

English as a Second Language Survey Analysis and Report

Prepared for the Mayor's International Cabinet by: UNC Charlotte Urban Institute, Community Services
April 1999

Executive Summary

This report contains the results of a survey of 376 non-native speakers in the region concerning their opinions on their interest and need for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. The results of this survey will be used as part of a planning process to address the needs of Charlotte's international community.

The Community Services Committee of the Mayor's International Cabinet developed the survey instruments and went out into the Charlotte community over the period of several months in 1997-1998 to administer the survey to members of Charlotte's international population. Surveys were made available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Laotian and two Montagnard dialects.

It should be pointed out that members of the Community Services Committee faced several issues in administering this survey. One was access to members of Charlotte's international population. Committee members attended Hispanic health fairs, went to the offices of Immigration and Naturalization, the Latin American Festival, churches with ethnic services and other social service organizations in an attempt to collect as many surveys as possible. The surveys are heavily weighted towards the Hispanic population as many of these events specifically targeted this ethnic group. However, the Hispanic population in Charlotte-Mecklenburg is approximately five times larger than the next most populous group, the Vietnamese. Given this fact the Committee felt that the large majority of surveys returned by Hispanic respondents would not improperly affect the findings of this survey on English as a Second Language needs. Another major barrier to the collection of these surveys was a cultural one. Sending out surveys is a uniquely American business tool that the general public is well accustomed to. The same cannot be said for other cultures. Many people from other cultures are mistrustful of providing personal information in such a format, even though they were not required to write down their names. Other groups were asked to complete the surveys but sent information back to the Committee in a separate format from the survey, with "group" answers provided. Unfortunately, this meant we were not able to use their responses.

Despite these obstacles to data collection, the Community Services Committee feels that the results that were obtained accurately reflect and confirm what ESL providers in the Charlotte community already suspected about the desire of internationals to learn English and what some of the barriers might be that are preventing them from doing so. It is our hope that this survey will allow ESL providers in the community to work together to more effectively target the international population, and provide the services and tailored courses necessary to enroll more individuals into English language training classes.

Highlights of the Survey:

1. Country of Origin

Respondents to the survey were from twenty-nine countries. The largest group of respondents came from Mexico (47.9%); the second largest group came from Vietnam (15.8%).

2. Native Language

Sixteen languages were identified as the respondents' native tongues with Spanish being the most frequently mentioned (71.5%) followed by Vietnamese with 8.3%.

3. Occupation in the United States

Construction workers represent the largest category of respondents (21.6%), followed by individuals identifying themselves as housewives (16.2%) and those individuals working in the services sector (15.2%).

4. Reason for Coming to the United States

The majority of respondents listed “economic” (53%) as their reason for coming to the United States, followed by “family” (26%) and “political” (24%).

5. Interest in ESL Classes

The overwhelming majority of respondents (95%) reported that they were interested in learning English, and in taking ESL classes. Most, however, were not interested in paying for the classes.

6. Barriers to Attending ESL Classes

The most significant barrier to attending ESL classes for a majority of respondents is that they are working during the time that ESL classes are offered. Lack of transportation, inconvenient class locations, lack of childcare arrangements and lack of knowledge about when classes are being offered also were listed as major barriers. Two other very interesting barriers were discovered as well: illiteracy in the respondent’s native language and fear of attending classes.

Many respondents indicated that weekday evening hours are good times for ESL classes, particularly Monday and Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Respondents preferred two or three hour classes held two days per week. ***Overall, 74% of the respondents said that they would attend classes if they were held at their place of employment.***

Conclusion:

There needs to be a concerted effort on the part of the Charlotte education and business communities to provide even more English language education for internationals in the Charlotte area. While it is recognized that Central Piedmont Community College and some community-based organizations provide English language instruction free-of-charge, or at very little cost, there are still many internationals, who for reasons stated in the survey, are not accessing these classes.

The areas to emphasize are those that directly pertain to aiding internationals in improving their economic situations here in the Charlotte area. Basic literacy classes are essential to those who have never been successful in the fundamentals of reading and writing. These classes should address the basic English skills needed for work. For those internationals who desire more discriminating skill instruction, specialized courses for a fee in the areas of pronunciation and grammar should be made available. Computer literacy also needs to be included in these offerings as almost all members of society now come in contact with the computer in some form or fashion.

The goal is to provide English language classes that build, develop, and strengthen the non-native speaker’s abilities in English. Providing these internationals with English language skills enables them to become informed, participating members of their community, aids them in being literate in the workplace, and produces independent learners. These goals must be supported by the education

and business institutions because they have a direct impact on the next learners/workers of the Charlotte area community.

The opportunity exists to meet the language needs in a proactive manner, train a work population fully capable of assimilating into all levels of jobs here in Charlotte, and produce citizens enabled to become more a part of the fabric of life here in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area – which truly makes us a world-class city.

