

# English Language Curriculum Development and Implementation for ESL Students in an American University

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to identify how the development and implementation of the English language curriculum for ESL students in an American university. The ESL program helps students that are not native English speakers to learn how to read, write, and talk in English. This study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative designs. It comprised of three sample groups of an administrator, two teachers, and thirty-two ESL students. Data was collected using semi structured interviews and surveys. The study revealed that the curriculum development process conformed to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Standards. The process took into consideration the input and needs of teachers and students. However, there was a lack of course books tailored specifically for the ESL curriculum. Moreover, the learning process was intensive and took a short time that limited the effective learning of some students. Despite a few limitations the results were an accurate representation of the ESL curriculum.

**Keywords:** ESL, administrator, curriculum, standards.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

English as a Second Language (ESL) programs at American universities help students learn to read, write, and speak the English language. The programs offer classes of varying levels of difficulty to educate their students who are not native English speakers to improve their English language skills. Most importantly, in ESL classes, students are rehearsing for life itself as for communication, and as a result, the implications of an ESL program are far-reaching.

In this case, the ESL program follows strategies and factors to develop and implement the English language curriculum to improve students' language skills in order to master the language. This involves improving a student's reading, speaking, and vocabulary in English, as well as their comprehension of written and spoken English language. However, there are different learners with different capacities to master the same curriculum and understand what it entails. The nature of an ESL program ensures that the students will be very different demographically, and because of this, the program must be developed in such a manner as to accommodate students of different backgrounds. As a result, there are a number of challenges when it comes to teaching the English language to certain individuals.

How do American ESL faculty members develop and implement the English language curriculum for ESL students? That is the aim of this study. This question has crossed my mind many times since I was a student in the Intensive English Program (IEP) at an American university in the Midwest of the United States two years ago. During these past two years, I had countless questions about the theoretical and conceptual side of the education system. I began to become interested in how the curriculum was developed and wondered, "Why did someone choose to implement these lessons in this manner? Does it make it more or less effective to deliver it this way? Would the students be better off working in groups for this activity?" I wondered how the curriculum development influences creativity among ESL students.

### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research aims at discovering how the IEP faculty members at an American university in the Midwest develop and implement the English language curriculum to increase English language proficiency and to enhance academic skills for students whose primary language is not English. Also, the study aims at finding out how changes to

the curriculum development influence the students' proficiency in the classroom and whether students are currently satisfied with the curriculum. Based on the research topic, developing certain strategies for ESL learners is necessary, as it helps the learners to develop fluency in English, even though English is not their native language. As a teacher of English, which is a foreign language in my country, Saudi Arabia, I strongly believe that well-developed curriculum enhances the ability of students to understand the subject and learning materials. Also, effective curriculum guides teachers to implement the material by choosing the best instruction methods that enable students to excel academically and leaves them satisfied with the class.

The curriculum development has a significant influence on a student's attitudes towards individual subjects and towards their general performance in academics. An excellent curriculum that meets the set goals and objectives the administration creates a positive environment in schools. Accordingly, the study was based on conducting semi-structured interviews and surveying students to examine the curriculum development and implementation in the Intensive English Program I attended two years ago. It was focused on investigating the specific strategies that the IEP adopts to present a good curriculum development. For instance, the administrator was asked whether he or she felt obligated to develop or revise the ESL curriculum. Also, the interview inquired from him or her on how best to make changes to an already existing curriculum. Additionally, the teachers were asked whether they would like to change or add anything to the ESL curriculum they teach. Furthermore, the students were asked to provide their perception of the ESL curriculum.

Any new curriculum developments must consider the different effects it has on the environment, religion, higher status, and politics. This is referring to the fact that the world as we know it today is very different from the world some decades ago. Today, technology and globalization influence the developments made in every system. Social habits that existed some years ago cannot compare to those of the contemporary world. Therefore, there is need to change the curriculum that will prepare students to interact appropriately with the society upon successful completion of the curriculum.

English language curriculum development and implementation plays an important role in establishing effective teaching methods that would enable ESL students to speak English with fluency. The study provides proposed strategies that will enable such students with diverse backgrounds provided with specialized learning to help to increase their ability in grasping the English language and developing fluency. The research project was conducted to answer the following question:

- How do American ESL faculty members interpret their experience with the curriculum development and its implementation at an Intensive English Program (IEP)?
- What are the IEP students' perceptions of the curriculum followed in the program?

