

De Anza College Office of Institutional Research and Planning

To: ESL Department

Thomas Ray, Language Arts Division Dean

From: Shreesh Prakash, Student Research Assistant; Lisa Ly, Senior Research Analyst

Date: January 26, 2026

Subject: ESL Student Survey Results, Fall 2025

Overview and Methodology

The ESL Department wanted to survey its students to obtain feedback on the recent changes that have occurred over the past few years. The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Accreditation collaborated with the ESL Department to gather feedback on course modalities, placement assessment effectiveness, and areas for improvement. An online survey was administered between October 6 and November 3, 2025 and a total of 411 students responded. Some respondents did not answer every question; and therefore, results presented in this report will not always total 411. Throughout this report, “HC” indicates distinct student respondent count and “N” indicates the response count (as some questions allowed for multiple selections).

Summary of Findings

- Student respondents indicated they were likely to take non-credit ESL courses, specifically intermediate and advanced ESL 444, 451, 455, 461, and 465.
- Respondents (HC=128 or 31%) had repeated an ESL course, and most did so after passing, to gain more practice.
- When reflecting on their first ESL course at De Anza, most felt the placement level was “just right” for them (HC=280% or 82%).
- Passing their ESL course was important to respondents (HC=276 or 81%).
- Student respondents preferred, in general, to take their ESL classes via synchronous hybrid (N=251) or in person (N=244).
- When it came to identifying the best modality for their own learning, the top 1 and 2 ranked choices were in person (N=240), followed by synchronous hybrid (N=212).
- Respondents cited the strength of their ESL classes were the high quality of classes and instructors (N=292) and the availability of free noncredit options (N=234).
- When probed to identify areas that could be improved, the top five choices selected were more in person classes (N=201), more listening/speaking classes (N=193), more pronunciation classes (N=157), more morning classes (N=121), and more reading classes (N=108).

ESL Courses Taken

Student respondents were asked to select all the ESL courses they have and were currently taking in the fall 2025 quarter. A total of 408 distinct respondents answered this question.

- Non-credit ESL courses, across the full ESL pathway, including entry-level, intermediate, and advanced courses in both reading/writing and listening/speaking, as well as specialized offerings such as pronunciation were mostly selected. Intermediate and advanced courses such as ESL 444, 451, 455, 461, and 465 were the top 5 ESL courses respondents selected.
- On the flip side, the courses least taken were ESL 6, 274, 474, 260A, and 260B.

Table 1:

ESL Courses Taken at De Anza
(N=1,022 Responses)

	Course	Response		Course	Response
1.	ESL 451	106	14.	ESL 460A	34
2.	ESL 444	98	15.	ESL 251	33
3.	ESL 461	95	16.	ESL 261	31
4.	ESL 455	89	17.	ESL 473	29
5.	ESL 465	80	18.	ESL 5	26
6.	ESL 434	72	19.	ESL 244	20
7.	ESL 472	42	20.	ESL 234	13
8.	ESL 460B	40	21.	ESL 200	10
9.	ESL 273	38	22.	ESL 260A	8
10.	ESL 255	37	23.	ESL 260B	7
11.	ESL 400	35	24.	ESL 474	7
12.	ESL 265	35	25.	ESL 274	1
13.	ESL 272	35	26.	ESL 6	1

ESL Course Repetition

The survey inquired if respondents had repeated an ESL course. A total of 409 respondents answered this question.

- Nearly one-third (HC=128) of respondents took at least one ESL course more than once.
- Respondents were then asked to provide the reason for repeating, and they could choose multiple reasons. The reason most cited was wanting to retake the course to continue improving their English skills.
 - 73% (N=80) passed the class but retook to improve their English
 - 25% (N=27) didn't pass the class
 - 10% (N=11) other
 - "Other" reasons cited included missing a final exam that prevented successful completion, time management, and having to travel or return to their home country.

ESL Placement Reflection

Respondents were asked to reflect back on their first ESL course at De Anza and consider their placement. A total of 341 respondents chose to answer this question.

