



**Monroe Community College**

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK



# ESOL Resources for Faculty & Staff

ESOL/TRS Department  
Division of Academic Foundations

Each year, MCC welcomes over 100 international visa-holding students, 700+ immigrant and refugee students, and countless Puerto Rican students and new U.S. citizens. Together these diverse students from countries around the world make up the non-native English speaking population at MCC.

The MCC ESOL Program serves approximately 250-300 students each semester. Most of our students are immigrants or refugees who plan to live in the United States permanently; some are international visa-holding students who are temporarily living in the United States; others are US citizens.

Not all non-native speaking students at MCC are ESOL Program students. Many non-native speaking students place at the ENG 101 level. A few non-native students independently register for courses with no pre-requisites and haven't taken any ESOL or English classes.

In addition to language and cultural diversity, our non-native speaking students are educationally diverse as well. Some students come directly from high school; others have had professions in their countries and wish to update their skills or change careers.

Though the resources and suggestions in this booklet were compiled by the ESOL Program Faculty with ESOL Program students in mind, they are applicable to any non-native speaking students in your classes.

## Second Language Acquisition

Before perusing this booklet for resources and tips, it may be useful to know some facts about **second language acquisition**.

- Academic English and social English are very different. Typically, students develop social English in 6 months to 2 years, while academic English can take up to 7 years.
- Students should be fluent and clear in English, but native-like accuracy will take many years to develop. It takes significant exposure to and practice with the language to acquire a new language at an academic and professional level. Non-native speakers will continue to improve their English skills while at MCC and throughout the rest of their educational experience, likely only reaching native-like accuracy towards the end of graduate school, if ever.
- Most non-native speaking students will only be successful if they are willing to work much harder than their native speaking counterparts, and if they are willing to utilize the support systems put in place by the college. Sometimes they'll have time for additional studying, and sometimes they won't. Encourage them to increase study time and time spent with tutors.
- Students will have better days than others. Being tired, stressed, hungry, nervous, etc. can affect second language skills. Also, some students "get rusty" during the extended vacations between semesters and may need 1-2 weeks of being back in school to return to their previously achieved proficiency levels.

This resource booklet contains the following sections:

1. Tips for Addressing Weak Language Skills
2. ESOL Program Resources
3. Culture "Cheat Sheet"
4. Common Questions: Who Do I Call?
5. References
6. Contacts

# 1. Tips for Addressing Weak Language Skills

## When a student has weak reading skills-

- Understand that the problem may be based on lack of vocabulary as opposed to poor reading comprehension skills. Provide vocabulary lists.
  - If **academic** or **discipline** specific vocabulary is the problem, encourage students to study word lists.
  - If **general everyday vocabulary** is the problem, encourage students to read easy books as a way to increase vocabulary. *(Roughly 98% of vocabulary in a text must be known for adequate comprehension, and 99% coverage is needed for pleasure reading.)*
- Suggest students with poor reading comprehension skills take one of the REA courses offered by the TRS program.
- Classroom Considerations-
  - Print legibly on the board; not all students can read cursive.
  - Provide class readings in advance.
  - Avoid texts that are highly idiomatic, use very colloquial language, or include many cultural references.
  - Provide content-specific vocabulary lists.
  - Allow extended test-time if time is not important. *(Research shows that even fluent non-native speakers read 50-70% slower in their foreign language than in their native language.)*