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The development of the literature work illustrated below will describe controversies surrounding the English language curriculum development and implementation for ESL students in the US. From the review of the chosen literatures, there will be an analysis of an in-depth scholarly work about the development of the English Language curriculum. The study will establish whether there are similar themes, factors, or varieties that may be related to the topic through two questions: "How do American ESL faculty members interpret their experience with the curriculum development and its implementation at an Intensive English Program (IEP)?" and "What are the IEP students' perceptions of the curriculum followed in the program?" The research questions act as a guideline to the study with a view to achieving the purpose of the literature review.

### The Development of English Language Curriculum and Assessment of ESL Students

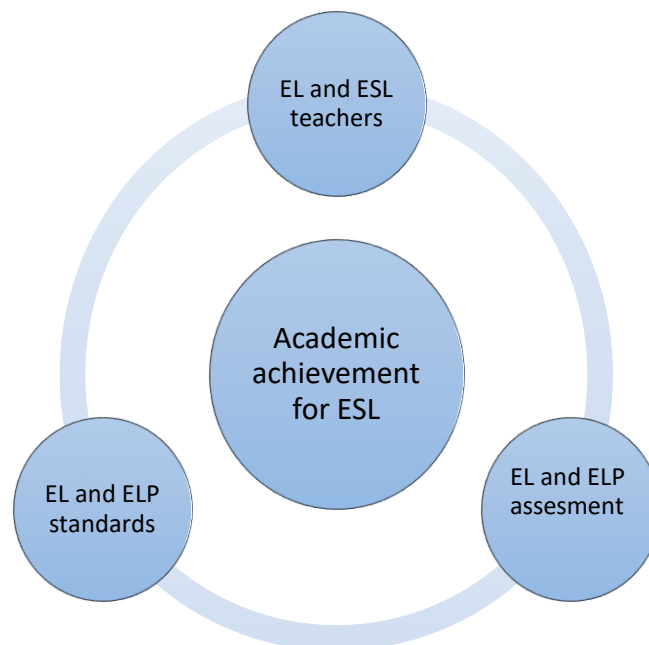
Abedi (2004) reported that a vast amount of information has been written about the development of English and its assessments in the United States, while Bailey and Huang (2011) stated that there have been hundreds of studies done and programs evaluated to ascertain the applicability of bilingual or English-only and whether they serve English Language Learners best. Much of this information relates to the policies and programs developed to ensure the effectiveness of English language curriculum. There has been an increasing amount of attention to the assessments of the number of individuals who have been learning English. As a result, there have been policy developments regarding the English instruction.

The development of English language curriculum and assessment for English Second Language students in the US falls into two broad categories. The first is the exclusion of English language learners from assessment programs due to challenges in language proficiency, which influences academic achievements (Mlynarczyk & Marcia, 2002). The second is the accommodation of English language teaching in the curriculum through various principles that ensure interactivity in the learning process. This review follows research from TESOL on the development of the ESL in an American university. The study discusses the professionalism in the development of English language proficiency among the ESL students (Ewert, 2011).

**The Exclusion of the ESL Students from the Program Assessment.** Mlynarczyk and Marcia (2002) reported that those individuals who engaged in learning English were excluded in the assessment programs due to concerns of confounding influences as a result of language proficiency, which influences academic achievements. In the previous years there were changes in the educational system to accommodate changes regarding the assessments of students (Harvey, 2012). The most notable change is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Together with other changes, these developments sought to formulate an assessment for monitoring and assessing learning in school to ensure that there was progress made towards a suitable standard for students (Rolstad, 2005).

**Accommodation of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Curriculum.** The overall curriculum development to assist English learning and teaching has followed a unique approach. The overall plan has been transformed to accommodate language teaching in the curriculum and ensure its effectiveness. Additionally, the process and methodology for learning English has followed a number of principles (Bailey, Butler, & Sato 2007).

The chart below shows cooperation of academic achievements for ESL to English Language (EL) and teachers, standards, and assessment of English Language proficiency (ELP). In learning the English Language, students' interaction with teachers and other students increases positive perception, and other students' reactions to ESL students affects the students' motivation for learning (Lynch & Davidson, 1994).



