

ESL PROGRAMS



Meeting the Needs of English Learners

For over twenty years, College of Marin has been addressing the needs of English learners through its high quality English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs. Through free non-credit ESL classes, credit ESL classes and a fee-based Intensive English Program, College of Marin has helped countless Marin residents and international students from over 50 countries fulfill their educational, career and personal goals.

Our ESL programs are designed to respond to the needs of the growing English learner population in Marin. While Marin is less ethnically diverse than the rest of California, the populations growing most quickly in the county are Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander, many of whom are English learners. Almost a fifth of Marin residents speak a language other than English at home, according to the 2000 Census.

Comprehensive Program

The ESL programs at College of Marin benefit all segments of the Marin community as well as the international student community, serving English learners with all levels of English proficiency. Beginning to low-intermediate classes are offered for free in our non-credit program; intermediate and advanced courses are offered in our credit program; and high beginning to advanced classes are offered in a concentrated format in our Intensive English Program. Our goal is to help students transform their language skills and thus provide a

bridge to educational and career opportunities. Many College of Marin ESL students have entered the ESL program with limited English skills and have gone on to receive an Associate degree, vocational certificate, or have transferred to a four-year university.

College of Marin is recognized for the high quality of its ESL programs. Our ESL faculty and staff are experienced, committed to their students, and well regarded by members of the community. ESL faculty members possess advanced degrees in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), Education, and English, credentials that allow them to provide an effective educational experience for students. Counselors who specialize in working with ESL students are also available to help students make educational plans. The ESL office staff, often the first contact for any new student, are known for "going the extra mile" to help students access and navigate the college. Evening and Saturday office hours make it convenient for working adults to get the help they need. We also have an ESL computer lab on campus, equipped with language-learning software, a range of books and books on tape, videos and other resources for English learners.

Community Connections

In an effort to meet the tremendous ESL need in Marin County, College of Marin is working with other ESL commu-

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nity providers. In collaboration with other providers, we initiated an ESL Community Fair in 2003. The Fair, which is held twice a year, provides Marin residents with information about ESL resources and other services for the English learner community.

The College also recently entered into a partnership with the Marin Conservation Corps and Tamalpais Adult Education to create an ESL and Basic Skills Computer Lab in the Canal neighborhood of San Rafael. At this convenient location, students are able to improve their English, work on basic math skills and prepare for the GED for free.

Free Non-Credit ESL Classes

College of Marin recognizes the need within the Marin community for access to free ESL classes. In response to this need, the College offers numerous free ESL classes at its campus in Kentfield. To best serve the local community, the College also offers free ESL classes at various locations throughout Marin County, including San Rafael, Novato and West Marin. Each semester these classes provide the opportunity for nearly 1,000 students to improve their English skills and work towards achieving their dreams.

Credit ESL Classes

For students with low-intermediate to advanced English proficiency, the College offers a number of ESL classes for credit. Each semester, approximately 500 students take advantage of these classes. These classes focus on specific skill areas—grammar, reading/vocabulary, writing, speaking/listening—and prepare students for the demands of taking college classes in other departments. Many students in this program are pursuing academic degrees or transfer, while others are seeking certificates and preparation for specific vocational careers.

Intensive English Program

For Marin residents and international students looking to improve their English skills in a concentrated 16-week course,



the College provides the Intensive English Program. The Intensive English Program is open to students who have had one year of academic English or the equivalent (high beginning to advanced levels of proficiency). This program is designed for students who want to become more proficient in English very quickly. Classes meet 20 hours per week, with four optional hours of conversation seminars, and are limited to 10 to 15 students. This structure has proven to be very successful and has helped many students achieve their specific goals and objectives.

How to Register For the ESL Programs

For information on how to register for ESL classes at College of Marin, please call the ESL Office at 415.485.9642.