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# Advising an Institution: A Report to the Administration of Deerfield Academy Regarding Thier Foreign Students

Stuart P. Salomon  
*School for International Training*

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M. Thesis  
S25a

ADVISING AN INSTITUTION:

A Report to the Administration of  
Deerfield Academy Regarding Their  
Foreign Students

Stuart P. Salomon

"Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the  
School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont."

13496

June, 1978

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Brattleboro, Vermont

This project by Stuart Salomon is accepted in  
its present form.

Date June 19, 1978 Principal Advisor Mary M. Clark

Project Reader:

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I. The Task

The Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, Massachusetts, is not a school that would seem to have the need for English as a Second Language. The Academy is a prep school in the prep school tradition-- a close knit community of students and staff working hard in the classrooms and playing hard on the athletic fields. With a student population of 550 boys and a faculty of 78, each student is assured of enough personal and academic attention.

Since it has maintained high standards, Deerfield Academy has established itself as a means of gaining admission to the best colleges and universities in the United States. For this reason, Deerfield has become a school to which a foreign student in search of an American education will apply. His application is treated just as the application of an American student is treated. If his class rank, test scores, and recommendations are competitive, he may be invited to attend. In 1978, Deerfield had twenty-five foreign students on their campus, representing eleven foreign countries. Of these, most foreign students came from the Orient--Hong Kong and Thailand in particular.

In retrospect, it would seem inevitable that problems would arise if twenty-five foreign students were dropped suddenly into a very traditional American prep school. Signs of problems did arise--first as statements on mid-term reports that the foreign students were withdrawn and non-participating; later they took the more serious form of failing grades--particularly in the humanities subjects. Socially,

there was the growth of national clans. The foreign students were forming cliques in which they spoke their own language and stayed clear of involvement with their American classmates.

With this background, I was invited to spend the winter term of 1978 at Deerfield as a consultant. (The two memos that follow outline what was expected of me.) In submitting the final report, which constitutes the rest of this paper, I worked on several levels. The first, and most obvious, was the need to show that there was a serious English language problem. This was proven by the below-average results of a basic test of vocabulary. But the following sections of the report were intended for the Deerfield staff. On one hand, I wanted to point out some of the cultural assumptions that foreign students find puzzling, and on the other hand, show the staff the distinction between the teaching of English literature and English language. With this distinction in mind, there follows the design for an E.S.L. course. Supplementing this are a number of in-service recommendations that could be used by any teacher on the faculty. The final sections are about testing and international contacts in the community.

In the future, foreign students may be part of many private high schools. These schools will have to support these students in special ways. It is my hope that what I discovered at the Deerfield Academy may prove useful to others.

Deerfield Academy  
DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01342

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Judd Blain  
FROM: Jim Marksbury  
DATE: December 15, 1977  
RE: E.S.L. Instructor/International Student Advisor

It is evident to those of us who have been involved in both past and current efforts to provide supplemental programs of instruction in "English as a Second Language" (E.S.L.) for international students that it is time to proceed toward developing an E.S.L. program within our own curriculum. Our experience indicates that each year several international students - both new and returning - clearly require such special instruction.

As our admissions policy is committed to maintaining strong international representation within the student body, we must be prepared to follow through with the needed language instruction as well as a more firmly established means of assistance and support in all areas of school life.

The primary implication here is the acquisition of a teacher with formal academic training in E.S.L. At this point heaven only knows what other odd niches this person will be called upon to occupy, but let's try these two for starters:

1) Instructor of a regularly-scheduled course in English as a Second Language.

All international students from non-English-speaking countries would automatically begin the school year enrolled in this course. The length of time each student remained in the E.S.L. course would be subject to the recommendation of the instructor - anywhere from a single class period to an entire academic year (or two, or three...?!). International students could subsequently be fully assimilated into the regular English course sequence or an audit/credit combination of E.S.L. and regular English. It all depends on what Mr. or Ms. X prescribes.

2) Faculty advisor to international students.

I'm sure that you and Jim Fabiani are much better qualified to catalogue the requirements of this task. However, I do feel we need some faculty member with specifically delegated responsibilities for international students in working with corridor masters, classroom teachers and people like Dave Foster; acting as liaison with foreign embassies, U.S. Government agencies, etc.; assisting in arrangements for travel, vacation and summer plans; planning special social activities and so forth...

As implied throughout, I don't believe you require a sales job on the need for a person to assume the above-mentioned responsibilities. My primary concern is that we include this in our faculty planning for the coming year. Additionally, I would like to suggest that this individual be placed on the Academy payroll as of August 1 and sent with our compliments to assist Mark Carawan in Blair Academy's summer orientation "Program for International Students." This would not only provide excellent experience for our person, but may also eventually lead to Blair's permitting Deerfield's new international students to participate in this unique program. It's certainly something worth considering.

cc: Jim Fabiani, Chuck Hohner

MEMO

January 3, 1978

TO: David Pynchon  
James Kilbreth

FROM: Judd H. Blain

SUBJ: Stuart P. Salomon - Consultant for Foreign Students During Winter Term 1978

Stuart will be with us as a consultant to us and for the sake of his increased experience. He will be supervised primarily by Chuck Hohner but will work closely with Jim Marksbury also insofar as Jim has helped arrange tutorials with Margaret Haigis for students of English as a Second Language.

