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ABSTRACT

Beginning in fall 1993, Golden West College, in California, began pilot testing an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) course adapted from the Focal Skills approach, which features instruction in intensive modules in listening, reading, writing, and general immersion. The listening and reading skills modules were offered in the fall 1993 semester, followed by the writing skills and immersion modules in spring 1994. To measure the effectiveness of the pilot courses, student performance in two sections, as measured by Focal Skills assessment instruments, was compared with that of students in two regular ESL sections during the fall 1993 semester. In addition, analyses were included of the continued skill development of pilot students through spring 1994 and ensuing course referrals. Results generally indicated that both the Focal Skills and comparison groups showed significant but comparable gains in reading and writing skills in the fall 1993 semester. Spring semester measurement showed that pilot students continued to make marked gains. Comparisons of the spring 1994 semester course referrals indicated a nonsignificant tendency for higher level course referrals for the pilot group students. At best, the results constituted marginal evidence for the effectiveness of the Focal Skills pilot. However, since the control and pilot students were not randomly assigned and were self-selected, caution must be taken in interpreting these findings and it is recommended that a second year pilot and evaluation be conducted. Data tables and a description of ESL courses at the college are attached. (Author/KP)

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Evaluation of the Focal Skills Pilot ESL Program  
at Golden West College, 1993-94

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## Abstract

A pilot course adapted from the Focal Skills approach (Hastings, 1992a), involving full time instruction in specific English language development skill areas (listening, reading, writing) was designed and implemented by ESL faculty at Golden West College. Performance of students in two sections of the pilot course, as measured by the Focal Skills assessment instruments (Hastings, 1992b), was compared with that of students in two sections of a regular ESL course during the Fall 1993 semester. Additionally, analyses focused upon continued skill development of the pilot students through the Spring 1994 semester and course referrals at the end of that semester. The results generally indicated that both the comparison and the Focal Skills groups showed significant but comparable gains in reading and writing skills over the course of the Fall 1993 semester. Spring semester measurement of pilot students showed that they continued to make marked gains for the second semester of instruction. Additionally, comparisons of the Spring 1994 semester course referrals indicated a nonsignificant tendency for higher level course referrals for the pilot group students. At best, the results constitute marginal evidence for the effectiveness of the Focal Skills pilot at GWC during the 1993-94 academic year. However, the existence of a number of potential confounds associated with the design and procedure of this type of evaluation make interpretation of the results difficult. Recommendations for the second year pilot and evaluation are made.

## Introduction

### Background.

The second language learning/acquisition process has been described as complex, gradual, nonlinear, and dynamic (e.g., Larsen-Freeman, 1991). As such, the task of effective curriculum design is complex. English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) programs are structured in a broad range of ways. At Golden West College, the ESL curriculum entails a series of six semester-length courses that relate to a range of skills from beginning through advanced levels, and then mainstreaming into English. The format for these semester-length courses is the traditional four hours of instruction per week. Students enter the sequence at any point, as recommended by an initial assessment with the Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA; Ilyin, D, 1992). They progress through the curriculum at various rates, largely determined by referrals made for course placement in the following term by their current instructors. A pilot course, adapted from the Focal Skills approach (Hastings, 1992a), was developed which involved full-time intensive instruction in specific skill areas (listening, reading, writing) separated into a series of modules. The pilot project was planned for the 1993-94 academic year. Two sections each of the intensive, 12-unit ESL course were scheduled in the Fall 1993 semester (ESL 006) and the Spring 1994 semester (ESL 007).

Focal Skills Approach. The Focal Skills approach was originally developed during 1987 and 1988 at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. The program

designers note that it is neither a theory nor a specific instructional methodology; rather, it is a general approach to designing an ESL curriculum. It features a series of modules in which students get intensive, focused instruction in listening, reading, and writing, followed by an integrated "immersion" module. The time basis for each module is a full-time student load. As the designers note "all modules emphasize comprehensible input and topic-centered communicative interaction, employing methods that stress the progressive, functional integration of developing skills with other relevant skills already possessed by the students" (Hastings, 1992a, p. 1). Another key component of the program design is that skill-specific proficiency tests are used to gauge student progress and to determine readiness for advancement to the next module. Students may either skip unneeded modules or repeat a module, as determined by the assessment.

Listening skills were deemed particularly critical to the acquisition of the other skills since the Focal Skills classes are conducted in English. As a result, this module was scheduled to be first. Videos are important tools for instruction in this module, and are used extensively. The sounds of English words, phrases, and sentences are linked to the video which serves as an anchor. Questions and comments are encouraged, and interactions are structured so that even low-proficiency students can participate. Reading is the focus of the next module, since reading helps to develop vocabulary and continued growth in understanding of the structure of the language. Group readings are typically used in which students participate in reading aloud and discussing articles and stories. Some time

is also designated for personal reading. In all cases, the emphasis is on comprehension. The writing module follows, and typically includes exercises such as personal writing tasks, class writing projects, and focused rewrites. The last module is "immersion". It is described as a "low stress seminar" in which students study together and work on both individual and cooperative work group projects. During this module, skills developed in each of the preceding modules are utilized.

