



QUALITY AND RELEVANCE IN AN IEP EXIT LEVEL

Beverley Earles and ELP team

English Language Program www.ksu.edu/elp

Kansas State University

BACKGROUND

- Change to letter grades in exit level spring 2010

Reasons: motivation (our grades impact GPA !)

mirroring university practices

BIG CONSEQUENCE =

- Loss of a tried and true point of reference for standard (our standardized test)



TWO BIG TASKS

- 1. Take a fresh look at standards
 - level
 - consistency
 - overall curriculum quality
- 2. Prioritize the greater university as resource for all the above: what's happening NOW? What should we be
 - a. bringing in for students
 - b. taking our students to
 - c. measuring our students by
 - d. integrating into the program proper (beyond ad hoc)?

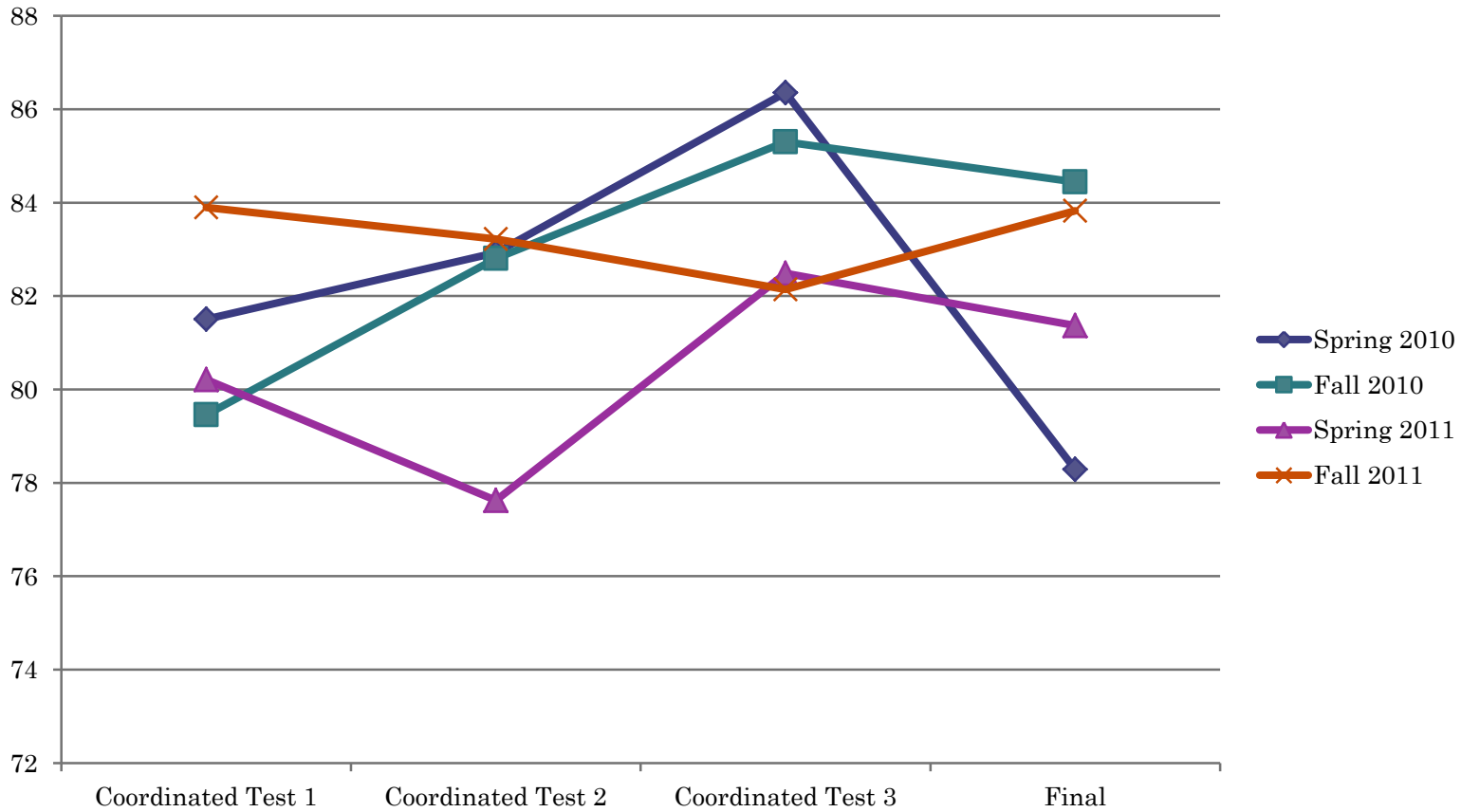


