlds, accelerating their progress in ESL, granting college credit for college-level work successfully completed, and aiding them in achieving their academic goals more quickly and with greater self-confidence.

Based on our own observations and program evaluations by students and teachers, we believe that the formation of a strong academic learning community is one of the most important reasons for the program's continuing success. The formation of learning communities is directly related to the program's structure. When students spend 25 hours a week attending all the same courses with other entering students, they form very strong bonds and friendships that are based on their academic work together.

The scholarly literature sheds light on how learning communities work and why they are such powerful forces for enhancing student learning. In the rest of this article, we will focus on three strands of this research: (1) the importance of a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to learning; (2) the benefits of active, student-centered pedagogy emphasizing reading and writing to learn; and (3) the possible effects of learning communities on students' perceptions of self-efficacy. Significantly, most of the research on which this discussion is based was done among native speakers of English, and we are convinced that all three areas should be considered in developing more effective programs for basic readers and writers who speak English as a first language.

Collaborative, Interdisciplinary Approach to Learning

A collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to learning is woven into the structure of our program. The following connections combine

to make possible the creation of a dynamic learning community: connections among departments; among instructors, tutors, and students; and among students in a cohort. The first community that students become part of takes shape in the small-group settings of each cohort, but the elements that promote the formation of such a community exist at a more basic and general level. The planning that goes into structuring the program blocks lays the groundwork for these student communities. This planning includes: meetings with department chairs to choose faculty for the program; ongoing faculty development workshops for faculty and tutors; integration of course curriculum and materials across disciplinary boundaries; structuring small-group activities and projects; arranging field trips; and dealing expeditiously with problems, both individual and collective.

Departments Working Together and Faculty-Tutor Development

As Brinton, Snow and Wesche note, faculty who participate in collaborative programs for ESL students should be "particularly sensitive to the needs and abilities of second language learners" (21). We look for instructors who are interested in working collaboratively in a block-program format. Departments we currently work with are: Behavioral Sciences (psychology and sociology); History and Political Science (popular American culture); Communication and Theater Arts (speech); and Student Development. Our experience has been that faculty in other departments enjoy working in this program. Students tend to be highly motivated, and superior results in content courses justify the extra work that faculty do.

The faculty development program begins with a 3-hour pre-semester orientation workshop for faculty and tutors in the program. After greetings from the provost, we hand out schedule grids for each program and any newly adopted textbooks to members of each team. Faculty members report on innovations in materials, pedagogy, student-centered activities, and other issues of general interest, and then we break into teams (for each of the program blocks) to develop plans for the semester. The emphasis of these discussions is on inter-relating course curricula, materials, projects, etc.

Throughout the 12-week semester, we schedule three 90-minute faculty development workshops with considerable time set aside for team meetings involving faculty and tutors in each of the program blocks. In addition, instructors in each block maintain close contact during the semester via e-mail, phone calls, lunches, and other short meetings. Ongoing meetings and discussions with team members from other departments reinforce the interdisciplinary nature of the program. "How can we best integrate sociology or history or psychology

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with speech and ESL?" "How can we coordinate academic work in all our classrooms?" These are just two of the questions we are continually examining, rethinking, and refocusing.

The sociology-related artifact project is one illustration of how we give vitality to the interdisciplinary aspect of our program. The sociology professor introduces students to the concept of cultural artifacts. In the ESL class, students work in groups to brainstorm and choose an artifact from their culture such as a Russian samovar or a Haitian *ve-ve* statue. Students then talk, read, and write about their artifact in groups and in a whole-class setting. Using a worksheet, students determine the relevance, history, and uses of this artifact to their culture and to them personally. During an ESL computer lab, they research the artifact on the Internet. Students then write a more formal essay about their cultural artifact, to which the ESL professor responds. In speech class, students take notes on their written artifact report and prepare these notes for a speech they will give in that class. They bring in their artifacts to illustrate their speeches.