- The majority reported their course level placement was appropriate (i.e., "just right").
 - 82% (HC=280) Just right
 - 9% (HC=31) Too easy
 - 5% (HC=17) Too hard
 - 4% (HC=13) Other
- A smaller proportion felt their first class was too easy or too hard, and open-ended from "other" responses reveal that some students experienced mismatches between different skill areas, such as strong reading but weaker speaking or pronunciation.

Importance of Passing Course

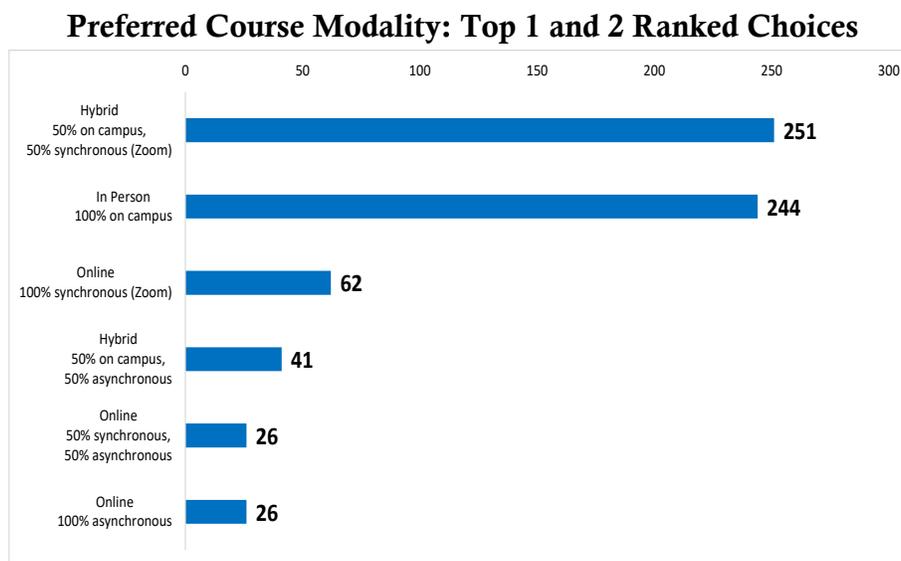
- The importance of earning a passing grade in ESL was very high. Of the 340 respondents who answered, 276 (81%) indicated that obtaining an A, B, C, or Pass is important to them.

Preferences for Class Modality

Student respondents were asked about course modality in two ways: which modality do they prefer to take ESL courses and which modality is best for their own learning.

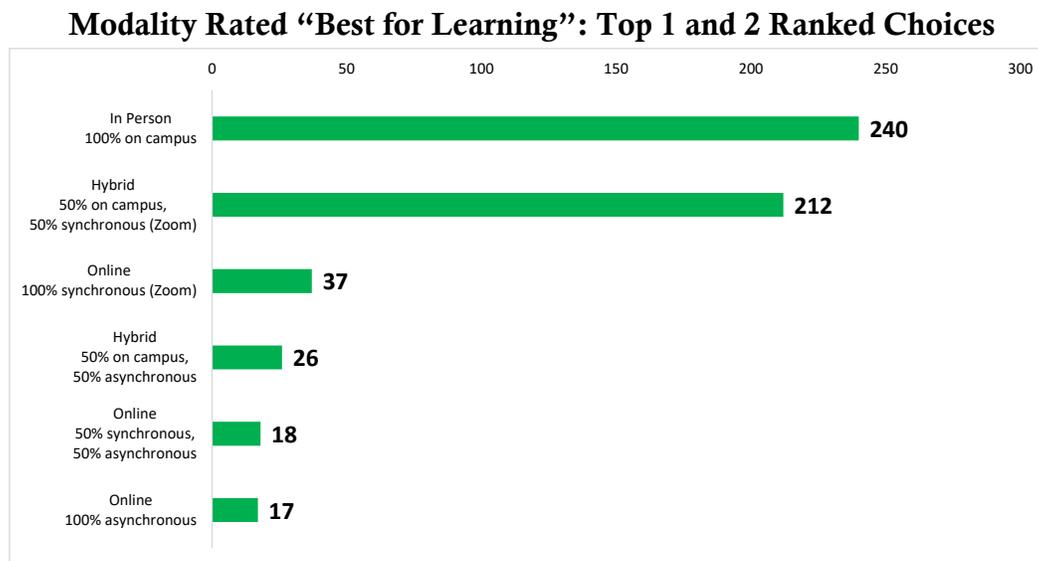
- For both questions, the top 1 and 2 choices ranked were in person and synchronous hybrid classes. Online formats with an asynchronous component received lower rankings.
- Student respondents preferred, in general, to take their ESL classes via synchronous hybrid (N=251) or in person (N=244). For class modality preference by ESL course level, see [Appendix A](#).