Stuart's duties will be varied and we have not yet really determined their proportions.

1. He will coordinate with Margaret Haigis to compliment and/or share in the tutorial upon which she has just begun. In this aspect it may be well to consider Stuart's working with Alessandro Scammaca as well as with Asians.

2. Stuart will take Jim Marksbury's tentative scheme for an ESL teacher (copies available) and, by his experience, comment on the questions it raises and raise the questions it omits. This sets a task for Stuart: a consultant's report.

3. In the process of no's 1. and 2. above, I anticipate that Stuart might travel in our behalf to discuss their programs with other schools who have taken steps to more systematically accommodate the needs of foreign students. He will apply to my consultant funds for any such work and I hope he will be authorized to use a school car or van.

4. I expect that Stuart will spend a fair amount of time in both regular and informal gatherings of international students, gatherings centering upon their personal and institutional experience outside of the classroom. As a result of his travel and findings elsewhere, he may want to form some liasons with international student programs.

5. As part of his consultation Stuart will want to talk with our Admissions officers, Jim Marksbury, Jim Fabiani, corridor masters and others for their perspectives on the foreign student experience. Also he may wish to speak with Wayne Turner and David Foster to establish us as a TOEFL center both for the usual admissions purpose and as a beginning-ending assessment instrument.



## II. The Diagnostic Vocabulary Test

A. The first priority I set was to determine the depth of the English language problem. Although the foreign students could all converse fluently, discounting accents and minor structural errors, I wanted to find out how they would compare with American students on a straight-forward vocabulary test.

The exam I chose was taken from David Harris' text, Improving Reading Comprehension for Students of English as a Second Language.\*

The author points out in the beginning of the book that American college freshmen will average 63 or 64 out of a possible score of 65. John O'Brien's sophomore class acted as my control group and confirmed (in fact, exceeded) Harris' statement: the class averaged 63. However, the 20 foreign students tested did far worse. Their average was an unimpressive 46.8. By that standard, they would not really be ready to use the Harris text as it is intended.

If you examine the test for a moment, you will see that the test items are rather elementary. At this point, I invite you to look at Harris' comment on his own test, the results in descending order and my conclusion.

\*Harris, David P., Reading Improvement Exercises for Students of English as a Second Language, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1966.

".....The Diagnostic Vocabulary Test is made up of relatively easy English words. When this test was given to college freshmen who were native speakers of English, it was found that most students took no more than six or seven minutes to complete the 65 problems, and made no more than one or two errors. If you have much difficulty with these problems, you probably still lack a good "working vocabulary" for dealing with college level reading materials. ....You will have to work on this problem yourself, primarily by doing as much reading as you can."

Introduction to "Reading Improvement Exercises for Students of English as a Second Language". by David P. Harris

EXERCISE 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnostic Vocabulary Test

*Directions:* Each problem consists of a test word followed by four possible definitions. Put a check mark on the line before the best definition of the test word.

*Example:*

wealthy

- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) dry
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) strong
- (c) rich
- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) sad

Work as rapidly and as accurately as you can. You will probably find most of the test words quite easy. But try to answer every problem, even if you are not sure your answer is correct.

Be sure to time yourself on the test. As soon as you finish, record your time on the line marked TIME just after the last problem.

1. tiny

- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) very swift
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) very strong
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) very small
- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) very sharp

4. nap

- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) a happy song
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) a short meeting
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) a sharp rock
- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) a brief sleep

2. sketch

- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) a long, deep cut
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) a loud, warning cry
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) a simple, rough drawing
- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) a small, light boat

5. ache

- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) a dull pain
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) a sharp knife
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) a sudden thought
- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) a deep cut

3. moist

- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) slightly wet
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) quite large
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) very dark
- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) rather noisy

6. glance

- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) a loud cry
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) a brief look
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) a quick reply
- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) a sharp weapon

7. astonish

- (a) to destroy entirely
- (b) to hide completely
- (c) to shout loudly
- (d) to surprise suddenly

8. gigantic

- (a) excited
- (b) foolish
- (c) huge
- (d) dangerous

9. swamp

- (a) a piece of soft, wet land
- (b) a kind of strong, thick rope
- (c) a group of small, low houses
- (d) a flash of clear, bright light

10. chilly

- (a) quite foolish
- (b) extremely rough
- (c) rather cold
- (d) very sick

11. brass

- (a) a rough cloth
- (b) a yellow metal
- (c) a thick plant
- (d) a farm animal

12. vanish

- (a) to paint
- (b) to disappear
- (c) to defeat
- (d) to suffer

13. pond

- (a) a small body of water
- (b) a large pile of earth
- (c) a strong wall of stone
- (d) a thick mass of trees

14. console

- (a) to save
- (b) to correct
- (c) to examine
- (d) to comfort

15. feeble

- (a) false
- (b) weak
- (c) dark
- (d) silent

16. gaze

- (a) to burn brightly
- (b) to sleep briefly
- (c) to walk slowly
- (d) to look steadily