The Mayor's International Cabinet wishes to thank the following members of the Community Services Committee for their tremendous work on this survey. They are:

Lorne Lassiter, Outgoing Chair, 1998	Business for Russia/Community Connections
Marcos Bomfim, Incoming Chair, 1999	Baptist Metrolina Ministries
Denisa Leach, 1997 Chair	United Way
Peter Awute	Conmat Engineering, Inc.
Dennie Crowder	Charlotte/Mecklenburg Police Department
Lewis Dancy	Self-Help Credit Union
David Davis	Programa Esperanza
Barbara Douglas	Refugee Resettlement Office / Catholic Social
Services	
Margaret Furr	Federal Reserve
Dawn Custalow Griffiths	Central Piedmont Community College
Carmen Hilton	Spanish Translation Services
Tuyet Seethaler	International Health & Community
	Services/Vietnamese Community Association
John Wallace	Amay James Center – City of Charlotte

The Mayor's International Cabinet also wishes to express its sincere thanks to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee and its Executive Director, Willie Ratchford, for its financial contribution to this project.

Introduction

This report contains the results of a survey of 376 non-native speakers in the region concerning their interest in and need for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. The results of the survey will be used as part of a planning process to address the needs of Charlotte's international community.

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte Urban Institute tabulated the survey on behalf of the City of Charlotte's Mayor's International Cabinet. The Mayor's International Cabinet developed the survey instruments, distributed them and had the surveys and the responses translated by volunteers. The survey was available in five languages: Spanish, English, Russian, Vietnamese and Laotian. Six Laotian surveys were returned but are not included in the analysis as no translation was available to determine which questions had been asked of respondents.

Surveys were distributed independently by members of the Mayor's International Cabinet. Two different versions of the survey (*A* and *B*) were used, with the majority of respondents completing Version *B*. Both versions of the survey are included in the Appendix.

Overall results of the survey are analyzed in the body of this report. In the survey analysis, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, so total percentages may be slightly more or slightly less than 100. Missing responses are excluded from the report analysis. Complete survey frequencies, combining versions *A* and *B* and including 'no responses,' are shown in the Appendix.

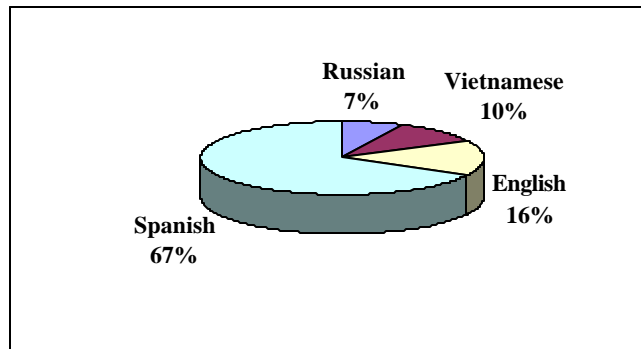
The results of the surveys can be used by the Mayor's International Cabinet as an overview of the ESL needs of Charlotte's non-native speaking community. The survey also provides useful data concerning barriers to attendance at ESL classes and location/time preferences. This information provides a useful basis for the expansion of English language education programs to serve Charlotte's international community.

Characteristics of the Sample

Version and Language of Survey

There are two surveys: *Survey A* distributed first and *Survey B*, a revision of *Survey A*. Seventy-six percent of completed surveys are from *Survey B*. Three hundred and seventy-six surveys were completed with the majority being in Spanish (67%). The English language version comprised 16% of completed surveys followed by Vietnamese with 10% and Russian with 7%.

**Figure 1 : Language of Survey
(percentage distributions)**



Country of Origin

Respondents identify twenty-nine countries as their country of origin with the most frequently cited being Mexico (47.9%). Vietnam has the next highest percentage of respondents with 15.8% followed by El Salvador with 6.1%.

**Table 1: Country of Origin
(percentage distributions)**

Country	Percent (n)	Country	Percent (n)	Country	Percent (n)	Country	Percent (n)
Argentina	0.3 (1)	El Salvador	6.1 (22)	Laos	0.6 (2)	Philippines	0.6 (2)
Brazil	0.8 (3)	Finland	0.6 (2)	Latvia	1.4 (5)	Puerto Rico	1.1 (4)
China	0.3 (1)	Guatemala	2.2 (8)	Mexico	47.9 (173)	Republic of Georgia	0.6 (2)
Colombia	1.4 (5)	Honduras	3.6 (13)	Morocco	0.8 (3)	Russia	2.5 (9)
Cuba	1.1 (4)	India	1.4 (5)	Nicaragua	1.1 (4)	Spain	0.6 (2)
Dominican Republic	1.7 (6)	Iran	0.3 (1)	Panama	0.3 (1)	Ukraine	0.8 (3)
Ecuador	3.3 (12)	Korea	0.3 (1)	Peru	2.2 (8)	USSR	0.6 (2)
						Vietnam	15.8 (57)

Native Language of Respondent

Sixteen languages are identified as the respondents' native tongues with Spanish being the most frequently mentioned with 71.5% followed by Vietnamese with 8.3%.