## When a student has weak writing skills-

- Refer the student to the ESOL tutors in the Tutoring & Academic Assistance Center at Brighton or the Downtown Learning Commons; in addition to teaching students to edit, they teach grammar lessons based on student errors, provide additional practice exercises, and model self-editing strategies. See ESOL Resourcing Referral Form in the appendix.
- Verify that the student knows that the expectation is for him/her to edit (write a 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of) EVERY out of class writing assignment.
- Find out if the student has taken ENG 101. If not, suggest the high advanced ESL 201 Reading/Writing class. If the student is currently enrolled in ESL 201 or ENG 101, suggest-
  - ESL 178 Grammar in Writing, offered both fall and spring semesters for students who are currently enrolled in ESL 201 or ENG 101, or have previously completed ESL 201. *(Based on enrollment, this class may be offered as a late start, and every semester students are accepted through the end of Week 1.)*
- Tell the student to read, read, read!!! Easy to read materials provide needed exposure to grammatical structures. *(8<sup>th</sup> grade level is an easy, enjoyable level for MCC ESOL students; most can handle young adult books. Students also benefit from reading content they enjoy, such as parenting, sports, or gossip magazines.)*
- Classroom Considerations-
  - Even students who are good writers will often write as little as possible, so give very specific directions for the length required for assignments.  
**Instead of:** Write 2 paragraphs.  
**Try Specific:** Write 2 well-developed paragraphs of at least 250-300 words each.
  - Explicitly teach about plagiarism specific to your discipline early in the semester. One lesson or conversation is often not sufficient. Refer students to ESOL tutors to work on summarizing and paraphrasing skills. (See *Consider Cultural Effects* section for more information on plagiarism.)

## When a student has weak listening or conversation skills-

- Suggest the student watch movies – once with subtitles, a second time without subtitles (the same movie!). Many movies are available in the MCC library.
- Suggest the student read books while listening to the audio. Many audiobooks are available in the MCC library.
- If the student hasn't already taken ESL 158, Oral Communication, suggest it for the following semester.
- Classroom Considerations-
  - Emphasize key lecture points both orally and in print.
  - Provide discussion questions in advance.
  - Consider providing the lecture notes/outline or allowing recording of lectures.
  - Try “flipping” the class.
  - Use visuals whenever possible.

## When you are speaking to non-native speakers-

- Don't speak louder.
- Speak a little slower than “normal American” pace, but still naturally.
- Give the student processing time before expecting a response; do not immediately repeat (or rephrase) what you have just said.
- When repeating, repeat the question or sentence verbatim before trying to rephrase. Rephrasing requires the student to process two or more utterances and decreases the likelihood of comprehension.
- Use simple language.
  - Simplify sentence structures.  
**Instead of:** In order to receive full credit for assignments, you must turn them in by the due date listed on the course information sheet, or else I will deduct late points.  
**Try Simple:** All assignments are listed on the course calendar. Late assignments lose points.
  - Be clear.  
**Instead of:** Even though you are working very hard in this class and completing all of your assignments, I am concerned that you may not pass. We won't know until the final exam, so we'll have to wait and see.  
**Try Simple:** I know you are working very hard. But your grade in this class is low. You must do well on the final exam to pass the class.  
*(Avoid using the word “fail” in any situation before the end of the semester. Students often don't understand the modal “might” and believe they are going to fail for certain and prematurely withdraw.)*
  - Avoid idiomatic expressions and slang.  
**Instead of:** I will bend over backwards to help any student, but you have to ask me if you need help.  
**Try Simple:** I am here to help you. But, you must ask me if you need help.

## 2. ESOL Program Resources

The following items are provided to all ESOL students. Students who have not taken ESOL classes may not know about these resources. They are also available for these students to pick up outside the ESOL Faculty offices at Brighton in Building 11-227 and Downtown at 374-H.

1. **Core Vocabulary:** academic and general service word vocabulary packet
2. **Connecting Words:** transition, coordinator, and subordinator reference sheet
3. **ESOL Resourcing:** tutoring hours and location flyer – faculty, please use the referral form on the last page of this booklet if you want to send students for help with a specific grammar structure

## 3. Culture “Cheat Sheet”

There is no cultural “cheat-sheet,” but here are a few examples of things that we can do as teachers to make sure that culture doesn’t affect learning in a negative way.