Figure 1:



- However, when it came to identifying the best modality for their own learning, the top 1 and 2 ranked choices were in person (N=240), followed by synchronous hybrid (N=212).

Figure 2:



ESL Class Strengths

Respondents were asked what they liked about their ESL classes and they could select multiple reasons. A total of 341 responses were collected.

- **Top Reasons Cited:** Respondents cited the high quality of classes and instructors (N=292) and the availability of free noncredit options (N=234).
- **Class Offering and Scheduling:** Other reasons cited were the “class choices” that accommodated variety of skills and proficiency levels (N=224), as well as having multiple modalities (N=223) and class times (N=208).
- **Support Resources:** Most of the open-ended responses gave a nod to campus resources such as the Language Success Center (LSC), Writing and Reading Center (WRC), and tutoring are they were viewed as integral to student success, providing essential space for conversational practice and individualized help.

Areas for Improvement

- When probed to identify areas that could be improved, the top five choices selected were more in person classes (N=201), more listening/speaking classes (N=193), more pronunciation classes (N=157), more morning classes (N=121), and more reading classes (N=108).
- “Other” areas for improvement specified included having more detailed course descriptions, more classes scheduled on Fridays, more vocabulary classes, same level of ESL class but different subjects, and fewer students per class.

Table 2:

Areas for Improvement

(N=1,222 Responses)

Areas for Improvements	Response
1. More in-person classes	201
2. More listening/speaking classes	193
3. More pronunciation classes	157
4. More morning classes	121
5. More reading classes	108
6. More grammar classes	103
7. More synchronous (Zoom) classes	89
8. More writing classes	89
9. More afternoon classes	57
10. More evening classes	52
11. More asynchronous (online, no meetings) classes	44
12. Other (please specify)	8

Open-Ended Feedback

A total of 141 student respondents provided open-ended responses when probed to clarify previously provided answers or to share more about their ESL experience at De Anza. The following themes were identified and a sample of the narratives are provided in [Appendix B](#).

High Instructor Quality and Support

- **Supportive and Patient:** Responses consistently described instructors as kind, patient, supportive and encouraging.
- **Varying Styles:** Student respondents recognized that while some instructors were strict and others were more relaxed, the diversity of teaching styles allowed them to find a "fit" for their learning preferences.

Learning Progress and Confidence

- **Skill Improvement:** Respondents acknowledged their tangible progress in their English proficiency in areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking that helped them participate more in class.
- **Confidence Building:** Many respondents highlighted a newfound courage to speak up in public and participate in social settings.
- **Cultural Adaptation:** Beyond the language, student respondents appreciated learning about American culture and academic expectations.

Workload and Rigor

- **Heavy Homework:** While many accepted the rigor, some student respondents found the volume and speed of homework challenging, particularly when balancing multiple classes or competing demands such as work or childcare.
- **Academic Pressure:** While some found the difficulty level exhausting, others acknowledged that the rigor is exactly why they are learning so much.

Class Schedule and Modality Preference

- **The Case for In-Person:** Many student respondents felt they could focus better on campus. They argued that "forced" interaction in the classroom helped prevented them from falling back on their native languages and provided better opportunities to practice their listening and speaking skills.
- **The Case for Online:** Other student respondents relied on Zoom or asynchronous options to balance school with work, childcare, and long commutes.
- **Course Availability:** There were requests for more morning in-person classes, more evening/online options for working parents, and more in-person classes for listening/speaking and pronunciation.