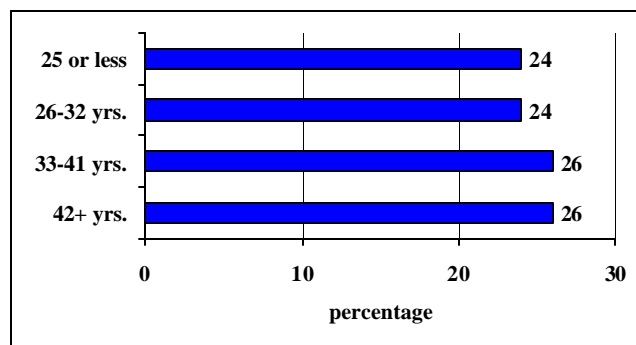
**Table 2: Native Language of Respondents
(percentage distributions)**

Language	Percent (n)	Language	Percent (n)
Arabic	.8 (3)	Lao	.3 (1)
Chinese	1.9 (7)	Montagnard	4.7 (17)
Farsi	.8 (3)	Portuguese	.6 (2)
Finnish	.6 (2)	Russian	7.2 (26)
Hmong	.3 (1)	Quecha	.6 (2)
Indian Gujarati	1.4 (5)	Spanish	71.5 (259)
Jarai	.3 (1)	Tagalog	.6 (2)
Korean	.3 (1)	Vietnamese	8.3 (30)

Age of Respondents

Respondents' ages vary from 13 years old to 83 years old with 48% between the ages of 13 and 32 and 52% above the age of 33 years old. The mean age of respondents is 35.9 years.

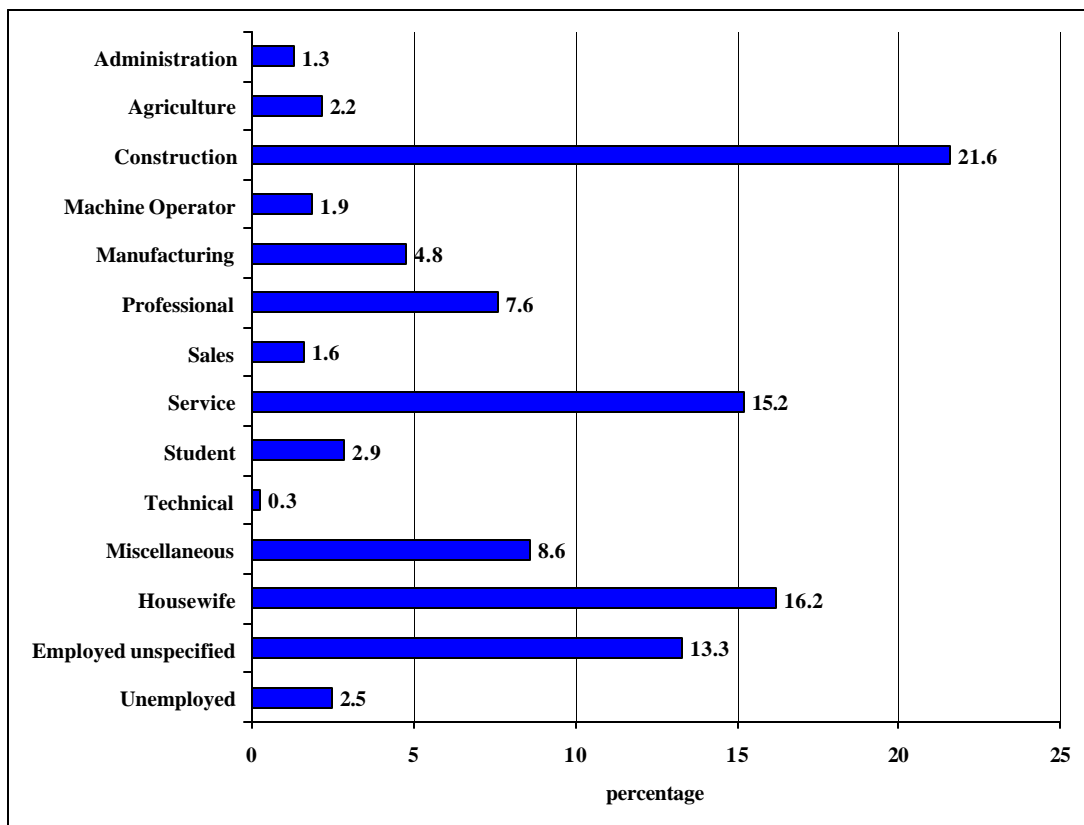
**Figure 2: Age of Respondents
(percentage distributions)**



