

# Academic Credit for ESL: A Study in Patience

Mary Wood

Kansas State University

[www.k-state.edu/elp](http://www.k-state.edu/elp)

# Academic Credit for ESL At K-state

Since June 2004,

- all ESL classes
- undergraduate level (100-level)
- 15 credits of ESL credit can be used toward a Bachelor's degree at the discretion of the department / college

# It's a Process not a Proposal

- Taking advantage of history but not being controlled by it
- Knowing your campus system: what works to your advantage and what holds you back
- Positioning yourself
- Building support
- Timing and serendipity
- Turning the question on its head
- Being prepared to compromise
- Recognizing it is a work in progress

# History

- Summer short program grew into an IEP
- History of shared English / ESL faculty
- Summer curriculum under DAS (Dean of Arts & Sciences)
- IEP curriculum written under the English dept.
- 0-level credit (remedial classes – did not count toward a degree)
- Continuing Education – off campus classes

# Knowing your campus: what helps you and what holds you back

- Curriculum under English, so ELP courses are a prerequisite to composition: ENGL 052 (ELP) vs. ENGL 100 (composition) **BUT** courses are part of the University system and approved by Faculty Senate
- No linear tuition (limited to a 15-credit or a 6-credit class) **BUT** the 6-credit course could be enrolled in conjunction with academic classes.
- ELP fee type (different from the University) **BUT** students are in the billing system
- Off-campus enrollment **BUT** students are in the KSU system as students

# Positioning yourself

Take advantage of systematic changes and reorganization to become more like other academic departments and curricula

- Moved to the newly developed International Programs Office (1994)
- Repackaged classes to be more like “University” classes when linear tuition was implemented (1998-2000)
- Moved enrollment process to main campus when Provost reorganized Continuing Education (2000)
- Requested an ELP fee type when main frame system was upgraded (2005)

# Building Support

- Annual visits to departments / colleges
- Collaboration on special programs / needs of University community
- Participation on campus committees
- Outreach – special consideration for special needs: example athletes, visiting scholars, spouses of faculty, international faculty
- Joint projects – International Communication and Culture Certificate.

# Timing and Serendipity

- Be ready but don't be committed to a certain line of argument
- Be patient – if it is not time, wait, and continue to build support
- Be informed on campus issues
  - President's challenge to Study Abroad was the argument.
- Be service oriented
  - Problem solution for Art & Sciences
- Be open to changes and challenges
  - Catalyst for ELP credit was athletics
- Put it in terms that academic departments will understand
  - ELP students are already doing what we are asking of UG.



# Turn the Question on its Head

Don't convince people that ESL is not remedial.

Ask them why ESL students are not getting credit for what we are giving credit to domestic students who study aboard.

In other words, ESL students are not remedial, they are ahead of the curve. They are doing what we want our undergraduates to do.

# Rationale Summary

ELP students engage in 22 hours of language work per week

ELP students show a proficiency level which allows them to compete in academic classes with American students by the time they have completed the ELP.

A student completing the ELP will have a proficiency level at least comparable to that in another language acquired by a native speaker of English who completes the language courses to meet a foreign language requirement (i.e. Spanish 4).

The ELP curriculum reflects the same types of language skills, performance, and learning as other language (I attached a comparison of SLOs for Modern Languages and ELP)

K-State students engaged in study abroad experiences, whether academic or language, are allowed to transfer credit back to K-State to apply to their degrees. International students here at K-State are engaged in the same experiential learning environment as our study abroad students.

# Be Prepared to Compromise

ELP courses were originally ENGL.

- Therefore, they were a prerequisite to ENGL 100.
- No way to get 100-level credit.

So, we moved our curriculum to Arts & Sciences

- Our original summer curriculum was DAS (Dean of Arts & Sciences)
- Convinced the Dean of A & S, who said, “it is poetic justice...”

The application of credits toward degree (what and how many) decided on by department

# Work in Progress

Not all colleges apply all 15 ESL credits toward degree requirements

A & S and Salina (technology)	all
Business, Human Ecology, Education, Agriculture	some
Architecture Engineering (Engineering is thinking about it)	none

# Remember it is a work in progress – additional curriculum changes

- Exit level classes
  - Advanced classes – grades of A, B, C – finished with English
  - Grades of D and F – must repeat
- Only allowed to repeat and replace grades for 6 courses.
- Asking for ELP to be an exemption. They can repeat 6 courses of ELP **AND** still get to repeat 6 academic courses if needed

# Contact

Mary Wood

[mwood@k-state.edu](mailto:mwood@k-state.edu)

[www.k-state.edu/elp](http://www.k-state.edu/elp)