

Sabbatical Leave Report
2005-2006

Submitted by
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**Sabbatical Proposal
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For
Academic Year 2005-2006**

Sabbatical Project Activities

Proposal One – Selection of Reading Placement Instrument for Non-Native Students

A. Rationale

My first project relates to the need for a reading placement instrument for non-native students here at Mt. SAC. The current reading placement instrument, the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) has been approved and used for placement since 2002. While serving the needs of the majority of the students, this instrument may not be appropriate for second language students and is not currently used for placement for these students. Once students have been identified as needing American Language classes based on an Assessment of Written English (AWE) score, they are placed into a corresponding reading course; for example, AmLa 52 writing students are placed in AmLa 51 reading classes.

The College has based this practice on the assumption that there is a high correlation between reading and writing skills in a second language acquisition process. The College has recently determined that it is not in the best interests of our students to continue this practice. With the onset of the Reading Competency requirement, which will be in effect beginning in the Fall 2005 semester, the need to research, pilot test, and validate a reading test for non-native students is absolutely essential. I will work closely with Jim Ocampo, Director of Matriculation, and with the AmLa, LERN, and ESL faculty to research reading placement measures. We are especially interested in looking at the possibility of a computer-based reading assessment instrument.

B. Activities

The project is broken into steps:

1. Review of current literature of second language reading assessment practices,
2. Analyze available data from DRP scores of current non-native students to determine if this test could be validated for use with non-native students,
3. Interview matriculation officers of at least 10 benchmark colleges to determine use and effectiveness of reading placement tests currently in use,
4. Analyze and evaluate the strength and weaknesses of reading assessment measures,
5. Recommend a reading assessment measure for non-native students. If an appropriate measure cannot be selected, the College must explore the possibility of developing an in-house assessment measure.

This placement instrument should be ready for pilot testing in the summer and fall semesters of 2006. An application for approval of the assessment measure should be ready to submit to the Chancellor's Office in the spring of 2007 with possible implementation of fall 2007. I have attached a proposed timeline of activities.

C. Anticipated Value and Benefit

Completion of this sabbatical project will lead to the adoption of an approved placement instrument for reading assessment for non-native students at Mt. SAC. It will be a complement to the AWE, Oral Interview, and TOEFL test scores. With all of this assessment information, students will be given complete advice about placement in appropriate reading classes so that they can successfully improve their English proficiency.

Project Two - Thematic Annotated Bibliography

A. Rationale

My second proposed sabbatical project is more closely related to my students in the classroom, but also connected to reading. One theory of reading pedagogy for second-language learners is that extended reading - abundant exposure to printed materials at or just below a

comfortable level of comprehension - is essential for the development of reading proficiency.

Extensive reading means reading self-chosen materials for enjoyment at an easy enough level for dictionaries to be unnecessary. Based on this pedagogy, in our reading classes we promote and encourage the reading of fiction books.

My current teaching practice is to have each of my students self-select any fiction book to read for the duration of the semester. Students read this novel and report only about the general meaning of the content and write reflectively about their experiences with reading. From reading about and listening to my students' reflections, I have concluded that one of the most difficult aspects for students is choosing the book. They have difficulty choosing a book at the appropriate level and one that is interesting to them. For over half of my students, completing this part of the course means reading their first whole book in English, and it is disheartening and counterproductive for them not to enjoy the experience because they made a bad choice of reading material.

I would like to develop a tool so that I can direct them with this first step – choosing a book that they can and will enjoy reading. I would like to compile a prototype of an annotated bibliography of books from which students can choose an appropriate book for their reading pleasure. This bibliography will include a short three-to-five- sentence overview of the content of the book, along with the title and author of the book. This annotated list will also include a suggested reading level of Level 1, 2, or 3, with 3 being the most difficult.

I intend for my annotated bibliography to be organized thematically. One classroom approach is to have our students join in "Literature Circles," through which a group of students, all of whom have read the same book, have directed discussions about what they are reading. If all the books are chosen from the same theme, the discussions will incorporate this theme for the semester.

The purpose of this project is to develop a system for this annotated bibliography to which I and other instructors can add reading recommendations for our students in subsequent semesters. This annotated bibliography can be published on our department web site so that all of our students can access it. (<http://elearn.mtsac.edu/amla>) Hopefully, the thematic approach can be duplicated by choosing a theme a semester and having the AmLa teachers read and suggest books to be added to the list. Therefore, after several semesters, our department will have an annotated bibliography organized around several themes. This thematic annotated bibliography can be used by instructors and students for the selection of appropriate reading material.

A. Activities

First of all, I will develop a system to rate the readability of a novel that will correspond with the average reading proficiency of our students. Next, I will compile a list of reading material starting with one theme, the genre of immigrant literature. I have chosen this theme because I feel my students will be motivated to read stories of courageous or ordinary people who have struggled to start a new life in another place. Having students read novels written by authors from their own countries will instill a sense of pride in their own culture at the same time that reading and listening to stories from other cultures will promote the embracing of the diversity that naturally exists in my classes. To explore this theme, I will first research the theme of recent immigrant literature. I will compile an annotated bibliography of 20 books. As I read the books for the list, I will make study notes and develop a general set of questions for possible use as discussion starters in book discussion groups.

C. Anticipated Value and Benefit

As an instructor, I will use this valuable resource in my reading classes. The students will benefit by being able to access a list of books from which to make appropriate choices. I will be able to use my study notes to facilitate discussions. The AmLa department will benefit from sharing

this list and using it and the readability rating as a prototype for additional thematic annotated bibliographies. As we compile further thematic lists, we will renew our interests in literature, and then share this interest with our students.

Personally, I value and anticipate this year of sabbatical because I will be able to read as much as I want without feeling guilty! My appreciation of the richness of the varied backgrounds of my students will be enhanced, and I will come back with a refreshed spirit, ready to begin anew.

Proposed Timeline for Sabbatical Project

DATE	ACTIVITY		
	Assessment Test	Annotated Bibliography	
		Activity	Possible Texts
2005-2006			
August -September	Review current literature on second language reading assessment	Research the theme of immigrant literature	<i>New Immigrant Literatures in the United States: A Sourcebook to Our Multicultural Literary Heritage</i>
October	Research benchmark colleges about assessment measures used	Develop readability rating method	
August - October	Analyze data from current DRP results for non-native students		
November -February	Evaluate at least 4 possible standardized placement instruments Consult with AmLa, ESL and READ faculty members	Read and complete annotation and discussion starters for 10 books	<i>At the Drop of a Veil</i> by Marianne Alireza, <i>Farewell to Manzanar</i> by Jeanne Wakatusuke Houston, <i>House of Sand and Fog</i> by Andre Dubus, <i>the House on Mango Street</i> by Sandra Cisneros
March - April	Conduct pilot testing with random students Evaluate data	Read and complete annotation and discussion starters for 10 books	<i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i> by Julia Alvarez, <i>Jasmine</i> by Bharati Mukherjee, <i>Native Speaker</i> by Chang-Rae Lee, <i>Typical American</i> by Gish Jen
May	Recommend placement test to the College Complete sabbatical report	Complete sabbatical report	

Sabbatical Report

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings and conclusions of my sabbatical work. As my proposal states, the year's project is divided into two parts: 1) Selection of a reading placement instrument for non-native students, and 2) Thematic Annotated Bibliography.

Currently, the College does not have an appropriate instrument for placing non-native students into reading classes. The Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) has been in use since 2002 serving the needs of the majority of the students, but this test has not been standardized for use with students whose first language is not English. In my research I reviewed the current literature of second language reading assessment practices, collected and analyzed available data about the appropriateness of using the DRP for non-native students, and analyzed and evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of various reading assessment measures. Using this information and research, I reached conclusions and recommended the implementation of a placement instrument for reading instruction for non-native students.

The second part of my sabbatical project related to reading instruction in my classes. Participating in extended reading - abundant exposure to printed materials at or just below a comfortable level of comprehension - is essential for the development of reading proficiency; therefore, it is a required objective in each of our reading courses. I used my time this year reading and compiling a list of books related to the theme of current immigrant literature. The purpose of this final report is to summarize the literature about the pedagogy of extended reading, present my methods for determining the readability of books, discuss common themes found in the immigrant literature, provide the annotated list of books, and provide a template for a semester lesson plan using the annotated list of books.

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Introduction and Historical Background

Beginning in 1980, a group of English professors at Mt. San Antonio recognized the necessity of developing English courses for students whose first language is not English. The program consisted of a core of courses in reading, writing, and speaking/listening. The American Language Department became its own department in 1990, with the faculty members responsible for curriculum and placement issues. One test was adopted for placement, the Michigan Test of English Language, which was a multiple choice test incorporating grammar, vocabulary and comprehension questions designed for non-native speakers of English. This test placed students into one of two levels, Intermediate or Advanced, with a requirement of concurrent enrollment in a speech class, a reading class, and a writing class. Thus, students primarily took credit ESL classes for one or two semesters prior to enrolling in English 67.

In 1991, the faculty recognized the need to implement some sort of assessment process to determine the speaking/listening proficiency of the population of students. Unlike the predominant immigrant population of the previous decade, more and more students were coming to college having more advanced speaking/listening skills than reading and writing skills because of having been in the US for a longer period of time. Conversely, some recent F1 Visa arrivals were evidencing stronger reading and writing skills than speaking/listening skills because of the type of instruction they had received in their native countries. The faculty members researched, developed and trained for the process of adding an Oral Interview to the Assessment process to provide a more suitable placement into the speaking/listening classes.

At approximately the same time, the Assessment department was informed that the Michigan Test would no longer be a chancellor-approved measure for placement; therefore, the AmLa faculty worked with the LERN and English departments under the auspices of a federally funded Title III grant to develop the AWE, Assessment of Written English, a writing placement

instrument for all levels of English at Mt. SAC. Students were placed into reading and writing classes based on the AWE and into a speaking/listening class based on a combination of the AWE test result along with an Oral Interview.

The College based this practice on the assumption that there is a high correlation between reading and writing skills in a second language acquisition process. The College has recently determined that it is not in the best interest of our students to continue this practice. The students now take the AWE, receive a placement into a writing course, and, if that placement is an AMLA writing class, are also advised but not required to concurrently enroll in an AmLa reading class at the same level. The Oral Interview process was discontinued in April of 2005 because the AmLa speaking/listening courses are no longer required.

Also, in 2005 the College implemented a Reading Competency requirement, which means that all students desiring to obtain either an Associate in Arts or Science Degree at Mt. SAC must demonstrate competency in reading by successfully completing READ 90, READ 100, or AMLA 33R. Students may also demonstrate competency by obtaining a determined score on the Reading placement exam or a Reading Competency Test.

The Reading placement exam currently used is the DRP, the Degrees of Reading Power. The results of this test give students advice on placement into one of four reading classes: READ 70, READ 80, READ 90 or READ 100. The College has not done significant research to support the idea that the DRP is an appropriate measure for second language students. Therefore, one part of my sabbatical project is to conduct this research. At the same time, it is necessary to review other assessment measures for second language reading in order to select the most appropriate measure. My sabbatical project consists of the following steps outlined in this report:

1. Review of literature of the nature of reading and assessment for second language learners at the college level
2. Review of current reading assessment measures approved by the Chancellor's office
3. Judging the appropriateness of using the DRP for this population of students.
4. Rationale for selection of appropriate assessment measure
5. Pilot testing and data analysis of the COMPASS/ESL Reading Test
6. Future steps

Review of the Literature

Review of the literature shows strong evidence that assessment measures that are designed and validated for English speakers are inappropriate assessment measures for second language learners. It is strongly recommended that programs use more than one assessment instrument to determine the reading needs of their differing populations. This recommendation stems from the recognition that there are differences between L1 and L2 reading.

One of the differences between L1 and L2 readers is categorized as a linguistic and processing difference. This difference is often discussed in terms of the Language Threshold Hypothesis, which argues that students must have a sufficient amount of L2 knowledge to make effective use of skills and strategies that are part of their L1 reading comprehension abilities. Many second language students have learned their language in classroom settings; therefore, they have developed strategies needed for successful reading and can use these strategies when reading in an L2. However, if the L2 readers have insufficient knowledge of the vocabulary, grammar and discourse in the required reading passages, or if they have not reached a "linguistic threshold," then they do not have sufficient cognitive resources to use strategies and practices that they can transfer from their L1 background (Grabe, 40-62). Obviously, an appropriate assessment measure would assess the students' proficiency in language knowledge as well as their ability to process and strategize.

A second area of difference between L1 and L2 reading is the area of individual experiences with reading and literacy tasks. Reading instruction and reading assessment must take into account the reality that students come to the task with varying levels of proficiency and experience in the act of reading in their L1. Some of our ESL students come with degrees from universities, and others come as products of at times confusing and interrupted secondary education in the United States. Other second language readers come lacking literacy skills in any language. There will be a big difference between second-language readers who have highly developed reading and problem-solving skills already through their first language, and second-language readers who, for whatever reason, have had little or no formal education. An individual's lack of experience with basic literacy tasks may then be compounded by lack of linguistic ability. An appropriate assessment measure must consider how much contextual support is provided in particular language tasks or activities (Alderson, 24). The passages in the test must be chosen, examined and validated specifically for second language readers to take into account the possible lack of experience with reading topics and context.

Alderson cites Cummin's theory of language acquisition to discuss the idea of bringing L1 reading skills and strategies to the act of reading in the L2. Linguistic proficiency has two basic components: basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP), or in other words, conversational vs. academic language proficiency. Proficient bilingual readers draw on their base of L1 reading strategies and background knowledge when asked to read in the L2. There may be a big difference between second language readers who have highly developed reading skills in L1 and those second language readers who may not have this formal education. The implication for the assessment of second-language reading and the interpretation of results is that poor second-language reading performance is likely to be due to insufficient language knowledge (Alderson, 24).

It is clear that a test that is developed for native speakers of English will not likely take into account these theories of differences between L1 and L2 readers. It seems evident that only a test that measures both the linguistic proficiency and reading strategy skills is a more appropriate assessment measure.

Second language students are not typically included in the norming population for standardized tests. In 2004, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges issued a paper addressing the problems with current assessment and placement practices with regards to basic skills. It cautions that the practice of having non-native speakers take an inappropriate assessment test for language may be a frustrating waste of time. Assessment tests designed for native speakers cannot provide the fine distinctions needed at the lower levels. As a result, non-native speakers end up inappropriately placed in the lowest basic skills course offered (Issues in Basic Skills Assessment and Placement In the California Community Colleges, 2004).

The Matriculation Guidelines for the California Community Colleges are quite clear on the appropriateness of an assessment measure that has been developed for the designated population. "The regulations provide guidance in that special practices are prohibited. In Implementing matriculation services, community college districts shall not do any of the following: ... (b) use any assessment instrument in a manner or for a purpose other than that for which it was developed or has been otherwise validated (Section 55521[a])" (Standards, Policies and Procedures for the Evaluation of Assessment Instruments Used in the California Community Colleges, March 2001). These guidelines clearly dictate that a test that has not been specifically developed for and validated by populations of non-English speakers should not be considered an appropriate measure of proficiency.

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office report *California Pathways* recommends that effective practices for assessment and placement of non-native speakers of English include these characteristics:

- Direct language assessment measures (e.g., a writing sample or oral interview), with raters trained to assess the language proficiency of L2 learners.
- Indirect language assessment measures (e.g., reading or grammar tests) that have been designed for and validated on L2 learners.
- Background information pertaining to education and language exposure (e.g., age of arrival in the U.s., years of schooling, and home language use).
- Instruments that not only place students in needed ESL or SDAIE courses, but are also capable of placing L2 learners whose skills show they no longer require ESL instruction in appropriate English courses designed for native speakers. (California Pathways, 2000)

In summary, research has shown that there are obvious differences between reading in the L1 and L2, and only an assessment measure that takes these differences into account would be an appropriate measure. The Matriculation Guidelines from the Chancellor's Office for California Community Colleges, the State Academic Senate position paper for assessment practices in adult basic skills, and a CATESOL position paper on effective assessment practices all strongly advocate using an assessment measure that is developed for second language learners.

Review of Approved Placement Instruments for Second Language Reading

Given overwhelming data that support the need for implementing a placement instrument that is validated for a second language population, the next step of the process is to investigate the tests that are on the Chancellor's list of approved placement instruments. Citing the latest list

available from September 29, 2005 limited options exist: (a) ACT COMPASS ESL Listening, Reading, and Grammar Usage; (b) Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA); (c) ACCUPLACER – ESL Reading Skills; or (d) locally developed and locally managed assessment instruments. This section will discuss the limitations of choices (b), (c), and (d). The advantages and support for having chosen the ACT COMPASS test will be addressed in a later section.

A. Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA)

The CELSA, developed by ACTT (Association of Classroom Teacher Testers), is a Chancellor's Office approved for placement of students into low beginning to advanced plus levels. It is also approved by the U.S. Department of Education for Federal Financial Aid, "Ability to Benefit." It consists of a 45-minute timed test in the cloze format. It is available in two forms in either a paper-pencil format or a computerized format. The only difference in the computerized version is the delivery; the test is exactly the same as the paper-pencil version. The test, Form 2, consists of three passages entitled, *Ann's Present*, *A Visit to the Doctor*, and *Learning a New Language*. The first passage describes Ann's family, her job, shopping for a present, and mailing the package. The second passage consists of a dialog between a patient and a doctor with suggestions for life-style changes. The third passage is expository dealing with the topic of the reasons for learning a new language. Throughout the passages, approximately every 7th word is eliminated with four multiple-choice options to choose the best word to complete the sentence. All of the passages have one to five intact sentences that do not have missing words to introduce and conclude that passage and give it contextual support (Summary Information for CELSA 1 and CELSA 2).

In my opinion, this test is not the best assessment instrument for our population for several reasons. The first reason concerns validity, which means that the "test measures the skills, strategies, abilities, and content knowledge that the college or program deems is important for a

given population's academic success" (Flippo and Caverly, 418). The wording, format, length, readability and content must all be considered for appropriateness. Because the content of the passages deals primarily with life skills and conversations about daily life events, I consider this a less than adequate measure for our students because it does not contain passages dealing with academic content. While we do need a test that measures from the low beginning to the advanced levels, the AMLA course curricula, content and outcomes for students are all based on skills necessary for further academic studies. Passages that relate to academic topics should be included on a placement instrument for the credit ESL population at Mt. SAC.

Another concern about the content is that some of the specific questions with the corresponding multiple-choice answers actually seem to test grammatical understanding rather than reading skills. For example, one of the test items is "These people (58. a. don't, b. are, c. should, d. who) concentrate on grammar, vocabulary and reading....." becomes an item which tests understanding of verbs rather than reading comprehension. Another example has as the four choices "for, by, a, in" for the answer. This seems to be another example of discreet testing of a grammatical aspect of language - the appropriate preposition or article - rather than reading comprehension. The title of the test, *Combined English Language Skills in a Reading Context*, implies that the test may be testing more than just reading skills. This may be very appropriate for other colleges that want to measure multiple skills and get an overall proficiency score, but Mt. SAC already has a validated and approved writing test for our population. We are interested in a test that measures only reading skills.

Another issue is one of the time constraints. The anxiety of finishing within a 45-minute period may affect the result of the test. In a review of the literature, several studies report that the time constraints imposed by many reading tests result in scores that may not reflect true reading

ability (Flippo and Schumm, 422). For these reasons, I chose not to consider the CELSA as an appropriate placement instrument for our population.

B. ACCUPLACER Levels of English Proficiency (College Board)

The Levels of English Proficiency (LOEP) assessment is a computerized-adaptive battery intended for use in placing students of low English proficiency in the appropriate language courses. It was developed primarily as a response to an expressed need for assessment of the skills of English as a Second Language student who would not perform well on the ACCUPLACER Sentence Skills and Reading Comprehension tests. LEOP consists of three components: Sentence Meaning, Language Use, and Reading Skills. Each component requires students to answer 20 items. The test manual suggests that students would be directed to the LOEP based on a score on the ACCUPLACER Reading Comprehension test or on the answer to a background question indicating that English is a second language.

The LOEP Reading Skills test assesses students' comprehension of short passages. It contains brief passages of 50 words or less and moderate length passages of 50 to 50 words. The reading passages are drawn from academic content areas such as arts/humanities, history/political science, practical situations/narrative, psychology/Human relations, and science. Half of the subtest contains straightforward comprehension items that assess the skills of paraphrasing, locating information, vocabulary and pronoun reference. The other half assesses inference skills such as main idea, fact vs. opinion, cause/effect logic, identifying irrelevant information, author's point of view, and applying the author's logic to another situation (ACCUPLACER On-Line Technical Manual, 2003).

The LOEP Reading skills test offers some obvious advantages. One of these is that it is a computer adaptive test, which allows for quick and accurate testing. The test technology selects specific test questions that are best suited for each particular test taker. This allows for accurate

diagnosis of students' knowledge and skills using fewer items than are typically required in traditional paper-and-pencil tests. The average time that it takes to complete the reading test is 30 minutes. When an accurate score is achieved in less time, students don't feel the anxiety or frustration of having to answer multiple questions that are obviously too difficult. The computerization also allows for instantaneous score reporting. The score print-out is immediately available to the student and is exportable to the college information systems. Because the test is adaptive, the sequence of test questions and the questions themselves will vary from student to student. The sequence is determined by whether the previous question/s were answered correctly or incorrectly. This variability improves test security because it eliminates problems of students exchanging information about answers either before or during the test (ACCUPLACER Coordinator's Guide, 2004).

The content of the LOEP Reading Skills is appropriate for academic credit ESL assessment because the passages are drawn from content areas of study in college. The types of questions in the test, both inferential and referential, are also very appropriate for content validity because they correlate very well with the AmLa curriculum and objectives. However, I have a concern about the length of the passages. As reported, the passages are brief, single-paragraph passages that vary from 25 to 100 words in length, even at the highest level. I feel that these brief passages are not reflective of college reading demands. Research shows that testing students' ability to handle college-level text requires the use of longer passages taken directly from college textbooks (Flippo and Schumm, 410). While all of the materials for any commercial reading test, especially a test designed for an ESL population, are likely to be adapted for language, syntax and test format, I compare the length of passages in LOEP to the COMPASS reading test sample test passage for Level 4, the highest level. It has four paragraphs and contains approximately 400 words. I believe that this length more appropriately reflects the demands of college level reading.

Another concern relates to how the test battery fits into our current system of tests for ESL students at Mt. SAC. As stated, the LOEP consists of four subtests, reading skills, sentence meaning, language use, and listening. The non-native students all take the Assessment of Written English (AWE) for accurate placement into a writing class. This test requires that the students write in response to a given prompt, and the results are validated for placement in any one of the writing classes in the Mt. SAC English spectrum from non-credit ESL to English 1A. Therefore, the need to take a multiple-choice test for language use is eliminated. However, LOEP divides the sentence meaning and reading skills into two different tests. The LEOP Sentence Meaning test measures how well students understand the meaning of sentences in English. It assesses the understanding of word meaning in one- or two-sentence contexts. The four types of areas measures are (a) particle, phrasal verbs, prepositions of direction; (b) adverbs, adjectives, connectives sequence, (c) basic nouns and verbs; and (d) basic and important idioms ((ACCUPLACER Online Technical Manual, 2003). In other words, it is basically a vocabulary test in the context of sentence meaning. Again, I compare this to the COMPASS battery. It too has both a grammar/usage and a listening component, but the reading is not divided. The assessment of contextual understanding of vocabulary, connectors, and essential idioms is included in the reading subtest. Therefore, I feel that one subtest with the COMPASS battery presents an equal evaluation to what would require a combination of two subtests in the ACCUPLACER battery.

C. Locally Developed Assessment Measure

Some community colleges have locally developed assessment measures. In other words, they developed their own test much like we did with the AWE and the non-credit ESL department did with their computer adaptive reading/listening test used for placement. Therefore, I spent some time looking at and talking to the non-credit ESL department about their assessment instrument. It is an excellent test, but the level is not appropriate for our students. Also, the test development

took approximately five years to complete. We could feasibly build on their test, using the technology that they have already in place, but the validation of new test items would still be very time-consuming. The development of the AWE took place over many semesters and was supported financially by Title III grant money. In favor of expediency, I believe that we can choose a commercially prepared test. If we later determine that our choice is not an ideal match, then we can discuss the option of taking the time to develop our own test.

Appropriateness of the Degrees of Reading Power

The reading placement instrument currently used at Mt. SAC is the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP). Knowing that one of factors of the success of the AWE is that it is the same test for all students, it seems obvious that if one test could be used to place all students in a reading class at Mt. SAC, the issue of who takes which test would be alleviated. Therefore, one of the steps that I outlined in my sabbatical proposal was that I would carefully look at the DRP as an appropriate instrument for our credit ESL students. Some research has suggested that of many reading tests designed for native English speakers, the DRP might be one of the more appropriate measures for second language students because it is an untimed test and because it is in the cloze format (Flippo and Schumm, 437). The DRP test manual directly states that the norming population did not include second language students; however, it states that students for whom English is a second language often do much better on DRP tests than they do on other kinds of reading tests because they are not penalized for time limits. Also, the content information necessary to answer the questions is provided in each paragraph and passage, so choosing the right answer on these tests does not depend on having any particular extra-linguistic background experiences in English-speaking cultures. The test manual guidelines do further suggest that if the test were to be used for non-native English students, a lower level might be more appropriate (Degrees of Reading Power Handbook, 18).

Due to these positive characteristics of the test, my next step was to conduct local research investigating the possible use of the DRP for second language students at Mt. SAC. With the help of Barbara McNeice-Stallard, Director of Research and Institutional Effectiveness, a study was done to compare DRP scores of our students who had taken previously taken the DRP as part of their assessment process with success in classes. Semester grades from AmLa students from past semester reading classes were compared with their DRP scores. After completing the study in the fall semester, Barbara stated that the results could not support using this test because while results indicated a statistically significant difference in the reading test scores between those who passed the AmLA course versus those who did not pass the course, the results also indicated that there no significant difference in reading scores between the classes. In other words, the results did not discriminate between levels; therefore, cut off scores would be difficult to determine.

Additionally, to get a clear picture of how a selected semester of reading class enrollees would perform on the DRP, I administered this test to all the reading classes during the second week of the spring semester. (Appendix A – Schedule of Testing for the DRP) The results clearly show that we would have to use different cut scores than what are currently used for reading classes in the READ department. Also, as with the previous research project, the test does not seem to adequately discriminate between levels. There seemed to be an equal distribution of scores over all three classes. At the lower level, AmLa 31, more students scored at a higher level than those in the next level of class, AmLa 32. For example, if the cutoff scores from the DRP were used to place students into our lowest level, AmLa 31R, just as they are used to place into the lowest reading class, READ 70, based on the testing from the beginning of the semester, only 1 student out of 16 would be placed in our AmLa 31R class. 13 out of the 16 students scored in the READ 80 level. Conversely, 32% of the students in our AmLa 32R classes scored in the lowest level, the READ 70 level. (Appendix B, Distribution of DRP Scores)

As I personally administered the DRP in all the classes, I observed these student behaviors during the testing sessions. First of all, the time element is a negative factor. Most of the students took 60 to 90 minutes to complete the test, and some students chose not to finish because they told me that they couldn't do any more. Secondly, it was obvious that the test was an overwhelming experience, especially for those students in the lower level classes. I observed students continually looking at how much was left in the booklet; discouragement was evident. Assessments that discourage and overwhelm are not appropriate measures of ability.

To collect additional data to correlate with the DRP scores, the Assessment department and I administered a Placement Satisfaction Survey in all of these same reading classes in which the students had taken the DRP. Both the students and the instructors were asked to rate their perception of the appropriateness of the students' placements in the reading class. This spring semester, 92% of students who took an AmLa reading class for the first time at Mt. SAC felt they belonged at the level in which they were enrolled; the instructors indicated an 80% placement satisfaction with the same group of students. (Appendix C-1-C-4, Placement Satisfaction Survey)

The DRP test scores do not correlate with student and instructor placement satisfaction surveys from this semester, which indicate a general satisfaction with student placement in our reading classes. I attempted to correlate scores of students who had placed unusually low or unusually high on the DRP with placement satisfaction surveys. In other words, if a student had placed above or below the average of the class on the DRP, I wanted to find a pattern of student or instructor dissatisfaction with the placement. I could not find a pattern of correlation.

In summary, research conducted by the Barbara McNeice-Stallard to correlate success in classes with DRP scores did not support the use of the DRP for our population. Local pilot testing did not produce favorable correlations, and the test administrator noticed visible discouragement on the part of the students while they were taking the test. Combined with overwhelming research

that strongly advises against using a test for second language students that is not designed for or normed on this population, I cannot recommend using the DRP as an appropriate placement instrument for the second language population at Mt. SAC.

Rationale for Selection of the COMPASS ESL Reading Test

After a thorough study of other alternatives, it is obvious that the most appropriate measure for our purposes at Mt. SAC is the COMPASS ESL Reading Test. One of the first obvious advantages is that it is on the Chancellor's list of approved measures for placement measures. For this reason, the implementation process is shortened. The Matriculation Guidelines state, "When adopting instruments that have been developed by publishers external to the California community colleges and that have received any approval status, colleges have a limited yet comprehensive set of responsibilities as detailed in the *March 2001 Standards*

Document. These responsibilities include:

- Prepare evidence of content-related validity
- Review the criterion-related or consequential-related validity evidence provided by the test publisher
- Review the test bias evidence provided by the test publisher
- Review the evidence of reliability provided by the test publisher
- Establish (and, at a later time, validate) cut scores using either a judgmental or empirical approach
- Develop a system to monitor disproportionate impact." (Assessment Q&A – Questions and Answers on Assessment for use in the California Community Colleges, 12)

In other words, if an approved test is selected, no information need be submitted to the Chancellor's office for review. The tasks for the College are to address the Content Validity, the Cut-Score Validity, and Disproportionate Impact. If the results of these studies are supportive of the use of the test, then the information is filed and shared at the time of a site visit.

The test manual for the COMPASS ESL Placement Test provides the necessary data and information for the required review process of validity, test bias, and reliability. First of all, the

stated purpose of this test is “to help postsecondary institutions (community colleges, four-year institutions, and intensive English programs) accurately place students from a wide range of proficiency levels into appropriate English as a Second Language and/or English as a Non-Native Language classes and to identify students who may be ready for mainstream courses” (COMPASS/ESL Reference Manual, 24). The stated purpose matches the range of needs of our College population - from the very beginning levels of non-credit ESL to the upper levels of near native proficiency.

This test is specifically developed for second language readers based on theories of language acquisition. “ACT bases the ESL Placement Test on several philosophies of language learning drawn from models proposed by Canale and Swain, Krashen, Chomsky, Rea, Bachman, and others” (COMPASS/ESL Reference Manual, 24). The test measures meaning rather than form. The ESL test is also integrative rather than decontextualized, which means that within the constrictions of a multiple-choice item test, the test meaning is derived from overall understanding of context. The students taking the test are not penalized by lack of prior knowledge about the content of the reading passages. The test also measures some of the language competence by testing the ability to recognize grammatical sentences and put the sentences in order. The passages and questions also test the ability to recognize the linguistic signals used in communication and how they make connections between the context and their referents. Most of the ESL Reading Test measures textual or organizational competence but some items also measure pragmatic aspects of language learning. Sensitivity to register and the ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech are tested at the higher levels of the test. It is difficult for second-language learner to learn and understand metaphorical and idiomatic language, but because so much of natural speech is metaphorical, a student realistically should have some competence in it before enrolling in standard university-level classes (COMPASS/ESL Reference

Manual, 25). It is evident that the test was developed based on current second language theory taking into account the differences between L1 and L2 reading.

Once the test is approved for use by the College, the evidence for content validity of the test will be gathered at the local level in the fall 2006 semester among the department members in the American Language Department. The process suggested by Matriculation Guidelines will be used, which requires that the faculty members of the AmLa department complete an item analysis. After having administered the COMPASS test and looking at the sample test items and content of the passages, it is clear that a preliminary judgment that the test has content validity can be made and that the test is a good match for the AmLa reading courses. "The ESL Reading Test assesses students' abilities to recognize and manipulate standard American English in the two major categories of Referring (*reading explicitly stated material*) and Reasoning (*inferential reading*)" (COMPASS/ESL Reference Manual, 32). Referential reading skills include those of literal comprehension of *main ideas, significant details, and explicitly stated relationships*. Reasoning reading skills require that the reader be able to make inferences, infer the meaning of vocabulary from context, critically understand the text, paraphrase, and apply information to new situations. The COMPASS test has both referring and reasoning questions at all levels but emphasizes reasoning items at the higher levels. All of these skills and their hierarchy are clearly evident in the course outlines for the AmLa reading courses. Providing evidence that the test measures what is taught in the classes, or measuring content validity, will be an easy task.