Occupation in the United States

Respondents of both surveys were asked to identify his/her occupation here in the United States. Due to the numerous jobs named, the occupations have been classified into the following categories: Administration, Agriculture, Construction, Machine Operator, Manufacturing, Professional, Sales, Service, Student, Technical, Miscellaneous, Housewife, Employed Unspecified, and Unemployed. Construction represents the largest category with 21.6% of respondents working within this industry, followed by 16.2% identifying themselves as housewives and 15.2% working in the service sector. *Please see the Appendix for a complete listing of occupations.*

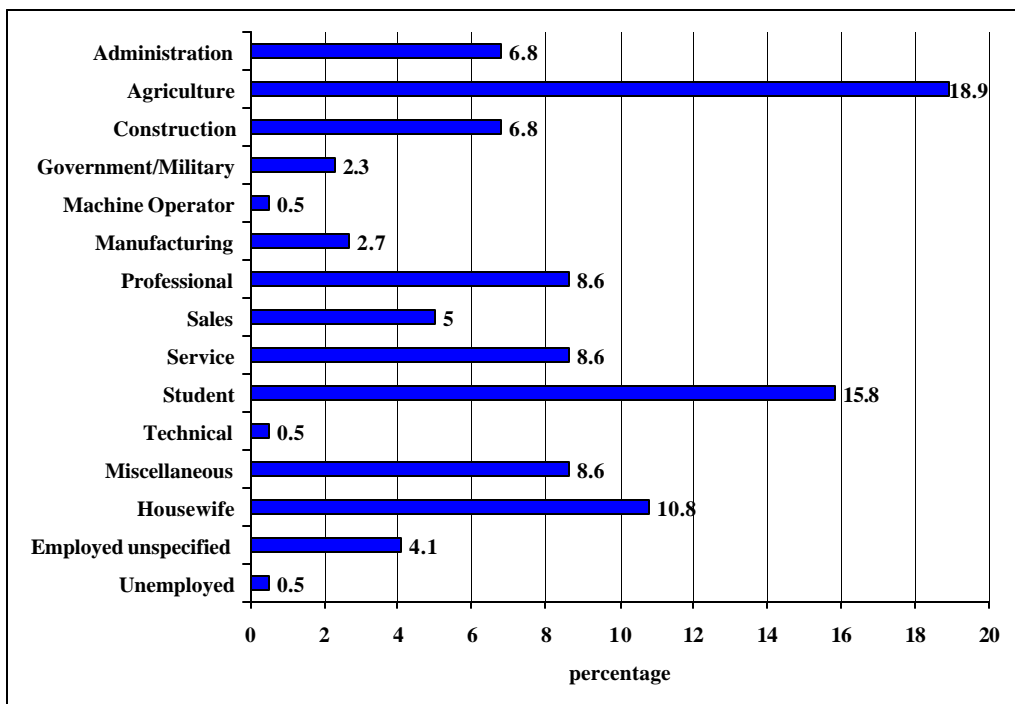
Figure 3: Occupation of Respondent in the United States (percentage distributions)



Occupation in Native Country

Only respondents on *Survey B* were asked to identify his/her occupation in his/her native country, therefore, making it difficult to make a comparison. Due to the numerous jobs named, the occupations have been classified into the following categories: Administration, Agriculture, Construction, Government/Military, Machine Operator, Manufacturing, Professional, Sales, Service, Student, Technical, Miscellaneous, Housewife, Employed Unspecified, and Unemployed. The largest percentage of occupations in the respondent's native country are in the agriculture industry (18.9%), followed by students with 15.8%. *Please see the Appendix for a complete listing of occupations.*

Figure 4: Occupation in Native Country (percentage distributions)



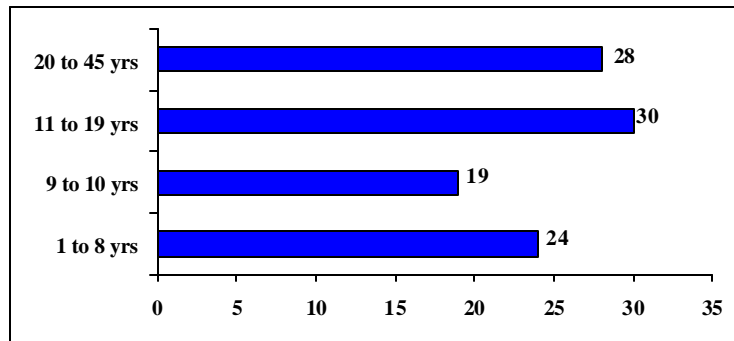
Education of Respondents

The educational level of the sample is difficult to ascertain. Many responses are non-specific and difficult to define with clarity. Therefore, the only responses presented are those that are precise. Fourteen respondents (4%) report being college graduates with 16 years of school completed. Eight respondents (2%) indicate being high school graduates. Other responses which could not be interpreted include items such as 'all,' 'none,' 'graduated,' 'completed my profession', and arbitrary numbers such as '10,' '12,' 'six,' etc. *Please see the Appendix for a complete list of reported education levels and frequencies.*