- Learn the pronunciation of students’ names and how they would like to be addressed in class; it’s often not by the “first” name that appears on your roster. Additionally, students will call you “teacher” as a sign of respect until you tell them what you want to be called.
- Assign group roles or establish rules of turn-taking for group work because students from collective cultures (Asian cultures, for example) won’t speak up until every person is quiet because it’s considered rude.
- Be explicit about when assignments may be redone and if/when extra credit is available. Grade negotiating in some cultures is as common as negotiating car prices in the USA.
- Provide periodic grade review. In many countries, grades are given based on status or relationship with the teacher, not performance, and students may think they have an A/B if you are kind and nice to them.
- Offer to make scheduled appointments during office hours. Most students won’t come to office hours even if you repeatedly encourage them because they feel it imposes on the teacher, and it’s not a common practice in many countries. Instead, they may monopolize your time after class or during the break.
- When talking to students about critical issues, especially attendance or progress, do so privately. Many students come from cultures where interpersonal relationships are primary, and it’s crucial for students to save face.
- Rethink “common knowledge.” For example, consider allowing Celsius vs. Fahrenheit or metric vs. US imperial on timed tests. Avoid or explain cultural references, especially on tests.
- If you feel frustrated, offended, or angered by something a student has said, try saying, “I am hearing xyz. Is this what you mean?”
- Be aware of non-verbal cues. They are different in different cultures. For example, did you know that Iraqi men may cross their arms when having a serious conversation to show respect for the person to whom they are speaking? If you feel confused or frustrated by something a student has done, ask the student about it. If you feel that something you have done may have offended a student, ask the student about it.
- If a student plagiarizes, do not assume it was intentional. Plagiarism is a cultural concept. Many cultures do not use citations if ideas have been paraphrased; some cultures consider anything put into print as public knowledge, so when they “synthesize” (cut & paste) writing from multiple sources, they don’t think of it as

plagiarism; some students with weak reading comprehension or summary writing skills unintentionally plagiarize.

- Remember that sometimes behavior is personal, not cultural. If a student is displaying very unusual or disturbing behavior, seek advice from an MCC expert.

## 4. Common Questions: Who Do I Call?

There are many people at MCC who are here to support faculty who teach and staff who work with non-native speaking students. However, it can be difficult to know who to call or email, and the answer varies based on the type of situation. The categories below explain who to call for different circumstances that may arise. There are also some samples of some of the questions that faculty or staff have asked. All contact information is listed on the back of this booklet.

### Academic Support for any non-native speaking students

#### ESOL Faculty Katie Leite and Pamela Fornieri

- *A student is really struggling to understand the class readings/lectures. What should I tell him to do?*
- *A student needs help with editing her papers before submitting them. Where should I send her?*
- *A student has trouble speaking with the other classmates? Are there any courses I can recommend?*

### Cultural Support for any non-native speaking students

#### ESOL Cross Cultural Counselor Don Beech and GEIS Assistant Director Audra Dion

- *Even when I say that work must be completed independently, three of my students from the same country always give each other the answers. Don't they have rules about cheating in their country?*
- *On the first day of class, I always greet each of my students at the door with a big smile, hello, and a firm handshake. My female Muslim student seemed uncomfortable and embarrassed. Did I do something wrong?*
- *I heard about the terrible earthquake in Nepal. I have a Nepalese student who I am concerned about.*

### Advisement and Grade Issues

#### ESOL Cross Cultural Counselor Don Beech (for refugee & immigrant students)

#### GEIS Assistant Director Audra Dion (for international visa-holding students)

- *A student is going to have to repeat my course. Is it better to encourage her to withdraw now or stay until the end, but earn a failing grade?*
- *A student has been absent 5 times. I'm going to withdraw him if he is absent again. I've spoken to him. Could you please speak with him, too?*
- *I am confused why this student is placed in my class. It seems that she doesn't meet the prerequisites. Could you please check her record for me?*

### Information about Professional Development, Opportunities & Cultural Events

#### GEIS Director

- *I would like to find out more about teaching an on-location course or applying for a Fulbright. Where do I start?*
- *How can I learn more about collaborative online international learning (COIL) and opportunities to work with international faculty and their students?*
- *How can I include more global learning outcomes in my course when the curriculum is already so full?*
- *I would like to invite a guest speaker to my class to offer some international perspectives. How can I find one?*
- *What international events are going on at MCC this semester?*



## References

*Creating Campus Bridges for Increased International Student Success*, TESOL Convention 2015 handout, Rhonda Petree and Charlie Lavin from the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, English Language Transition Program.