One criticism of some of the other choices for ESL reading tests was that the passages were not of appropriate length or subject matter. The passages in the COMPASS ESL reading test range from several sentences to many paragraphs. Most of the materials are excerpts from authentic material. "Materials at the lower end of the context continuum are limited to areas of nearly universal knowledge, such as food, transportation, and work. These materials use basic

vocabulary and do not include idiomatic or metaphorical language. Reading passages at the higher levels of the context continuum, however, incorporate academic and unfamiliar contexts and include idiomatic and metaphorical language" (COMPASS/ESL Reference Manual, 33). Most materials are authentic though they may have been edited, especially at the lower levels. While materials are primarily reading passages ranging in length from several sentences to many paragraphs, items also may involve interpreting tables, charts, or graphs; following directions (e.g., using a map); and performing similar tasks. Some items include graphics or photographs, either to be read and comprehended or to serve as a context for the item or passage. The emphasis and content in these areas differ across levels of English proficiency, with more emphasis on referring at the lower levels and on reasoning at the higher levels. The content of the reading passages is a good match for the difficulty levels and required critical reading skills of the students in our program.

In addition to evaluating the content validity of an assessment measure, Matriculation Guidelines also require that appropriate cut-off scores be established at the local level. The COMPASS Reading Test assesses the reading levels of students from beginning levels to near-native like proficiency. In other words, the test will be able to assess students from basic ESL to students who possess sufficient skills in reading to students whose scores indicate they would no longer benefit from taking courses in second-language reading. With scores ranging from 1 – 99, the test places students starting from Pre-Level 1 to Proficiency Level 4. (Appendix F-3, Proficiency Descriptors for COMPASS/ESL Reading) The proficiency descriptors were linked with nationally recognized benchmarks of English language proficiency, which included:

- 1986 proficiency guidelines developed by members of the American Council on the Teaching of foreign Languages (ACTFL)

- Second Language Proficiency Descriptors considered by the California Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) to assist in ESL articulation
- 1993 benchmarks written for the college Standards and Accreditation Council for a pilot project to develop standards in ESL education throughout 17 colleges in Ontario, Canada
- Language Benchmarks intended for adult learners of English as a Second Language drafted in 1993 by the [Canadian} National Working Group on Language Benchmarks
- March 1996 draft version of TESOL's ESL Standards for Pre-K through 12 students.

Using these descriptors and scores from the pilot testing done in the Fall 2005 semester, initial cut-off scores will be established. Once the initial cut-off scores are established, students will be placed into appropriate courses. We will then need to conduct faculty and student placement satisfaction surveys and review course outcome data for several semesters in order to validate these cut-scores.

Matriculation Guidelines also require that the assessment measure be evaluated for consequential-related validity evidence. The data for this evidence will be collected once students have been placed using the COMPASS/ESL Reading Test. For several semesters, placement satisfaction surveys will be given to both the students and the faculty members. Success/failure rates after completion of courses will also be compared to collect evidence for consequential validity.

The *COMPASS ESL Reading Test Manual* provides data to evidence that the norming population was similar to the population of students in AmLa credit classes at Mt. SAC. The graphical data reported come from a validity study conducted by ACT from September 1999 through June 2001, and the data charts and statistics in this report are those supplied in the test manual. Approximately 50 schools from across the nation contributed a total of 22,597 datasets for this study. The descriptions indicate that demographics of the students in the dataset for the validity studies are quite similar to the demographics of the non-native population of students at Mt. SAC. The students reportedly listed 28 different languages as their primary language. Females outnumbered males in this study by a ratio of about 3 to 2. The largest age group was 20-29 with about 47% of the study participants.

Table 1
ESL Student Responses to the Standard
COMPASS/ESL Demographic Questions

Demographic Characteristic	Percentage
Gender	
Male	39
Female	61
Age	
Under 20	10
20-29	47
30-39	26
40-49	13
50 and over	4
Ethnic Background	
Black/African American	3
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0
White/Caucasian	11
Mexican American/Chicano	16
Asian/Pacific Islander	17
Puerto Rican/Cuban/Other Hispanic	29
Filipino	2
Other	18
Prefer Not to Respond	3

Participants in this study were also given the option to respond to another series of questions related to their previous exposure to the English language and their current level of education.

Table 2 summarizes the data and provides useful information about educationally relevant aspects of these ESL students' backgrounds.

Table 2
Previous Exposure to English and Educational Background
Of Students Participating in the Validity Study

Question	Frequency	Percentage
Have you studied English previously?		
No	488	11
Yes	3837	89
No response (22%)		
How many years?		
0-1 years	1146	30
1-2 years	699	18
2-3 years	462	12
3-4 years	317	8
More than 4 years	1212	32
No response (31%)		
Do you have a high school degree?		
No	682	16
Yes	3643	84
No Response (22%)		
Do you have a college degree from another country?		
No	3026	70
Yes	1299	30
No Response (22%)		
Do you usually speak English at home?		
No	3342	67
Yes	1666	33
No response (10%)		

In summary, the data study for the development and standardization of the COMPASS ESL tests clearly show similarities to the Amla student population in the areas of language background, gender, age, and previous exposure to English and educational background.

The COMPASS/ESL test manual provides sufficient data to substantiate the reliability of the ESL reading subtest at the Standard Length and Maximum lengths. Table 3 lists the minimum, maximum, and average number of items administered and the marginal reliability coefficient associated with each available test length option.

Table 3
Test Length Options and Reliabilities for the ESL Tests

	Test Length							
	Standard				Maximum			
	Min.	Max.	Avg.	Reliability	Min.	Max.	Avg.	Reliability
ESL Test								
Reading	8	19	12.7	0.86	10	24	18.4	0.91

These figures provide more than satisfactory evidence of the reliability of the test.

The *COMPASS/ESL Reading Test Manual* also provides evidence concerning test bias. All passages and items in the ESL Placement Test went through an internal review, which involved examination by ESL test specialists and editors who evaluated and modified items based on both soundness and fairness criteria. After the internal review, the items underwent two separate external reviews for both soundness (content) and fairness (sensitivity) by consultants commissioned by ACT. The Soundness Review ensures that each item met the following criteria:

- stimulus passages match the content criteria in the proficiency descriptor of the assigned skill level
- items measure the skill reflected in their item classification category
- items have one and only one correct answer, and the other answer choices are plausible but incorrect
- items are passage-dependent; that is prior knowledge or common sense should not allow examinees to answer items without reading or listening to the stimulus
- passages and items within one level are of comparable difficulty
- the continuum of difficulty of passages and items from the lowest to highest level is smooth

The items also went through a Sensitivity Review or Fairness Review to ensure that materials in the ESL Placement Test would not offend, favor, or disadvantage any examinees due to their racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, or linguistic backgrounds (*COMPASS/ESL Reference Manual*, 129).

ACT has provided data to prove that the data collection was done on a demographical similar population and that there is evidence that the *COMPASS/ESL Reading Test* meets the *Matriculation Standards* for validity, reliability and test bias.

Another advantage in selecting the *COMPASS/ESL Reading Test* is that it allows for the inclusion of a multi-measure placement message. "Up to six different variables can be included in the placement message for *COMPASS/ESL* examinees. *COMPASS/ESL* allows the addition of specific self-reported high school grades, overall self-reported high school grades, and scores from

other tests to be included as measures taken into account in placement decisions. For example, if an examinee scores near but below the cutoff score for placement in a particular course and also reports a high grade in a corresponding high school course and a high score in another relevant assessment measure, the multi-measure placement score feature allows these factors to be taken into account in the placement decision" (COMPASS/ESL Reference Manual, 86). Therefore, the test incorporates with the scoring process a means of using a multiple measure for placement advice, which is also required in the Matriculation Guidelines.

In addition, the test also has available an Educational Planning Form to use in learning more about the student's educational background, needs, plans, and goals. "The Educational Planning Form consists of a bank of preset demographic questions (including a group specifically designed for ESL students from which the institution can choose and an additional set of up to 40 locally constructed items (30 multiple choice items and 10 numerical entry items). The choice to use these noncognitive items is completely controlled by the college, allowing the college to gather information it determines useful for the delivery of comprehensive advising-and-retention support services" (COMPASS/ESL Reference Manual, 2).

As an added benefit to the College, the COMPASS/ESL test has been an approved test for Ability-to-Benefit (ATB) purposes. The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education placed this test on the list in 2002 and extended the approval of the COMPASS/ESL through April of 2007, with further extension likely (COMPASS/ESL Reference Manual, 16). When the College buys "units" from ACT, access to all the subtests is granted; the cost of the subtests are accrued by separate units. Therefore, second language students could take all the language/communication subtests in order to meet the requirements for Ability to Benefit. For stated reasons, this test is a more appropriate measure of communication proficiency for second language learners than an assessment measure for English speaking students.

To summarize, the testing company, ACT, provides many options that can be used along with the COMPASS/ESL Reading Test, a valid and reliable assessment measurement. We will have the ability to collect demographic information to be used in program planning and advising. The College can tailor the questions to fit the needs of the population and department. These questions that are answered during the testing session are recorded in a data file, and they can be accessed and manipulated to generate reports that we can use for program review and evaluation. The advantage of an automatic multiple measure will ensure the best possible placement, fulfill the Matriculation Guideline requirements and be less time consuming for test proctors and facilitators. ACT offers all of these options at no extra cost to the College.

A final compelling advantage of the COMPASS/ESL Reading Test is that it is a computer adaptive test, which means that the test is administered individually with each student using a computer. When taking a computer adaptive test, the examinee starts the test and the testing program automatically selects the next test passage based on the right or wrong answers. When a proficiency level has been determined, the test is stopped. There is no fixed set or number of items, and examinees can receive different sets of items, different numbers of items, and different orders of item presentation. The advantages of this type of testing are numerous. According to Alderson, computer adaptive tests "offer opportunities not only for more efficient testing of reading, but also for presenting tests that are tailored to readers' ability levels, and that do not frustrate test-takers by presenting them with items that are too difficult or too easy" (Alderson, 353). The time element is also a factor to consider. Pilot testing was done with both the DRP and the COMPASS/ESL Reading Test. Both tests are untimed, so the students were told that ample time would be given to take each of the tests. Most students took more than an hour to complete the DRP while the average time for the COMPASS test was 25 minutes. Test security is an additional benefit. Because the passages are chosen randomly, even if two students are in close proximity

while testing, it is not likely that both of them would have the same passage on the computer screen at the same time. Multiple forms of the test are not necessary, and it would almost impossible to compromise the security of the items because of the large pool of test items and the fact that the test can be accessed only through a password protected computer program. The scheduling of the testing sessions is simpler because students can enter and exit on an individual basis as long as there is a test proctor available. It is likely that blocks of times will be scheduled for the purpose of this test, and students will be told that they can come and take the test at any time during these blocks of time. Score reports are generated immediately after a student takes the test, so students are able to access their scores quickly. ACT provides software that can connect the testing program to the college data base systems, so that placement advice can be given. The data can be stored so that future reports based on demographic item responses, course placement messages, individual student reports, list reports, student retention reports, or mailing labels can be generated.

Some questions have arisen about the use of computers for those students who are not familiar with computers or who have computer anxiety. The COMPASS/ESL Reading Test begins with a very thorough set of directions that is accessible in an auditory and visual format. Because of the visual pictures and the auditory input, this orientation can be easily understood by students, even those with a very limited English proficiency. Examinees are given very clear and explicit directions about using a computer mouse, scrolling down the screen, using the mouse to make answer selections, and going from one passage and set of questions to the next passage. When the pilot test was given, the use of the computer was not an issue for any student, even for those who self-reported that they did not know how to use a computer. The benefits of having a quicker more precise measurement far outweigh any disadvantage of computer testing.

Pilot-Testing of COMPASS/ESL Reading Test

ACT Testing Services granted to Mt. SAC a 90-day pilot testing period. During this time we were allowed to administer the test to an unlimited number of students. The first step I took was to attend a workshop entitled "Delivering Assessment Course Placement Using the New COMPASS/ESL" on November 9, 2005 in Anaheim presented by Dr. John Roth, the Principal Consultant for ACT. I received valuable information about the types of tests, report generation, and set-up procedures. I was also able to network with personnel from other colleges who were already using the test.

The AmLa Department was generously allowed to use the ESL computer lab facilities in Building 66. The lab technician installed and downloaded the test on all of the computers in two labs. The initial computer set-up was completed by the ESL lab technician, and he reported that while it took some time to accomplish, it was not difficult. He was able to access help from the ACT computer staff.

With the permission of the AmLa faculty, I scheduled a testing period for all of the reading classes at the end of November. (Appendix D-1 and D-2 - Schedule of Testing.) With the generous help of the lab technician and staff, the COMPASS/ESL Reading test was administered to 126 students in 10 classes of AmLa 31, 32, and 33, the three levels of reading in the program. The students were tested during the 15th week of the fall 2005 semester, which means that they had benefited from almost an entire semester of reading instruction. It also should be noted that these students were placed into these classes through a variety of means. The AmLa program is in a state of curriculum change, so this fall semester was the first semester for the new levels of reading classes. Therefore, some students chose a reading class based on articulation advice from a reading teacher from the previous semester. Since all registration restrictions were taken off, some students self-selected the level of reading class. Some students were given advice to

take a reading class based on an AWE writing placement score. Overall, the levels of the students were not as consistent as if they had been placed based on advice produced by a consistent assessment instrument.

The students came to the computer lab at the scheduled time and were given a set of directions concerning how to log into the program and how to follow the computer directions. The students were also given assurances that the test scores would be made available to them immediately but that their grade would not be affected by the test in any way (Appendix E – ESL COMPASS Reading Test Directions to Students).

The actual testing procedure had some major glitches caused by the fact that the ACT servers were down on the first day of our testing. Some testing was interrupted, and some students were not able to get a score printout. It affected two classes, so the number of total students tested was reduced by approximately 20 students. After the first day, the testing procedure was very smooth and efficient. Relying on a network outside of the control of the College is a major disadvantage. ACT has given assurances that this occurs very infrequently and that these problems are being taken care of. For this reason, I recommend that the College purchase the option of having the test downloaded on individual computers as a back-up system in case the networks are experiencing difficulties.

Overall, the students reacted very favorably to the testing situation. As mentioned, no student experienced major difficulties with the use of the computer. Some students were surprised when they finished so quickly. One suggestion I would make would be that the test proctor stress to the examinees before beginning that all responses to a particular passage should be verified before going on to the next passage. Once the examinee goes to the next passage, he cannot go back to a previous passage at a later time. The test orientation and directions stress this, but some students did not seem to understand that part. A few students commented about this.

The following table represents the score distribution of the results of the pilot testing of the COMPASS/ESL Reading Test. The Levels and the corresponding ranges are provided by ACT in the Proficiency Descriptors for Reading.

Level	Score Range
Pre-Level 1	1-37
Level 1	38-64
Level 2	65-79
Level 3	80-91
Level 4	92-99

Table 6
Distribution of COMPASS/ESL Reading Pilot Testing Scores
Week 15 of Classes - Fall 2005

Class	No. of Students	Pre-Level 1		Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
AmLa 31	21	0	0%	6	29%	9	43%	6	29%	0	0%
AmLa 32	65	0	0%	11	17%	23	35%	28	43%	3	5%
AmLa 33	40	0	0%	1	40%	12	30%	20	50%	7	18%
Total of All students	126	0	0%	18	14%	44	35%	54	43%	10	8%

Again, because students were allowed to randomly choose classes, it is difficult to make clear judgments about the distribution of scores because of the varying levels of proficiency that each of the classes represented this semester. The results show that no students placed in the Pre-Level 1 category, which would be expected as it indicates a very low level of proficiency. Also, only 8% of all students tested placed in the Level 4 range, which would also be expected because this level of proficiency indicates a native-like proficiency of English with no second language instruction necessary.

Because I knew that the levels of proficiency distributed across the classes was somewhat uneven this semester, I decided to conduct an Instructor survey to judge the individual instructor's agreement with the individual student scores. I believe that given the information about the Level placement based on the Proficiency Descriptors, the instructors who had worked with the students

for 15 semesters could accurately judge whether or not the test score result was an accurate range of an individual's proficiency levels. I created a set of instructions and a survey to fill out, which was completed by all the instructors before the end of the fall semester. (Appendix F-1, F-2, F-3, and F-4) The Instructors were given a copy of the Proficiency Descriptors along with an individual score report for each student in their classes. They were instructed to mark "Agree or Disagree" with the score. If they marked "Disagree," they were asked to rate the intensity of their disagreement. They were also asked to include comments they thought would be helpful. The following table represents the Instructor Survey Results.