**Figure 1. Accommodation of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Curriculum**

There are policies that have been developed to help teachers motivate their ESL students. These ensure that the techniques used by the teachers guarantee that principle of beliefs and theories about the nature of language. These create systems that integrate ideas and theories of language that are used in teaching methods and change instructional practices used in teaching the English Language. For example, the creation of policies that mix beliefs and ideas of the aspects of language in teaching techniques helps the ESL teachers to follow the approved language skills in the syllabus and implement content-based ESL curriculum. In addition, there have been changes in the instructional practices of teaching language and the mastery of it (Curtin, 2005). As a result, there has been a more accurate approach that allows for interaction in the learning process. Most of these developments are made to ensure the effectiveness of language and its development.

### Issues and Challenges Limiting the Development of English Proficiency

Porter (2011) reported that there are a number of issues and challenges that limit the development of English proficiency. Several studies have shown that the causes of these problems include lack of definition of the roles of teachers in language development, lack of definition of the standards, unclear purpose of assessment, and student perception of English language study (Kroll, 1990; Richards, 2013). Pawan (2008) reported that there is an increased challenge when introducing instruction for ELLs. There is the need for higher skills to fit the demands for ELLs instruction. Additionally, there is a lack of motivation to sustain the progress for success. There has been a general development that the failure for interdisciplinary approach and integrative curriculum limits the progress of English language learners. Clearly, there would be no language development if the teacher fails to provide affordable feedback to students. However, the assessment being done by the teacher has been found to be inconsistent. As a result, language development fails to reach the standards, hence affecting the scores of the students. The variability and inconsistency developed by the teacher limits the ability of the students to make affordable decisions (Llosa, 2011).

**Variability in the Interpretation and Application of Language ELT.** ESL teachers play a critical role in the development and implementation of English language in the curriculum. The goals they set determine the standard rules the ESL students are likely to acquire after assessment of their proficiency of English language (Mohan, Leung & Davison, 2001). The challenges with variability in the interpretation and application of communication standards by teachers include the demands of the content knowledge the language requires teachers to achieve and times them to prepare for the sessions. Therefore, it makes them start on the task they may not be at ease with, resulting in unreliable results and below-typical language learners. The ESL teachers may put more emphasis on the content area and neglect teaching of the language skills, failing to develop the language due to exclusion of some crucial components. The inability of teachers to achieve goals makes it a challenge to effectively teach the ESL curriculum (Ansary & Babaii, 2002).

Variability in interpretation and application of language standards by teachers of ESL and the limited professionalism and quality standards among teachers pose challenges in the development of English language instruction (Zhou, 2009). The diversity of students in the American universities raises the need to establish a language standard that can be used to evaluate the performance of students in each university. This results in the motive behind the study of English Language as ESL by students. The standard language enables the student to undergo an equal and fair assessment of his or her competence in the area of survey by passing a systematic assessment. Moreover, language is the basic channel for passing knowledge and communicating with the teachers. According to Zamel (1995), teaching ESL students requires essay tests and writing papers in classes, which integrate language learning to achieve the goal of learning any subject. As a result, it makes the English language a standard language among the American students in the United States.

**Limited Professionalism and Quality Standards among Teachers.** ESL teachers are limited in number. Therefore, it leads to an increased workload that requires the preparation of the content as established in the material for a large number of students. Consequently, this increased workload is responsible for diminishing the effectiveness of teaching. Some ESL teachers may transition to other careers because they do not feel at ease with the workload (Brown, 2004).

**Lack of Definition of the Roles of Teachers in Language Development.** Definition of roles is important in achieving the set objectives. The roles of teachers apply in the definition of the English Second Learners teachers in the way that they execute their duties. For example, the content the ESL teachers teach must be well-defined to avoid exclusion in teaching. Therefore, it ensures that teachers do not teach out of content but stick to the specific course outline within the set syllabus and cover the assigned topics. As a result, the language teaching will provide students with adequate and thorough communication skills pursuant to the curriculum at hand (Celce-Murcia & McIntosh 1991).

**Lack of Definition of Standards and Unclear Purpose of Assessment.** A lack of standard methods to determine the retention of English language among the students results in low standards of students with low-quality writing skills in English language and grammar. The methods some ESL teachers use to evaluate are based on assumptions and neglect other characteristics of the students that may have an impact on their performance. Teachers have inconsistent methods of assessing the ESL students on their progress, resulting in bias due to the assumption that English students are actually more knowledgeable than ESL students. This appears to contribute to the challenges of developing an ESL program, as teachers cannot identify the actual achievements of the students (Richards, 2013).