To summarize, the Focal Skills approach is characterized by acquisition and integration of skills according to recognized principles of second language acquisition; instruction is intensive and takes place in skill-focused modules; development is progressive; and students proceed at their own pace. The approach is individualized in that progress depends upon the gains made by individual students. Assessment is conducted every four weeks. As soon as appropriate, as determined by the assessment, the student moves on to the next module. The program designers argue that measurable gains that are made within a relatively short period of time engender a sense of accomplishment and empowerment in students. This academic self-efficacy facilitates subsequent skill development. Finally, Hastings (1992a) readily acknowledges that the principles upon which the Focal Skills approach is based are not new--in many ways they are similar to what has been referred to variously elsewhere, e.g., "whole language development" (Riggs, 1991) and "natural language approach" (Krashen and Terrell, 1983).

Adaptation of the Focal Skills Approach and Its Implementation at Golden West College. The previous section presented the Focal Skills approach as described by its developers. For a variety of reasons, it was necessary to modify the approach for implementation at GWC. One modification involved dividing the academic year into four equal-length segments with two modules per semester. Thus, each module lasted approximately nine weeks. Listening skills were targeted during the first half of the Fall 1993 semester, and reading skills were the focus of the second half of that term. During the Spring 1994 semester, the writing skills module was followed by the immersion module. Although assessment in a variety of forms occurs throughout the term as a regular part of the course, it was not possible for student progress from one module to the next to be made contingent upon the outcome of assessment. Students could neither repeat nor skip modules-- only one module was used at a time. Another important difference between the original Focal Skills design and the GWC implementation is that classes at GWC had enrollments of approximately 35 students each, compared to about 15 students at other sites. Specific instructional activities were designed and discussed at regular planning and coordinating meetings of the GWC ESL instructors who taught the course. The weekly activities were organized around themes. Weekly and monthly charts to facilitate coordination were prepared, and extensive records maintained.

## Method

Design. For purposes of comparison, two class sections of ESL 002 (Intermediate English Language I) were included in the design during the Fall 1993 semester. This level was selected because the ESL 006 Focal Skills course was intended for students with course recommendations to the ESL 002 level (Intermediate English Language I -- a basic course in English grammar and sentence writing). Two class sections of each were included so that the sample sizes of the Focal Skills and comparison conditions would be similar, and so that at least two different instructors for each course would be involved, thereby reducing the effects of unique characteristics of a particular instructor. In all cases, students essentially self-selected condition participation since enrollment could not be legally restricted. Therefore, "assignment" to conditions was not random. The implications of this fact will be discussed in more detail below. (Note that the terms "ESL 002" and "comparison group" will be used to refer to students in these two sections; "ESL 006/007", "pilot group", and "Focal Skills condition" will be used to refer to students in the special intensive instruction classes.)

An approximation of a non-equivalent control group design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963) was used. For the Fall 1993 semester, it involved evaluating the effects of the pilot program relative to the comparison group (between-subjects factor), performance of both groups over time (repeated-measures factor), and the differential effects of the between-subjects factor over time (interaction effect).



(See Appendix B -- Overview of the Anova Design). This characterization as a quasi-experimental design reflects the fact that students were not randomly assigned to the conditions, as noted above. In fact, the design of the present study actually falls short of a non-equivalent control group design, because students actually self-selected group membership. Thus, in addition to the classic threats to validity associated with the non-equivalent control group design, the effects of selection and its possible interaction with other factors must be considered. In short, caution must be exercised when interpreting the results of the Fall 1993 comparisons since the effects of the program are confounded with an array of other factors.

Measures. There are three forms of each of the skill-area tests (Hastings, 1992b). The Focal Skills Listening Test consists of 60 "yes-no" questions delivered with audio cassette. Students respond to the questions on a separate answer sheet. The test takes about 30 minutes to administer. The Focal Skills Reading Test consists of a booklet with 20 paragraphs, each of which is followed by three "yes/no" questions. A 50-minute time limit is enforced. Students are not allowed to use dictionaries. The number of correct answers can be readily determined, as can the number of incorrect answers. An adjusted score (number correct minus number incorrect) is computed, thereby adjusting for inflation of scores due to guessing. The Focal Skills Writing Test uses a format that involves deleted elements of text, but rather than deleting entire words, only the second part of words is deleted. More specifically, the test consists of 12 paragraphs, each with

10 partial deletions. The deletions are represented by an underscore for each missing letter. As with the reading test, students do not use dictionaries; in this case a 40-minute time limit is imposed. Unlike the listening and reading tests, the adjustment for guessing effects is not made. Credit is given only if the answer is exactly correct.

Procedure. In all cases, the tests were administered in class according to prearranged schedules. Initial testing, conducted by the GWC Matriculation Research Office staff, with the assistance of the instructors, took place during first week of classes in Fall 1993; subsequent testing using alternate forms of the instruments took place at both the midpoint and the end of that semester. Additionally, testing of the pilot group students continued during the Spring 1994 semester, allowing for an evaluation of their skill gains over the entire academic year. All testing was conducted by the classroom instructors, coordinated by the ESL Department Chairperson. Scoring and processing of testing information, as well as analyses of the data, were performed by the GWC Matriculation Research Office. Since the comparison group classes were regular courses, students in these classes did not remain together as an intact class during the Spring 1994 semester, thereby making testing of them impractical.