Table 7
COMPASS/ESL Reading Test
Fall 2006
Instructor Survey Results

	Agreed with Score	Did Not Agree with Score	Score Should Be <u>MUCH Higher</u>	Score Should Be <u>SOMEWHAT Higher</u>	Score Should Be <u>SOMEWHAT Lower</u>	Score Should Be <u>MUCH Lower</u>
AMLA 31	57%	43%	33%	56%	11%	0%
AMLA 32	62%	38%	8%	68%	20%	4%
AMLA 33	75%	25%	13%	25%	38%	25%
All Students	64%	36%	18%	50%	23%	10%

Overall, 64% of the instructors completely agreed with the student scores. Of the 36% who disagreed with the scores, 73% of them thought the score would have been only "somewhat higher" or "somewhat lower." This indicates that overall, with slight adjustments to cut-off scores, the instructors were in agreement with the test results of the students compared to their perceived proficiency levels based on working with the students for almost an entire semester. Based on these preliminary scores and instructor surveys, I believe the COMPASS/ESL Reading Test is a fairly accurate measure of the reading proficiencies of the students in the AmLa Reading classes at Mt. SAC.

It was my intention to compare test results to final semester grades to get some outcome data comparing scores of those who had passed to those who had not passed their reading class. However, after consulting with Barbara McNeice-Stallard in the Research Department, I found that the data could not be compiled because there wasn't a sufficient amount of students who had not passed the classes to do a feasible study. This was due mainly to the timing of the pilot testing. Because it was done nearly at the end of the semester after the last drop date, the majority of those students still remaining in the class and available for the pilot testing were those students who would most likely pass the class.

Despite not being able to collect data that can be definitively used to set cut-scores or make predictions about outcome results, the pilot testing procedure was beneficial. I learned that the test setup can be completed on a network system; I discovered that the examinees can successfully go through the test with minimal outside direction, and I learned that the overall perception of those taking the test was favorable. Given this and the other advantages mentioned, I strongly recommend adoption of the COMPASS/ESL Reading Test as a placement instrument for second language students into appropriate second language reading classes.

Future Steps for Implementation

The first step in the implementation process is to seek approval from the College to adopt the COMPASS/ESL Reading Test as an assessment measure for second language learners. First, I presented a summary report and my recommendation to my colleagues in the American Language Department, which was unanimously accepted. In April of 2006, I presented a summary report of my findings and recommendations to the Matriculation and Assessment Committee, where the recommendation was unanimously approved. (Appendix G) I also presented the same information to the Student Preparation and Success Committee in May of 2006. In June, I worked with Jim Ocampo and the Assessment staff to write a budget request to Dr. Audrey Yamagta-Noji

for the purchase of a site license and initial order of test units. (See Appendix H) This was also approved, so the College should be ready to start the installation and pilot testing in the fall semester of 2006.

In the fall semester, one of the first steps for implementation will be to finish collecting all the necessary data for the Matriculation requirements. To assist me with this step, I attended a Matriculation Workshop on April 4, 2006, given by the Chancellor's Office for California Community Colleges entitled "California Community College Assessment Technical Workshops on Implementing Standards for Placement Tests." I received valuable information and handouts about the guidelines and procedures needed for the approval process required by the Chancellor's Office. Using the data from pilot testing, the suggested proficiency descriptors, and guidelines from the test manual, we will establish initial cut-off scores for placement advice into the three levels of AmLa reading classes. This data will be the initial data necessary to establish Cut-Score Validity. I will also collaborate with the non-credit ESL department, the READ faculty, and the Assessment Director to determine the appropriate placement advice and procedures for those students who score either too low or too high for the AmLa reading classes.

Because the College will have two different reading tests, students will need to make a decision about which test is the more appropriate for them. According to Matriculation Guidelines, the district cannot subject any person to unlawful discrimination. Therefore, the students must be allowed to choose which test they take, the DRP or the COMPASS ESL Reading Test. "A college or district - using established and defined criteria that have been carefully scrutinized by college faculty, staff, and administrators - may advise students regarding the appropriateness of the English and ESL assessments, but students must be free to choose which assessment they wish to take" (Assessment Q & A, 14). It will be the responsibility of the Assessment department and staff to formulate standard information to be given to all students upon initial inquiry. Information

about the tests and their differences can also be provided on the Assessment web pages for students to access. If students are placed into a second-language writing class based on direct performances on the AWE test, they will also be advised to take the COMPASS ESL Reading test rather than the DRP because it is the more appropriate assessment of their reading proficiency. These scores, along with information accessed from other multiple measures such as student's primary language, length of time living in the United States, and frequency of use of English is speaking, reading/writing outside the classroom, will enable counselors, faculty, and assessment directors to advise students to make the best decision about course selection.

Following Matriculation guidelines, just as a student should not be placed into the ESL curriculum on the basis of an English Language Test, a student should not be placed into the English curriculum on the basis of an ESL Language Test. In other words, the COMPASS ESL Reading Test cannot be used to place students into READ classes at Mt. SAC. The results of this test cannot be used to place students into the transferable reading class at Mt. SAC, READ 100. The AmLa and READ department faculty, along with the Assessment Director, will need to collaborate to establish assessment advice for those students who place out of AmLa reading classes based on the COMPASS ESL Reading Test.

The faculty of the AmLa department will collaborate to develop a set of questions to be included for the demographic report capabilities. We will also work with the Assessment Director to establish the multiple measure options that are included with the test scoring. The department faculty will also need to complete the forms and compile the data necessary for Content Validity.

The Assessment Department and IET will need to be directly involved with the set up of the computer facilities and the software downloads. We will also need to collaborate with IET about the matriculation message that students will receive in their assessment print-out information.

Students will need to be informed about the new assessment option. The procedure for informing students about the reading test options will need to be established for training of the Assessment personnel who deal directly with student questions over the telephone and at the front desk. We will also update the Assessment Web page to include information about this test.

The Counseling staff at the College plays an important role in helping students make the best decisions about which classes are the most appropriate. Therefore, my colleagues and I need to develop a dialog and perhaps an informational workshop about the needs of second language learners in the College setting. This is an opportunity to dialog with the counseling and advising departments at the college, both credit and non-credit, about the needs and an understanding of second language acquisition issues such as the process and time required for acquisition and a learner's total language skill proficiency. According to the report "California Pathways: The Second Language Student in Public High Schools, colleges, and Universities," students may be inappropriately advised based on insufficient information. "Incorrect identification of ESL students may occur when advisors and others misjudge an L2 speaker's identify or abilities based upon the proficiency in a single skill, such as fluency in spoken English, which may mask the absence of other, equally important skills such as reading or writing in English (California Pathways, 38). Many students come to the College having been in the United States for a number of years, possessing a high school diploma. Students are reluctant to self-identify as needing any further help in acquiring a second language. They may be quite proficient in speaking, and seem to be capable of handling developmental classes for English speaking students. However, they may lack the necessary academic writing and reading skills necessary for success in rigorous college courses. If the Counselor's are fully aware of the options for and needs of second language learners, the assessment measures will give them the complete information necessary to help advise our English language learners. The Counselors will have access to direct assessment from

an AWE writing test, an indirect assessment measure of reading proficiency from the COMPASS ESL Reading Test, grades and reports from previous educational experiences, multiple measure information and a demographic report about the student's language speaking experiences. Early identification and advisement into the appropriate types of courses will prevent students from enrolling in courses that do not meet their needs and therefore discouragingly waste their time.

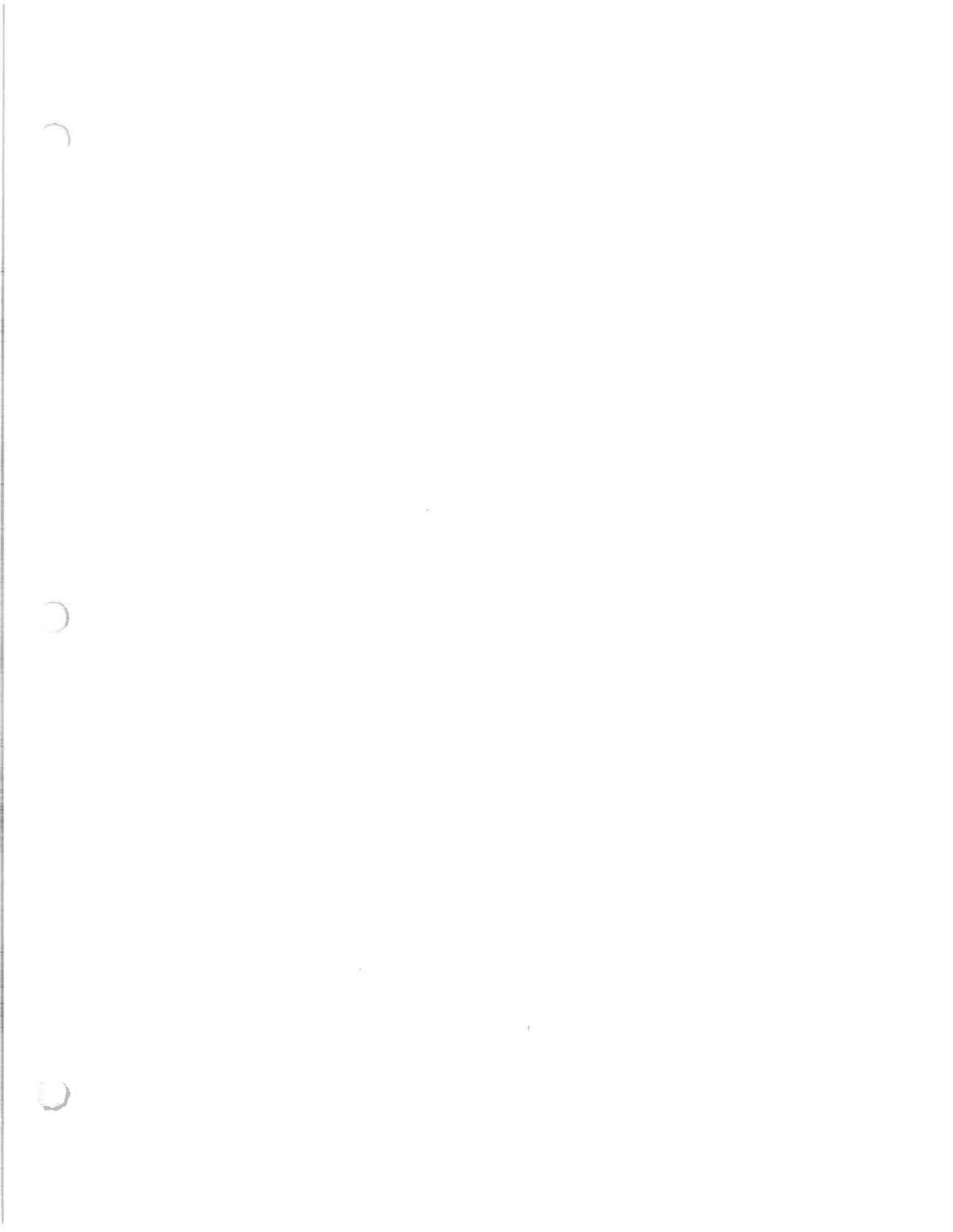
Hopefully, these preliminary implementation steps will be completed or well in progress by the middle of the fall semester so that we can start to advise placement into AmLa reading classes for the Spring 2007 semester. Once students are enrolled in classes through the placement advise of the test scores, we will need to collect several semesters of data about student and faculty satisfaction with this placement. These same surveys will be used to collect data for the *Disproportionate Impact studies required for Matriculation Guidelines*.

Conclusion

Although the process is not yet completed, the research and work thus far have been informative and productive. A review of the literature and local research and pilot testing do not support the use of the DRP or any other test that it is not normed for the second language student population. A thorough investigation of the all the ESL reading tests that are approved by the Chancellor's Office led to the conclusion that the COMPASS/ESL Reading Test is the most appropriate test for our population because it is computer adaptive, it is appropriate in length and content, and it most closely matches the content of the curriculum of the AmLa reading courses. I believe that the COMPASS/ESL Reading Test will be a good measure of reading proficiency for our second language student population at Mt. San Antonio College.

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Immigrant Voices

One component of second language reading curriculum is the concept of **extended or extensive reading**, or abundant exposure to printed materials at or just below a comfortable level of comprehension. It differs from intensive reading, which is deliberate in-class study reading through which reading strategies and components are directly taught and reviewed. Second language learners especially need both types of reading in order to build fluency and proficiency. Successful intensive reading instruction builds students' reading competence and confidence, which lead to a willingness to read more, a beneficial cycle. Based on this pedagogy, the American Language reading curricula include both intensive study reading objectives and extensive reading opportunities for outside reading, usually in the form of requiring the students to read a fiction novel.

In the AmLa department, the extended reading requirement takes different forms with different instructors. Some instructors allow students to choose fiction novels that interest them; others select one book for the whole class. My past practice has been to allow students to select their own fiction novel to read within some parameters for length and type. In recent semesters, I have been struggling with this requirement for various reasons. First, students often do not know how to make an appropriate selection for their semester reading. For many, fulfilling this requirement means reading their first whole book in English, a daunting prospect for some. Others choose inappropriate material either in difficulty level or subject matter. Another dilemma that I have faced is choosing the avenue of student response to ensure that students are actually reading the books. While the pure concept of extended reading is reading for pleasure and self-improvement, many of my students do not have the time or interest in "reading for fun." Making students take quizzes, write about, or discuss the concepts of the books seems contrary to the

purpose of pleasure reading, but we all are bound by grades and evaluations of some sort. We struggle as a department to find the best way to include this requirement in our course curriculum; therefore, the decision to include some research into the concept of extensive reading seemed to be a suitable sabbatical project. My project also included reading of fiction novels related to the theme of immigrant literature, which culminated in a recommended reading list and lesson plan that I will use in my reading classes for future semesters.

A research review of recent literature on the topic of extended reading reinforced the pedagogical benefits of including an extended reading assignment in my reading curricula. Studies show evidence of improvements in second language acquisition brought about by extensive reading programs. In a review of literature, Timothy Bell cites research evidence to enumerate the role of extensive reading in fostering learners' progress in reading development and improvement. As Bell pointed out, one of the benefits of extensive reading is that it can provide the 'comprehensible input' that Krashen argues will lead to language acquisition. This type of reading of interesting material in a relaxed learning environment fits into Krashen's model. As cited by Bell, Grabe also believes that extensive reading can enhance the learners' general language competence because it provides learners with practice in automaticity of word recognition. Additional advantages cited by Bell in his research review are the increase of knowledge of vocabulary as researched by Nagy and Herman, the improvement in writing, and motivation of learners to read. The research also proves that extensive reading practice can also consolidate previously learned language, build confidence with extended texts, and facilitate the development of prediction skills. (Bell, 1998)

One of the most important benefits of extensive reading is vocabulary acquisition. According to Nation, vocabulary learning is a gradual process in which words are met over and over again, adding to the understanding. If the learning of a word is not reinforced by another

meeting, then the learning will be lost. Extensive reading provides opportunities for readers to meet words over and over again (Nation, 1997).

Based on these pedagogical implications, in their book entitled *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language*, Richard Day and Julian Bamford have proposed some principles for a successful extensive reading approach to teaching reading.

1. The reading material should be easy and well within the learners' reading competence. A good *rule of hand* for intermediate readers is that there be no more than five difficult words per page. This probably means that for all but advanced learners, material for extensive reading adapted reading texts may need to be available so that the learner can read independently without the help of the teacher.
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics should be available. This variety of materials will lead learners to practice reading for different purposes such as entertainment and information and in different ways such as skimming, scanning and careful reading.
3. Learners should be allowed to choose what they want to read and also to be encouraged to discontinue reading if they do not enjoy the material. They should also be encouraged to read as much as possible.
4. The purpose of extended reading is related to general understanding and pleasure; therefore, 100% comprehension is not the goal. The focus on follow-up activities should be to track the amount of reading, monitor students' attitudes, and make the reading a shared experience rather than a testing of comprehension.
5. Readers should be encouraged to read faster to lead to more comprehension and enjoyment. Learners should be encouraged to use guessing strategies or to ignore

unknown words rather than revert to a dictionary when they encounter unknown words.

6. Teachers should orient and guide their students and be a role model. Teachers should explain the benefits and purposes of extensive reading and also guide them to find appropriate materials. Teachers' attitudes and reading habits can also show learners that reading for enjoyment is a pleasurable and valuable habit. (Bamford and Day, 1-3)

Having reviewed the literature, I am more convinced than ever that our department's practice of requiring our students to read extensively to enhance their language acquisition is a valuable and necessary component of our reading course curricula.