**Establish Standards Language to be used in Assessment System.** The challenges in developing ELP include students with bilingual backgrounds. According to Zhou (2008), the ability for a student with a bilingual background to understand a new language depends on the particular ELP program. For example, full inclusion provides students with a chance of borrowing words that enable them to more effectively learn English.

### **To Ensure Progression of English Language Learners**

Most important goal is to ensure the progression of those individuals who engage in language learning. The development of proficiency in language has a relationship with academic English. As a result, the state saw it of good undertaking to accommodate the use of standard language in the assessment systems. According to Zhou (2008), a learner's ability to perceive a new language is dependent on certain conditions, such as the learner's inherent ability to grasp the language, strategies used in learning, and language training. Moreover, he explains the similarities and differences various learners possess in the process of learning a new language. This method determines how learners approach the strategies of learning a new language and their eventual level of success.

The strategies for advancement include focusing on the writing abilities of English learners, which fall into sub categories like cognitive, social, and metacognitive. This categorization ensures the ESL students' progress in the field that they specialize in while attending the university. Cohen (2011) states that the strategies used in learning the English language follow earlier reviews from which the language learners' strategies were developed while Zhou, A. A. (2009) reported that the two sets of strategies both indicate that the ESL learners are conscious of language skills. Therefore, it helps them to improve their verbal skills along with their grammar.

One of the best means to repair a compartmentalized program is scaffolding. Scaffolding is a system that provides the teachers with an effective approach for integration of ELL instruction into content-area instruction (Llosa, 2011).

Llosa (2011) says that students who have not developed literacy skills due to limited access to education most probably come from areas where English is the official language, but they have been unable to develop proficiency. These students are also unable to demonstrate competence in other disciplines because they lack the necessary language skills to communicate effectively.

Schools that work most effectively with ESL learners share certain qualities and beliefs about teaching and learning. Abedi (2004) states that in order to ensure progression of English language learners and avoid a high number of dropouts, it is fair to include their native languages in the English curriculum. Educational instruction should focus on the students' bilingualism and multilingualism. The school must also appreciate their cultures and practices. In the 21st century, anyone who has plurilingual abilities is in a better economic position. Therefore, the benefits from using the home language in a child's education should not be ignored (Gracia & Sylvan 2011).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection. Data collection consisted of interviews and surveys with the Intensive English Program faculty members and students. Semi-structured interviews were planned with IEP faculty members in order to provide more in-depth data collection about the English Language curriculum. Also, a survey among thirty-two ESL students provided their opinions regarding the English language curriculum.

#### **Participants**

The participants consisted of those who were active in an IEP at an American university in the Midwest of the United States. These participants were one ESL administrator, two ESL teachers, and 32 ESL students of various ages, races, ethnicities, and genders. Thus, there were indirect restrictions on nationality (i.e., they were not English native speakers) within the sample population of ESL students, but there were no formal restrictions based on nationality. The ESL student participants were from different ESL classes, representing levels two through six (because of the English reading comprehension skills required to read the survey itself, the level one class was not included). A set of thirty-five students was required, yet fewer students participated due to unforeseen issues.

#### **Materials**

Two types of instruments were used in this research project: semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A), and a student survey (see Appendix B) as the main data collection tools. The semi-structured interviews were planned to provide an opportunity for the researcher to converse with the participants. On the other hand, the student survey consisted of eight closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. The eight closed-ended questions allowed data to be collected from many respondents in a short period of time, and also provided quantifiable and empirical results. The one open-ended question was intended to gather more robust and specific feedback from the students.



## Procedures

The EIP faculty members received a recruitment email explaining the purpose of this study, the confidently, and the benefits for the ESL programs of the results. When the candidates made a commitment to this study, the researcher sent the respondents an Excel table in which the date and time inputs were available. Here, they could put several check marks in the boxes when they were to be interviewed. The interviews were recorded using a voice recorder. Recordings were placed in save security drives for ethical and security purposes, and pseudonym names were used in the data results.

The first interview was conducted with the ESL administrator, and the aim of the interview was to determine how their ESL program develops the overall English language curriculum to help students to become more proficient with the language. There was also an inquiry to learn how best to make changes to an existing curriculum.