Length of Time Living in United States

As shown in **Figure 5**, the sample consists of individuals who have been in the U.S. from one year to forty-five years. The mean number of years in the U.S. is 15.26.

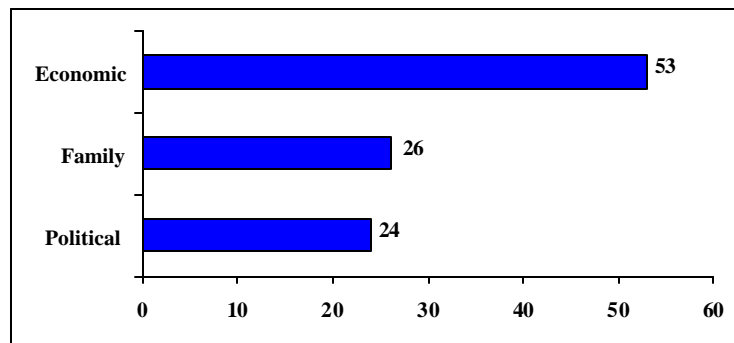
**Figure 5: Length of Time in the US
(percentage distributions)**



Reason for Coming to United States

As presented in **Figure 6**, the most commonly reported reason for coming to the United States in the sample is 'economic' (53%), followed by 'family' (26%), and then 'political' (24%). Other responses given include issues such as 'like America,' 'work and learn English,' 'land,' 'learn to speak English and return to native country,' and 'religion.' *See the Appendix for a complete listing.*

**Figure 6: Reason for Coming to the US
(percentage distributions)**

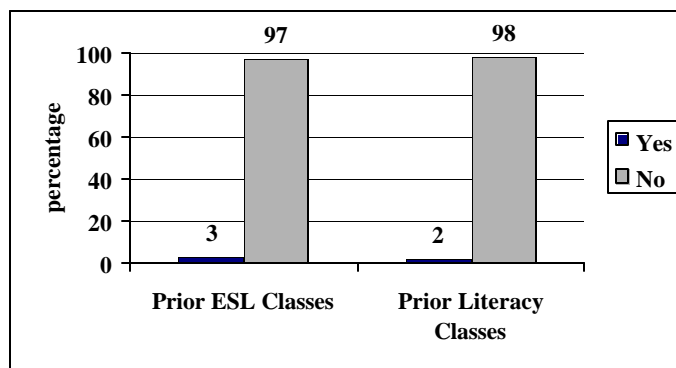


Survey Analysis

Interest In, and Previous Experiences With, ESL Classes

There is a great deal of interest in English as a Second Language classes in the sample. Ninety-five percent of respondents report being interested in ESL classes. As shown in Figure 7, the sample reports a lack of experience with ESL and Literacy classes. Only three percent of the respondents report having taken ESL classes before. An even lower percentage of respondents report having taken literacy (reading and writing proficiency in English) classes. Only two percent of the entire sample report having taken literacy classes in the past.

Figure 7: Prior Class Experience with ESL or Literacy (percentage distributions)



A total of 22 respondents gave reasons why they would not be interested in attending ESL or literacy classes. The most frequently cited reason in the sample is ‘No time’ (n=6 or 2%). Other responses include ‘Because I know English,’ ‘Don’t need it,’ and ‘Too old to study’.

Specific Areas of Interest

Respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay \$60 to \$75 for ESL classes if they already had advanced, level 6, English language skills. This question was not presented to some (25%) of the respondents in the sample, and another segment (16%) offered no answer to this question. Therefore, the results are based on 59% of the sample. Sixty percent of those who were asked and provided a response report that they would not be interested in paying for the classes themselves. Next, respondents were asked if they paid for a class, the areas they would be interested in studying. Looking only at the 90 respondents who said they would pay for classes, the most popular classes are ‘Pronunciation’ (72%) and ‘Reading/Writing’ (68%). However, exactly half of the respondents who would pay for classes report an interest in ‘Grammar,’ and 48% report interest in ‘Listening/Speaking/Public Presentations’ classes. Respondents were given the opportunity to suggest other courses they would like to see offered and these include ‘GED,’ ‘Vocational training,’ ‘computer-math/calculation,’ and ‘vocabularies related to employment’. All responses in this ‘other’ category represent less than 1% of the entire sample and three percent or less of those who are willing to pay for ESL classes. Please see the Appendix for a complete list of ‘other’ responses.