It is important that students choose reading material that is of interest to them, but I also know that making a choice of a book to read can be problematic for our students. They are not familiar with titles of books in English, and they are not comfortable with going to libraries or bookstores to look for books. In past semesters, when asked about their metacognitive reactions to reading and the extensive reading project, students report that making an appropriate choice of a novel is one of the hardest aspects of the project. Some instructors solve this by making the choice for the students and having the whole class read the same book. However, this practice seems contrary to the principles of extended reading. Trying to stay true to the principles of extensive reading and also trying to help my students to make good choices, I decided to use my sabbatical time to compile an annotated list of appropriate fiction books from which my students can choose for their extensive reading for the semester.

Another principle of extensive reading is that the reading material is at the appropriate reading level – not too hard so that students are struggling with the language but also not too easy so that the students are not challenged with stretching their linguistic abilities. To assist students

with this aspect, I have added to my list a readability rating for each of the books so that students and other instructors can easily discern an appropriate difficulty level. The ratings are based on grade level readability formulas done on each book, using both the *Fry's Readability Graph* and *Flesch-Kincaid Reading Level*, both of which are very easy to use and are easily accessible to most instructors. The directions for the Use of the Fry Readability Graph (Appendix I) are as follows:

- Randomly select three sample passages and count exactly 100 words beginning with the beginning of a sentence. Don't count numbers. Do count proper nouns.
- Count the number of sentences in the hundred words, estimating length of the fraction of the last sentence to the nearest 1/10th.
- Count the total number of syllables in the 100-word passage.
- Enter graph with average sentence length and number of syllables; plot dot where the two lines intersect. The area where the dot is plotted will give you the approximate grade level.
- Average the three graph readings to determine the grade-level readability

Another simple method of determining readability is by using the Flesch-Kincaid Reading Level built into the new version of Microsoft® Word. Following are instructions for access in Word XP:

- On the *Tools* menu, click *Options*, and click the *Spelling & Grammar* tab.
- Select the *Show readability statistics* check box, and then click *OK*.
- Randomly select three 100 -word passages from the book and type them into a Word document. Then check spelling and grammar for each passage separately.
- On the *Tools* menu, click *Spelling and Grammar*.

- When Microsoft® Word finished checking spelling and grammar, it displays information the reading level of the document.
- Average the three readability levels to get an approximate reading grade level.

Instead of including the reading difficulty by grade levels for students, the annotated list of recommended books that the students will receive has a difficulty rating of Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced. Translated, a rating of Beginning means that a book is approximately 4th to 5th grade reading level; a rating of Intermediate means that it is approximately 6th to 7th grade reading level, and a book with an Advanced rating is 8th grade and above reading level. Students at all three levels of our classes should be able to find reading material that is at an appropriate reading level. The rating levels correspond to our course titles, so the list will be easier for the students to understand than a grade level list. See Appendix J for a list of the books and the graded reading levels. See Appendix K for the annotated list for students.

All of the books that I read and chose to include on the recommended reading list are fiction novels that are written by immigrants or about immigrant experiences from their own cultures. Today, the explosive topic of immigration is foremost in the news every week, if not every day. Whether it has been the horror of 9/11, the Middle East conflict, the shortage of oil, or the immigration legislation, the news coming from all forms of media is mostly negative. The vocabulary from these news stories comes through in terms like *smuggling, tunneling, undocumented, scars, criminal prosecution, backlash, crackdown, poverty, deported....* In the opinion of Alpana Sharma Knippling, the editor of *New Immigrant Literatures in the United States: A Sourcebook to Our Multicultural Literary Heritage*, our immigrant literature has not portrayed a positive image. She compares today's news images to E.L. Doctorow's descriptions in his novel, *Ragtime*, a novel about primarily Italians and Eastern European immigrants coming through Ellis

Island at the turn of the century. Doctorow describes the living conditions "in a way that refuses the sentimental and nostalgic invitation of a Norman Rockwell painting... deliberately unromantic and gritty." Vocabulary like *tagged, bathed, renamed, separated, riffraff, insolent, filthy, and illiterate* come from his work. (Knippling, xiv) The issue of immigration, whether it is portrayed through the news media or through immigrant literature from 100 years ago and today, often brings out the negative and ugly side of prejudice and misunderstandings.

The issue of immigration is explosive, but it is a very timely issue for our students. The media stir up negative points, often disseminating contradictory and negative information about the effects of immigration on the United States. Do immigrants take jobs, benefit from social services while not paying taxes, and, in general, drain the economy? While we cannot minimize the problem or ignore it, we can discuss it and learn from it. Hopefully, the reading will motivate my students to read about, study, and look carefully at the issues surrounding them.

Our literary culture has many fine examples of stories of the immigrant experience in such books as Willa Cather's *My Antonia* and E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* from the viewpoint of 100 years ago. I, however, chose to focus on novels about recent immigrant experiences that my students could relate to. The United States receives more immigrants today than it has in any period in its history, but these immigrants trace their origins not to Europe but to Asia, Latin American and other developing nations. These are the new faces of immigrants today, but many people neglect to consider their stories when they think of immigrant history and immigrant literature. Ronald Takaki, in his book *A History of Asian Americans - Strangers From a Different Shore*, relates his experience when asked by a news show host to explain the difference between Ellis Island and Angel Island. He referred to E.D. Hirsch's book *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Need to Know* and the fact that the list includes Ellis Island but it omits Angel Island. "Ellis Island was the entry point for European immigrants, and Angel Island was the location of the immigration station.

for 'strangers from a different shore' – for Chinese and Japanese immigrants." "Cultural literacy, as defined by Hirsch as well as by educators and pundits like him, reflects a widely held but mistaken view that 'American means 'white' or European in origin. This ethnocentric notion leaves out many groups, including Asian Americans" (Takaki, xi-xii). I want my students to read stories from or about their ancestors or their contemporaries as a springboard for discussion of pride in their ethnic diversity and open discussion of the explosive timely issue of how immigration affects the United States today.

The books that I have chosen for the recommended reading list have common themes. One of these is the theme of alienation or not belonging. This comes out clearly as the fictional characters are treated with hatred and prejudice or feel that they are different from everyone else. *Journey to Topaz* and *Journey Home* by Yoshiko Uchida relate the horrific story of the Japanese interment during World War II from a personal perspective of a 10-year-old girl. Victor Villaseñor's character, Roberto Garcia, experiences the brutal and inhumane treatment of his dangerous journey to the north and experiences of a migrant worker in the fields of California. *The Tortilla Curtain* by T.C. Boyle emphasizes the disparity of circumstances between two homeless workers living in a canyon in Los Angeles and the wealthy white suburbanites trying to 'fence out' the real world.

Another common theme of immigrant literature is homesickness or generally missing a life that used to be much easier or more pleasant. This also involves feelings of missing family and friends that were left behind in the native country. *A Step From Heaven* by An Na relates the experiences of a Korean teenager who had had the perception that America was like heaven but realizes the truth as she struggles with learning English, translating for her parents, and lying to her friends about her true home life. Gloria Whelan's *Goodbye, Vietnam* provides the reader with beautiful descriptions of a family's love for Vietnam as they are forced to flee.

Also, a predominant theme is sacrifice. What does one need to give up in order to emigrate to a new life? In some instances, the characters had to give up their personal safety in order to come to the United States and other stories relate the horrific conditions of their homeland, which force them to leave. *Jasmine* by Bharati Mukherjee relates the story of a young girl whose husband was violently killed by a bomb in a small village in India during the partition. She flees to America for safety, but immediately faces more horror in Florida as she is exploited by her "American friend." *Journey of the Sparrows* tells the story of young children leaving El Salvador after the *guardias* have killed their father and brother-in-law, but face an equally difficult life in Chicago in constant fear of immigration and starvation. *Refugees*, *Under the Persimmon Tree*, and *The Kite Runner* are all books about the struggle of living in modern Afghanistan.

Many novels illustrate the theme of generational conflicts. Often the younger generation is quicker and more willing to adapt to the new culture. This often causes conflicts with their parents and grandparents who haven't changed, haven't learned the language, and view with dismay the changes in their children or grandchildren. *April and the Dragon Lady* by Lensey Namioka and *Children of the River* by Linda Crew describe the conflicts between young girls wanting to be "Americans" and grandmothers and other relatives insisting that they remain true to their customs and cultures. *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri reveals the story of a young Indian man, Gogol, who has grown up completely American but only later in life learns to appreciate the meaning of his name, his cultural heritage and who he is as a person.

Allowing my students to select a book about someone's experience, perhaps someone very much like themselves, read it, and then discuss these themes will perhaps provide a background for their own stories – immigrant voices. My students have experienced these directly or indirectly through parents or grandparents. They hear or read about the topic of immigration

every day in the news media. They have a rich supply of stories, and hopefully, reading about these stories from other people will bring out their own stories, their immigrant voices.

This annotated list is not a complete list by any means. There is a wealth of material from which to choose, and I intend to add to or delete from this list based on feedback from my students and colleagues as the semester progresses. I have read all of the books on the list, so I will be able to guide my students as they choose and ask questions about the books. Along with the reading difficulty level, I have written a short synopsis of the story to catch their interests. From this list, students will be able to choose a novel about their own culture or a classmate's culture.

This list will be distributed with the intention of sharing it with my colleagues. Hopefully, as we discuss the concept, other titles can be added through recommendations of other instructors and students. My goal is that this annotated list be a prototype to other thematic lists that can be developed by all of the faculty members. Eventually, I would like to include such annotated lists on our department web site so that students and instructors can have access and guidance to suggested reading.

Also included is a sample Lesson Plan Outline (Appendix L) that can be referenced by the reading instructors in the American Language Department. Not wanting to be prescriptive, the lesson plan is merely suggested activities for a semester class project of extensive reading activities within the theme of "Immigrant Voices." Extensive reading follow-up often includes involving the students in some type of discussion or reporting out about their reactions to what they are reading. The various types of activities encourage students to interact, improve their organizational and summary skills, and practice their speaking and listening skills along with their reading skills. The interview questions at the end of the semester not only assess a student's basic comprehension of the novel, but also allow the student to reflect on the metacognitive aspects of how reading habits and perceptions have changed by completing the fiction reading

project. The lesson plan template also includes sample graphic organizers, oral interview questions and grading rubrics for a four-step fiction-reading project that encompasses an entire semester.

The reading that I have done this semester has given me even more admiration and sense of amazement of the experiences that many of my students have gone through merely to be where they are in my classes. I hope that by reading and talking about these stories, they will not only improve their language proficiency but also hear the voices of their parents or grandparents and be willing to share this with others in the class. Through this sharing of stories, my multicultural classrooms can become a haven of tolerance and understanding.

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Conclusions

My sabbatical leave has been successful and will be of value to the College for several reasons. First of all, with the approval of the COMPASS ESL Reading Test for use as a placement instrument is the first step to providing a more appropriate means of informing second language students about their reading proficiency and advising them about appropriate classes for success in college. I believe that this test is a good complement to the assessment measures already in place. Research evidence clearly shows that this test designed for non-native speakers is a better choice than the DRP. It is also a good complement to the AWE, a direct writing assessment. The implementation process should be complete and we should be able to advise students about placement for the Spring 2007 semester.

The second part of my project gave me a chance to enhance my knowledge of current immigrant literature and solidify in my mind the importance of extended reading in the second language acquisition process. I read so many good books about immigrants and the struggles they go through as they uproot their lives. I have a much deeper appreciation of their courage and determination. Completing this project will allow me to help students accept pride in their heritage, realize the differences of other cultures, and give them a voice to express these insights.

The luxury of time to do this sabbatical project was a constant amazement to me all year long. The selection of the reading test for second language students should have been done along with the implementation of the DRP in 2002, but no one in the AmLa department had the time. My sabbatical time allowed me to complete thorough research, a definite luxury. I was also delighted that I could actually read as much as I wanted to without feeling guilty about not grading papers. I truly feel restored and confident that my time and efforts will have long-lasting effects for not only me but also students at Mt. San Antonio College.

TO: AmLa Reading Instructors
Barbara, Candance, Mary, Maya, Monica, Richard, Sally and Sharon
CC: Evelyn Hill-Enriquez, Chair
FROM: Glenda Bro
DATE: December 8, 2005

In order to continue collecting data, it is necessary to administer the reading test, Degrees of Reading Power (DRP), to all of our students. This is the reading test that is currently used for placement into reading classes for all students at Mt. SAC. We need to collect data to determine the appropriateness for our population of students. This paper-pencil test will be administered in all the reading classes the second week of classes. I will come to your classrooms to proctor the test, but I need to schedule one hour of your class time during this week. Listed below is the schedule for the pilot testing of the DRP test.

I have scheduled 60 minutes for each session, but some students may be finished before that. When the students are finished, they will be able to leave. The test is untimed, so if students require more than an hour, I will make arrangements to complete the testing in a different location if the classroom is occupied.

Class	Instructor	Date	Time	Room
AmLa 31R 084384	Bjorck	January 18	1:45-2:45 pm	45-104
AmLa 31R 084386	Alcaraz	January 18	6:45-7:45 pm	66-246
AmLa 32R 084409	Alvarez-Galvan	January 18	8:45-9:45 am	66-246
AmLa 32R 084413	Myers	January 18	8:45-9:45 pm	66-246
AmLa 32R 084414	Hankins	January 17	6:45-7:45 pm	66-222
AmLa 32R 084410	Alvarez-Galvan	January 17	10:45-11:45am	66-246
AmLa 33R 085703	Lynch- Thompson	January 18	8:45-9:45 pm	66-246*
AmLa 33R 085702	Patterson	January 17	2:45-3:45pm	66-246
AmLa 33R 085701	Mezaki	January 18	12:45-1:45pm	66-222

* Candace, I am asking if you could walk your students over to this building by 8:45 so that we can test the two classes together at one time. The students will be able to leave from this classroom.

Thank you again for giving me your valuable class time for this project. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me through email or telephone.

Glenda Bro
(909) 621-7055
gbro@mtsac.edu

**Distribution of DRP Scores for AMLA Students
Comparison of Placement into READ Classes**

The DRP was administered to all AmLa reading classes during the second week of classes of the Spring 2006 semester. This data represents the range of scores for each of the classes and how these students would be placed into a corresponding READ class based on an independent level DRP score. In all cases, the score represented is the Independent Score, not the Raw Score.

AMLA 31R (16 students)
Range of Scores Low Score - 15
 High Score - 59

See Director of Assessment	1/16	6%
READ 70	1/16	6%
READ 80	13/16	81%
READ 90	1/16	6%
READ 100	0/16	0%

AMLA 32R (77 students)
Range of Scores Low Score - 35
 High Score - 63

See Director of Assessment	0/77	0%
READ 70	15/77	32%
READ 80	47/77	61%
READ 90	15/77	32%
READ 100	0/77	0%

AMLA 33R (51 students)
Range of Scores Low Score - 36
 High Score - 64

See Director of Assessment	0/51	0%
READ 70	4/51	8%
READ 80	25/51	49%
READ 90	20/51	39%
READ 100	2/51	4%

TOTAL OF ALL STUDENTS TESTED (144 students)

See Director of Assessment	1/144	1%
READ 70	20/144	14%
READ 80	85/144	59%
READ 90	36/144	25%
READ 100	2/144	1%



MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE

1100 North Grand Avenue • Walnut, CA 91789-1399

ACCESS TO QUALITY

February 1, 2006

Dear Professor:

Enclosed are Placement Satisfaction Surveys for the AmLa Reading Classes. There is one half-page survey for each student enrolled in your class and additional surveys for students whom you have added but may not be in the roll database yet. There is also a full-page faculty survey for you to fill out. Each student in your class is listed on this page. Please add students that you may have that are not on the list. It is very important that your responses be as complete and as honest as possible. The results of this survey will affect the assessment and placement system, as well as Chancellor's Office approval for our assessment instruments.

Please take time as soon as possible to administer the student surveys in class and to complete your response for each student. Please return the surveys to Glenda Bro's mailbox in 66-229 no later than Monday, February 13, 2006.

If you have any questions, please contact Jim Ocampo at Ext. 5670 or Glenda Bro at 909 621-7055.

Thank you for taking time out of what we know is an already very busy schedule.

Sincerely,

James Ocampo
Director, Assessment & Matriculation

Glenda Bro
Professor

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Christopher C. O'Hearn, Ph.D., College President

Reading Placement Satisfaction Survey
Spring 2006
Faculty Questionnaire

This survey is being given to faculty as part of an evaluation of student placement. It is very important that each professor be as exact and as honest as possible when completing the form for each student. Please base your judgment on how this particular student is prepared for your class; do not compare this student to other students in the class. We will use this data to further adjust and refine the placement process.