Constructive Critiques and Suggested Improvements

- **Class Size and Peer Interaction:** Some felt classes were too large, which limited speaking time. A few respondents noted that "group discussions" with other ESL students can be frustrating due to varying accents and suggested more interaction with native speakers.
- **Course Availability:** Specialized classes like Pronunciation filled up too quickly, and some felt there were not enough sections offered throughout the year.
- **Pacing and Practice:** A few student respondents suggested devoting more class time to practicing new skills rather than relying primarily on homework and requested slightly slower pacing in online classes to allow more time for questions and corrections.
- **Logistics and Costs:** Suggestions included making the re-enrollment process easier for returning students, providing zero-cost textbooks, and opening tutoring roles to all qualified students (not just international students).
- **Placement Accuracy:** A few respondents had mixed feelings about assessment testing. One respondent found their placement informative, illuminating areas of strengths and weaknesses. Others either had high or low confidence in its accuracy to appropriately place students.

Concerning Feedback

- One student respondent reported a negative experience with a teacher who used "negative words," and another explicitly mentioned an encounter with a "mean and racist" instructor. These stand out as significant outliers in an otherwise positive student feedback set.

Appendix

Appendix A: Class Modality Preference by Course Level

After the survey was administered, the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Accreditation was asked to examine class modality preference by ESL course level. Since the survey inquired about *general preference* for class modality and not modality preference by course level or course content (e.g., reading/writing versus listening/speaking), the results in this section have limitations and cannot be generalizable. The numbers denoted in Figures 3 to 9 reflect the weighted average of responses and the most preferred choice is denoted with highest score.

- When examined by course level, the data suggests respondents still preferred to take ESL courses in person, followed by synchronous hybrid and synchronous online.
- Respondents who self-reported they enrolled in advanced and/or transfer-level ESL, while they still preferred in person and synchronous hybrid, the strength of these preferred formats slightly declined.

Figure 3:

ESL 200/400 High Beginning: Preferred Class Modality (N=29)

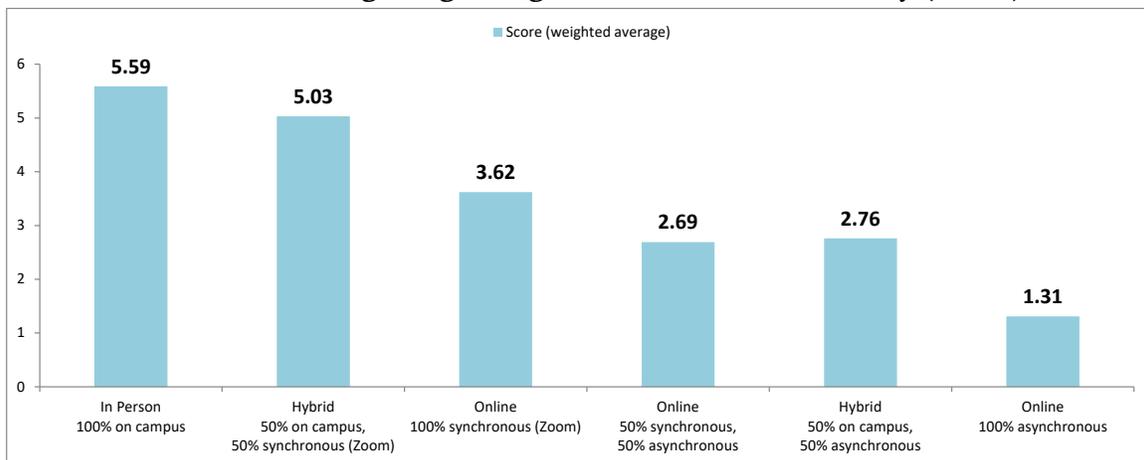


Figure 4:

ESL 234/434 Low Intermediate: Preferred Class Modality (N=63)