Barriers to Attending ESL Classes

Respondents were given a series of statements and asked to identify which were potential barriers to attending classes. In addition, respondents were asked to rate the importance of each statement on a scale of one to three with one (1) as a ‘A big problem,’ two (2) as ‘Somewhat of a problem’, and three (3) as ‘Not a problem’.

Table 3 shows the total percentage responding yes to the question, “Which of the following obstacles prevent you from attending ESL and literacy classes?” and **Table 4** shows the rating of each barrier as a problem. The percent reporting the degree of the problem represents only those respondents who received *Survey B*. In analyzing the responses to these statements, possible explanations for the inconsistencies in the responses to the questions may be attributable to language translations or problems with the administration of the survey. For example, 49% of the sample report that not having transportation to classes is an obstacle to their attendance, but when asked to rate importance of the problem 52% report that this is not a problem. And while 46% report being illiterate in their native language as an obstacle, only 12% report it is a big problem. The most consistent response is given to ‘Working at ESL time.’ Forty-five percent say this is an obstacle and 50% rate it as a big problem. It also seems clear that being afraid to go to ESL classes is not a major barrier to attendance.

**Table 3: Obstacles to Attendance at ESL Classes
(percentage distributions)**

Reason	Total % Responding Yes to Barrier
No transportation	49 (157)
Location not convenient	35 (102)
No child care	25 (68)
Working at ESL time	45 (132)
Illiterate in native language	46 (140)
Don't know when/where classes meet	29 (89)
Afraid to go	14 (44)
No benefit from ESL	45 (138)

**Table 4: Rating of Importance of Obstacles as a Problem
(percentage distributions)**

Reason	Big Problem	Somewhat Problem	Not a Problem
No transportation	36 (69)	12 (24)	52 (101)
Location not convenient	43 (77)	16 (28)	42 (75)
No child care	35 (61)	8 (14)	57 (101)
Working at ESL time	50 (90)	16 (28)	34 (62)
Illiterate in native language	12 (20)	10 (17)	78 (133)
Don't know when/where classes meet	49 (86)	21 (37)	29 (51)
Afraid to go	15 (22)	10 (15)	75 (112)
No benefit from ESL	35 (51)	6 (9)	59 (85)

Note: Not all questions were asked to all respondents and therefore percentages are based on different numbers.

Reasons for Interest in ESL Classes

Respondents were asked to identify the personal benefits of learning to read and write English, as well as to rank the importance of each on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being 'very important' and 5 being 'not at all important' (4 is equal to 'not sure'). **Table 5** shows the percentages of those positively responding to the list of benefits. Respondents from both surveys are included. **Table 6** reports the importance ratings of these benefits but only includes responses from the *Survey B*.

Most respondents in the sample (75% or greater) feel they would personally gain from ESL classes in each of the benefit categories presented. 'I would be able to communicate with social service providers, the police, the doctor, my child's teachers, store clerks,' (90%) and 'I would be able to help my family members communicate with social services providers, the doctor,' (90%) are the two most frequently reported benefits, followed by 'I would be able to get a better job' (88%) and 'I would be able to earn more money' (87%). The rating scale represents only responses to *Survey B*. 'Able to get a better job' (89%), 'able to communicate with social service providers, police, doctors' (87%) and 'able to earn more money' (86%) are all rated as very important benefits to attending ESL classes.

**Table 5: Benefits from ESL Classes
(percentage distributions)**

Benefit	% (n)
Able to get a better job	88 (306)
Able to earn more money	87 (299)
Able to help my children learn English and prepare for school	84 (283)
Able to get my driver's license	76 (246)
Able to communicate with social service providers, the police, doctors, etc.	90 (308)
Able to help family members communicate	90 (283)
Able to get more involved in the Charlotte community	86 (292)

**Table 6: Rating of Importance of Benefits from ESL Classes
(percentage distributions)**

Benefit	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Sure	Not Important
Able to get a better job	89 (200)	6 (14)	1 (2)	1 (2)	3 (6)
Able to earn more money	86 (189)	8 (18)	2 (5)	1 (2)	3 (6)
Able to help my children learn English and prepare for school	80 (164)	12 (25)	3 (6)	1 (1)	5 (10)
Able to get my driver's license	74 (138)	15 (27)	4 (8)	2 (4)	5 (9)
Able to communicate with social service providers, the police, doctors, etc.	87 (183)	9 (18)	3 (7)	1 (1)	1 (1)
Able to help family members communicate	78 (159)	13 (27)	8 (16)	1 (2)	1 (1)
Able to get more involved in the Charlotte community	72 (145)	11 (22)	6 (12)	7 (3)	5 (9)

Note: Not all questions were asked to all respondents and therefore percentages are based on different numbers.