Sometimes coordination among team members develops in response to college activities. At Kingsborough the events surrounding *The Clothesline Project*, a traveling exhibit designed to "break the silence" of domestic violence, afforded an opportunity for students to connect with and learn about this project and to explore the sociological issue of domestic violence in personal and social as well as academic ways. After reading about this topic in the sociology text, students attended one of the events with the ESL instructor and another with the speech instructor. Students talked and wrote about what they had experienced, and some even chose to design a T-shirt, which was later displayed in the college. Students benefit greatly, as we have stated earlier, from this sort of interdisciplinary approach. In projects such as these, students are able to connect academic concepts with situations in the real world outside of school.

The Instructor-Tutor-Student Connection

Tutors play an important role as liaisons between instructors in a block since they attend class sessions throughout the week. Moreover, tutors develop a unique bond with students through their frequent presence in classes and tutoring sessions. Tutors and students work closely in tutoring sessions and in the ESL classroom during small-group activities, project work, etc. The presence of tutors in the content-area class contributes to students' growing feelings of confidence in mastering challenging academic subjects. For example, students are developing their note-taking abilities and are aware that they need good notes to discuss the academic subject in the ESL class. However, knowing that tutors are with them and taking notes too adds to their

confidence in coping with difficult academic material. A bond of trust forms between students and their tutors, and this bond enhances the other connections that students are forging with each other, with instructors, and with the college as a whole.

Student-to-Student Connections

It is in the student-to-student connections that the true power of the academic learning community resides. The social/academic student-to-student connections that result from the careful structuring and planning of our program enhance the students' chances for success in future semesters (for a statistical analysis of our students' retention and academic success after they leave the Intensive Program, see Fox). Students bring away from their experiences of the first semester an academic base on which to build, an ability to read and write analytically, and a strong network of peer support.

Active, Student-Centered Pedagogy

Students in the Intensive ESL Program don't sit and listen to lectures for 25 hours a week. Instead, they spend a significant amount of their class time working together in an active way. They may be collaborating with a small group of students on a group problem-solving activity. Or they may be working with a student partner to read and respond to each other's essays or journals. This active approach is especially important for ESL students because they acquire academic English much more effectively when they are actually using it many hours a week. Students have often told us that during their weeks in the Intensive Program, they began thinking in English for the first time.

Learning communities encourage students to assimilate new academic material by making personal connections with what they are learning. Students may be asked to use journal writing to relate new concepts from their academic courses to their own life experience. In more formal writing as well, students are often asked to make personal connections with course material. For instance, students who were studying immigration to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for their history course, were asked to do research on various aspects of immigrants' lives during this period and then write an essay on the question: "How would my life have been different if I had immigrated to the U.S. 100 years ago?" According to Gabelnick et al., one of the important intellectual tasks of learning communities is to "contextualize the disciplines and push both students and faculty to develop a personal point of view about the material and issues being studied" (55). This type of contextualization is extremely important for second-language students, who may find the

concepts they are studying in U.S. colleges as well as the teaching methods to be drastically different from those of their previous educational experience. However, both ESL students and English-dominant developmental students benefit greatly from opportunities to process academic concepts in their own language and to make personal connections with the new ideas they are encountering.

Talking to Learn

One of the most important ways in which learning communities encourage students to connect in personal ways with what they are studying is through exploratory talk, or "talking to learn" as it is sometimes called (Britton). In Kingsborough's program, for example, during the 10 hours a week that students spend in the ESL class, approximately half the time is spent in small-group discussions or group problem-solving activities. Students may meet in groups to read and discuss their history journals or to work out the answers to questions on a practice reading test. Even on the first day of the semester, students work in groups to read and understand the course syllabus.

In a study of CUNY open admissions students who spoke English as a first language, Bruffee states that students in collaborative learning situations must develop a relationship of interdependence and trust. He believes that it is important to "reacculturate" new college students to work successfully in an academic environment. Bruffee realizes that open admissions students experience a situation of "local acculturation," or being acculturated to local communities, which enables them to negotiate effectively with those in their neighborhood, their family, or their ethnic group. According to Bruffee, however, one result of local acculturation seems to be that students "could not discover their own buried potential" (19). Reacculturation within an academic environment, although difficult to accomplish, and almost impossible to accomplish when students work individually, can sometimes occur when students work together collaboratively. People seem to be able to "renegotiate" connections to their local communities while gaining membership in other communities, in this case the academic environment of the university (17-20).