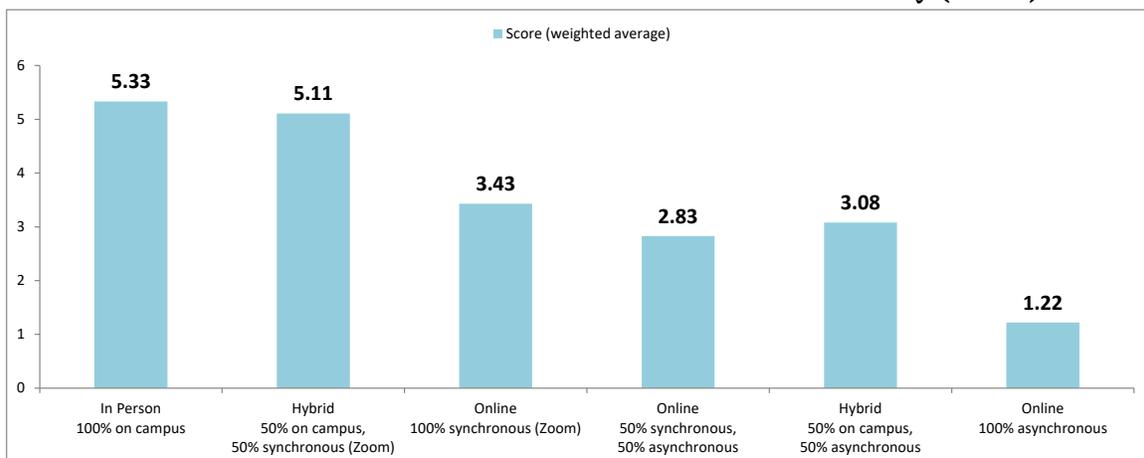


Figure 5:

ESL 244/444 Intermediate: Preferred Class Modality (N=83)

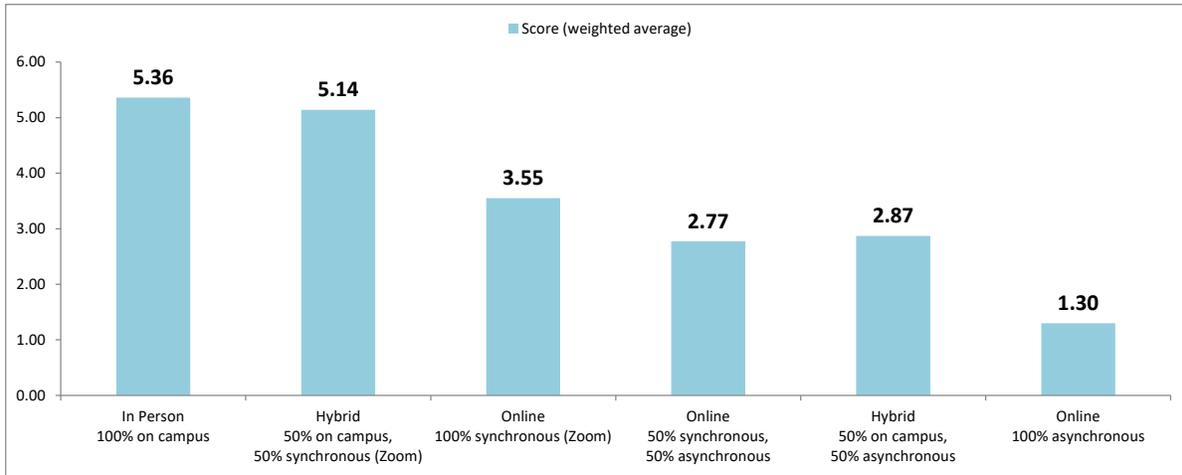


Figure 6:

ESL 251/451 to 255/455 High Intermediate: Preferred Class Modality (N=128)