17. hazard

- (a) a danger
- (b) a storm
- (c) a battle
- (d) a fire

18. flagrant

- (a) sweet-smelling
- (b) fast-moving
- (c) finely built
- (d) easily broken

19. chat

- (a) an untruthful story
- (b) a friendly greeting
- (c) an informal talk
- (d) a noisy quarrel

20. stare

- (a) to speak in anger
- (b) to move in a circle
- (c) to climb with difficulty
- (d) to look long and hard

21. slender

- (a) long and thin
- (b) polite and kind
- (c) complete and final
- (d) hard and strong

22. dismiss

- (a) to look for
- (b) to send away
- (c) to pour out
- (d) to cut apart

23. keen

- (a) brief
- (b) ugly
- (c) new
- (d) sharp

24. handy

- (a) attractive
- (b) powerful
- (c) convenient
- (d) careful

25. mend

- (a) to repair
- (b) to remember
- (c) to report
- (d) to return

26. drowsy

- (a) hungry
- (b) friendly
- (c) ugly
- (d) sleepy

27. tumble

- (a) to talk quietly
- (b) to walk slowly
- (c) to fall suddenly
- (d) to strike repeatedly

28. trivial

- (a) difficult to believe
- (b) of little importance
- (c) lacking good sense
- (d) strange in appearance

29. spade \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) a tool for digging  
 (b) a large, flat field  
 (c) a device for writing  
 (d) a long, deep valley
30. reckless \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) useless  
 (b) hopeless  
 (c) careless  
 (d) worthless
31. mute \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) hungry  
 (b) angry  
 (c) little  
 (d) silent
32. discard \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) to oppose  
 (b) to throw away  
 (c) to injure  
 (d) to find by accident
33. pebble \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) a wide stream  
 (b) a high hill  
 (c) a deep hole  
 (d) a small stone
34. weary \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) early  
 (b) careful  
 (c) tired  
 (d) unhappy
35. conceal \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) to describe  
 (b) to injure  
 (c) to praise  
 (d) to hide
36. strive \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) to wait very eagerly  
 (b) to measure very carefully  
 (c) to walk very rapidly  
 (d) to try very hard
37. gloomy \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) foolish  
 (b) sad  
 (c) timid  
 (d) open
38. ponder \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) to walk slowly  
 (b) to consider carefully  
 (c) to hold tightly  
 (d) to speak softly
39. wrath \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) great anger  
 (b) a large crowd  
 (c) hard labor  
 (d) a sudden storm
40. tap \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) to sleep briefly  
 (b) to strike lightly  
 (c) to tie tightly  
 (d) to run quickly
41. blunder \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) a sudden fall  
 (b) a deep thought  
 (c) a loud noise  
 (d) a foolish mistake
42. speck \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) a small spot  
 (b) a cruel remark  
 (c) a strange sight  
 (d) a short talk
43. hoist \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) to raise up  
 (b) to shout joyfully  
 (c) to throw away  
 (d) to wash thoroughly
44. hurl \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) to cry with pain  
 (b) to throw with force  
 (c) to depart in haste  
 (d) to injure in anger
45. yearn \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) to acquire great wealth  
 (b) to speak at great length  
 (c) to feel great desire  
 (d) to cause great damage
46. twig \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) a double amount  
 (b) a small branch  
 (c) a sudden pause  
 (d) a sharp stone
47. haul \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) to shout  
 (b) to cover  
 (c) to cut  
 (d) to pull
48. gale \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) an ancient story  
 (b) a strong wind  
 (c) a serious accident  
 (d) a high wall
49. stray \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) to lift up  
 (b) to throw away  
 (c) to wander  
 (d) to burn up
50. lull \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) a soft area of land  
 (b) a short period of quiet  
 (c) a small group of people  
 (d) a loud cry of pain
51. shrewd \_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) clever  
 (b) torn  
 (c) rough  
 (d) afraid

52. apparel

- (a) clothing
- (b) knowledge
- (c) fear
- (d) shelter

57. bough

- (a) a high wall
- (b) a wide street
- (c) a loud laugh
- (d) a large branch

53. snatch

- (a) to break completely
- (b) to strike forcefully
- (c) to examine closely
- (d) to seize suddenly

58. crave

- (a) to cover completely
- (b) to deny strongly
- (c) to desire greatly
- (d) to wash carefully

54. haughty

- (a) old and tired
- (b) weak and frightened
- (c) proud and scornful
- (d) young and happy

59. shun

- (a) to push
- (b) to avoid
- (c) to burn
- (d) to brighten

55. dwindle

- (a) to burn brightly
- (b) to walk slowly
- (c) to become smaller
- (d) to grow angry

60. twine

- (a) a pleasant drink
- (b) great success
- (c) a double amount
- (d) strong string

56. bewildered

- (a) greatly angered
- (b) greatly confused
- (c) greatly amused
- (d) greatly injured

61. lofty

- (a) very amusing
- (b) very frequent
- (c) very high
- (d) very expensive

62. scotch

- (a) to burn slightly
- (b) to act superior to
- (c) to examine carefully
- (d) to cut the surface of

64. wade

- (a) to observe from a distance
- (b) to beat with the hands
- (c) to walk through water
- (d) to tear into pieces