Since ESL courses at GWC are graded "credit/no-credit", and progress rates vary, instructors also provide referrals indicating appropriate courses for the subsequent semester. Course referral data were gathered for all students in the two ESL 002 (Fall 1993) semester classes and the two ESL 006/007 classes at the

end of the Spring 1994 semester. This information served as an additional gauge of progress made during the academic year and is an additional basis for comparison between the groups.

Analysis. The primary analysis of the Fall testing data involved a mixed factorial design with one between-groups factor (comparison group versus Focal Skills group) and one repeated-measures factor (beginning versus end of the semester). Therefore, the two main effects (group differences and overall gains over time) and the interaction between these two effects could be evaluated separately. The course referral data collected at the end of the Spring 1994 semester are categorical, and therefore were analyzed with a Chi-Square test.

In addition to the above analyses that addressed the question of program effectiveness, other analyses relevant to related issues were conducted. Correlations among Focal Skills test scores, and CELSA scores were computed to provide information about the range of skills tapped by the CELSA, currently the primary instrument used for assessment and placement at Golden West College. Finally, possible group differences arising from self-selection were assessed by comparing the Focal Skills and the comparison students on each of the skill dimensions at the start of the Fall 1993 semester using independent groups *t*-tests.

## Results

### Effects of the Focal Skills Program

Listening Skills Assessments--Fall 1993 Comparison. A repeated-measures analysis of variance was performed on the listening test adjusted scores for the two groups. This analysis indicated a trend, although non-significant for a difference between groups [ $F(1,72) = 2.78, p \text{ ns}$ ]. As Table 1 shows, this trend was for higher listening test adjusted scores for students in the Focal Skills condition. The repeated-measures factor was also non-significant [ $F(1, 72) = 2.15, p \text{ ns}$ ]. The critical question which involves the differential effects of instruction format over time, is represented by the interaction effect. Interestingly, the interaction effect is statistically significant [ $F(1,72) = 8.93, p < .005$ ]. Examination of the listening test adjusted scores presented in Table 1 indicates that this interaction effect reflects both a gain by the students in the pilot group and a drop in scores by students in the comparison group from the start to the end of the semester. (All Tables appear in Appendix A.)

Reading Skills Assessments--Fall 1993 Comparison. A repeated measures analysis of variance was performed on the reading test adjusted scores for the two groups. This analysis indicated a trend, although non-significant, for a between-groups effect [ $F(1,114) = 2.94, .05 < p < .10$ ]. The repeated-measures effect was highly significant [ $F(1,114) = 8.56, p < .005$ ], suggesting strong gains by both groups. Finally, the interaction effect was not significant [ $F(1,114) = .29, p \text{ ns}$ ], indicating the lack of differential gains across groups. Table 2 contains the

mean adjusted reading scores for the two groups at each time of measurement.

Writing Skills Assessments--Fall 1993 Comparison. A repeated-measures analysis of variance was performed on the writing test scores for the two groups. Unlike the case for listening and reading, the writing test yielded number of correct answers instead of an adjusted score. This analysis indicated a trend, although not statistically significant, for a between-groups effect [ $F(1,120) = 2.18, p \text{ ns}$ ]. The repeated-measures factor was highly significant [ $F(1,120) = 41.49, p < .001$ ], indicating strong gains by both groups. The interaction effect, the test of differential gains, was not significant, however [ $F(1,120) = .16, p \text{ ns}$ ].

Spring 1994 Assessment of Focal Skills Students. Since the pilot group classes remained intact throughout the academic year, it was possible to continue the measurement of skill development for students in those classes using the Focal Skills instruments. At the end of the Spring 1994 semester the Focal Skills students were assessed with the full battery of instruments. Although comparisons against the ESL 002 students are not possible, striking gains were observed for the pilot group students in terms of their Listening adjusted score (to a mean value of 24.0, representing an increase of 22.7% over the assessment at the end of the Fall 1993 semester, and a 59.2% gain over the start of the academic year), Reading adjusted score (to a mean value of 18.7, representing an increase of 47.2% over the end of the Fall 1993 semester, and a nearly 100% increase over the start of the school year), and Writing test score (to a mean value of 59.8, representing an increase of 17.8% over the assessment at the end of the Fall 1993

semester, and a gain of 59.5% over the start of the academic year). This information is also depicted in Table 1 through Table 3.

Course Referrals at the End of the Spring 1994 Semester. Table 4a presents the number and percent of students in the pilot and comparison conditions who received the various ESL course referrals from their Spring 1994 instructors. As can be seen, whereas no comparison group students received a referral to ESL 005, 10 (20%) of the pilot students did receive such a referral. The percentages associated with referrals to ESL 003 and ESL 004 are nearly identical. Finally, a greater percentage of students in the comparison condition had referrals to ESL 001 and ESL 002 than was case for pilot group students. A Chi-Square test was performed on these data, with the course referral levels combined to form three categories as shown in Table 4b: ESL 002 or lower (same or lower course level), ESL 003 (representing a gain of one course level), or ESL 004 or above (representing a gain of more than one course level). These categories were not dependent upon condition ( $X^2_{(2)} = 4.21, p = ns$ ) -- the group difference was not statistically significant.

