Academic Year 2007/2008 Assessment Report

Intensive English

Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Intensive English

First Problem identified: Many students are more focused on grades than on the learning process, and, as a result, resort to cheating in order to obtain a higher score.

Solution stated: A formal *Intensive English Language Center Consequences of Cheating Policies* was drawn up in September, 2007, and given to the teachers to give to the students. It provides students with a list of activities/behaviors that constitute cheating in the U.S., as well as the consequences of cheating because the act of cheating robs the students of opportunities to learn.

How change/solution will be implemented: Cheating continues to be a problem across all levels.

However, there has been a reduction in the amount of cheating and cheating attempts since the implementation of the *Policies* above-mentioned. There has been a significant reduction in plagiarism at the highest level. Nevertheless, cheating continues to occur in chronic cases of students who continue breaking rules and new students who are testing the system. This problem has been solved insomuch as the policy is now in place. We will continue to monitor the effect the policy has on cheating in our program.

Second Problem identified: Intensive English had no formal attendance policy. The teachers handled excused/unexcused absences and tardies in various ways. Because we were experiencing a lot of absenteeism which ultimately caused many of our students not to progress through our program in a timely manner, it was determined that we needed a formal attendance policy that would be followed by all teachers in the program.

Solution stated: A formal *Intensive English Language Center Attendance Policies* was drawn up in October 2008. The main point we wanted to get across to the students was that attending classes daily is their “job” as a student. Teachers take teaching seriously, and students need to take studying and being in class seriously. The major consequence of unexcused absences and too many tardies is the lowering of a students’ final grade average by 1 percentage point for every two unexcused absences, 1 percentage point for every three tardies, and 1 percentage point for every three times the student doesn’t do his/her homework.

How change/solution will be implemented: All teachers made the formal attendance policy part of their syllabus beginning with the Fall II session of 2007. They report a general decrease in the number of absences in their classes. As above, the chronic absentee students and new students testing the system continue to keep the absentee rate higher than we would like. The effect of this policy has caused a number of students not to pass a class, but it has gotten their attention such that they are now faithfully attending class. We will continue to monitor the effect this policy has on reducing absenteeism in our program.

Third Problem identified: One of the terms of our F1 visa students’ I-20 is that they make “normal progress” in the program they are attending. We have students who, mainly because of absences, fail a level and have to repeat it, often more than one time. Failure to pass a level after two sessions in it means they are not making “normal progress,” an indication that our program is not a good match for those students. However, we want to encourage them to attend class and be successful the second time they are in a particular level and not have to take that level again.

Solution stated: At the beginning of the session when a student is repeating a level for the first time, they will be given notice that if they do not pass that level during that session/semester, they will be asked to find another program to attend at the end of the semester. The desired outcome of this notice is that they will take their responsibility as a student seriously, they will attend class faithfully, and they will successfully pass the level and go on to the next. We want and need to avoid students being in the same level two, three, and sometimes four times. Notification that they might be dismissed from the program should jolt them into better student behavior.

How changes/solution will be implemented: A *Notification* document will be drawn up and given to those students who are in their second or third session in a level. Except for Fall I, 2008, this *Notification* will go out to students by the beginning of the second week of class.

05/September 2008