The second interview was conducted with two ESL teachers individually. The same questions and procedures were used with both of them. The interview allowed teachers to reflect on their experiences regarding the implementation of the ESL curriculum in the classroom, and gave insight into the changes needed to make the curriculum more effective.

Thirty-two students were informed via oral solicitation for the student survey. They were then provided with written affirmation that the data collected would be analyzed with the intent to determine their views of the English language textbook that is used in the classroom. The data was completely confidential without any potential risks, and the students did not place identifying information on the surveys. The participants who chose not to participate were to be asked simply to return the materials with no questions asked.

## 4. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Before analyzing and discussing the outcomes of the present study, it is important to first bear in mind the two main limitations. The first was that the research population was very small; it consisted of two IEP teachers' interviews, and thirty-two IEP survey responses. For this reason, drawing a conclusion from these results, that is, making inferences about the unobserved accidental on the observed, was cautiously handled. Since the participants in this study were restricted to a small number of ESL teachers and students, the conclusions may not be representative of all ESL teachers, and students of the Intensive English program.

Another limitation of this study is the possibility of different interpretations, among the students, of the survey questions. A combination of the students' minimal understanding of the English language, along with poor word choice in one of the survey questions, may have resulted in inconclusive results for this specific question. A disclaimer will be added to the analysis of the results of this question, specifying which one I have identified as possibly problematic and inconclusive. Students may have understood fun to mean simply satisfaction, while others may students who may have been satisfied with the textbook topics but not excited by it would answer that they were having fun with the textbook; which would imply that they were not satisfied.

## 5. FINDINGS

This section will answer the research questions: "How do American ESL faculty members interpret their experience with the curriculum development and its implementation in an Intensive English Program (IEP)?" and "What are the IEP students' opinions of the curriculum followed in the program?"

### Faculty's evaluation of curriculum

The interviews with the teachers and administrator revealed that the typical curriculum is an eight week program of intensive course work. One issue unique to ESL is that teachers lack textbooks tailored specifically for the program. As such, they must to use materials from different sources to meet their objectives. This challenge makes it more difficult for them to complete their curriculum in the allotted time frame.

The interviews also revealed that there is a need to extend the duration of each class from eight weeks to at least nine weeks. In addition, teachers should be allowed to develop textbook materials specifically for the ESL curriculum. Mrs. Smith, an ESL teacher in the IEP, said the following:

The schedule is a weakness of the ESL curriculum, and there are only eight weeks for a session. The consulting agency decided, the eight-week program takes students two days to warm up and get motivated and a week to take their finals, so we have six week to teach. That is why some of our students feel overwhelmed. We have often complained about it, but it is not in our hands. This is not an option, so what we are trying to do is to make it in eight weeks.

The administrator said, "I think I would do a full eight weeks, and the ninth week is the exams."

### Student evaluation of the curriculum

The sample in the present study consisted of 32 students who were currently enrolled in the ESL program in the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth levels of an Intensive English Program at a university in the United States Midwest.

The finding from the open-ended question brought to my attention the changes and recommendations that students would think about in this program. The most common answer supported the interview opinions in that they both wanted to extend the duration of the classes. They think that eight weeks does not give them a sufficient amount of time to complete enough practice exercises, which causes them to lack the examples and explanations that they need. Also, some of the students revealed that they hope to get more vocabulary to learn especially in listening and speaking class, while two of them were hoping to have more grammar exercises in their different classes.

The survey revealed that the majority of the respondents believed that the topics that had been chosen helped them to progress in their language level. The respondents' opinions were as follows: 12 (37.50%) strongly agreed, the rest of the population, 20 (62.50%), agreed, while none disagreed or strongly disagreed. Likewise, the respondents generally agreed that the textbook's topics helped them to participate in the classroom. However, in this question, the distribution of responses was more varied: 8 (25.81%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 20 (64.45%) agreed, 2 (6.45%) disagreed, and 1 (3.23%) strongly disagreed. In the third question, the respondents were asked whether the topics of the textbook are interesting. The survey responses showed that 8 (25.61%) strongly agreed, 22 (70.97) students agreed, only 1 (3.23%) disagreed, and none of them strongly disagreed. The fourth question under limitation was asked if the students have fun with topics of the textbook: 6 (18.8%) strongly agreed, 15 (46.9%) agreed, 10 (31.3%) disagreed with only 1 (3.1%) strongly disagreeing. This question was more ambiguous than the previous questions because students may have different understanding of having fun to simply mean satisfaction

