

The Foundations Prep Course for Low Proficiency Students at Brigham Young University's English Language Center.

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The Foundations Prep Course for Low Proficiency Students at Brigham Young University's English Language Center

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Abstract

At the beginning of each term, a handful of students who are likely to struggle to function in an English-speaking classroom appear at the door. These students, who participate in language programs across the globe, are often the result of inadequate preparation. The English Language Center at Brigham Young University (BYU) is no exception. In the recent past, five percent of students arriving each semester inadequately prepared for the lowest level of instruction. Those placed in that level (Level One), these so-called "Level Zero" students, are not progressing and have also delayed the progress of the entire class. If these students can continue to lag behind and pull down the class, the problem throughout their time at the ELC. Finding or creating a solution to this problem was the purpose of this project. The solution presented here is a new curriculum designed specifically for these students. The implementation presents its own challenges, such as ensuring cost-effectiveness, adequate staffing, and finding or creating appropriate course materials. These challenges have been addressed. Cost effectiveness and adequacy have been achieved by utilizing unpaid interns from the BYU undergraduate TESOL

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teachers, and paying only one experienced teacher who functioned as needed. Course materials, some only recently developed for the All Skills Class, the Vocabulary Class, the Reading Class, and other classes currently constitute the Foundations Prep Course. This was reiterated during a needs analysis conducted with Winter Semester students of the BYU Linguistics 677 (Curriculum Development) Prep curriculum was then developed by the author during the semester implemented by her the following semester at the ELC. It is agreed upon for Winter Semester 2010. Institutional and financial feasibility, professional reactions of members of the Executive Council, of the Foundations Prep Teacher/Supervisor, and of the interns, have all been examined for the efficacy of continuing this program into the future.

Degree

MA

College and Department

Humanities; Linguistics and English Language

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