#### Relationship Between Gains and Initial Skill Levels.

Since it was not possible to randomly assign students to the classes, there was a possibility of a selection effect which would confound findings related to the effects of program differences. Differences between the comparison and Focal Skills groups at the beginning of the semester were evaluated with independent groups *t*-tests. No difference was found for either the Listening test adjusted

scores or the Reading test adjusted scores between students in the two conditions [ $t(133) < 1$ , and  $t(136) = 1.37$ ,  $p$  ns, respectively]. In the case of the number of correct items on the writing test, there was a tendency, although not statistically significant, for students in the Focal Skills classes to have higher scores [ $t(136) = 1.66$ ,  $.05 < p < .10$ ]. Thus, although the equivalence of the groups on a full range of factors is not established by the results of this analysis, the analysis does indicate that the groups were not statistically significantly different on listening, reading, and writing skills as measured by the Focal Skills instruments.

#### Relationship Between the Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA) and the Focal Skills Measures.

As noted earlier, the Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA) is the primary instrument used for initial ESL course placement at Golden West College (Isonio, 1992). The Focal Skills tests which assess specific skill areas can be used to help understand the array of skills tapped by the CELSA. Specifically, the relationships between CELSA test scores and initial scores on the Focal Skills Listening, Reading, and Writing Test were evaluated. In total, 44 students who took the Focal Skills tests also had records of CELSA test scores. For these students, the CELSA was found to correlate significantly with the initial Reading Test adjusted score, [ $r(43) = .43$ ,  $p < .001$ ] and with the number correct on the Writing test [ $r(43) = .37$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. Similarly, there is evidence for a moderate positive relationship between CELSA scores and initial Listening test adjusted scores [ $r(43) = .37$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. These correlations indicate that the CELSA taps

aspects of reading, writing, and listening skills, and thereby indirectly supports its continued use as a global measure of English language proficiency for placement into regular ESL courses at GWC which combine these language skills.

### Discussion

The results generally indicate that both the comparison and the Focal Skills groups showed significant gains in reading and writing skills over the course of the Fall 1993 semester, however the lack of an interaction between the treatment and the time factors suggests that the amount of gains between the groups was comparable. That is, both groups gained in reading and writing skills, but to similar degrees. In the case of listening, the pilot students improved and the comparison students' scores actually dropped slightly. The Spring 1994 semester measurement of pilot condition students indicated that they continued to show marked gains in each skill area over that second semester of instruction. Additionally, comparisons between the Spring 1994 semester course referrals received by the two groups indicated a tendency, although not significant, for higher level course referrals for the pilot group students than for comparison students. To summarize, the results of these three sets of analyses represent, at best, marginal evidence for the effectiveness of the Focal Skills program, as implemented at Golden West College. Further, however, the existence of a number of potential confounds makes clear interpretation of the results of the



evaluation difficult. As such, a more detailed consideration of these potential confounds is needed to support a proper interpretation of the findings as well as to limit their effect in any followup evaluation.

The effectiveness and appropriateness of the Focal Skills tests themselves warrants discussion. One strength is that these tests were developed by the program designers for the specific purpose of addressing the skills targeted in the modules. However, despite a series of reports distributed by the test developers (e.g., Hastings, 1992b), the tests are somewhat unknown and relatively untried. They were developed, normed and validated at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and as such, may not be as appropriate for entering ESL 002 level students at GWC. Additionally, since repeated measures were taken over the course of the Fall 1993 semester (and for the Focal Skills students through the Spring 1994 semester), parallel forms of the measures were used. The issue of true comparability of the various forms is critical to the validity of the comparisons. The procedure used to construct the parallel forms of the tests is described in detail (Hastings, 1992b), but independent evidence for comparability of forms of the Focal Skills tests is needed.

Another set of concerns relates to some procedural anomalies. The evaluation of a pilot program such as the Focal Skills approach requires a major commitment on the part of all persons involved. Practical problems may arise. The motivation and interest levels of students who are asked to take the full battery of tests on a number of occasions may vary, thereby bringing into question the

validity of the measurements. Additionally, instructors who must repeatedly relinquish precious class time to accommodate the testing might have reservations about doing so. Further, since it is likely that students respond differently when testing is conducted by their regular classroom instructor than when it is conducted by strangers, it is critical that all future assessments either be conducted by assessment/research personnel or only by the classroom instructors, trained and working from a script. Consistency is critical. Finally, it is important that the evaluation design be understood and accepted by all parties at the outset. A full schedule of test dates and times should be developed prior to the start of the academic year and adhered to without modification.

Given the demand for extensive assessment involving repeated administrations of the battery of instruments, the prominent "pilot" label associated with the Focal Skills students, and other forms of atypical interest, measurement, and monitoring, the possibility of the "Hawthorne effect" (Roesthlisberger & Dickson, 1939) must be considered. Students who know that they are participants in a special experimental program might behave in ways different from how they would naturally behave. A range of related artifacts, including instructor expectancy effects, might also be operating (e.g., Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1969). Instructors always have a stake in the success of their students, but this fact might be especially true of instructors in special, pilot programs. Their behavior may influence students in ways, either overt or subtle, beyond those defined by instructional design and methods, and therefore constitute a confound.