One way in which students in our program work through this complex process of reacculturation is by using small-group discussions to make sense of the challenging reading material they are encountering in their academic courses. Lemke emphasizes the importance of helping students learn to construct meaning as they read by making "the text talk in [the students'] own voices, not by reading it, but by elaborating on it themselves, building on it in their own words and making its words their own" (quoted in Davenport 184).

The key concept undergirding the importance of exploratory talk

as a means of learning is the recognition that language is inherently social in the sense that Bakhtin theorizes. Thus, it is not surprising that talk forms the basis of every well-functioning learning community. This talk, however, is very different from the type of "teacher talk" (Cazden) that is the dominant mode of discourse in most whole-class discussions. Because of the limiting nature of typical discourse in the whole-class setting, Barnes feels that it is essential for teachers to provide many opportunities for small-group discussion: "A small group of peers is less threatening than the full class, and the absence of the teacher temporarily releases [students] from the search for right answers that so often distorts their learning strategies" ("Supporting" 30). Although Barnes recommends small-group work as a valuable tool, he does not regard it as a panacea. In any class, the teacher retains a crucial role in creating the kind of supportive environment in which true learning can take place: "Unless students' contributions to the business of the lesson are valued by the teacher not so much by praise as by listening and replying to them, they will not perceive their own role in learning as an active one" ("Supporting" 31).

Most of the teachers and students in Kingsborough's Intensive ESL Program seem to share this belief in the importance of talking to learn. One student explained it this way in the cover letter she wrote for her final writing portfolio: "From my classmates, I learned many different cultures and customs. I enjoyed studying in this small group. Sometimes, I could discuss the questions from textbooks with my classmates. We shared our opinions with each other. It helped me to understand the materials of textbooks from the group discussion. Sharing is a great thing to get along with other people. A lot [of] time, we are so busy to care about ourselves. And, we forget how joyful that sharing is in our life."

Reading to Learn and Writing to Learn

In order to prepare students for the challenging reading and writing assignments of college courses, we include many reading- and writing-to-learn activities in our program (see Babbitt). This approach grows out of the whole-language, Fluency First approach to teaching ESL developed at CUNY's City College (see MacGowan Gilhooly *Achieving Clarity, Achieving Fluency*). Students are required to do extensive reading, approximately 10 pages each day, of full-length books, essays, articles, etc. They also do extensive writing in many genres such as essays and analytical journal writing in response to readings in ESL; journal writing to explore topics in history, psychology, or sociology; rewriting of lecture and discussion notes; and open-ended, experimental forms such as freewriting and point-of-view writing.

Writing is sometimes done in small-group settings, and an im-

portant aspect of student writing that also usually takes place in small groups is peer review and peer discussion of student writing. This collaborative writing discussion often requires written response and revision by the writer of the piece being discussed. One advantage to this approach is that students become more equalized in their contribution to the class: quieter students necessarily take on a more active role. Roles of group members, for example leader or recorder, change as each student's work is discussed. All group members take responsibility for group content-course journal work and other group reading or writing activities.

Student response to this type of work, although not always enthusiastic at first, is usually positive once the process is underway. Through anonymous reflective writing about the effectiveness of reading- and writing-to-learn activities, students analyze what they have gained from these experiences. We have noticed that benefits to students go beyond the content of the work done to include valuable gains in self-efficacy, and that knowledge and confidence gained are factors in student success in the program and in retention beyond the first college semester.

Possible Enhancement of Students' Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, a concept that has been investigated by cognitive researchers, relates to one's self-confidence as a learner. Students with a high degree of self-efficacy believe that they can succeed at school tasks if they try hard and use effective learning strategies. Such learners are more likely to persist at tasks and eventually to accomplish them. Modeling is an important means of increasing self-efficacy: "Individuals who observe others perform a task are apt to believe that they can as well (Bandura), because modeling implicitly conveys to observers that they possess the necessary capabilities to succeed (Schunk)" (quoted in Schunk and Hanson 313).

