

Letter to the Editor:

Entire Department responds to 'necessity' of official language

Dear Editor:

Eric Eatherton believes that English should be the official language of the U.S.A. In order to "save tax dollars" he implies that public publications, such as bus schedules, should be printed in English. According to this reasoning, health department information, driver's manuals, college information and all other publications should be printed only in English, all in the name of national unity.

As teachers of English as a second language, who by profession have a vested interest in encouraging immigrants to learn English, we want to state our strong disagreement with Mr. Eatherton's position and reasoning.

First, the proposal to limit the dissemination of information by printing only in English will not save money in the long run. Without access to information in their own languages about transportation and education options, those who wish to learn English will have greater difficulty doing so.

Secondly, even when immigrants achieve a level of proficiency adequate to participate ac-

tively in this society, many find that access to complex information, such as information about AIDS prevention, can be more completely understood when read in their native language. In such cases, multilingual literature enhances communication of important facts and ideas.

Third, it is true that the earliest colonists were speakers of English, but close on their heels were immigrants from many non-English speaking European countries. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were even public schools conducted in the various languages of the communities which they served. It wasn't until later that English was recognized as the prevailing language to be used for all government functions.

Fourth, the myth of "quick assimilation" is just that, a myth. Few immigrants arriving with no English have been able to acquire proficiency in a short time. Why not? Are they lazy? Do they simply not care because they can get by without English skills? Far be this from the truth. Research has proven that acquiring a second language as an adult is very diffi-

cult. Imagine, for a moment, that you are an adult immigrant to Vietnam. You arrive in Vietnam without any language skills in Vietnamese. Because Vietnamese is the official language, you are unable to learn how to ride the bus in English.

You take any job you can to support your family. Since you don't speak Vietnamese, you probably have to do heavy, tiring manual labor. At the end of a long day at work, you rush home, fix dinner, feed your children, take care of your household responsibilities, then drag yourself off to Vietnamese class. Because of lack of funding, classes are only offered two nights a week, for a total of four hours a week. The class has 30 people of various levels of proficiency. You're bone tired. Under these conditions, how quickly are you going to learn Vietnamese? Not very quickly. Learning a language as an adult is one of the most difficult mental undertakings imaginable. Look at yourself. Why haven't you made the effort to learn a second language?

Finally, Mr. Eatherton implies that most immigrants don't

want to learn English. This is a false stereotype. The majority of immigrants desperately want to learn English. They move to the U.S. for job and educational opportunities. They know that without English they cannot take advantage of those opportunities. The three to six month waiting lists for class space at many community colleges attests to this fact. Since most Americans don't learn foreign languages themselves, they have no realistic idea of the difficulty learning a new language entails for adult learners.

Mr. Eatherton is a fine example of ethnocentrism. This is the belief that the way we do things is right and how other cultures do things is wrong. To Mr. Eatherton, English is the "right" language and other languages are "gibberish." If every culture in this world feels that their way is the right way and others aren't right, then we will never be able to bridge our differences.

Being able to look at different values, beliefs and behaviors of others will promote understanding and better communication between everyone.

Passing an English only law

is discriminatory and will not better our society. It would, in fact, endanger the lives of those non-English speakers who need emergency services by eliminating the multilingual police and ambulance services.

It would limit the administration of justice for those who need court translators by jeopardizing their ability to understand court procedures. It would cause reduced productivity by prohibiting free communication among workers in languages other than English. Public health workers will face increased problems if they cannot educate language minority people with translated materials. Most important of all is that it will promote more discrimination and bigotry in a country that needs to rid itself of these counterproductive practices.

Sincerely,

- Molly Williams
- Suzanne Munro
- Lori Hartill
- Caroline Cate
- Lena Koessler
- Joe Van Zutphen
- Ayde York

Student surveys show satisfaction with CCC

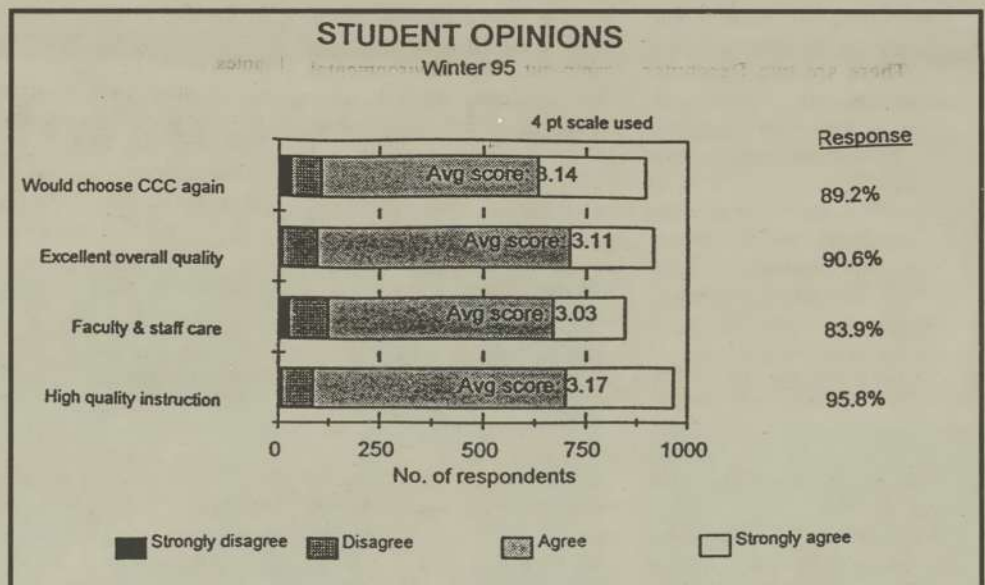
In an effort to improve the educational experience for students at Clackamas, the Research & Planning Office in conjunction with the Enrollment Council, conducted an in-class student survey project during Winter term 1995.