## Summary and Recommendations

1. Since the pilot course is designed for students at the ESL 002 level, it is especially critical that students with higher or lower skill levels be dissuaded from enrolling in the course. It is likely that instruction suffers when students with greatly varying skill levels are enrolled in a single skills development class. Although the college is currently unable to legally restrict enrollment in the ESL 006 / 007 classes, the strongest possible message advising students with skill levels above or below ESL 002 should be given by registration staff, counselors, and the instructors.
2. It is probably advisable to continue using the Focal Skills assessment instruments as the primary measures of progress, but they should be supplemented with other measures. Two forms of the CELSA are available and could be used in this way. One finding of the present study is that CELSA scores correlate moderately positively with Focal Skills test scores for each of the three targeted skill areas. Unlike the Focal Skills instruments, the CELSA has been approved for use in the California Community Colleges as a placement test. Also, writing assignments administered at set times in both sections of the pilot classes as well as the comparison classes and evaluated according to standard criteria could serve as additional indices of progress.
3. The assessment should be built into the regular class schedule. This would accomplish at least two important goals. First, a set schedule would exist, precluding individual instructors from deciding not to administer a particular test at a given time. Second, the perception by the students that the assessment is an "extra add-on", outside of the structure of the class, and the impact that this perception might have on their performance, would be reduced.
4. Although the classroom setting is less amenable to standardized testing procedures, it is nevertheless critical that the testing be done in a consistent, standardized manner. There are advantages to having the regular classroom instructors administer the tests, however they should follow scripts to avoid the possibility of biasing the results as by inadvertent comments about test-taking strategies.

5. The formal evaluation of the pilot embodied in analyses of outcomes as contained in this report must be considered with details of how the pilot program was implemented. Readers must be familiar with detailed descriptions of instructional strategies and lesson plans used in the pilot in order to truly understand the "independent variable". Detailed documentation of decisions about instruction and the content of lesson plans must be openly discussed among Language Arts faculty at GWC, as well as interested experts on other campuses.
  
6. Although the study did not incorporate a true experimental design, the project was very much an "experiment" in that a perspective on ESL instructional design was adapted and tried. The GWC version of the experiment entailed many modifications of the "standard" Focal Skills approach. Participating instructors met regularly to discuss ideas, plan, compare notes, and revise lessons. From this perspective, there are two distinct interpretations of program success. First, of course, success means that the program seems to work--significant gains in listening, reading, and writing skills made by pilot students, especially relative to students in the control classes. As noted, the evidence for this is mixed. Also, however, significant gains in knowledge and ideas about instructional strategies and curriculum design by ESL faculty at GWC would constitute "success". In this sense, the project was certainly a success. The second year pilot will be substantively different from the first year because of what has been learned from the first year experience.

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## APPENDIX A

### Tables and Figures

| Type / Number | Title   | Page |
|---------------|---|------|
| Table 1.      | Focal Skills Listening Test Adjusted Scores: Repeated Measures, By Group                              | 20   |
| Figure 1.     | Mean Listening Test Adjusted Score: Focal Skills and Comparison Groups (Fall 1993 -- Modules 1 and 2) | 21   |
| Table 2.      | Focal Skills Reading Test Adjusted Scores: Repeated Measures, By Group                                | 22   |
| Figure 2.     | Mean Reading Test Adjusted Score: Focal Skills and Comparison Groups (Fall 1993 -- Modules 1 and 2)   | 23   |
| Table 3.      | Focal Skills Writing Test: Repeated Measures, By Group  | 24   |
| Figure 3.     | Mean Writing Test Correct Score: Focal Skills and Comparison Groups (Fall 1993 -- Modules 1 and 2)    | 25   |
| Table 4a.     | Course Referrals at End of the Spring 1994 Semester, By Group   | 26   |
| Table 4b.     | Categorized Course Referrals at the End of the Spring 1994 Semester, By Group                         | 27   |