63. kindle

- (a) to reduce in size
- (b) to set on fire
- (c) to handle roughly
- (d) to act friendly toward

65. genial

- (a) strong and bold
- (b) noble and wise
- (c) cheerful and friendly
- (d) famous and respected

TIME \_\_\_\_\_

SCORE \_\_\_\_\_

## D. Results of Diagnostic Vocabulary Test in Descending Order

1. Richard Okuno	65
2. Abdul Hussein	62
3. Dukho Yeon	62
4. Stanford Kuo	59
5. Milan Rahman	58
6. Uttama Savanayana	58
7. Phillip Yang	54
8. Peter Haagesen	52
9. Edmond Yue	51
10. Tim Yeung	48
11. John Wivstam	47
12. Tony Yue	44
13. Paul Chow	42
14. Samart Suepiantham	42
15. Eric Todd	38
16. Niels Madsen	37
17. Kalin Sarasin	31
18. Billy Tejapaibul	29
19. Masao Iketani	26
20. Alex Scammacca	11

## E. Conclusion

The average score of 46.8 over 65 on a test of such basic vocabulary suggests to me that Deerfield's foreign students are finding ways of studying that somehow ignore the English language. The most common strategy, of course, is to specialize in science and math where verbal ability is less important. But is this what Deerfield Academy wants--a young specialist? Another fact that is worth noting here is the stated ambitions of the foreign students. Most of those I spoke to planned on going to a top notch college after graduation. Will they be able to get in? Will they continue their narrow specialization?

This test, my interviews, and many conversations all pointed to serious language problems. The following report tries to give some perspective and solutions.



### III. The English Language Problem: A Perspective

#### A. Deerfield Academy as a Cultural Experience

Before launching directly into the English language problems at Deerfield's foreign students, I would like to explore the subtle features of the Academy that may be taken for granted. While at Deerfield, the foreign student is engaged in an experience that is far different from that of his classmate on the other side of the dining table or two doors down the corridor. The foreign student is learning a new culture.

Although chosen for his academic excellence, the foreign student has entered a world that is a sudden break with his past. His family is no longer here to support and pressure him. His food is vastly different. His pleasures are not those of his own country. And academically, doing well at Deerfield is not the same as doing well in Thailand or Sweden. The style and the rules need to be relearned. For example, in talking to many of the Oriental students, I found that they were puzzled by the American system of library research. Back home, they said, it was quite enough to memorize the lessons that their teachers set for memorization. Back home, teachers were not interested in the opinions of high school students--older and wiser people may have opinions when they reach a proper age for that. One student even ventured the thought that he does not feel fully polite in talking to his American teachers--back home the good boy is the boy who does his assignments and remains quiet. Puzzling too, was the value they found placed upon sports. Back home, athletics were considered

fun, but always less important than the very serious task of achieving high scholastic distinction.

When a foreign student arrives at Deerfield Academy he becomes part of a school that is American in its outlook and American in its traditions. He may not fully appreciate the unique historical setting of Old Deerfield. Perhaps he will not fathom the depths of Jewish irony as taught in his English course. He might never understand the agony of the American Civil War. But he may well achieve success, as foreign students have before him. We might remember that his success may be one that is a little more personal and mysterious than that of his American counterparts.

From what I have seen, the Academy has done a proper job of supporting the foreign student. None of those interviewed hoped for radical changes; most of them felt quite at home. Assimilation into the American life style was almost a unanimous goal. Not surprisingly therefore, their greatest hang-up was over their own clanning tendencies. The Chinese, or Thai cliques exist, yet there was a sense of guilt about them. None of those I spoke with felt comfortable with the cliques, yet most of them were members. The conflict is worth noting--on one hand, assimilation is what they ideally would like; on the other hand, it is far more comfortable having friends who speak the same language and share the same background.

The foreign student at Deerfield Academy faces a challenge even greater than his American counterpart, and by and large, he faces up to this challenge. We might ask ourselves, how well would the most promising American students do if they were transplanted to a high quality Japanese or

Thai high school? The delicate problem for the Deerfield staff to decide is what kind of special help is needed, what standards to relax or maintain and what kind of special support should be provided.

B. Q: When is an English teacher not an English teacher?

A: When he is a teacher of English as a Second Language.

The riddle above seems to me to summarize the problem that has been much discussed at Deerfield Academy. The English Department, as it is presently constituted, is not ready to take on the problems of foreign students struggling with the English language. The teaching of English Literature and the teaching of the English language are only distant relatives. The identical nomenclature of "English teacher" only obscures the problem.

Linguists tell us that by the age of five a normal child has mastered the structure of his native tongue. After that, he adds vocabulary and concepts important to his own culture. If educated, he learns to read, and then write, his own language. This is the role that Deerfield's English Department is performing--they are taking the students deeper into the poetry and prose that the English language has produced. They are guiding the thinking, the reading and the writing of students who have been members of American culture for a decade and more.

But the teacher of English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) has a different set of assumptions to work with. His students are new to the language and the thoughts behind the language. They lack the nuances of a developed vocabulary. In learning English, their own language often interferes. There are new modes of organization and style to be mastered. Pause for a moment, and try to anticipate the problems that the quoted paragraph might provide for the foreign student.