Schunk and Hanson describe an experiment in which elementary school children who had difficulty with subtraction watched one of three different videotapes. The children who had observed a peer model thinking aloud and eventually solving a set of subtraction problems scored significantly higher both in self-efficacy and in achievement than did those who had observed a teacher explaining and solving the same problems. The children who had not observed either a peer or teacher model scored significantly lower than those in both the peer-model and teacher-model groups. The authors conclude: "Children who observe similar others perform a task are apt to believe that they can succeed as well and thereby experience higher self-efficacy" (319).

The results of this experiment support Vygotsky's concept of the

zone of proximal development, the idea that students are able to solve problems "under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (86) which they would not be able to solve on their own. This type of shared problem solving is useful for the "more capable" as well as the "less capable" peers for as Barnes ("Afterword") explains, the process of explaining new ideas to others is a way of "owning" one's learning: "The struggle to communicate with someone who only half understands can contribute to the clarification of the speaker's own thinking" (344).

Bruffee's research sheds additional light on the power of small-group work in a community of peers. According to Bruffee, two worthwhile aspects of collaborative work for students are that (1) as participants in the same academic class, they speak roughly the same language; and (2) as members of different non-academic communities, they bring to the task or discussion at hand their own perspectives (21-23). If these positive aspects of collaboration exist for non-ESL open admissions students, they are perhaps even more relevant to our ESL population at Kingsborough. Students in our Intensive ESL Program work with and develop interdependent and supportive relationships with students of cultural and language backgrounds quite different from their own. The collaborative work that students do together in their groups helps them to be more open to others' points of view. Students are influenced by peers' ideas, and sometimes readjust their own opinions and feelings to incorporate the thoughts of others. Thus, an advantage of small-group collaborative work is that while students are learning to listen to, respect, and evaluate each other's ideas, they are also learning to respect and evaluate their own ideas. We can see from our Intensive ESL Program students' journal writing, freewriting, oral communication, and end-of-semester evaluation reports how highly they value the contributions of their peers during small-group discussions.

The reacculturation process just described does not cause students to abandon their ethnic identity or their individuality; rather, they appear to draw on their uniqueness and gain strength from it when working in their small groups. Students report that through studying and working in the collaborative setting of the Intensive Program, they have gained confidence in their ability to manipulate English in the areas of listening, speaking, writing, reading comprehension, and study skills. They also report that they have developed expertise in these areas as well.

Students gain confidence from seeing their peers succeed at various learning tasks and from talking with them about how they have achieved this success. The following example illustrates how this process of peer modeling works. Usually, the scores on the first exam in the linked history, psychology, or sociology courses are not as high as

the students had hoped. In the ESL course, the professor helps students to analyze which study and writing strategies were most successful. Sometimes the professor asks permission to type up a successful essay exam answer, which students then discuss in small groups. Outside of class, students often ask to borrow and read the exams of students who got the best grades. Our observations over the past seven years suggest that when students in the Intensive Program get a low test score, they do not lapse into passivity or depression—or even drop the class—as students in unlinked courses often do. Instead, they resolve to do better the next time and develop a realistic plan for doing so.

Another sign of the way in which peer modeling increases self-efficacy is the high retention rate for students in the Intensive Program. Despite the challenging academic nature of the program and the heavy workload, students develop the confidence that they can succeed, and the retention rate for all courses in the program is close to 100 percent. At the end of the semester, when students complete an anonymous program evaluation, they often mention an increase in self-confidence as one of the ways in which they have benefited. One student wrote: "Working and going to classes with the same persons is helpful for me because it gives me confidence. We all know each other." Another student commented: "[In this program] I studied writing, reading, speaking, listening and this improved my self-confidence, and therefore it'll help me in the following semester."

Indeed, a heightened sense of self-efficacy does seem to help students when they enter the college mainstream after completing their first semester in the Intensive Program. Their retention at the college and their grade point averages are significantly above average (Fox).