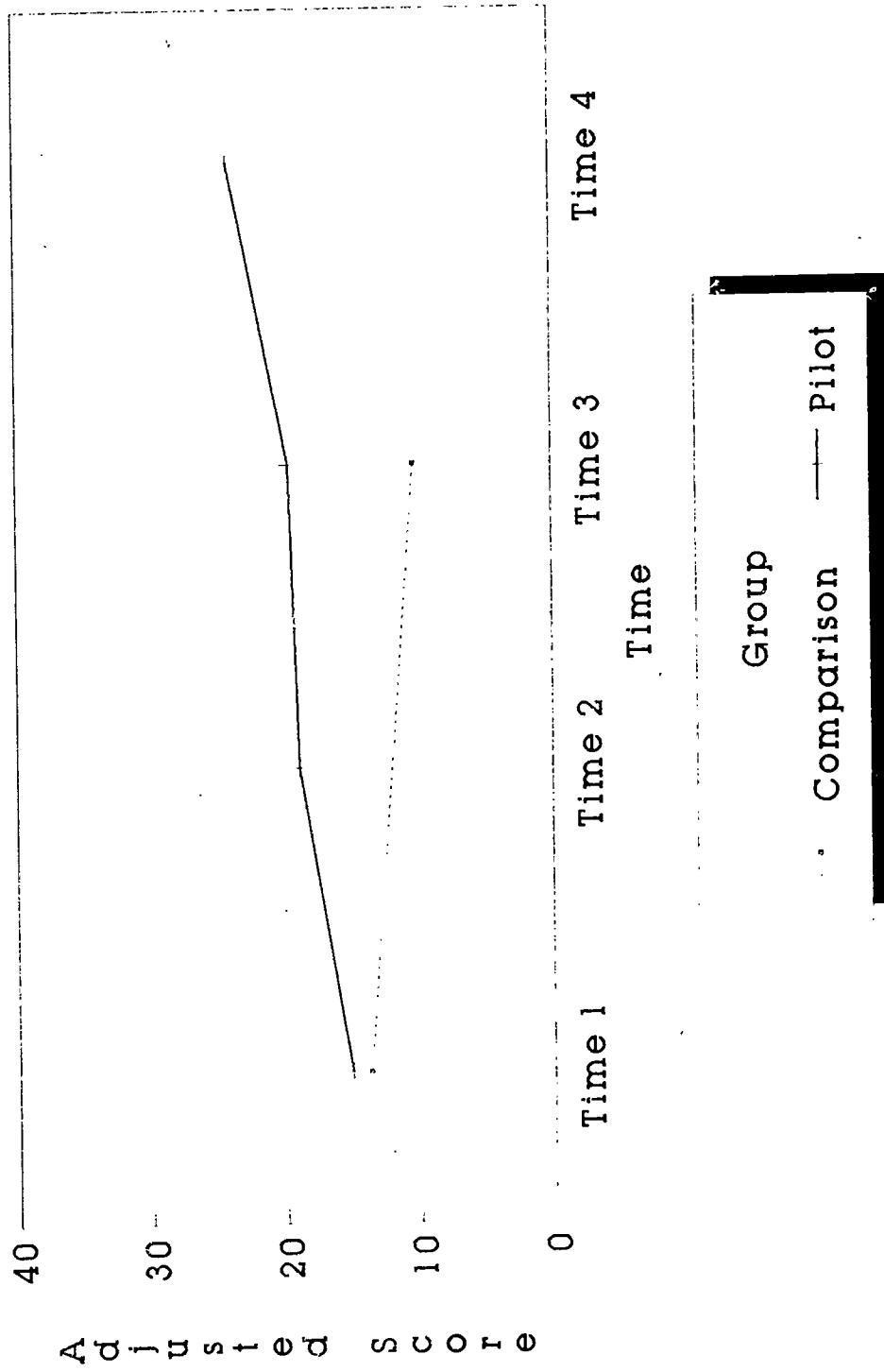
Table 1

Focal Skills Listening Test Adjusted Scores: Repeated Measures, By Group

| Condition  | Time 1 |        | Time 2 |        | Time 3 |        | Time 4 |        |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|            | Mean   | St.Dev | Mean   | St.Dev | Mean   | St.Dev | Mean   | St.Dev |
| Comparison | 13.7   | 12.5   | --     | --     | 10.3   | 13.2   | --     | --     |
| Pilot      | 15.1   | 14.4   | 18.9   | 17.1   | 19.6   | 14.9   | 24.04  | 13.04  |

Note: Time 1 = Start of the Fall 1993 semester  
 Time 2 = Midpoint of the Fall 1993 semester  
 Time 3 = End of the Fall 1993 semester  
 Time 4 = End of the Spring 1994 semester

