

HISPANIC OUTREACH REPORT FOR 2002-03

ESL COMPONENT

ESL classes are offered to the Hispanic community in Pontiac during three Oakland University semesters: fall term (fourteen weeks from September to December), winter term (fourteen weeks from January to April), and spring term (seven weeks in May and June). There are no classes during the summer term (July and August) because the participants' children are home from school during those months. Generally, the peak semester for regular participation is the fall; fewer participants attend during the winter, primarily because the cold weather causes difficulties (increased illness and snows days for children), and during the spring, primarily because there are more opportunities for seasonal work (landscaping, construction, housekeeping, etc.).

Each term, two sessions are held. The day sessions meet Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 am to noon; the evening sessions meet Monday and Wednesday, from 6:00 to 8:00. During the day, we generally run three levels of ESL classes (beginning, intermediate, and advanced). In the evening, we generally run two levels of ESL classes (beginning and intermediate-advanced). Other classes and levels are added as needed when resources allow.

During the 2002-03 academic year, about 150 students registered for ESL classes each term (175 in the fall, 141 in the winter, and 158 in the spring). An average of 94 students attended classes regularly in the fall, 81 in the winter, and 63 in the spring. During those three semester, fourteen Oakland University students completed student teaching for their ESL Certificates and/or their degrees in Linguistics (Luke Abbott, Dan Brenner, Christen Carlsen, Marcie Clarke, Candice Dabish, Grace DiMercurio, Kristen Donalds, Kimberly Gibala, Mike Higdon, Kari Kocher, Christi Laginess, Kimberly Stinson, Beth Tracey, Noel Woodcraft). In addition, two other ESL teachers were hired to cover the remaining classes (Hollie Anderson and Jennifer Sollman).

GED COMPONENT

The GED classes follow the schedule of the evening ESL classes, meeting twice a week, Monday and Wednesday, 6:00 to 8:00. Kathy Cornman, the on-site ESL Supervisor, designed the GED curriculum, taught the classes during 2002-03, and will teach them again in 2003-04. The *Contemporary Series 2003* preparation material is used, supplemented by a variety of material from different sources. Classroom activities are varied to suit the subject matter and the level of understanding of the participants. Students work in groups and individually and often have homework assignments. For example, much of the practice in writing is done at home when students are not pressed for time; generally, students work on the mechanics in class, and the teacher expects them to complete the written portion at home. Math homework is done for reinforcement of concepts discussed in class. The students are given a pre-test in each subject to assess their level and help in the planning of individual lessons. The books are designed to assess knowledge at the end of each segment. Finally, the students are given a post-test which also serves as a simulation of the GED exam.

During the 2002-03 academic year, attendance in the GED classes varied considerably; often, students could not keep up with the assignments because of their work schedules and had to miss class. At the peak, eight students were attending. One student, Arlene Lopez, has taken the GED test and is awaiting the results. She was by far the most promising and dedicated student in the class and already has financial support to begin at OCC in the fall.

PRESCHOOL COMPONENT

The childcare and preschool programs follow the day schedule of the ESL classes, overlapping before and after by about 30 minutes. There is no childcare or preschool offered in the evening. The preschool activities include story time, fine motor skill activity (color, cut, paste), gross motor skill activity (whole body movement to music or follow direction from teacher), and language development activity (both English and Spanish).

During 2002-03, there were between twenty and twenty-five children each day in the childcare program; of these, between five and eight of the older children attended the preschool program.

ASSESSMENT

No new assessment was done this year. The new questionnaires, which concentrate on job related issues, have just been completed; they are being translated into Spanish by Helen Kehr, Graduate Assistant, Department of Linguistics. This year during registration, Kathy Cornman, on-site ESL Supervisor, will have the participants fill out an intake survey, which contains demographic information (age, sex, years in the USA, country of origin, level of education in home country, etc.). Shortly before the fall semester ends, the participants will complete the new questionnaires on job related issues. All information will be entered into a computer database. Our impression, formed from informal and casual conversation with participants, is that the ESL classes are helping them to secure employment or advance in a position and to become fully integrated members of American society. We are confident that data from the new questionnaires will support that impression.

OUTINGS

This year, outings to area places and events were somewhat limited due to transportation and scheduling problems. The three outings that took place were to the Detroit Zoo, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and the Supermarket. The purpose of such outings is to give participants an opportunity to apply what they have learned in class, as well as learn first hand something about American culture and values.