Please check the appropriate placement satisfaction level for each student.

Student I.D. Number	Student (Last Name, First Name)	This student is not prepared and should have been advised to enroll in a LOWER LEVEL course. If possible, please indicate which course.	This student is prepared and BELONGS in this course	This student is prepared to enroll in a HIGHER LEVEL course. If possible, please indicate which course.	Comments*
1	CHICAS, CLAUDIA ROXAN				
2	GARCIA, LUIS G				
3	KIM, HYUN-SOOK				
4	LEUNG, CANDY TAILIN				
5	LIN, FENG YING				
6	LIU, KAI				
7	REYES, DORIS LEONOR				
8	SU, DAN				
9	TANG, YAORONG				
10	VONG, BAO DANH				
11	WANG, JACK CHIA-HO				
12	WATKINS, PHANNALAK LE				

*Comments:

1=poor reading skills; 2=poor study skills; 3=poor writing skills; 4=vocabulary deficiency; 5=second language interference;

6=lack of ability to comprehend professor; 7=superior reading skills; 8=superior study skills; 9=superior writing skills; 10=superior vocabulary skills

Last Name, First Name:		Student I.D. Number:
Course:		

**Reading Placement Satisfaction Survey
Spring 2006
Student Questionnaire**

This survey is being given to students enrolled in reading classes at Mt. SAC. Please complete the form to the best of your ability. Your response will have NO effect upon your grade in this class.

1. This is my first reading class at Mt. SAC (please check one):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

2. I think that (please check one):

<input type="checkbox"/>	I should have been advised to enroll in a lower level course.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I belong in this course.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I should have been advised to enroll in a higher level course.

Thank you for your cooperation!

**AMLA READING PLACEMENT STAISFACTION SURVEY
SPRING 2006**

STUDENTS WHO HAVE <u>NOT</u> TAKEN A PREVIOUS READING COURSE AT ME. SAC								
These percentages indicate satisfaction with placement for both students and instructors.								
Course	AmLa 31R 084384	AmLa 32R 084410	AmLa 32R 084409	AmLa 32R 084414	AmLa 32R 084413	AmLa 33R 085702	AmLa 33R 085701	AmLa 33R 085703
Students	92%	84%	100%	78%	100%	100%	100%	83%
Instructor	82%	79%	56%	67%	100%	83%	89%	83%
Number of Students	13	19	9	9	8	6	9	6

92% student satisfaction with placement for students who are taking a reading course for the first time.

80% instructor satisfaction with placement for students who are taking a reading course for the first time.

STUDENTS WHO <u>HAVE</u> TAKEN A PREVIOUS READING COURSE AT MT. SAC								
These percentages indicate satisfaction with placement for both students and instructors.								
Course	AmLa 31R 084384	AmLa 32R 084410	AmLa 32R 084409	AmLa 32R 084414	AmLa 32R 084413	AmLa 33R 085702	AmLa 33R 085701	AmLa 33R 085703
Students	50%	60%	96%	75%	100%	100%	91%	100%
Instructor	50%	100%	100%	75%	100%	100%	73%	66%
Number of students	2	5	12	4	7	5	11	6

84% student satisfaction with placement for students who have taken a previous reading course.

83% instructor satisfaction with placement for student who have taken a previous reading course.

Both instructors and students were asked to complete a placement satisfaction survey. The students were to distinguish whether or not this was their first reading class at Mt. SAC, and then were asked to check one of three choices:

I should have been advised to enroll in a lower level course.

I belong in this course.

I should have been advised to enroll in a higher level course.

The instructors were also asked to rate the students in the following manner:

This student is not prepared and should have been advised to enroll in a **LOWER** level course.

This student is prepared and **BELONGS** in this course.

This student is prepared to enroll in a **HIGHER LEVEL COURSE**.

Important Announcement – Please Read

TO: AmLa Reading Instructors
Barbara, Carol, Danny, Mary, Maya, Monica, and Sally
FROM: Glenda Bro
DATE: October 24, 2005

As many of you know, my sabbatical project is to research and select a reading placement instrument for our students. The project is going well, but I NEED YOUR HELP. In order for us to make a decision, I need to gather data to determine if a computerized placement test is an appropriate assessment measure.

I must administer this test to as many students as possible before the end of the semester. Please allow me to schedule one two-hour class session so that you can bring your students to a computer lab for testing. I have tentatively scheduled this for the week of November 28th – December 2nd. I do not yet have the exact time and place because I am still negotiating lab time and space.

In the next week or two, I will tell you the day when your reading class is scheduled. On that day, you will bring your students to a computer lab for a group test. The test is adaptive and untimed, which means that some of your students may be done in 30 minutes but some may take the full two hours of class time. Therefore, I will need to schedule a full two hours of your class. I also need you to be the supervising teacher for the testing session because you know your students.

I realize that this is a sacrifice of a class period, but this research is absolutely necessary so that our students can be given the appropriate placement into our reading classes in the future. I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me through email or telephone.

Glenda Bro
(909) 621-7055
gbro@mtsac.edu

TO: AmLa Reading Instructors
Barbara, Carol, Danny, Mary, Maya, Monica, and Sally
CC: Evelyn Hill-Enriquez, Chair
FROM: Glenda Bro
DATE: November 1, 2005

Listed below is the schedule for the pilot testing of the COMPASS ESL Reading test. On this date please bring your entire class to the classroom listed. All of the testing will be done in one of the ESL computer labs in Building 66. Please do not announce this early in your classes because I don't want students to "skip" class that day if they feel it is not important for them to be there. I want to get as many students as possible for this data study. I have arranged the time so that you can meet your students in your classrooms at the beginning of class and then come to the lab testing room as a group.

I will do an orientation and the students will then take the computerized test. After the students are finished, I will give them a brief reaction questionnaire to get their opinion of the procedure and the test. I would like you to be there for the session as you know your students and can help with questions that they might have.

When the students are finished, they will be able to leave the lab. Some students may be done in 30 minutes, but others may take longer than that. I have scheduled 90 minutes for each of the sessions, but I am sure that most will be done sooner.

Class	Instructor	Date	Time	Room
AmLa 31R 080261	Alcaraz	Nov. 30	6:30-8:00 pm	66-169
AmLa 31R 080260	Craig	Nov. 28	1:15-2:45 pm	66-228
AmLa 32R 080279	Alvarez-Galvan	Nov. 30	8:15-9:45 am	66-228
AmLa 32R 080282	Hankins	Nov. 28	8:15-9:45 pm	66-228
AmLa 32R 080283	Patterson	Nov. 29	6:30-8:00 pm	66-169
AmLa 32R 080280	Alvarez-Galvan	Nov. 29	10:15-11:45am	66-169
AmLa 32R 080284	Pittaway	Dec. 02	10:15-11:45am	66-228
AmLa 33R 080285	Craig	Nov. 30	10:15-11:45am	66-228
AmLa 33R 080287	Patterson	Nov. 29	1:15-2:45pm	66-169
AmLa 33R 080286	Mezaki	Nov. 30	12:15-1:45pm	66-228

Thank you again for giving me your valuable class time for this project. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me through email or telephone.

Glenda Bro
(909) 621-7055
gbro@mtsac.edu

ESL Compass Reading Test Directions to Students

1. This test is not a part of your grade in class and **will not** have any effect on your placement. It is only for research purposes.
2. Type in your **last** name.
3. Your ID is the following:

11111 + the last four numbers of your student ID number

DO NOT TYPE IN YOUR ENTIRE ID. Do not leave any spaces.
4. Then you will be asked for your first name, your birth date, your gender, and your ethnicity. Please ask if you have any questions about this part.
5. Then, you will be asked to put on earphones for Test Practice. Please follow the instructions. The speaker speaks very slowly, but you have to go through these directions before you get to the test. When you are done, you will take off the earphones and go to the test.
6. Once you start the test, you cannot exit or go back.
7. The test is untimed and different for every student. Some of you may finish before others. Do not worry about that. Take the time that you need to do your best reading.
8. You may not use a dictionary of any kind, talk to other students, or ask about vocabulary. If you have a question about the procedure, raise your hand and we will help you.
9. When you are finished, a report of your score will be printed. Please come to the printer, show me your student ID to verify your student ID number. At this time, I will ask you for your complete ID number. I will not share this number with anyone else, but we need it for data collection.
10. You will be able to see a score, but it will not mean anything to you because the scores are on a scale that only has meaning for test purposes. The score does not represent a grade, a percentage correct, or a placement.

Thank you for your cooperation for this important project.

TO: AmLa Reading Instructors
FROM: Glenda Bro
DATE: December 5, 2005
RE: Test Score Survey

Thank you again for allowing me to use your students and class time for the pilot testing last week. As we discussed during the testing session, I also need your help with completing a follow-up survey. Fill out the form for each student in your class for whom we got a test score. Please follow the instructions and return the completed forms in the same envelope to my mailbox in the AmLa office area on or before December 16th.

Directions:

1. Carefully read the "Reading Proficiency Descriptors" (printed on pink paper) provided by ACT.
2. Match the score of each student to the range of scores in the descriptors.
3. Mark your choices based on your knowledge of your students' proficiency levels at this time.
4. Add comments if you feel that you have information that will be helpful in analyzing the test score.
5. Remember that these test scores should not in any way affect the outcome of the student's grade in your class this semester.

**COMPASS ESL Reading
Test Score Survey**

Because of registration difficulties, all prerequisite blocks were taken off our reading courses this semester. As a result, students may be attending your reading class, but their skills may not necessarily match the level of the class.

Therefore, in order to make a decision about the appropriateness of the COMPASS Reading test, we need additional information. After having had these students for almost an entire semester, you as their instructor probably have the best information regarding whether the results from COMPASS ESL Reading Test that your students took match the proficiency levels of your students.

Please take the time to fill out the survey to the best of your ability by following these steps:

1. Carefully read the "Reading Proficiency Descriptors" provided by ACT.
2. Match the score of each student to the range of scores in the descriptors.
3. Then check the correct columns and add comments.

Student Name	Test Score	This test score matches my perception of the student's proficiency (Check one)		If you feel that the score does not match expectations, fill out this section. I expected this score to be: (check one)				Comments:
		Yes	No	Much lower	Somewhat lower	Somewhat higher	Much higher	

Please remember that this data is merely being collected for research purposes. Do not let it affect the way that you grade your students' progress in your class.



Proficiency Descriptors Reading

ACT ESL Reading Proficiency Descriptors	
PRE-LEVEL 1 (1-37)	Although students scoring at Pre-Level 1 may have some limited reading skills in English, they have provided insufficient evidence that they possess the skills typical of Level 1 students, i.e., recognizing most letters of the English alphabet and a few sight words, especially those from the environment, such as common signs and words, phrases, or short sentences supported by pictures.
LEVEL 1 (38-64)	Students at Level 1 typically recognize most letters of the English alphabet and recognize a few sight words, especially those from the environment, such as common signs and words, phrases, or short sentences supported by pictures.
LEVEL 2 (65-79)	Students at Level 2 typically are able to read brief prose composed of short, simple sentences related to everyday needs (e.g., numbers, street signs, short informational signs, simple instructions). They can understand high-frequency structures, such as present, simple past, and simple future tenses. They usually understand some of the more common idioms and colloquial expressions. Students can compare facts to make choices (e.g., making a purchase) and they may draw simple conclusions from their reading.
LEVEL 3 (80-91)	Students at Level 3 typically can comprehend prose of several paragraphs on subjects within a familiar framework and with a clear underlying structure, and they can understand some main ideas in limited occupational or academic materials. Students can read news items, basic business letters, simple technical materials, classified ads, school bulletins and academic text excerpts, and they can comprehend multi-step directions. They can use the reading strategies of skimming, scanning, and predicting to locate information and to help structure their reading for a variety of purposes. They can also use a variety of textual clues such as sentence connectors, transitions, and pronoun reference to comprehend the meaning and structure of a text. Students sometimes understand the meanings of new words from context, sometimes distinguish between main and supporting ideas, and understand some common cultural references. They can make some inferences and generalizations from what they read, though complex inferences may still be difficult for them to make. However, they can often read texts equal in difficulty to those read by students at a more advanced level, though with less consistent comprehension. They possess some awareness of style and register.
LEVEL 4 (92-99)	Students at Level 4 typically can read for many purposes at a relatively normal rate with increasing comprehension, and they can read materials that are increasingly abstract and grammatically complex. They understand some hypothesis, argument, and opinion, and can differentiate between fact and opinion in academic, as well as general, materials; they can interpret, make inferences and generalizations, relate ideas, and identify an author's prejudices or biases, tone, or mood. They can paraphrase an author's implicit meaning or main points. The students have an emerging awareness of literary style. Materials they read accurately may include more complex newspaper articles, as well as some periodicals, academic texts, technical materials, and library reference materials. Their reading exhibits a near native-speaker proficiency, but with less flexibility and a slower rate of comprehension. Even these advanced students will experience some difficulty with unusually complex structures, with low-frequency idioms or colloquial language, and with obscure cultural references.

Student Name _____

Test Score _____

This test score matches my perception of the student's proficiency:

Yes _____

No _____

If no, please check one of the following:

I expected the score for this student to be:

Much lower _____

Somewhat lower _____

Somewhat higher _____

Much higher _____

Please add comments that you feel might be helpful:

**Proposal For Approval of the COMPASS ESL Reading Test
April 2006**

I. History and Current Practice

The Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency was the first assessment measure used to place credit-ESL students into a core of reading, writing and speech classes at Mt. SAC. In 1991, the faculty members researched, developed and trained for the process of adding an Oral Interview to the assessment process to provide a more suitable placement into the speaking/listening classes. At approximately the same time, the Assessment Department was informed that the Michigan Test would no longer be a chancellor-approved measure for placement; therefore, the AMLa faculty worked with the LERN and English departments under the auspices of a federally funded Title III grant to develop the AWE, Assessment of Written English, a writing placement instrument for all levels of English at Mt. SAC. Students were placed into reading and writing classes based on the AWE and into a speaking/listening class based on a combination of the AWE test result and an Oral Interview.

Implementing a reading assessment measure for AMLa reading classes is now necessary because the College has recently determined that it is not in the best interests of our students to continue the practice of placing students in a reading class based on a writing assessment. The students now take the AWE, receive a placement into a writing course, and if that placement is an AMLA writing class, are also advised but not required to concurrently enroll in an AMLA reading class at the same level. The Oral Interview process was discontinued in April of 2005 because the AMLA speaking/listening courses are no longer required.

Also, in 2005 the College implemented a Reading Competency requirement, which means that all students desiring to obtain an Associate in Arts or Science Degree at Mt. SAC must demonstrate competency in reading by successfully completing READ 90, READ 100, or AMLA 33R. Students may also show competency by obtaining a determined score on the Reading placement exam or a Reading Competency Test.

II. Use of the DRP (Degrees of Reading Power)

The reading placement instrument currently used at Mt. SAC is the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP). Knowing that one of factors of the success of the AWE is that it is the same test for all students, it seems obvious that if one test could be used to place all students in a reading class

at Mt. SAC, the issue of who takes which test would be alleviated. Therefore, one of the steps that I outlined in my sabbatical proposal was that I would carefully look at the DRP as an appropriate instrument for our students. Some research has suggested that of many reading tests designed for native English speakers, the DRP might be one of the more appropriate measures for second language students because it is an untimed test and because it is in the cloze format. More thorough research led to other conclusions.

First, the DRP test manual directly states that the norming population did not include second language students; it also suggests that if the test were to be used for non-native English students, a lower level might be more appropriate.

With the help of Barbarba McNeice-Stallard in Research and Institutional Effectiveness, a study was done to compare DRP scores of our students who had taken previously taken the test as part of their assessment process with success in classes. Semester grades from AmLa students from past semester reading classes were compared with their DRP scores. After completing the study in the fall semester, Barbara stated that the results could not support using this test because while results indicated a statistically significant difference in the reading test scores between those who passes the AmLA course versus those who did not pass the course, the results also indicated that there no significant difference in reading scores between the classes. In other words, the results did not discriminate between levels; therefore, cut off scores would be difficult to determine.