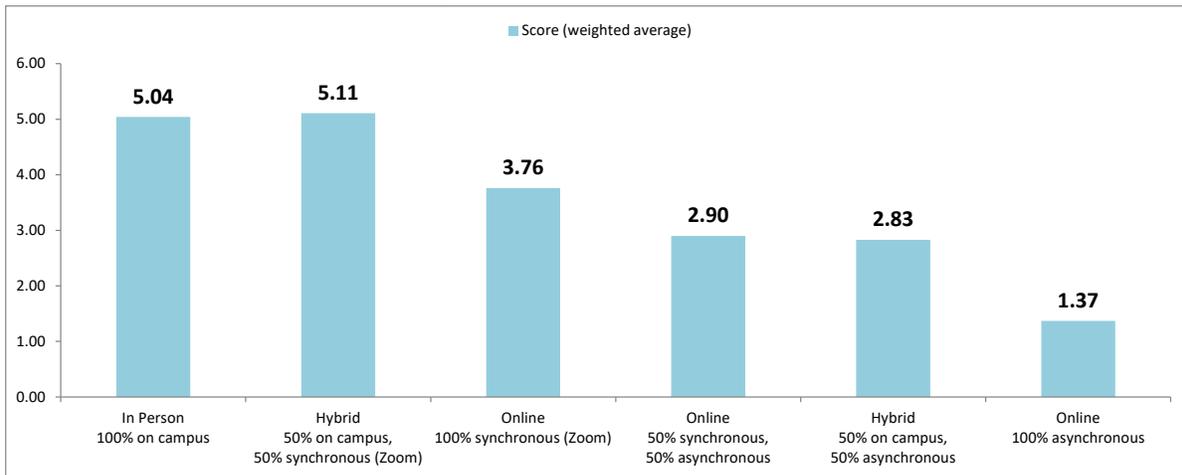


Figure 7:

ESL 260A/B-265/460A/B-465 Low Advanced: Preferred Class Modality (N=146)

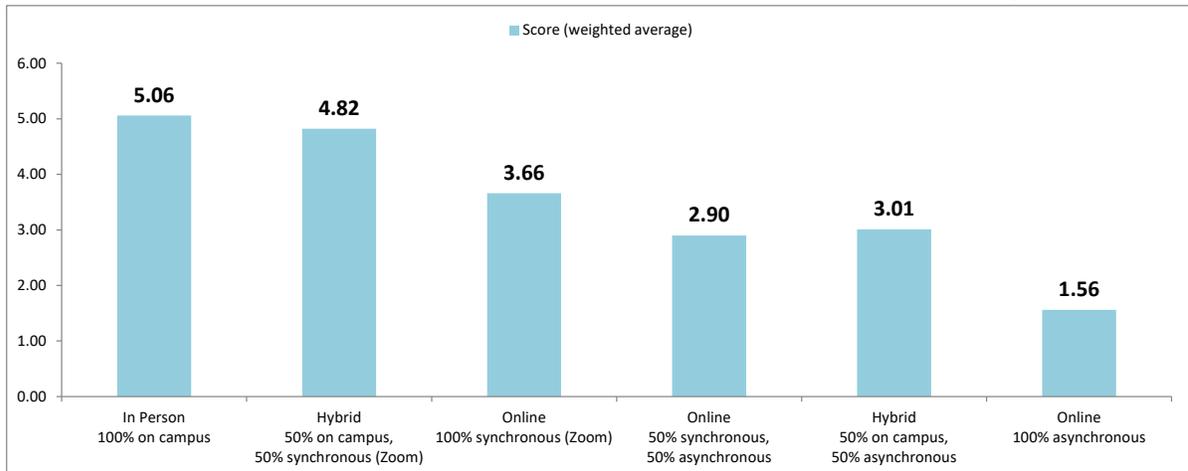


Figure 8:

ESL 272/472 to 274/474 Advanced: Preferred Class Modality (N=73)