Another question was asked to determine whether the topics of the textbook are useful to someone who wants to learn English. 12 (49%) strongly agreed, half of the population 16 (53.33%) agreed, while only 2 (6.67%) disagreed with none strongly disagreeing. Questions six, seven, and eight were related to the respondents' perceived improvement of English language skills. According to the results of question six, half of the respondents acknowledged that the topics of the textbook helped them to improve their vocabulary skills; 18 (56.25%) strongly agreed, 10 (31.25%) agreed, and 4 (12.50%) disagreed. The seventh question further revealed that the textbook helped them to improve their writing skills: 14 (43.75%) strongly agreed, 13 (40.63%) agreed, and 5 (15.63) disagreed. The eighth question asked if there had been improvement to their speaking and listening skills: 8 (25%) strongly agreed, 20 (62.50) agreed, and 4 (12.50) disagreed.

## 6. DATA DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the current ESL curriculum has been developed in accordance with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Standards and also follows the American Association Intensive Language (ACTFL) standards. It is interesting to note that the development of the ESL curriculum follows five strands of development that reflect the policies of the national standards. These include communication, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities. According to the administrator, these strands are each defined as goals to be achieved by the end of the ESL curriculum. These policies and programs are developed to ensure the effectiveness of English language curriculum (Bailey and Huang, 2011). As for the administrator, the ACTFL standards guide the development of the curriculum by helping the administrators understand what each level means and what students should learn. This new understanding allows the administrators to model the curriculum to their needs and those of their students. The current curriculum consists of six levels that require expert guidance to create a suitable course. Furthermore, extensive research goes into the development of the curriculum to identify the amount of progress that students make, as well as the effectiveness of the curriculum at each level. For instance, in the case that an assessment passes many students that should have failed, then the curriculum is not effective and needs revision. An analysis of the results also reveals that the design of the curriculum takes into account the goals of the administrator in developing well-rounded students. The students must understand the English language and apply it to all aspect of their academic and professional lives. Passing tests alone is not a measure of success.

It was discovered through the interview with the administrator that the current ESL curriculum offers placement tests to assess the level of proficiency for each student. There are also faculty meetings to discuss the students' progress and interventions geared towards student improvement if one were to fall behind.

These interventions address even the most basic forms of learning a language, e.g. pronunciation. Most of the improvement programs are free to encourage students to participate. Evaluation of this kind is in line with the claim by Lynch and Davidson (1994) that in learning the English Language, students' interactions with teachers and other students increase positive perception, and other students' reactions to ESL students affects the students' motivation for learning (Lynch & Davidson, 1994). The administrator stated that the current curriculum was responsive to the needs of students and adjusted accordingly to address those needs. The success of such a flexible curriculum is illustrated by the positive nature that students view the ESL programs. Notably, the survey has shown that most students feel that the program has helped them improve their proficiency in the English language. The interviews also have shown that the teachers feel that the curriculum and the ESL program takes everyone's preferences into account. It makes them feel like a part of the curriculum development process, thereby ensuring the effectiveness of the curriculum and its development (Curtin, 2005). This arrangement is more of an interactive learning and evaluation process between the teachers and students. This is vital for the success of any school curriculum.

Furthermore, the interview with the administrator has shown that curriculum development is a continuous process. The administrator Mrs. Brown said the following:

We always keep developing the curriculum because it is a nonstop task. If there is something that we are using again, we will still need to revise and develop to meet the needs of the new students, so the curriculum is contentiously being assessed.

The participants use continuous assessments to evaluate the progress of students and adjust the curriculum accordingly. They are responsive to the needs of the students. There is also a research office that tracks the progress of successful students in universities that went through the ESL program, which provides longer-term feedback to the program. The group also seeks feedback from students and asks them what they need to be included in the learning process (Lynch & Davidson, 1994). This contradicts the findings by Mlynarczyk and Marcia (2002) that revealed that the assessment programs sidelined those students that were engaged in learning English (Mlynarczyk & Marcia, 2002). The holistic approach adopted in the development of the curriculum ensures that every student's needs are addressed.