1. FRESH LOOK AT STANDARDS AND CONSISTENCY: STANDARD PROCEDURES AND THEN SOME

- Norming increase throughout the semester & additional for new tests in writing & speaking
- Trading teachers for grading not only finals but in specific cross section writing & speaking assessments (and recording)
- Two teachers for all exit level speaking finals (very labor intensive)
- Insertion of reading section of our standardized test into the final to see relative levels.
- Continued publishing of student performance on every test (100-150 students each time) to bring perspective for all involved (and worried) i.e. teachers, curriculum chairs and others.



Exit level Speaking Mean Percentage Scores from Spring 2010 to Fall 2011

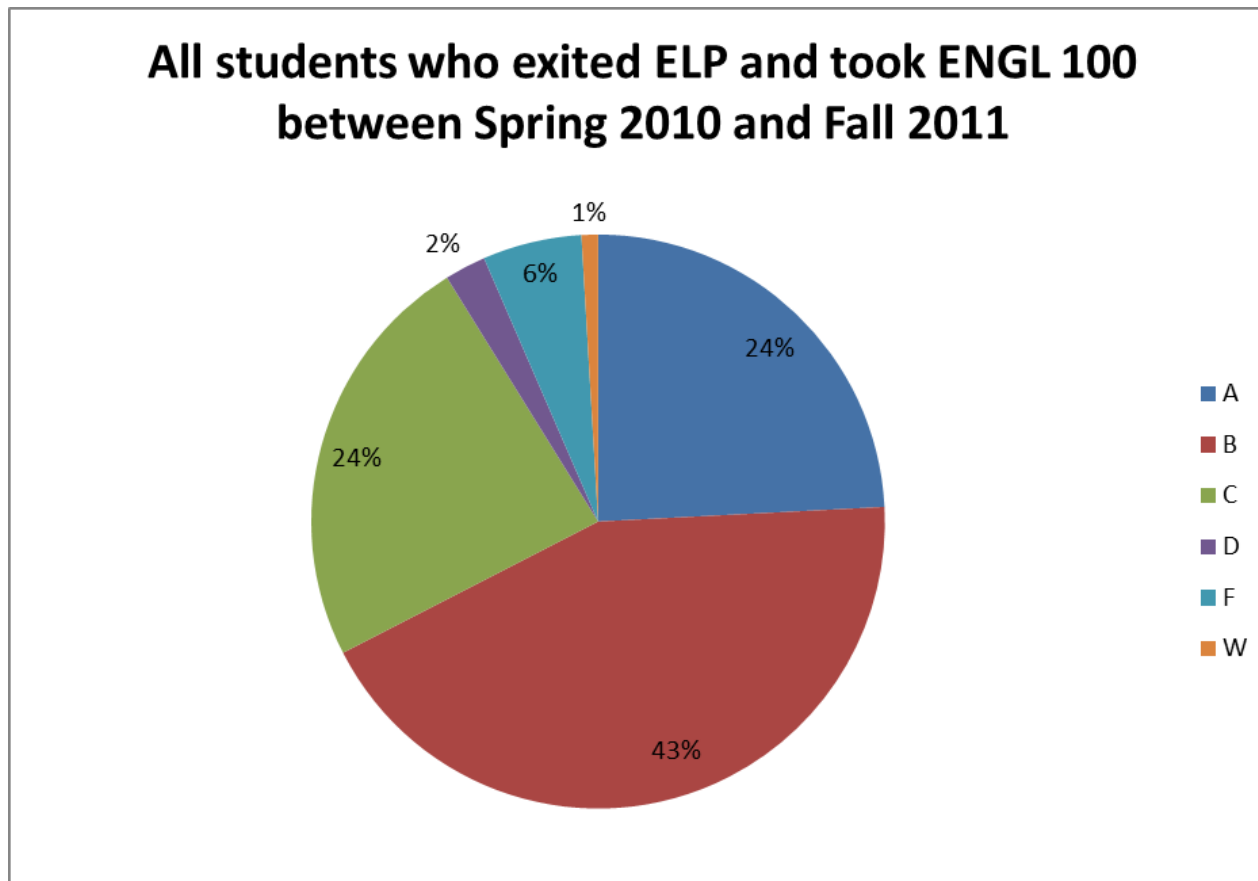


NORMING BEYOND THE PROGRAM (& THEN SOME)