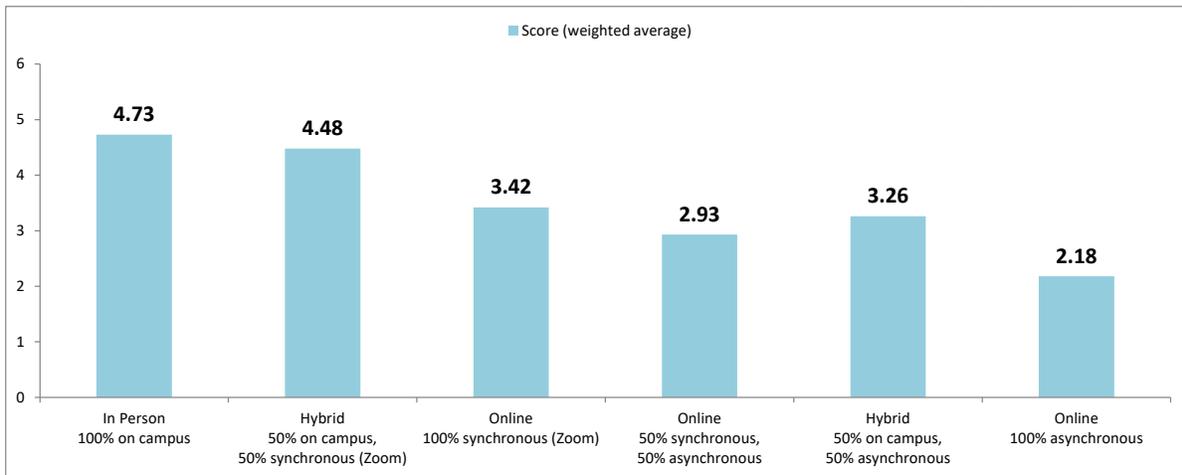
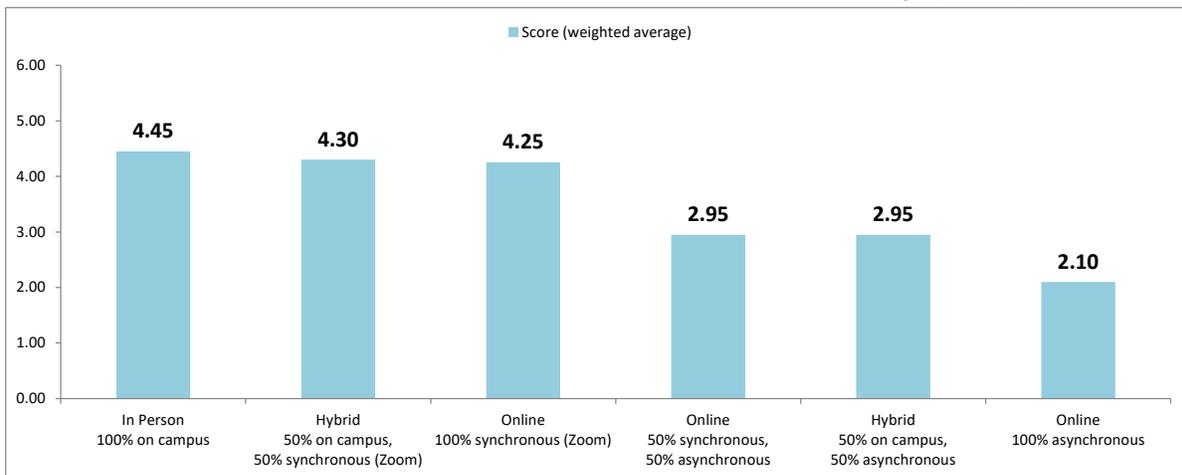


Figure 9:

ESL 5 and 6 Transfer Level: Preferred Class Modality (N=20)



Appendix B: Open-Ended Feedback

Sample narrative pertaining to instructors

- *I think the ESL program at De Anza is very well designed, and the course materials are also excellent. Some teachers are very nice and supportive, but a few professors are too strict and create extra pressure. I believe the best way is to keep a good balance between challenge and encouragement. The class requires a lot of time and effort, but I really want to complete all my advanced ESL courses and transfer to college, even though I sometimes feel stuck.*
- *It is my first time taking ESL at a foreign country, so when I took my ESL class at De Anza College, I was surprised by the good quality of each course. The instructors are full of passion for their classes, they all have a specific plan for each week's lessons which I really like about it here. I enjoyed the atmosphere at ESL classes at De Anza a lot.*
- *Professors use a variety of teaching approaches in class which can motivate our interests and persistence in English learning. SLC is also a good place to practice English.*

- *The class is well-structured, and I like that it is taught the same way for both credit and non-credit students. Homework and grades are also assessed equally, which I find great. The workshops and tutoring at LSC are also very helpful. Professors are all good.*
- *Workshops and tutoring are really helpful especially practicing conversation and supplemental learning of grammar or reading.*
- *There are many academic ESL classes at De Anza class. I think many people who want to learn practical English like me need communication with classmates. However, many profferer [professor] push us to study alone like assignments. So, many friends left de Anza college to look for other communication class at other colleges.*
- *Mostly, professors are great. However, one professor is not nice. The professor always says negative words to students, and I started to dislike studying English.*