Additionally, to get a clear picture of how a selected semester of reading class enrollees would perform on the DRP, I administered this test to all the reading classes during the second week of the spring semester. The results clearly show that we would have to use different cut scores than what are currently used for reading classes in the READ department. Also, as with the previous research project, the test does not seem to adequately discriminate between levels, especially at the lower levels. For example, If the cutoff scores from the DRP were used to place students into our lowest level, AmLa 31R, just as they are used to place into the lowest reading class, READ 70, based on the testing from the beginning of the semester, only 1 student out of 16 would be placed in our AmLa 31R class. 13 out of the 16 students scored in the READ 80 level. Conversely, 32% of the students in our AmLa 32R classes scored in the lowest level, the READ 70 level. These scores do not correlate with student and instructor placement satisfaction surveys from this semester, which indicate a general satisfaction with student placement in our reading

classes. (This spring semester, 92% of students who are taking an AmLa reading class for the first time at Mt. SAC feel they belong at the level in which they are enrolled; the instructors indicated an 80% placement satisfaction with the same group of students.) In summary, research done to compare success in class with test scores and pilot testing for range of scores do not support the use of the DRP as an appropriate instrument for our students.

After a more thorough review of the literature and the matriculation guidelines, it became very clear to me that it is important that the assessment measure that we choose be one that has been designed and validated for our population of students. In fact, it clearly states in Title V Matriculation guidelines that this policy be strictly adhered to. CATESOL position papers and Assessment/Matriculation position papers from the State Academic Senate very clearly mandate using a test that is specifically designed for second language speakers as a placement instrument.

In summary, the DRP is not an appropriate measure for our students for several reasons:

1. Matriculation guidelines and current research suggest that a test not be used unless it is designed for and validated on the population being assessed.
2. Local research and pilot testing do not show favorable results for the use of the DRP for our students.
3. If we did try to validate the DRP, it seems that at the least, different cut scores would need to be used than what are currently used, which presents potential confusion for the assessment staff and students receiving test results. A different level of the test would probably be more appropriate. Therefore, this negates the advantage of having one assessment measure for all students.

III. Locally Developed Assessment Measure

Some community colleges have locally developed assessment measures. In other words, they developed their own test much like we did with the AWE and the non-credit ESL department did with their computer adaptive reading/listening test used for placement. Therefore, I spent some time looking at and talking to the non-credit ESL department about their assessment instrument. It is an excellent test, but the level is not appropriate for our students. Also, the test development took approximately five years to complete. We could feasibly build on their test, using the technology that they have already in place, but the validation of the test items would still be very time-consuming. The development of the AWE took place over many semesters and was

supported financially by Title III grant money. In favor of expediency, I believe that we can choose a commercially prepared test. If we later determine that our choice is not an ideal match, then we can discuss the option of taking the time to develop our own test.

III. Options for Chancellor Office Approved ESL reading placement instruments

My next step was to examine the options of tests that are on the approved list distributed by the Chancellor's Office: ACCUPLACER - Levels of English Proficiency (LOEP), CELSA – English Language skills Assessment, and COMPASS - ESL Placement Test. CELSA is a paper-and-pencil test while ACCUPLACER and COMPASS are both computer adaptive tests.

In my opinion, the CELSA test is inappropriate for our population because the content of the reading passages is not academic in nature. Also, it is not strictly a reading test; some of the test items cover grammar proficiency. For some colleges, this is the only ESL assessment measure; we have the AWE for writing.

ACCUPLACER – LOEP is a computer adaptive test, but the reading passages are quite short compared to the passages in the COMPASS reading test. In addition, the LOEP tests reading comprehension and sentence meaning (vocabulary) in two separate subtests. I believe that we would have to administer and use a combined score of two subtests in order to measure the same skills that we would with one test for the COMPASS ESL Reading Test.

IV. ACT COMPASS ESL Reading Test

The COMPASS ESL Reading Test seems to be the most appropriate test for our population. The passages are adequate in length, the content of the passages is academic, and the test items, which test referential, inferential, and vocabulary/idiom skills, clearly match our course objectives. There is strong evidence of content validity.

I administered the COMPASS ESL reading test to all of our students at the end of the fall semester. The results show a clear distribution of scores. Also, the AmLa instructors completed a survey to determine whether they felt the test results of the COMPASS test matched the proficiency levels of their students. Overall, 64% said that they agreed with the test score and 36% said that they did not agree. Of those that did not agree with the test score, 73% marked the categories "Somewhat higher or lower" and only 28% marked the categories "Much higher or much lower." Overall, the test scores correlate to the students' levels of proficiency. Therefore, I believe

that with a refinement and adjustment of cut off scores, this will be an appropriate measure of the reading proficiency of our students.

Another advantage of the test is that it has the option of including an institutionally devised set of questions to be used as a multiple measure and to provide background information about our students that can assist in program decisions.

Also, it is a computer adaptive test. In addition to giving accurate and immediate results, the time it takes to administer this test is much shorter. The average testing time for the COMPASS was 24 minutes, while most students took an hour or longer for the DRP. Because it is adaptive, the test itself leads the test takers through only those passages and questions that are necessary to get an accurate score. Students are not faced with the frustrating and daunting task of taking a test that from the beginning looks too difficult for them. Jim Ocampo, Director of Assessment and Matriculation, supports the feasibility of administering a computerized assessment measure. It seems that this is possibly the direction the College wants to pursue, so our implementation of such a test will be a good introduction into the area of computer assessment at Mt. SAC.

Prepared by Glenda Bro, American Language Department
Spring 2006

TO: Dr. Audrey Yamagata-Noji, Vice-President Student Services
CC: Jim Ocampo, Director, Assessment and Matriculation
Nico Martinez, Assessment
FROM: Glenda Bro, Faculty, American Language Department
DATE: June 5, 2006
RE: Proposal for Purchase of COMPASS ESL Reading Test Software License
and Test Units

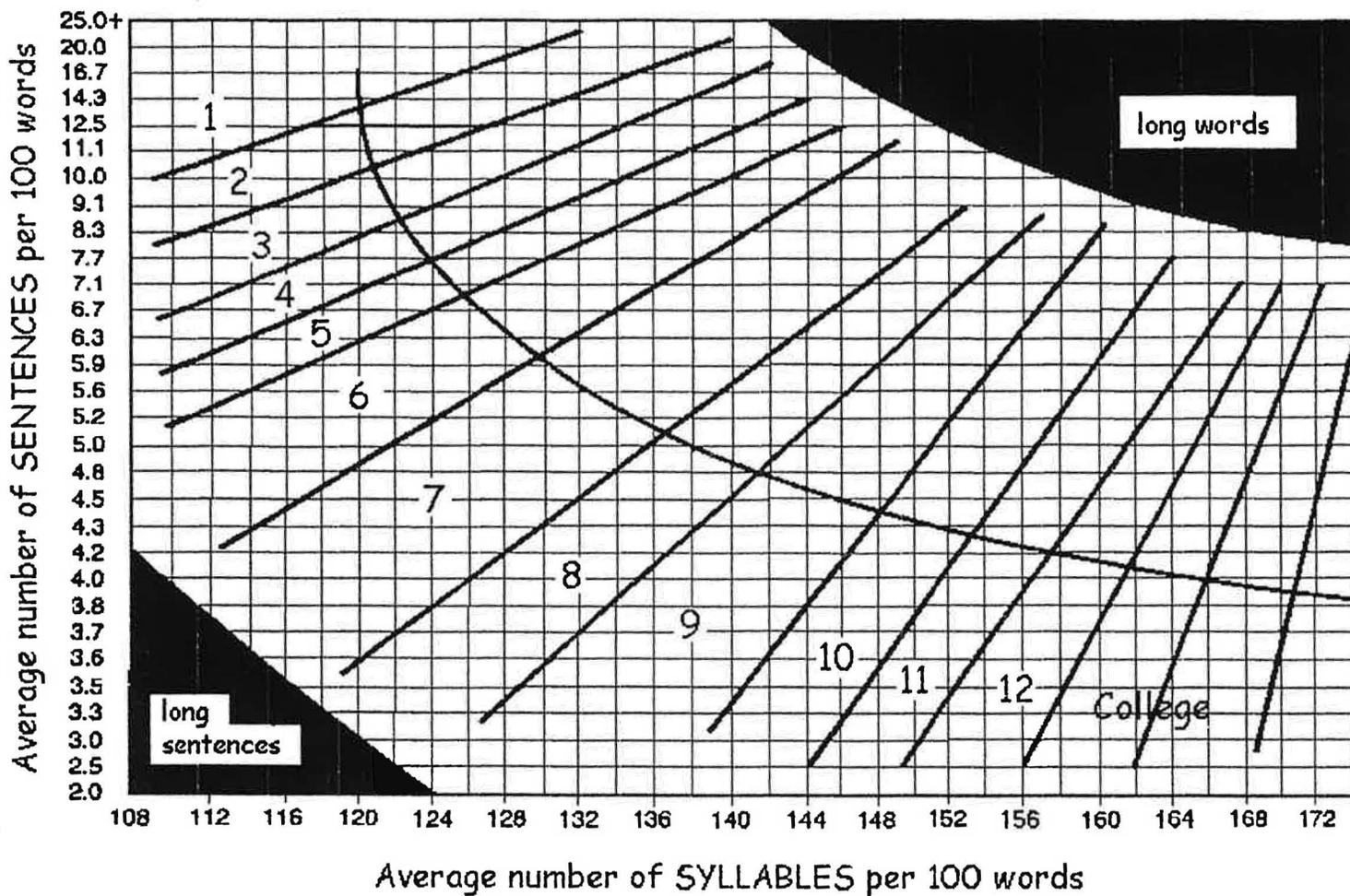
After having carefully researched the issue of an appropriate instrument to use for placement into reading classes for second language students at Mt. San Antonio College, I recommend that we adopt the computer adaptive ACT COMPASS ESL Reading test. This proposal was approved by the Matriculation and Assessment Committee on April 11, 2006. I also presented the proposal as an information agenda item to the Student Preparation and Success Committee on May 1, 2006.

The annual software license is \$450.00, and the cost of the test is \$1.15 per unit. One reading subtest is counted as 1.4 units. It is estimated that we should purchase 3,500 units at a cost of \$4,025.00. The total is an expenditure of \$4,475.00. The unit price is a discounted price if the units are ordered through the California Community Colleges (CCC)/ACT Consortium for ASSET/COMPASS/ESL placement testing. The College is able to get a discounted price, but sufficient units must be purchased for the entire year as the next ordering date through this consortium is not until May 2007.

The COMPASS/ESL Software License Agreement should be completed and tests ordered before the deadline of June 30, 2006 so that the tests can be delivered on or before July 14, 2006.

I project that after working with and refining multiple measures, cut-off scores and IET requirements in the beginning of the fall semester, we should be able to place students into appropriate second language reading classes by the spring 2007 semester.

Fry Graph for estimating Reading Ages (grade level)



Appendix J – List of Books

Title	Author	No. of Pages	Publishing Company	Copyright Date	Fry	Fleisch-Kinkaid
<i>A Step From Heaven</i>	An Na	154	Speak Publishers	2003	4.6	4.3
<i>American Son</i>	Brian Ascalon Roley	216	W.W. Norton & Company	2001	7.7	7.3
<i>An Ocean Apart, A World Away</i>	Lensey Namioka	193	Dell Laurel-leaf Books	2002	7.0	6.6
<i>April and the Dragon Lady</i>	Lensey Namioka	214	Browndeer Press	1994	7.5	6.5
<i>bộat peöplé</i>	Mary Gardner	277	W.W. Norton and Company	1995	8.0	8.0
<i>Children of the River</i>	Linda Crew	213	Laurel Leaf Books	1989	6.3	5.4
<i>Chu Ju's House</i>	Gloria Whelan	253	Harper Collins Publishers	2004	5.4	4.8
<i>Desirable Daughters</i>	Bharati Mukherjee	310	Hyperion	2002	6.8	6.8
<i>Enrique's Journey</i>	Sonia Nazario	240	Random House	2006	7.4	6.0
<i>Goodbye, Vietnam</i>	Gloria Whelan	135	Alfred A. Knopf	1992	4.2	4.1
<i>Grass Roof, Tin Roof</i>	Dao Strom	229	Houghton Mifflin Company	2003	8.8	8.6
<i>Homeless Bird</i>	Gloria Whelan	182	Harper Collins Publishers	2001	4.5	4.0
<i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i>	Julia Alvarez	290	Penguin Books	1991	8.3	8.1
<i>Jasmine</i>	Bharati Mukherjee	241	Weidenfeld	1989	6.7	6.1
<i>Journey of the Sparrows</i>	Fran Leeper Buss with Daisy Cubias	155	Lodestar Books	1991	6.2	6.9

Appendix J – List of Books

<i>Journey to Topaz</i>	Yoshiko Uchida	149	Charles Scribner's Sons	1971	7.6	7.6
<i>Kira-Kira</i>	Cynthia Kadohata	242	Atheneum Books	2004	6.6	5.6
<i>Lupita Manana</i>	Patricia Beatty	186	Harper Trophy	1981	6.5	5.6
<i>Macho!</i>	Victor Villaseñor	240	Dell Publishing	1991	3.3	3.1
<i>Monkey Bridge</i>	Lan Cao	260	Viking Press	1997	9.7	10.0
<i>Rain of Gold</i>	Victor Villaseñor	543	Dell Publishing	1991	6.0	5.4
<i>Refugees</i>	Catherine Stine	268	Delacorte Press	2005	5.7	5.6
<i>Snow Flower and the Secret Fan</i>	Lisa See	253	Random House	2006	8.4	9.4
<i>The Kite Runner</i>	Khaled Hosseini	369	Riverhead Books	2003	7.0	7.8
<i>The Love Wife</i>	Gish Jen	379	Alfred A. Knopf	2004	8.3	8.2
<i>The Namesake</i>	Jhumpa Lahiri	291	Houghton Mifflin Company	2003	7.0	6.0
<i>Thousand Pieces of Gold</i>	RuthAnne Lum McCunn	307	Beacon Press	1981	6.2	6.1
<i>The Tortilla Curtain</i>	T.C. Boyle	355	Viking Penguin	1995	8.3	7.8
<i>Typical American</i>	Gish Jen	293	Penquin Books	1992	7.0	6.4
<i>Under the Persimmon Tree</i>	Suzanne Fisher Staples	270	Frances Foster Books	2005	7.0	6.3

Fiction Reading List Immigrant Literature

Choose one novel from this list to read for the semester. After the title and the author is a short introduction to introduce you to the story. The books are in groups according to the difficulty of the reading: beginning, intermediate, or advanced. The three levels correspond to the AMLa reading classes – AMLa 31R, 32R, and 33R. Some of the books have an "Adult Rating" to alert you that there are adult themes/adult language in the book.

You should try to choose a book at an appropriate level for you – not too difficult but not too easy. One simple method to help you make sure the level is correct is to read just one page of the novel. If there are more than five words on one page that you cannot understand, then the book may be too difficult for you.

Beginning Level

A Step From Heaven

An Na

Young Ju Park leaves Korea to go to *Mi Gook*, the Korean name for America. She doesn't want to leave because she will miss her grandmother. When they get to California, they have to live in a bad neighborhood, and her mother and father both have to work two jobs just to make money to live. To make matters worse, a baby brother is born who is automatically the favored son. Young Ju struggles with learning English, translating for her parents, and lying to her friends about her true home life. The desperate situation turns worse when her father's personality changes completely and he becomes abusive. This is a good story about a young adolescent growing up in a strange new land having to speak the truth that is hard to face.

Children of the River

Linda Crew

213 pp.

Sundara escapes from Cambodia at the age of 13 with her aunt's family. She has to leave her parents, her brother and sister, and the boy she has loved since she was a child. Her aunt's family settles in Oregon where they work picking fruit and doing other low-paying jobs. Now that she is 17 and in high school, she wants to fit in and be an American, but she has to follow the Cambodian rules expected of all "good Cambodian girls." When she meets Jonathan through a school project, she has conflicts. She also has to deal with the guilt of not being able to save her aunt's baby long ago during the escape in the boat. She misses her home, she misses her family, and she misses love since she feels that her aunt hates her. She wonders if she will ever find happiness in this new land.

Chu Ju's House

Gloria Whelan

Chu Ju lives in China during the Communist revolution, when there are laws about limiting the number of children to one per family, not being able to travel and live where one pleases, and not being able to read certain books. When her baby sister was born, she knew that if she did not do something, her sister would be sold to an orphanage or worse. Chu Ju decides to run away so that her family would not be in trouble for having more than one child, especially two girls. This story tells how she lives and works in difficult jobs, always relying on the help of strangers to give her at least enough food to eat. This courageous young girl adopts a hard life to save another life.

Goodbye, Vietnam**Gloria Whelan**

Mai and her family have to leave Vietnam because the government officials suspect her father and her grandmother. They are forced to sell all of their possessions, sneak away in the night, and travel along the Mekong Delta to get to a boat that would take them to Hong Kong. They are cheated out of food and money, and only get a passage on the boat because Mai's father is an skilled mechanic who is needed to keep the boat engine working. The conditions on the crowded boat are terrible because no one has enough food, and people are sick. When they finally reach Hong Kong, they are forced to live in a crowded refugee camp not knowing whether they will get sent back to Vietnam or be allowed to go to the United States. This is a good story about courage and hope.