Two surveys were administered: one targeting student learning styles, and the other targeting marketing issues. Both surveys included the same demographic and college services questions.

Seventy lower division and technical credit classes comprising over 1,700 enrolled students were surveyed. At total of 1,004 surveys were completed with 486 Learning Styles respondents, and 518 Marketing respondents.

Student Profile

- Here are some highlights of student demographics:
- 65.2% have an educational intent of a transfer degree or transfer classes.
- 63.2% were enrolled full-time for Winter term.
- 50.0% said that Winter term was their first or second term at CCC.
- 83.8% attend day classes; 36.5% attend classes at night.
- 94.9% attend classes at the main campus; 15% attend at other sites (multiple responses allowed).
- 55.4% are 18 to 21 years old;
- 41.4% are between 22 and 50 in age.
- 55.8% completed high school or a GED in the past three years.
- 50.1% attended a Clackamas County high school.
- 47.0% live at home with their parents; 29.7% live with a spouse/partner and/or children.
- 22% have dependent children.
- 49.8% work at least 20 hours per week; 21.1% work 1 to 19 hours



per week. 48.9% live in households with annual incomes of less than \$30,000. 35.1% receive financial aid. 7.9% are minorities; 3.5% said English is not their native language.

Service Areas

Seventeen service areas were included in both surveys. Students were asked to rate the service on a four point quality scale from Poor to Excellent in the Learning Styles survey. In the Marketing survey, they were asked to rate their satisfaction with the service.

Students gave their highest ratings for quality of service to the Help center, the computer lab and telephone registration. They were most satisfied with the computer lab, telephone registration and library services. Career planning help ranked the lowest average score for quality of service. Students were least satisfied with

educational planning and advising help.

Student Opinions

Survey participants were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with several statements of opinion. Four of the statements were the same on both surveys (see graph)

Eight of the statements dealt with the issues of student access. "The CCC class schedule helps me choose classes when I resist" rated the highest average score. "I am able to get financial aid if I need it" rated the lowest average score.

Of the 16 statements about the CCC experience, "I feel safe on campus during the day" rated the highest average score. "I got a fair price for the books I sold back to the Bookstore last term" scored the lowest. Of the 19 statements about the student's learning environment, nine dealt with

equality/diversity in the classroom, eight dealt with the quality of the class assignments and equipment, and three statements dealt with instructor quality. Six of the statements were negatively worded.

"Students from other races cultures make me uncomfortable in my classes" rated the highest average score indicating strong disagreement with the statement (reversed scale used). "There are enough computers available in computer labs for student use" rated the lowest average score.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Respondents to both surveys were asked to comment on what they believed to be CCC's greatest strength and greatest weakness. 21% said that CCC's classes, their size, availability, and variety are its greatest strength. 17% remarked on shortcomings in times, locations and variety of classes and programs.

Learning Methods

The Learning Styles survey asked students to respond to 12 types of instructional methods and rate them for effectiveness and frequency of use in the student's classroom experience. The most frequently used teaching methods, according to survey respondents, were in-class test preparation and instructor/staff aided lab work. The least used methods were use of the Internet, computer-assisted instruction and recorded audio lesson. The least effective methods were recorded audio lessons, multimedia lessons and unstructured class discussion.

Why students attend CCC

Students responding to the Marketing survey were asked to rate a series of eight factors for the importance they played in the student's decision to attend CCC. Cost ranked first in average score. Location and availability of financial aid.

Students were also asked to rate for importance nine types of people who might have influenced the student's decision to attend CCC. Parents and friends ranked the highest in influence. Employers and co-workers were least influential.

Educational Delivery Formats

Students responding to the Marketing survey were asked to indicate their or a friend's possible interest in educational delivery formats CCC is not currently offering. "Getting a transfer degree in less than two years" and "Two-week intensive summer classes" garnered the most interest. "Sunday classes" and "Friday night classes" were least desirable.

Compiled by Research & Planning