Class Time Preferences

The respondents were asked to indicate the times and days when classes would be most convenient for them. The survey provided opportunities to choose as many time slots as necessary between the hours of 7:30 AM and 9:00 PM every day of the week. Weekday evening hours were the most popular times for ESL classes. (See **Table 7** for percentage distributions for each time slot.)

Twenty-two percent of respondents in the sample favor the 7:00 PM, Monday time period. The second most popular time for ESL classes is Wednesday evening at 7:00 (21%). Monday and Wednesday at 7:30 PM are the third most popular time, followed by Monday at 8:00 PM (18%), Wednesday at 8:00 PM (17%), and Thursday at 7:00 PM (17%). Fifteen percent of the sample report the following times to be convenient for them: Monday, 6:00 PM, 6:30 PM, 8:30 PM, and 9:00 PM; Tuesday, 7:30 PM, 8:00 PM, and 9:00 PM; Wednesday, 8:30 PM; Thursday, 8:00 PM; and Friday, 7:00 PM and 7:30 PM. Overall, Monday classes from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM are the most popular times reported as convenient. Many of the respondents also indicate preferences for classes on Tuesday through Thursday evenings. However, not all of the class times on those evenings were reported by 15% or more of the sample. For instance, Tuesday and Thursday at 8:30 PM is only convenient for 13% of the sample. Bolded figures in **Table 7** represent at least 15% of the respondents preferring a specific time slot.

**Table 7: Class Time Preferences
(percentage distributions)**

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:30 AM	6 (24)	6 (22)	7 (25)	6 (22)	6 (23)	6 (21)	9 (33)
8:00 AM	5 (19)	7 (26)	7 (25)	6 (24)	6 (24)	6 (21)	8 (30)
8:30 AM	5 (18)	6 (23)	6 (22)	6 (21)	6 (21)	5 (19)	8 (30)
9:00 AM	6 (23)	8 (30)	8 (29)	7 (27)	7 (27)	7 (26)	10 (36)
9:30 AM	7 (25)	10 (36)	9 (34)	9 (33)	9 (34)	8 (30)	8 (31)
10:00 AM	8 (30)	9 (33)	10 (37)	8 (31)	9 (32)	7 (28)	10 (37)
10:30 AM	6 (22)	7 (28)	8 (29)	7 (27)	7 (28)	6 (24)	8 (29)
11:00 AM	6 (22)	8 (29)	8 (30)	7 (28)	8 (29)	7 (25)	8 (29)
11:30 AM	6 (21)	7 (28)	8 (29)	7 (27)	7 (28)	7 (25)	8 (29)
12:00 PM	6 (21)	7 (27)	7 (28)	7 (26)	7 (27)	6 (23)	8 (29)
1:00 PM	6 (21)	5 (19)	5 (20)	5 (18)	5 (19)	4 (15)	8 (31)
2:00 PM	6 (22)	4 (13)	4 (14)	3 (12)	4 (13)	3 (11)	8 (31)
3:00 PM	6 (23)	4 (15)	4 (13)	3 (11)	3 (12)	2 (9)	8 (29)
4:00 PM	8 (29)	5 (17)	5 (17)	4 (15)	5 (18)	5 (17)	10 (36)
5:00 PM	9 (33)	7 (26)	6 (23)	6 (22)	6 (24)	6 (23)	9 (32)
5:30 PM	7 (27)	9 (34)	6 (23)	9 (33)	6 (24)	6 (22)	7 (26)
6:00 PM	10 (39)	15 (57)	12 (45)	14 (52)	13 (48)	11 (42)	11 (40)
6:30 PM	10 (37)	15 (56)	11 (43)	14 (51)	12 (45)	11 (41)	10 (37)
7:00 PM	10 (37)	22 (83)	16 (60)	21 (78)	17 (64)	15 (57)	11 (43)
7:30 PM	10 (36)	19 (71)	15 (58)	19 (70)	16 (59)	15 (55)	11 (42)
8:00 PM	8 (31)	18 (67)	15 (56)	17 (64)	15 (55)	13 (49)	9 (33)
8:30 PM	8 (30)	15 (58)	13 (47)	15 (58)	13 (49)	11 (43)	9 (32)
9:00 PM	10 (36)	15 (55)	15 (55)	15 (56)	15 (57)	14 (51)	11 (41)

Class Location Preferences

Respondents were presented with a number of different possible locations for ESL classes and asked which would be more convenient. Locations included public facilities such as the local community college, libraries, and social centers, as well as apartment complexes. Furthermore, each respondent was able to specify apartment complexes, libraries, and/or churches that would be convenient to them. The greatest preferred location for attending ESL classes would be at the respondent's workplace. Overall, 74% of the sample said that they would attend classes if they were held at their place of employment.