"A horde of hungry office seekers, elbowing for the patronage pie counter, overwhelmed Lincoln at the very outset. At the time when he should have had his mind clear for pressing affairs of state, he was forced to worry about the 'postmastership at Podunk'."

Rather than reading, "Lincoln first had to distribute patronage before facing serious problems," or something equally straightforward, the foreign student faces metaphor, localisms, breezy prose and elongated sentences.

Writing English, of course, poses the most difficult problem of all. What is acceptable in speech may not be proper when written. During conversation, teachers may overlook a dropped article or an error in verb tense, but will probably note it in red on a composition paper. English prepositions are notoriously whimsical. Clauses and complex sentences are waiting traps.

It seems quite clear that there is not enough time for the English Department to provide the kind of help needed by the foreign student. The problem is large, but it is not unsolvable. What is needed is a methodical, persistent approach. My recommendations for an E.F.L. course follow.

\*Bailey, Thomas A.; The American Pageant, A History of the Republic, p. 417  
2nd edition, D.C. Heath & Co. Boston, 1961.

### C. English as a Second Language: A Course Design

Deerfield's foreign students, however well-assimilated, have serious deficiencies in vocabulary (as seen in the Diagnostic Vocabulary Test), and in writing ability (numerous teacher complaints). They face enormous reading assignments in many courses. They are often withdrawn in their classroom participation. In addition, we can safely assume that they have large knowledge gaps by nature of their different cultural experience.

In order to help them, they should be required to take, and successfully complete, a course in English as a Second Language.

Their foreign language requirement should be waived. They are already masters of a foreign language--their mother tongue. It seems counterproductive to ask them to study French or German when there is such a pressing demand to master English. If they wish to study a language such as French or German, they could do so after proving in an E.S.L. class that their English is satisfactory.

The E.S.L. course could easily be constructed to fit the needs of Deerfield's foreign students. It would be a course that grows and changes according to the individual levels of the students in the class.

#### Course Design for E.S.L.

##### 1. English Grammar and Structural Practice

This main component of the course exposes the student to the grammar and syntax of English. Presently, there is no place at Deerfield Academy where this is taught and this is what the foreign student needs the most. Through demonstration and practice, the student would master verb tense

behavior, placement of prepositions, the use of articles, clause construction, the conditionals and other advanced grammar points. Presently, our foreign students only receive grammar instruction in remedial situations--such as when a written assignment is returned for rework. Nor can it be argued that units on style or rhetoric, as taught in the regular English courses, suffice to fill their language gaps. These units are intended to sharpen the writing of native speakers whose expression needs clarification.

The Grammar and Structural Practice component would not be an abstract or theoretical approach to language: it is not enough for the student to understand a grammar point, he would have to demonstrate his knowledge in his written work. A lot of writing would be expected, but more emphasis would be placed upon form than upon content. Short, written pieces would be required almost every day with the stress moving from highly controlled, imitative work on to a freer style at the later stages.

## 2. Vocabulary Acquisition.

The need for the foreign student to improve his vocabulary was made clear by the results of the Diagnostic Vocabulary Test. It is staggering to realize that Deerfield's students are unsure of words such as, "stare," "pond," "lofty," or "mend." This component of the E.S.L. course would utilize several methods of vocabulary building with the final goal of giving the foreign student the habit of word discovery. Central to this component would be a course book such as "Advanced English Vocabulary," or one like it, that directly addresses the needs of the foreign learner. In addition, the class would learn that the English language is filled with lexical spelling clues that enable us to detect relationships between known and

unknown words (e.g.; sign: signature: signal: signify: significance).

This would be part of their training. Another would be the choosing of an advanced 'learners dictionary' of English and instruction in how to use it most efficiently. And as part of the cooperative spirit that must exist, the E.S.L. teacher would also monitor the individual vocabulary notebooks that should be companions to all the academic course.

### 3. Reading Comprehension

Presently, little attention has been paid to the reading problems facing the foreign student. He is expected to stay abreast of his American counterparts in all reading assignments. In literature, and particularly history, this is an awesome task. This component of the E.S.L. course would attempt to make him a more efficient reader.

Much of reading is understanding the writer's organization. Foreign students should be trained in understanding titles, chapter headings and sub-headings. Pre-reading is a skill in itself. Deerfield possesses overhead projectors which are perfect tools for controlling the group reading of a paragraph projected on a screen. In this way, a class can be taught to read for central ideas and not to get hung up on difficult words. Reading speed will increase with practice. Here too, is time for reading aloud, an aid in bringing together aural and written cues. And by using some of the excellent, individualized reading kits, comprehension levels should show improvement.

### 4. Academic Backgrounding

This is the cooperative or collaborative aspect of the course. It involves ongoing cooperation between the E.S.L. teacher and all the other



faculty members that have foreign students in their classes. A major problem for foreign students is their lack of background in areas such as American History or American Literature. For example, the history teacher assumes that everyone in the class understands the concept of checks and balance in American government. Foreign students do not necessarily know this (as I've discovered). There is not really enough time in class to go over this elementary material. But in a responsive E.S.L. course, the history teacher can suggest that this background be supplied. Hence, the E.S.L. teacher would teach a simplified lesson on check and balance--a lesson in which the language and the content would be controlled.