Conclusion

The question that arises at this point is whether learning community programs for developmental students who are not classified as "ESL" have similar benefits. The existing research strongly indicates that they do (Bruffee; Tinto; Tinto, Love, and Russo). Why do such programs result in greater student learning and better retention rates? We believe—and recent research (Tinto) supports this belief—that the most important factor is the learning community that develops within the classroom. This community is not only social, although social ties are important, especially on a commuter campus where many students are the first in their families to attend college. What seems crucial, however, is that these learning communities are both social and academic. Students form social bonds while discussing academic course material and working together to succeed on course assignments and exams. According to Tinto, this type of integration of the social and

the academic is not typical. Unfortunately, for many entering college students, social life and academic life exist in a kind of competition. Learning community programs, on the other hand, help students to "draw these two worlds together" (610) in positive ways.

At our community college, we often see former students who first met in the Intensive ESL Program together in the library, in the cafeteria, in the halls. They are still maintaining the social-academic ties that they formed at the beginning of their college careers. For example, from one class several semesters ago we see three male students, from China, Haiti, and Morocco—still fast friends. From last semester we see three women, from Japan, Iran, and Yemen—students with different cultural roots but strong common bonds. We see former students who have become an integral part of the life of the college, who do not feel alone in our large urban commuter campus, who know where to go for help when they need it, and who are on their way to achieving their academic and career goals. Some transfer to other institutions. Others graduate and then pursue their careers in the work force or their studies in other colleges or universities. Some go on to graduate school. Our former students, through their struggles, their efforts, and their successes, give living testimony to the power of the academic learning community.

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APPENDIX 1. SAMPLE BLOCK SCHEDULE

Kingsborough Community College
Intensive ESL Program
Schedule of Classes: Spring 2001
ESL 09 (Intermediate ESL)

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Friday
B (9:10)	ESL 09	ESL 09	Tutors	ESL 09	ESL 09
C (10:20)	ESL 09	ESL 09	Tutors	ESL 09	ESL 09
D (11:30)					
E (12:40)	Speech 28	Tutors	Speech 28	Tutors	Student Development 10
F (1:50)	Sociology 31	Sociology 31	Speech 28	Sociology 31	Student Development
G (3:00)					

APPENDIX 2. RESULTS FOR THE
FALL 2000 SEMESTER

ESL PASS RATES: FALL 2000

Note: For the first seven semesters of its existence, the Intensive ESL Program was optional and thus tended to attract students who were academically motivated. Because of the program's impressive results, it was mandated for all entering ESL students beginning in fall 1998. It would seem reasonable that pass rates from fall 1998 onward would be lower than those of previous semesters. This has turned out to be the case, particularly in ESL 07, the lowest ESL level. See table below for results.

	INTENSIVE PROGRAM		REGULAR ESL PROGRAM	
	Percent Passing	Total Number of Students	Percent Passing	Total Number of Students
ESL 07	63%	43	61%	41
ESL 09	80%	45	66%	79
ESL 91	92%	39	65%	87
Pass Rate for All 3 Levels	78% 64%			

Total Number ESL Students Enrolled in All 3 ESL levels: 334

Total Number Intensive Program Students: 127

Total Number Non-Intensive Program Students: 207

ESL SKIP RATES: FALL 2000

Note: Results in all of Kingsborough's ESL and developmental English courses are determined by the students' performance on the end-of-semester reading and writing assessments, which are graded by other instructors who have been carefully normed to insure uniform standards. Before the Intensive ESL Program began, skipping a level for ESL 07 or ESL 09 students was virtually unheard of. Since the program's inception, however, skipping a level has become more commonplace. Skipping has always been an option in ESL 91: at the time of data collection, students who passed both the reading and writing components of the course moved into ENG 93 (the final course in the developmental sequence), and those who passed only one component moved into ENG 92.

	INTENSIVE PROGRAM		REGULAR ESL PROGRAM	
	Percent Skipping	Total Number of Students	Percent Skipping	Total Number of Students
ESL 07	26%	43	0%	41
ESL 09	20%	45	5%	79
ESL 91	56%	39	65%	87
Skip rate for All 3 levels	34%	127	23%	207