Sample narrative pertaining to learning progress

- *I am very satisfied with the ESL course I am taking now. I also like my professor very much. The course is rich and substantial. Through ESL, I have read many articles that I have never encountered before and also learned the MLA format of American papers. In short, I am very satisfied with my current situation and I hope that the school's ESL course will get better and better.*
- *In my ESL program, I'm learning not just the English language but also the culture and way of life in the United States.*
- *Taking an ESL class at De Anza College has been a very positive and valuable experience for me. I improved my English skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, which helped me participate more actively in group projects and class discussions. The assignments challenged me to think critically and express my ideas clearly, while the supportive environment made it easier to learn and ask questions. Overall, the class strengthened my confidence in using English both academically and socially, and I feel better prepared for future college courses and professional settings.*
- *Yes, I would like to explain my experience taking an ESL class at De Anza college. It is very useful to improve our English Language skills. I am getting more confident after attending these classes. I improved a lot understanding the language. Thank you.*

Sample narrative about scheduling

- *Campus classes help me focus more on the lesson, while online (Zoom) classes save me the time of commuting to college.*
- *Class sizes are too large, which limits speaking practice and feedback. Tutorials/workshops are often not led by trained ESL educators, and the educator-led ones are still overcrowded. Also, please don't limit tutoring roles to international students only; open them to all qualified students and provide training.*
- *I really enjoy the ESL classes. Since I'm taking them as a non-credit student, I don't have to pay tuition. I know tuition can be a huge expense, so this is very important to me as a full-time mom who isn't currently working. Most of the classes I take are in the morning, because I need to pick up my child from school in the afternoon, so I don't have time then. In the evening, I have to cook and take care of my child, so I also don't have time for classes at night. That's why I really like attending daytime classes. I've really enjoyed the classes I've taken so far. The teachers are very friendly, responsible, and*

dedicated. They often encourage us to answer questions, practice pronunciation, and remind us not to worry about making mistakes. I feel that my English has been improving step by step. I'm very grateful to De Anza for offering these ESL courses.

- *I think there should be more in-person classes for Listening and Speaking, and also for Pronunciation. In-person classes help students practice more and improve faster. Also, I believe Pronunciation classes should start at lower levels. Many students need help with pronunciation from the beginning. One class is not enough to make progress. Also, when I try to register, the classes are already full. It is hard to register. I hope the school can add more classes for Listening, Speaking, and Pronunciation. This will help more students learn better and get more speaking practice.*
- *I would like Listening and Speaking classes had more speaking practice. The time of practicing is too short in class and I do not have the enough interaction with my peers as I was expected. Activities at home are listening, but in classroom I do not practice neither listening nor speaking too much as I expected.*
- *I always want to take pronunciation classes but it gets full whenever I try to register. I really wish to have more pronunciation classes, especially in the afternoon.*
- *I think we need to read more in class so the teacher can correct and teach us. Also, online classes should be a little slower. In my experience, sometimes I don't manage to correct my homework mistakes because the teacher reads the book too quickly.*
- *The curriculum is well-designed. The ability to retake non-credit courses makes it very suitable for new immigrants.*

Sample narrative for improvements

- *I wish the school would let us borrow textbooks for free, like Foothill College.*
- *It's too much homework and too hard for me, I like more time on class to do things together instead by myself, I like CCSF better because more time work on class together. I go school every day, But in De Anza, we only met once or twice per week*
- *The in-person class is much better than the online class even the same teacher and same teaching content. Please add more in-person class. Thanks.*
- *Teacher quality in summer quarter is not as good as that in other quarters.*
- *There is often not enough time in class for each student to practice public speaking. A Toastmasters program designed specifically for ESL students would be helpful.*
- *While I appreciate the ESL program's goal of helping students learn English, my time at De Anza College has shown me that there aren't enough course options available. This limits how quickly students can improve their English skills and reach a native-level of fluency. To address this, I strongly suggest that De Anza College expand its course offerings to include classes during every semester of the academic year, not just the typical fall and spring terms. This would provide students with more opportunities to learn and progress at their own pace.*