#### 5. American Culture

This component would be a continuing orientation to American life. It would be an area in which students could "fill-in" the cultural gaps that logically arise when students arrive in a new country. Areas of discussion might include comparative styles of education, the American emphasis on sports, dating customs, current events and other topics that may arise spontaneously. (These discussion topics, as well as those in Academic Backgrounding, could be used as a basis for written work for the Grammar and Structure component."

#### 6. Study Skills

American education expects students to listen to lectures, take meaningful notes, outline, organize and use the library. These skills, as well as the above five, would be part of the E.S.L. design.

D. What to do until the doctor arrives.....

Even without a full E.S.L. program, there are certain techniques that any teacher could adapt that would benefit the foreign student. The following section outlines some of those tactics.

1. Questioning Techniques: A Way to Encourage the Silent Student

Upon reading the files on the foreign students, I found a comment repeated over and over again. The foreign student does not speak up in class; his silence is a mystery and possibly the symptom of a deeper problem. What can be done?

Obviously, one reason a foreign student might not speak up is because he is shy about his accent or his awkward way of expressing himself. On the other hand, he may not be following the discussion at all, and if that is so, the teacher should be aware of that. Since the spoken word is the main source of feedback, how does the teacher stay in tune with the reticent student?

Perhaps the answer lies in a technique of English Language teaching. There are several different ways of posing a question in the English language. Each particular way will subtly determine the type of answer received. Some of our question forms are more difficult than others so it might be wise to begin questioning the foreign student with the most elementary form.

a.) Comprehension Checking

The most basic question form is the Is/Does question. This type of question always begins with a form is "is" or "does."

e.g.;

"Is Tennyson a 19th century poet? Yes, he is."

"Did McKinley finish his term in the White House? No, he didn't."

The question contains the information and the syntax. The answer requires only a short reply which reveals whether the student understands what is going on. The student does not have to say very much, but his answers will reveal how much of the discussion is under control.

b.) Choice questions with "or".

The next type of question is also basic, but requires a little more from the student. This form pairs two statements with the word, "or."

e.g. "Was Conrad the author or the narrator of Heart of Darkness?"

To reply correctly, the student will have to comprehend the entire question, choose the correct element within it, and repeat the correct element. The response could be, "The author. He was the author. Conrad was the author." This is also a good form to use with foreign students because it still serves as a language model that guides the student toward the teacher's intent.

c.) 'Wh' questions. (What, Why, Where, Who, etc.)

Now we are in the big leagues. These are the hardest question forms in English because, in order to answer, the student must produce a reply that is suitable in vocabulary, structure and pronunciation (not to mention content!) A 'wh' question is an invitation to linguistic creativity-- the respondee has the floor and can answer in many different ways.

e.g.; "Who was Ulysses S. Grant?"

"The 18th President." (numerical identification)

"Johnson's successor." (chronological identification)

"A Civil War hero." (historical identification)

"He was a general who went into politics." (historical information)

"One of our most incompetent leaders." (opinion)

As you can see, the 'wh' question form is the one which would give a foreign student the most difficulty. He has to create statements that may

need complicated syntax, uncertain vocabulary, as well as expose his pronunciation.

My recommendation is to draw foreign students into classroom work with a careful use of comprehension or choice forms. If they can handle these forms, they might take on the more demanding "wh" forms. But since they are having language difficulties, we ought to realize what linguistic burdens we place upon them in our framing of questions.

## 2. Alternate Assignments

Several faculty members have felt the need to set alternate assignments when language problems seem to make the normal course work insurmountable. Such a practice makes sense in many cases. The following list suggests what form these assignments may take.

### a.) Spoken Word Materials

The library has an impressive amount of literature, drama, poetry and current events (speeches, commentary) on cassette tape. Mungchai and I listened through several dramas that were giving him difficulty, stopping the tape whenever we wanted to go over an obscure point. He then listened on his own, while following along in the text. I suggest that foreign students with language problems be given listening assignments to either complicate or supplement their regular reading assignments.

### b.) Vocabulary Notebooks

Each foreign student might be asked to keep a separate notebook for vocabulary for each course. In the beginning of the week ten pertinent words would be assigned--words that are essential to the topic under study.

For example, in studying the American Civil War, the teacher may ask his foreign students to understand words such as--"suffrage, emancipate, secede, rebel (noun and verb), abolish, plantation. These words would be reviewed and tested. To prove they understand the meanings, the students probably would have to cite examples from the course itself.

c.) Cross-cultural essays

Give written assignments that draw from their own cultural experience. For example, we might ask, "How would a man from Thailand, in a similar situation to the one we just studied, express his grief?" Or, "Compare Robinson Crusoe's experience in isolation to that of the Japanese soldier recently found on that Pacific Island."

d.) Shorter, more frequent papers

Rather than assigning a major term paper, teachers may consider assigning papers of shorter length. Organizational problems would be easier to control in these papers. Foreign students may find it easier to focus on one idea at a time and get the advantage of more correction after each assignment is completed.

e.) Scaling Down

I was impressed by the high level of academic expectation in the classes I attended; in many classes I felt that the class was doing close to college level work. This may be too much for some of the foreign students. For them it might be wise to revert to standard high school techniques of instruction. In literature, for example, it might help to return to analytic teaching techniques in which the student is asked to recognize the elements of theme, plot, and character. In history, it might help to require him to know general chronology and key identification.