# Listening Test, By Group Over Time



GWC Matriculation Research





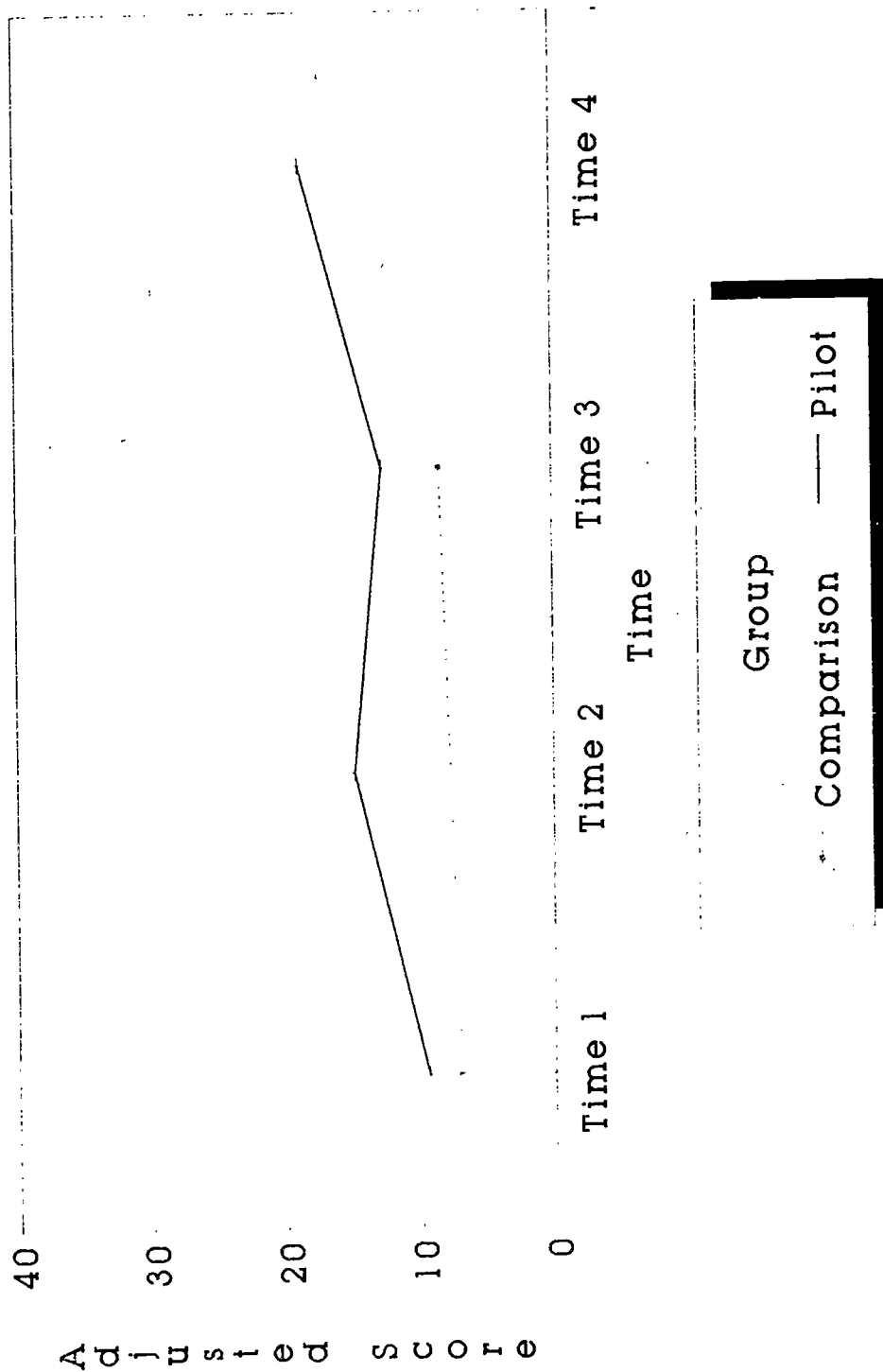
Table 2

Focal Skills Reading Test Adjusted Scores: Repeated Measures, By Group

| Condition  | Time 1 |        | Time 2 |        | Time 3 |        | Time 4 |        |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|            | Mean   | St.Dev | Mean   | St.Dev | Mean   | St.Dev | Mean   | St.Dev |
| Comparison | 7.0    | 9.4    | --     | --     | 8.4    | 9.6    | --     | --     |
| Pilot      | 9.4    | 11.5   | 14.8   | 15.3   | 12.7   | 13.2   | 18.7   | 15.5   |

Note: Time 1 = Start of the Fall 1993 semester  
 Time 2 = Midpoint of the Fall 1993 semester  
 Time 3 = End of the Fall 1993 semester  
 Time 4 = End of the Spring 1994 semester

# Reading Test, By Group Over Time



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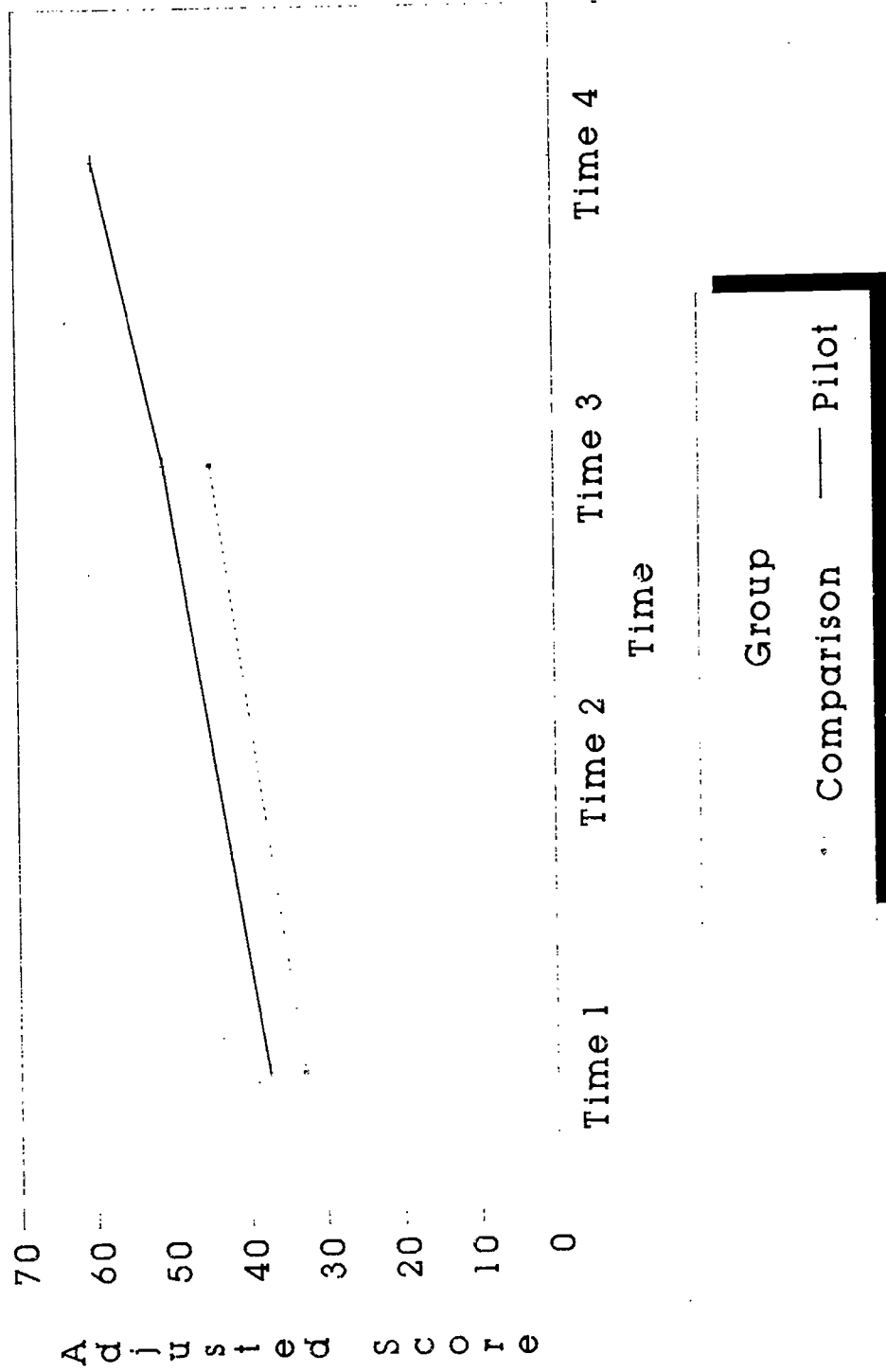
Table 3