Despite this holistic approach used in developing the curriculum, it still has flaws. One prominent flaw in the ESL curriculum is the schedule for ESL programs. The current curriculum provides only an eight-week learning period. Students often start speaking English for the first time in such classes. This is overwhelming for both the teacher and student. The administrators have shown little initiative towards changing this situation. The only advantage to this system is that when students fail the level, they do not have to wait long to retake the level. Regardless, this flaw needs to be addressed. It forces teachers to cut back on the content they are teaching to ensure they meet the deadline (Ansary & Babaii, 2002). Students also feel the pressure of such a short and hurried course, as they do not get enough time to go through the course materials provided by teachers. This is detrimental to the progress of the students and limits the development of English proficiency. This is perhaps one of the reasons for the lack of consistency in the assessment being conducted by teachers as described by Llosa (2011). The inconsistencies make it hard for ESL institutions to achieve the required standards of language development, which in turn affects the performance of the students. The variability and inconsistency created by the teachers limits the ability of the students to make affordable decisions (Llosa, 2011).

Moreover, there is a need to develop specific grammar levels for particular classes to make the learning process easier, which is something that many students expressed in the student surveys. According to one teacher, "Grammar is imbedded in several ways. We need grammar-specific grammar classes, especially for lower levels." The current system uses the same grammar level used in higher levels in the lower levels. This makes it hard for the lower level students to get a quick start into learning English. This problem is further magnified by the lack of course books tailored for ESL learners. Currently, teachers have to search for materials from different textbooks to meet the needs of the curriculum. Furthermore, surveying the students revealed that the current syllabus and teaching materials did not provide adequate examples to allow them to practice their vocabularies. According to Mohan, Leung, and Davison (2001), teachers play a critical role in the success of the ESL curriculum. The goals they set determine the standard rules the ESL students are likely to acquire after assessment of their proficiency of the English language (Mohan, Leung & Davison, 2001). In this respect, it is necessary to allow teachers to develop materials that are specific to their objectives. These materials could be published and made available to other ESL teachers to make it easy to teach within the eight-week period and avoid rushing through content (Celce-Murcia & McIntosh 1991).



## 7. CONCLUSION

The development of the ESL curriculum is done in an informed manner. Faculty members and students feel like part of the curriculum development process. Their feedback is continually sourced to ensure the curriculum meets their needs. The development process also conforms to the American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages standards (ACTFL) as well as American Association of Intensive English Programs standards, which makes the curriculum well poised to allow the ESL students to adapt and develop in an English speaking society. However, there are still some challenges that should be addressed. These problems, such as the lack of course books tailored especially for ESL teaching and the short coursework duration, limit the ability of teachers to train students as per the standards set in the curriculum.

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## APPENDIX - A

### Semi-structured Interview

This was a qualitative interview study of three practicing ESL faculty members. The goals of the interviews were to answer the following question: How do American ESL faculty members interpret their experience with the curriculum development and its implementation at an Intensive English Program (IEP)?

1. How do you use American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages Standards to plan, develop, and implement the ESL curriculum?
2. What specifically do you want students to understand from the use of the English language curriculum?
3. When will you feel obligated to develop or revise the ESL curriculum?
4. How will you evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum?
5. What is your knowledge of and experience with American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages Standards-based ESL curriculum?
6. What are the strengths of the ESL curriculum?
7. What are the weaknesses of the ESL curriculum?
8. What would you like to change or add to the curriculum development?
9. Do you feel like the IEP program cares about your opinion of the curriculum? If so, how are these changes proposed to the program? Why or why not are they receptive to your proposal?

## APPENDIX - B

### Questionnaire with Survey Results

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The textbook helps me to progress in my language level	37.50%	62.50%	0.00%	0.00%
The textbook topics help me to participate in the classroom	25.81%	64.52%	6.45%	3.23%
The textbook topics are interesting	25.81%	70.97%	3.23%	0.00%
I am having fun with the textbook	18.75%	46.88%	31.25%	3.13%
The textbook is useful to someone who wants to learn English	40.00%	53.33%	6.67%	0.00%
The textbook topics help me to improve my vocabulary skills.	56.25%	31.25%	12.50%	0.00%
The textbook topics help me to improve my writing skills.	43.75%	40.63%	15.63%	0.00%
The textbook topics help me to improve my Speaking/listening skills	25.00%	62.50%	12.50%	0.00%