The expectation of these classes operates well above these levels, but for a foreign student who plans to enter the sciences, it might suffice for him to perform well at this lower level of achievement.

f.) The Tutorial System

Deerfield Academy has an ongoing tutorial system. Foreign students could benefit by having a responsible student work with them. This could be a very rewarding experience for the tutor as well: most of the foreign students are bright and respond well to extra help. Pre-reading assignment papers, filling in background are obvious needs that immediately come to mind. In addition, tutors that rise to the occasion should be recognized with a letter in their permanent files.

3. Summer Study

Faculty members have expressed the notion that during the summer vacations, foreign students lose their English proficiency because they no longer use the language as intensively as when they are in the United States. Several solutions are possible.

a.) Correspondence. For the foreign student who does not have serious language deficiencies it might be enough to require him to write a letter to a faculty member every few weeks.

b.) Formal Study Back Home. In most of the countries in which our students live, the British Council or the United States Information Service conducts classes in English as a Second Language. Students with deeper language problems could be required to attend these courses. Ideally, our students could be sent home with letters detailing their particular needs (study skills, research papers, etc.) and asked to return with a letter from their summer teacher.

c.) Summer Institutes in E.S.L. in the United States. There are

several institutions in the area that offer intensive work in English language during the summer. Phillips Academy at Andover, Cushing Academy and Blair Academy all offer courses that allow foreign students to work on their English language skills. Most programs balance academic work with recreation, giving students the chance to study as well as to have an enjoyable summer. The idea of having newly-admitted foreign students attend one of these institutes has been discussed with the faculty and the foreign students. Most foreign students endorse the idea and indicated that given the opportunity, they would have attended.

#### 4. Contractual Arrangements: An Answer to the Pass/Fail System

A problem plaguing the faculty has been the discrepancy between the American student and the foreign student in diploma courses. If allowance is given for language deficiencies, is the 80% given to the foreign student really worth the same as the 80% given to the American student? The faculty seem to be justifiably anxious over this handicap. One alternative has been the Pass/Fail system. This arrangement substitutes Pass or Fail for a numerical grade, but at the same time, takes away diploma credit. Some have noted that this system also takes away motivation because most foreign students can manage to do just enough for a Pass. Is there a middle course that might work better?

Perhaps one such middle course would be a contractual arrangement in which, at the outset, the teacher sets out a series of alternate assignments that would earn diploma credit. For example, five "mini-papers" would be expected rather than two major term papers and four short answer, multiple-choice exams would be expected rather than a mid-term and a final. To be fair, these arrangements should be stated at the beginning of the course in the form of a contract. When the contract is fulfilled, credit is given.

#### IV. Testing and Evaluation

##### A. The TOEFL vs. the SAT

Too little attention has been paid to the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam. It is a test designed for students whose native language is not English. It is a test that college admission officers depend on in evaluating foreign students. The SAT, on the other hand, is a test that assumes years of English language experience. For a student to do well on SAT, he ought to have been an active and curious reader from the sixth grade onward. Vocabulary on the exam is intentionally difficult and obscure. Analogistic reasoning assumes full understanding of shades of meaning. As results of the Diagnostic Vocabulary Test show, foreign students will do poorly on this part of the exam.

For Deerfield's purposes, the goal should be constant improvement on the TOEFL. A continual improvement is convincing evidence for college admissions officers. I recommend that the test be administered once upon admission and once yearly thereafter. Arrangements with Educational Testing Service could be made so that Deerfield Academy be established as an institutional center--a status that would probably be sufficient (institutional test scores are not generated to other institutions) until the international administration is required.

A copy of my correspondence with ETS appears at the end of this section along with a guideline to interpreting the scores. This was developed by the Intensive English Language Institute in Buffalo.

##### B. Internal Assessment

###### 1. The E.S.L. Grade

If ESL is instituted as an alternate to the foreign language



requirement, the student will have to receive a grade much as he would in his science or history course. Along with his mid-term report, and his final grade, he should receive a written report on his motivation. Some institutions reduce motivation to a number grade; I myself do not agree with that. But as educators dealing with a cross-cultural experience, we should provide a detailed comment on how hard he is trying; how he is succeeding, how he is lacking. It seems to be the only way of watching a very important intangible.

## 2. Alternate Testing Arrangements

Testing formats in themselves may be enough to make the foreign student appear slower than he really is. An essay format is as much a test of English expression as it is a test of acquired knowledge. It is a fair instructor, indeed, who can separate awkward thought from awkward expression. For the foreign student in question, however, perhaps a short answer or multiple choice format would allow his knowledge to emerge. So would an oral test. Just as in the area of alternate assignments, some special consideration may be justified.

INTENSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE/SUNY at BUFFALO  
 116 RICHMOND QUAD, ELLICOTT COMPLEX  
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TOEFL SCORE RECOMMENDATIONS  
 Revised February 4, 1976

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a standardized examination of English language ability published by the Educational Testing Service of the College Examination Board. It is intended to assist in the admission of foreign students and their placement in appropriate remedial classes. All foreign students whose native language is not English are required to take TOEFL which is given several times each year at centers in all major cities in the world.