Focal Skills Writing Test Scores: Repeated Measures, By Group

| Condition  | Time 1 |        | Time 2 |        | Time 3 |        | Time 4 |        |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|            | Mean   | St.Dev | Mean   | St.Dev | Mean   | St.Dev | Mean   | St.Dev |
| Comparison | 32.8   | 14.9   | --     | --     | 44.7   | 13.9   | --     | --     |
| Pilot      | 37.5   | 18.3   | --     | --     | 50.8   | 18.3   | 59.8   | 20.3   |

Note: Time 1 = Start of the Fall 1993 semester  
 Time 2 = Midpoint of the Fall 1993 semester  
 Time 3 = End of the Fall 1993 semester  
 Time 4 = End of the Spring 1994 semester

# Writing Test, By Group Over Time



GWC Matriculation Research

Table 4a

Course Referrals at the End of the Spring 1994 Semester, By Group

| Course Referral Level | ESL 002<br>(Comparison) |       | ESL 006 / 007<br>(Focal Skills) |       |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|-------|
|                       | n                       | %     | n                               | %     |
| ESL 005               | 0                       | 0.0%  | 10                              | 20.0% |
| ESL 004               | 5                       | 17.9% | 9                               | 18.0% |
| ESL 003               | 7                       | 25.0% | 13                              | 26.0% |
| ESL 002               | 14                      | 50.0% | 16                              | 32.0% |
| ESL 001               | 2                       | 7.1%  | 2                               | 4.0%  |

Table 4b

Categorized Course Referrals at the End of the Spring 1994 Semester, By Group

| Course Referral Level | ESL 002<br>(Comparison) |       | ESL 006 / 007<br>(Focal Skills) |       |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|-------|
|                       | n                       | %     | n                               | %     |
| ESL 004 or higher     | 5                       | 17.9% | 19                              | 38.0% |
| ESL 003               | 7                       | 25.0% | 13                              | 26.0% |
| ESL 002 or lower      | 16                      | 57.1% | 18                              | 36.0% |

(Note:  $X^2_{(2)} = 4.21, p \text{ ns}$ )

## APPENDIX B

### OVERVIEW OF THE ANOVA DESIGN (FALL SEMESTER COMPARISONS)

#### FACTORS:

##### Between-Groups Factor:

Overall differences between mean scores of Focal Skills and Comparison groups (collapsing across the time factor)

##### Within-Groups Factor:

Overall changes over time (collapsing across the group factor)

##### Interaction Effect:

Differential gain -- difference in amount of gain made by the two groups over time

## APPENDIX C

### GOLDEN WEST COLLEGE -- ESL COURSES

| Course  | Title & Description   |
|---------|---|
| ESL 900 | <i>Introduction to English I.</i> A non-credit course emphasizing basic listening and speaking skills students need in order to function in other subject areas.  |
| ESL 001 | <i>Introduction to English II.</i> Four-unit course continuing the introduction to, and practice of, the basic sounds and structure of English. Emphasis is on listening comprehension and oral communication skills as well as the elementary reading and writing skills necessary for college work.       |
| ESL 002 | <i>Intermediate English Language I.</i> Four-unit basic course in English grammar and sentence writing. Course work includes simple and complex sentence structures, syntax and pronunciation. The Focal Skills courses at Golden West College were designed for students at the ESL 002 proficiency level. |
| ESL 003 | <i>Intermediate English Language II.</i> A four-unit sentence-writing course. Writing simple and complex sentences using correct grammar and punctuation.   |
| ESL 004 | <i>Advanced English Language I.</i> A four-unit introductory course in paragraph writing. Sentence structure review and paragraph writing.  |
| ESL 005 | <i>Advanced English Language II.</i> A four-unit course emphasizing vocabulary, reading and writing designed to promote fluency for advanced students and to develop contextual understanding common to native speakers of English.   |



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