- Regular English department norming of writing final since spring 2010
- Hiring of public speaking TA's to team teach exit level speaking and bring perspective to level (cross training)
- Hiring of public speaking instructor to teach in our exit level
- Sample gathering of
 - writing in expository/comp. classes post ELP
 - speaking in public speaking classes post ELP
- Surveying of students who have exited -- what they found helpful in the ELP, level of confidence & how we could improve



Focused tracking of our ELP grads. in university classes (e.g. expository writing and speech communication)



2. PRIORITIZE THE GREATER UNIVERSITY, AS RESOURCE: BEYOND AD HOC ENRICHMENT

- Not new but not visited often enough



1. ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Rude awakening # 1

- New thematic approach - Identities and Communities based on idea of the social construction of identity with heavy underlay of U.S. shared cultural history
- Assumption of background in U.S history of race (white privilege) the women's movement and class issues
- Readings academic & sophisticated journalistic



CONCLUSIONS:

- Build constancy with the English department.
Institutionalize a mutually beneficial relationship
(They had issues, wanted our help with too!)
- Give ELP students background in shared cultural history Americans bring with them already



ACTIONS

In cooperation with the Curriculum & Assessment
Director & skill Chairs

Teacher volunteers

- Close look at types of reading and writing students are NOW expected to manage in comp./expository writing classes
- Initial low stakes piloting
- Later higher stakes implementation



- E.g. # 1 (of many)

Lower stakes: use of some or all of Free at Last: the U.S. Civil Rights Movement (U.S. Dpt. of State website) and other readings

- **Higher Stakes implementation:** Adoption of new reading textbooks at exit & upper intermed. levels covering American cultural history
- **Higher stakes:** Writing Chair used several readings on a Latino issue as the basis for a grade carrying coordinated test (synthesizing, summarizing and response)



- E.g. # 2

- **Lower stakes** --Listening teacher piloted an activity on the social construction of gender, specifically in advertising.
- **Higher stakes** -- Listening. One of the grade bearing coordinated tests is on theme



2. COMMUNICATION STUDIES DEPARTMENT (SPEECH /PUBLIC SPEAKING)

- Rude awakening # 2
- Prepared speeches not a special problem for international students in Public Speaking classes
- Delivery currently not assessed highly in Public Speaking classes
- Interactive process of getting to speeches is the problem as is impromptu speech



CONCLUSIONS

- Build constancy with Communication Studies department. **Institutionalize** a mutually beneficial relationship
- Give our students much more work on spontaneous speech in all the relevant settings – work shopping in groups, impromptu speaking etc.



ACTIONS

- Refocus of curriculum to encourage high proficiency in conversational speaking, impromptu's etc.
- Training of **Speaking chair** in the Oral Proficiency Interview assessment offered by ACTFL (American College of Teaching Foreign Languages) & adaptation to our needs
- Altering assessment practices to grade the new types of performance (including use of cross trained instructors)

Impromptu speeches, final interview



3. OTHER DEPARTMENTS

- Build sustainable relationships with other relevant academic departments and programs (beyond English and Communication Studies)
- Leadership Studies Program
 - Speaking Chair, teachers & office staff
 - Cooperating professors



LEADERSHIP STUDIES WEEK

- Institutionalized mutually beneficial experience for our two highest levels and the American students (over 200)
- LEAD 350 Culture and Context class (up to 240 students)
- ELP exit level and upper intermediate students (about 200) attend
- ELP students attend the LEAD classes for one week
- Facilitated/taught by the American professor



NEW PILOT PROJECTS (SAMPLING)

- Small Group Communication class in Communication Studies (structured learning opportunity)

Instructor

- Writing project with the Director of Sustainability on campus and his interns

Writing Chair/Instructor

- Several mutually helpful projects with the College of Business

Multiple parties

- Digital English class – communication and cultural competency in a digital setting

Lab. Director and GA



CONCLUSIONS

- 1. Change to letter grades at the exit level has made for greater relevance to students encourages incremental effort, impacts GPA, mirrors where they are going
- 2. Change has meant:
 - fresh & challenging look at assessment and curriculum at that level
 - commitment to prioritizing relations with greater university as an external point of reference for standards and curriculum quality

Hard work, flexibility and imagination of a lot of people-- student workers, office staff, instructors, administrators, professors