*Tips on Teaching ESL Students*, University of North Carolina College of Arts & Sciences, Writing Center, website retrieved 4/30/2015.

*CCCC Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers*, Conference on College Composition and Communication, revised 2009.

*Reading in a Second Language*, Grabe, 2009.

*Teaching Vocabulary*, Nation, 2008.

*Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*, Nation, 2001.

*Unknown Vocabulary Density and Reading Comprehension*, Hu & Nation, 2000.

# **MCC Contacts & Resources**

## **ESOL Program Faculty, Bldg. 9, Room 240**

### **Katie Leite**

ESOL Program Coordinator & Full-time Faculty

kleite@monroecc.edu

585-292-3132

### **Pamela Fornieri**

ESOL Full-time Faculty

pfornieri@monroecc.edu

585-292-2354

*Pamela teaches at the Downtown Campus on M/W/F mornings.*

## **Global Education & International Services Office, Bldg. 11, Room 208**

### **Don Beech**

ESOL Cross-Cultural Counselor

dbeech@monroecc.edu

585-292-2345

### **Christina Lee**

Coordinator of Global Education

clee40@monroecc.edu

585-292-3173

### **Carly O'Keefe**

Coordinator of International Services

cokeefe7@monroecc.edu

585-292-3171

### **Beth Krowl**

Office Clerk

ekrowl@monroecc.edu

585-292-3172

## **ESOL Resourcing (ESOL Trained Tutors)**

### **Martha MacDonald at the Brighton Campus**

Academic Services Sr. Technical Assistant

mmacdonald@monroecc.edu

585-292-3396

*Students sign up for tutoring in the Tutoring & Academic Assistance Center, Bldg. 11-211*

### **Ann Bauer at the Downtown Campus**

Academic Services

abauer@monroecc.edu

585-262-6202

*Sign up for tutoring in the in the Downtown Campus Learning Commons, Room 440*



**Monroe Community College**  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK



# ESOL Resources

## for MCC Faculty

ESOL/TRS Department  
Division of Academic Foundations





**The ESOL Program Website has up-to-date links to websites for practicing reading, listening, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary skills.**

ESOL Program <http://www.monroecc.edu/depts/esol/>

Katie Leite, Full-time Faculty and ESOL Coordinator  
Office 08-606 | Phone (585) 292-3132 | Email [kleite@monroecc.edu](mailto:kleite@monroecc.edu)

Pamela Fornieri, Full-time Faculty  
Office 08-606 | Phone (585) 292-2354 | Email [pfornieri@monroecc.edu](mailto:pfornieri@monroecc.edu)

Don Beech, ESOL Cross-Cultural Counselor  
Office 11-258 | Phone (585) 292-2345 | Email [dbeech@monroecc.edu](mailto:dbeech@monroecc.edu)

Adjunct Office | Brighton Campus 8-611

Adjunct Office | Downtown Campus, 374-H

## **Global Education & International Services Office**

### **Audra Dion**

Asst. Director Global Education & International Services  
[adion@monroecc.edu](mailto:adion@monroecc.edu)  
585-292-3172

### **Gale Lynch**

Director Global Education & International Services  
[glynch6@monroecc.edu](mailto:glynch6@monroecc.edu)  
585-292-3173

## **Global Education & International Services Office**

### **Audra Dion**

Asst. Director Global Education & International Services  
[adion@monroecc.edu](mailto:adion@monroecc.edu)  
585-292-3172

### **Gale Lynch**

Director Global Education & International Services  
[glynch6@monroecc.edu](mailto:glynch6@monroecc.edu)

585-292-3173

Free Tutoring is available in ESOL and other subject areas. For more information contact:

Brighton Campus  
Martha McDonald, Academic Support Services  
Academic Foundations Learning Center 11-211

Damon City Campus  
Sandy Chamberlain, Academic Support Services  
Interdisciplinary Programs Learning Resource Center

*Updated September 2018*