As presented in **Table 8** the public facilities most frequently reported as convenient are 'CPCC' (28%), the 'Hispanic/Latino Community Resource Center' (16%), and the 'Centro Catolico Hispano' (16%). Only one library, 'Independence', is reported by more than 5% of the sample as being convenient.

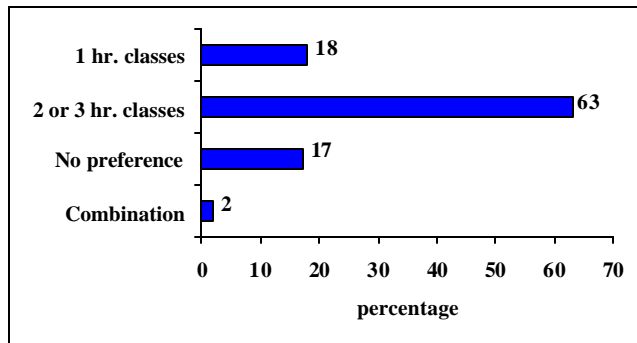
**Table 8: Location Preferences
(percentage distributions)**

Location	%
Respondent's Place of Employment	74
CPCC	28
Hispano/Latino Community Resource Center	16
Centro Catolico Hispano	16
Senior Center	7
La Voz de Esperanza	6
Adam Service Area Building	4
Belmont Regional Center	3
Amay James Center	>1
Williamsburg Apartments	4
Park Apartments	4
Silverstone Apartments	3
Independence Library	6
Main Library	3
North Park Library	3
Matthews Library	2
Plaza-Midwood Library	2
Hickory Grove Library	2
Scaleybark Library	3
West Boulevard Library	1

Class Structure Options

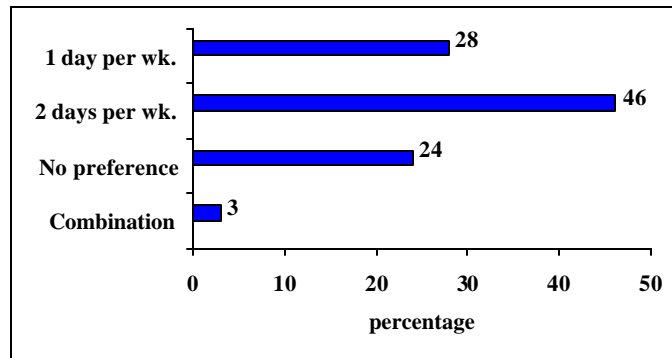
Respondents were given the opportunity to state their preferences in relation to a preferred length of time for ESL classes. Sixty-three percent of respondents indicate that 2 or 3 hour classes are preferable followed by 18% specifying a preference for one-hour classes.

**Figure 8: Preferred Length of Classes
(percentage distributions)**



In relation to the frequency of ESL classes, 46% of respondents indicate their preference for shorter classes two days per week. One day per week classes is preferred by 28% of the sample, and 24% specify no preference as to the frequency of classes.

**Figure 9: Preference for Class Frequency
(percentage distributions)**



Conclusions

The Mayor's International Cabinet survey can be used as a benchmark to further study and identify the English language needs of the region's non-native residents. Due to language barriers and other problems in the administration of the surveys, the results of these surveys cannot be used to generalize about the larger population. However, it provides a good view of English and literacy needs of those internationals living in the Charlotte community who responded to the surveys.

These respondents indicate a great interest in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Ninety-five percent of respondents report interest in such classes with very few having any prior experience with ESL or literacy classes. Approximately 60% of the respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay a fee for such a service, and 60% of this group report no interest in paying for such classes. Of those willing to pay, the most popular class topics are pronunciation and reading/writing.

'No transportation' (n=157), 'illiterate in native language' (n=140), 'no benefit to have ESL' (n=138), and 'working at ESL class time' (n=132) are the most frequently cited barriers to attending classes. Conversely, a large number of respondents report benefits from ESL classes with 'able to communicate with social service providers' (n=308), 'able to get a better job' (n=306) and able to earn more money' (n=299) as the most frequently cited benefits.

Monday evening is the most frequently reported preferable class time, however, other weeknight time slots are also indicated to be convenient. The respondent's place of employment and CPCC are the two most frequently mentioned locations that would be convenient for ESL classes. Respondents report that 2- or 3-hour classes, two days a week are the most preferable.

With the growing cultural diversity in the region, it is commendable that the Mayor's International Cabinet is addressing the issues and needs of the non-native members of its community. Fostering interethnic dialogue encourages and promotes communication and furthers potential involvement by all in the collective community.