Homeless Bird**Gloria Whelan**

Koly lives with her family in a small village in India. When she is 13, her family plans a dowry and marriage to a boy in another village. Only after the wedding do they realize that the boy's family lied to them. They only wanted the wedding dowry to make a trip to the healing waters for their son. In a short time, Koly's young husband dies, and Koly is forced to remain as a worthless widow with her in-laws. The only consolation she has is her quilt that she had sewn to remind her of her own family. She is treated as a slave by her mother-in-law, who eventually abandons her in a big city. Koly has to make a new life in a big city with no money, but her skills and courage lead her to success.

Macho! (Adult Rating)**Victor Villaseñor**

At only 16, Roberto Garcia is already a foreman in his village in the mountains of Mexico, but he has bigger dreams. He follows others and becomes a *norteño*, one who goes north to the United States to make more money than he can imagine so that he can send it back to his family. The story tells of the brutal and inhumane treatment of his dangerous journey to the north, working as a migrant worker in the fields in California, and then finally returning home. The author gives graphic details of this unbelievable journey of a young boy in the 1960's as he becomes a man with prideful revenge for his family.

Refugees**Catherine Stine**

Dawn is a teenager who has lived in foster homes all of her life, not really belonging to anyone. When her foster mom has to go to Pakistan for her duties as a Red Cross doctor, Dawn decides to run away from San Francisco to New York. Johar is a teenager in Afghanistan who has to flee to a refugee camp with his three-year-old niece after he is orphaned by the events of the war. When the Twin Towers are bombed in New York, Dawn is confused but finds some peace by playing her flute for mourners at Ground Zero. Jofar finds safety and some food by becoming a translator for Dawn's foster mother who is stationed in the same refugee camp. The two teenagers start to communicate through emails as they help each find courage to live in very dangerous and confusing times.

Intermediate Level

American Son (Adult Rating)

Brian Ascalon Roley

Gabe is the younger of two brothers whose mother is Filipino and father is white. They have lived in the U.S. since they were very young, but their father has left them. The mother needs to work at low paying jobs, and the older brother Tomas belongs to a Mexican gang and raises guard dogs to sell. Gabe is afraid of his brother and ashamed of his mother, so he does not fit in at all. When he gets caught stealing from his brother, he is forced to do things that he is not comfortable doing just to pay him back. This is a violent story about a young immigrant boy who is desperately trying to find his place in the world.

An Ocean Apart, A World Away

Lensey Namioka

Yanyan lives in Nanching, China in 1921. This is a period of time when young girls are expected to marry and become dutiful wives. She has been attending school and learning English, and she wants to become a doctor. She swears that she has no intention of getting married. Her best friend Ailin goes to America as a nanny for a white missionary family, and when Yanyan goes to Shanghai to say goodbye, she travels with her brother and his friend, Baoshu. A friendship develops, and she almost changes her mind when Baoshu wants her to follow him to adventure. She gets the chance to go to a university in New York, so she starts a new life in a new country. As Yanyan struggles with her studies, she also struggles to make new friends and to adapt to a new culture.

April and the Dragon Lady

Lensey Namioka

April is a high school student who wants to be an ordinary American girl with high school activities, an American boyfriend, and a dream of going to college. Her Chinese family and traditions seem to always get in the way, especially her grandmother, whom April refers to as "the dragon lady." Her brother doesn't help her because, of course, he is the "first son" and has the honored place in the family. This is an interesting story of family generational conflicts.

Journey of the Sparrows

Fran Leeper Buss with Daisy Cubias

Maria has a chance to save her life, but it means leaving El Salvador where the *guardias* have killed her father and brother-in-law. She and her little brother and pregnant older sister smuggle into the U.S. by being nailed shut in a crate on the back of a truck. They make it to Chicago, but they are forced to rely on sewing and cleaning jobs for just a little money for food. She is helped by strangers, but life is not easy. Then, she must make the trip back down to rescue her little sister who was abandoned in Mexico when her mother was taken back to El Salvador by the police. They have to live in constant fear of being caught by immigration and sent back, where they will certainly be killed. This is a story of desperation and courage in fight to stay in a new country that offers not much more than a chance to stay alive.

Journey to Topaz

Yoshiko Uchida

Yuki lives with her brother and parents in a comfortable house in Berkeley, California until their world is torn apart on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. It was difficult to understand because of course they were loyal residents of the United States, but they were soon subjected to the most unfair and almost inhumane treatment. The story is told from the perspective of a young girl as she and her family try bravely to make the best of one of the worst mistakes ever made in the history of the United States.

Kira-Kira**Cynthia Kadohata**

Katie and her family move from a Japanese community in Iowa to Georgia, where her parents take jobs working in chicken processing plants. Katie idolizes her older sister Lynn, who seems to be perfect in every way. The family lives in poverty, experiencing the hostility of people who treat the Japanese with discrimination. When Lynn becomes very ill, Katie's love for her comes shining through like a glittering light – *kira-kira*.

Lupita Mañana**Patricia Beatty**

Lupita Torres lives in Mexico with her family. She has the nickname of Lupita Mañana because she always has a positive attitude about the future. When her father dies in a fishing accident, she and her older brother have to leave their home and make the dangerous trip north to live with their aunt in California so that they can earn money to support their mother and brothers and sisters. The story tells of their dangerous journey and their difficult life when they finally get to California. They often do not have enough to eat and are constantly afraid that they will be caught by *la migra*. Even for Lupita, it is difficult to maintain her positive attitude with all of their struggles.

The Namesake (Adult Rating)**Jhumpa Lahiri**

Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli have a traditional arranged marriage in Calcutta, India, and leave immediately for Cambridge, Massachusetts where he is an engineering professor. They name their first-born son Gogol after a favorite Russian author. Ashima and Ashoke gradually get used to living in the US, and the story evolves around Gogol, who grows up completely American. He is bored with his parents' friends, traditions, and habits. When he goes away to college and is working on his own, he has a series of relationships with American women, none of which work out. He finally meets and marries an Indian woman. In the end, Gogol understands the meaning of his name, his parents' cultural heritage and who he is as a person.

Thousand Pieces of Gold**RuthAnne Lum McCunn**

Lalu is a 13-year-old favored daughter of a farmer in China in the 1860s. Her father is forced to sell her to bandits for a bag of seed, and she is then sold as a slave to a saloon owner in America. This is a fictional story about a real person who becomes Polly Beemis, a successful Chinese woman during the Gold Rush in the West.

Typical American (Adult Rating)**Gish Jen**

Yifeng Chang, later to change his name to Ralph, comes to the United States to get a college degree. As he studies and learns English, he starts to become Americanized. Because he does not follow through with immigration requirements, he has to leave the university and becomes penniless. Ralph meets Helen through his sister, and the three of them live together and are living more and more like "typical Americans." They get involved with a Chinese con man who leads them to business deals to earn money quickly. In the end, they finally discover what is really important in life.

Under the Persimmon Tree**Suzanne Fisher Staples**

Najmah is a young Afghan girl who finds herself abandoned when her father and brother are forced to join the Taliban to fight the war and her mother and baby brother are killed by an air bomb. She has to find her way to safety, which happens to be the border town of Peshawar in Pakistan. She makes a promise to herself that she will return to claim the land and shepherd lifestyle in the hills in northern Afghanistan. She receives help from an American woman living in Pakistan with her Afghan husband, a doctor. Both of these characters face many difficulties trying to survive in the war-torn post 9/11 country.

Advanced Level

boat people (Adult Rating)

Mary Gardner

This story focuses on Galveston, Texas and a poor community of Vietnamese and blacks. The fathers are fishermen, and the children are struggling in American schools, trying to learn English. Trang, the product of an American soldier and Vietnamese mother, is trying to find her identity as she is forced to live with her aunt and uncle. Linh's mother is in the psychiatric ward of the hospital because she has a "ghost husband," so Linh has all the responsibilities of taking care of a family. Dr. Nguyen is a medical resident, but struggles with leaving his family behind in Vietnam while he adopts this new country as his own. All of the characters connect in some way as the readers learn about human life and conflict in this multi-cultural world.

Desirable Daughters (Adult Rating)

Bharati Mukherjee

Tara grew up in a privileged Hindu family in Calcutta, India. She had two sisters, and all of them were beautiful and had the best educations in private schools. Her marriage to Bish, which was arranged by her father, brought her to California, where her husband makes a fortune in Silicon Valley. She is now divorced and living in San Francisco with her teenage son and a lover. A stranger enters her life by explaining that he is her nephew from an affair that her sister had as a young girl. Tara is forced to confront her sisters who live in Bombay and New Jersey. No one wants to be truthful about the past. The story turns to mystery when Tara goes to the police with the suspicion that the "nephew" may not be who he says he is. The reader is given many details about Indian culture and the clash between the old and the new while reading an intriguing mystery.

Grass Roof, Tin Roof (Adult Rating)

Dao Strom

Tran is a writer in Vietnam, who is forced to leave in 1975 with her two fatherless children when she is suspected of subversive activity. She marries Hus, a Danish immigrant, and they settle in the country in northern California. The family lives in poverty and self-reliant isolation, with the community usually suspicious of the "foreigners." Even Hus, the father, is ashamed of his wife and her ways. The psychological story is told from the different viewpoints of the family members as they struggle in a dysfunctional emotional existence. The story ends with the daughter going back to Vietnam to visit family and make connections with her past.

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents (Adult Rating)

Julia Alvariz

The four Garcia sisters are uprooted from a comfortable life in the Dominican Republic, growing up in a respected and wealthy family. The family must flee to New York as political refugees. The stories come from the girls as they look back to their childhoods and realize what they have lost and also what they have had to go through to try to be "American." The stories start from the present time and look backward, contrasting the differences and relating the conflicts they had between the "old country" and their new home.

Jasmine (Adult)

Bharati Mukherjee

Jasmine has grown up as a Hindu in a small village in India during the time of partition. She marries at age 15, but her husband is violently killed by a bomb. She flees to America where she meets even more horror immediately after reaching the United States illegally. She settles first in an Indian neighborhood in New York, which she realizes is more isolating than her village. She becomes a "day mummy" for a small child of a couple in New York but has to flee again when her past catches up with her. Strangely, she settles in a small rural town in Iowa, where the farmers

are desperately trying to make ends meet in difficult financial times. The author not only shows how one person lives through pain and tragedy but also how some Americans deal with multicultural issues.

Monkey Bridge

Lan Cao

Mai Nguyen leaves Vietnam in 1975, just before the withdrawal of American troops. Mai's mother comes later, but they have to leave her grandfather behind. As Mai and her mother settle as refugees in Falls Church, Virginia, Mai must take on the role of the parent because her English skills are more proficient. Mai adapts to the culture, but she finds her mother's diaries that reveal secrets about her life and remind her of her homeland. She is constantly haunted about her memory of her grandfather, and she wants to try to bring him out of Vietnam. She wants to go away to college, like other American teenagers, but she is drawn to her past and her mother's secrets. The writer artfully creates pictures of a lush and beautiful life in the Mekong Delta that opposes the horrors of the war.

The Kite Runner (Adult Rating)

Khaled Hosseini

Amir has grown up in a privileged family in Afghanistan in the time period just before the Russians have invaded. He constantly tries to please his powerful father, but usually does not seem to succeed. His boyhood companion is Hassan, the son of the family's servant, who is devoted to Amir. Amir betrays this friendship, but then their lives are turned upside down because he and his father have to flee for their safety from Afghanistan to the U.S. Amir's somewhat comfortable life in the US is again interrupted by an old family friend begging him to come back to the now dangerous Afghanistan to save the son of his old friend. This story gives a picture of what life in this war-torn country is like, but it also tells the story of family love and loyalty to friendships.

The Love Wife (Adult Rating)

Gish Jen

Carnegie Wong is a second-generation Chinese who marries a blonde American. His mother, Mama Wong, was always against his wife, whom she calls Blondie, and influences the family even after her death by sending a distant relative from China, Lanlan, to live with them and be a caretaker, for the three children. Lanlan tries to make her own place in the US, but totally disrupts the family. The author shows us a funny but tragic story of a mixed race family in the United States.

The Tortilla Curtain (Adult Rating)

T.C. Boyle

Cándido and América have smuggled across the Mexican border but are forced to live in the wild in a canyon in a Los Angeles. They both struggle to earn barely enough money to buy food at day laborer jobs. Their lives connect with the lives of a wealthy suburban couple when Delaney strikes Cándido with his car on the curvy road on his way to his gated suburban home in the canyon. The author does an excellent job of showing the great differences between the two cultures and how misunderstandings and stereotyping can turn into tragedy for everyone involved.

Lesson Plan Outline
Immigrant Voices
Fiction Reading Project

Objectives:

By the end of the semester project students will:

- Understand the basic parts of fiction: setting, characters, conflict, plot, resolution, and theme
- Demonstrate comprehension of a fiction novel appropriate to individual reading level
- Develop metacognitive awareness of how reading for pleasure improves overall language proficiency
- Develop metacognitive awareness of individual strengths and weakness in reading practices
- Improve oral proficiency by practice in group work and individual reports
- Improve writing proficiency by writing short summaries

Procedure:

1. Introduce the concept of extended reading

Extended reading is pleasure reading to be done outside of class. The benefits of extended are increased fluency and language competency and vocabulary acquisition. In other words, this semester project gives them a chance to practice all the reading skills and develop reading speed and proficiency. Explain how the extended reading project fits into their overall course grade and course expectations.

2. Introduce the book choices

Introduce the concept of immigrant literature. You may have them form small groups to discuss their perspectives on the issue of immigration and their own personal experiences. From the annotated list of immigrant literature, choose the books that you feel are most appropriate for the level of your students according to the readability levels. Make sure that you have a copy of each of the books available to show to the students. It will be beneficial for you to have read all the

books that you have chosen so that you can talk to your students about the books and judge appropriateness for your students.

Introduce each of the books by showing the book and briefly describing the plot. Explain the readability levels of Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced if you have chosen some books from the different levels. To guide the students in choosing a book at the appropriate reading level, explain the "5 per page" guideline. The students should be able to read one page of the book without having difficulty with no more than 5 words. If there are more than 5 words per page that the student does not know, then the book may be too difficult. Allow some time for the students to look at the books and make a selection. Set a deadline for the students to obtain their own copy of the book and bring it to class; the books on the list can be found in a public library or purchased in most bookstores or online. If more students want to purchase their books online from Amazon.com for example, you may want to organize a group order process in order to get free shipping.

3. **Book Check #1 (1/4 of the book should be read)**

Introduce the fiction literature concepts of **setting** and **character** development. Divide the class into groups of students who are reading the same book. Give them time to plan a group presentation with the following points:

- Describe the **setting** of the book. Make sure that the class knows where and when the novel takes place. It would be good to have a world map so that the group can point out to the class where the novel takes place.
- Describe the main **character** of the book. Include what this person looks like, what his/her personality is like, and what this person's job is during the day. Do you like this person? Why or why not?
- Explain to the class what is happening in this country at the time of the novel. What is the political or economic situation of most people at that time in that country? Students may have to do a bit of research for this part.
- Be prepared to answer classmates' questions.

discussing this video may spark some discussion about the issue of immigration and some of these themes. (Any faculty member is welcome to borrow my copy of this video.)

Explain and discuss these themes in a group and then have students make notes of specific examples in these themes as they read their books. Having students take notes with the attached graphic organizer might be beneficial.

Group the students in small groups with their notes from the reading. After the discussion, the group should pick one theme and one specific example from the book to illustrate that theme. Assign each group a short class presentation about their novel that illustrates one of these themes. Following are some suggestions for the modes of reporting:

- Draw a picture that portrays a specific example in the action of the book that illustrates the chosen theme. Show the picture and read that part of the book to your classmates.
- Draw a cartoon with dialog bubbles and read that part of the book.
- Write a short role play with dialog and act out a specific example from the book.
- Write a "Dear Abby" letter illustrating one of the themes. Then, write Abby's response to the letter. Read both to the class.

Design an assessment rubric that includes their individual notes (graphic organizer) and their group participation.

6. Book Check #4 (Book should be finished)

Arrange time during class for an individual oral interview with each student. Use the attached Oral Interview Question sheet as a guideline for your students. Each interview should take no longer than 10 to 15 minutes. Design a rubric that assesses oral and aural competency as well as completeness of answers.