We find requiring that a student remedy his English deficiency early in his program of study prevents serious difficulty in successfully reaching his educational goals. The following guidelines are recommended requirements for various TOEFL scores.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, German, Russian, Linguistics and Teaching English as a Foreign Language)

- below 530 - student should not be accepted or could be accepted conditional on successful completion of a 12 week Intensive English Program\*\*
- 530-550 - student could be accepted conditional on successful completion of a 12 week Intensive English Program\*\*
- 550-570 - student may be accepted conditional on successful completion of six week Intensive English Program\* or 1/2 load English (2 courses) during the first semester
- 570-590 - 1/4 load English (1 course) during the first semester
- 590-620 - teaching assistants: 1/4 load (1 course in Spoken English) during the first semester
- above 620 - no requirement

ECONOMICS, ENGINEERING, HUMANITIES, FINE ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES, EDUCATION

- below 500 - student should not be accepted or could be accepted conditional on his successful completion of a 12 week Intensive English Program\*\*
- 500-550 - student may be accepted conditional on successful completion of six week Intensive English Program\* or 1/2 load English (2 courses) during the first semester
- 550-600 - 1/4 load (1 course) during the first semester, teaching assistants are strongly recommended to enroll in a six week Intensive Program prior to commencing instructional duties
- above 600 - no requirement

NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS

- below 480 - student should not be accepted or could be accepted conditional on his successful completion of a 12 week Intensive English Program\*\*
- 480-540 - student may be accepted conditional on successful completion of six week Intensive English Program\* or 1/2 load English (2 courses) during the first semester
- 540-580 - 1/4 load English (1 course)
- 580-600 - teaching assistants: 1 course in Spoken English
- above 580 - no requirement

\*\*Twelve week Intensive English Programs are offered by the Intensive English Language Institute of the SUNYAB during the Fall, Spring, and Summer semester.

\*Six week Intensive English Language Programs are offered by the Intensive English Language Institute of the SUNYAB during the Summer semesters and during the Fall and Spring semesters depending upon demand.

For additional information about the Intensive English Language Institute programs, kindly request a brochure from the Intensive English Language Institute, 117 Dean Richmond Quadrangle (2075/2077).

Descriptive literature and interpretative data on TOEFL are available upon request from the Intensive English Language Institute.

February 8, 1978

Mr. Stuart Salomon  
Deerfield Academy  
Deerfield, MA 01342

Dear Mr. Salomon:

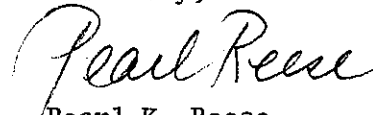
Thank you for your letter of February 3 to Mr. Spits of this office. Enclosed is a memorandum describing the TOEFL Institutional Testing Program, with an attached form that may be used to apply for an administration. The form should reach ETS approximately four weeks before the test date specified by the institution, and the date may be at any time except for those dates on which International TOEFL administrations are scheduled.

The forms used in the Institutional Program are forms previously used in International administrations, where a new form is administered each time. This year, the old five-section forms are available, but starting in July 1978, three-section forms will be used in the Institutional Testing Program. Also starting in July, the transcript service, for reporting Institutional scores to institutions other than the one administering the test, will be discontinued. The administering institution will continue to receive a score roster, with an individual score report for each student.

Although the UMass center is only scheduled to open in December and February, it could be opened for other administrations if you wished to send 10 or more applications for a particular admin. in bulk to ETS, along with fees, about two months in advance of the testing date. To open another center for International administrations is not a routine matter, but we can pursue this further if neither of the above suggestions will solve your problem.

Thank you for your interest in TOEFL. If we can answer any further questions, please get in touch with us again.

Sincerely,



Pearl K. Reese  
Administrative Associate

Enc. Inst. memo  
Program memo

## V. Contacts for the International Student Advisor

A. National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA). Deerfield has become an institutional member of this organization, a Washington-based association that has been active in foreign student affairs for many years. Their publications, some of which we have, include titles such as "A Guide to the Admissions of Foreign Students," "Initial Orientation of Foreign Students," "Academic and Personal Advising," "U.S. --Foreign Student Relationships." NAFSA also has interest groups within it that include Admissions, T.E.S.L., Council of Advisors, Community Support. The Association holds a yearly national conference and several regional conferences. They may prove a valuable resource in the future.

### B. The Experiment in International Living

The Experiment, in Brattleboro, Vermont, often sponsors activities of interest to foreign students. They hold summer courses for teachers interested in language teaching methods and cross-cultural studies.

### C. The American Language Academy, Northfield School, Northfield, Mass.

There are fifty foreign students studying intensive English in the ALA's program. This nearby school could provide a healthy social contact for Deerfield's foreign students.

### D. Foreign Student Office, University of Massachusetts

Although this office works with university people, they have indicated that they run social events that would be of interest to younger people as well. They have an ongoing concern for the wives of their foreign students and try to organize family-type functions. Their newsletter is sent to Deerfield's Foreign Student Advisor.