

OEPP 2012 YEARBOOK

ORAL ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PROGRAM

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Summary of OEPP Activities in 2012

The Purdue Oral English Proficiency Program Yearbook for calendar year 2012 provides information on the OEPP's mission, services, users, collaborators and staff. During calendar year 2012 the OEPP tested 512 graduate students with its test of oral English proficiency (OEPT). The OEPT Practice Tests were downloaded more than 900 times from the OEPP website. OEPT test raters rated more than 1200 individual tests. OEPP staff served 188 students through its English 620 course, *Classroom Communication in ESL for Teaching Assistants*. More than 1800 undergraduate students spent more than 2300 hours in the ENGL 620 classrooms as part of the OEPP undergraduate volunteer program. In addition to other professional activities and awards, OEPP staff made more than twenty conference and symposia presentations, received several grants, and had five publications. Three staff members completed doctoral dissertations and eight more were ABD.

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1. Introduction to the OEPP

The Oral English Proficiency Program at Purdue University was established in 1987 under the auspices of the Office of the Provost, in response to complaints and concerns on the part of students and parents regarding the difficulty that students faced in courses where international graduate teaching assistants were perceived as needing to develop oral English skills. Currently, University policy states that any person whose first language is not English and who holds or is a candidate for appointment as a graduate teaching assistant must demonstrate adequate oral English proficiency before assignment to duties involving direct contact with undergraduate students.

The OEPP is responsible for certifying the oral English proficiency of all international graduate students who have been identified by their departments as prospective teaching assistants. This is the first step in ensuring that potential language barriers do not negatively affect undergraduate instruction. The program meets this responsibility in three ways: (1) screening potential teaching assistants by administering the Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT), (2) by reviewing the results of departmental screening procedures used by Math and the School of Languages and Cultures, and (3) by requiring certification through the successful completion of the Program's instructional component (ENGL 62000) for those who are not certified through the OEPT.

A. Testing – the OEPT

The Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT) is a computer-based, semi-direct test of oral English proficiency developed and administered by the OEPP. Because the test is computer mediated, all test takers experience the same test interface without the variability introduced by different interlocutors in face-to-face interviews. The OEPT consists of 12 items with a variety of prompt types - text, graphic, and audio. Examinees have 2 minutes to prepare their item responses and 2 minutes to respond. Most examinees complete the test and the short survey that follows in about an hour.

Graduate students are exempted from taking the OEPT who have provided evidence of a high level of oral proficiency with the following test scores: at least 27 on the speaking portion of the TOEFL iBT; at least 8.0 on the IELTS speaking section; at least 76 on the speaking portion of the Pearson Test of English (PTE). The OEPP is responsible for certifying students whose first language is not English and who do not meet the above test score cut offs.

Test administration

The OEPT test is administered by OEPP staff nine months during the year in ITaP labs. More than half of test administration sessions and individual tests take place in August during the week before fall semester classes begin. Because each test must be rated by at least two trained raters, the OEPT is generally not administered during the months of December, May, and June when raters are not available.

Table 1: Numbers of OEPT Test administration sessions and individuals tested in 2012

Month	Test Admin Sessions	Individuals Tested
January	2	34
February	2	34
March	2	20
April	2	33
July	3	23
August	24	247
September	2	25
October	3	34
November	4	57
2012 Totals:	44	507

OEPT Test Rating and Scoring

Each OEPT test is assigned electronically to at least 2 trained raters who rate individually on the secure OEPP web application. Raters generally spend between 15 and 30 minutes rating each exam. (See page 11 for a short description of rater training.)

The OEPT has a six-point rating scale with three passing scores (60, 55, 50) and three failing scores (45, 40, 35). If the two raters disagree on a score that determines passing, failing, or level 45, a third rater is assigned to rate the exam. About one third of all exams are assigned to third raters. Examinees who pass the test are certified for oral English proficiency. Examinees who fail the test are put on the waiting list for the English 620 course taught in the OEPP. Those who fail but receive a score of 45, considered borderline, may be assigned teaching duties by their department if they concurrently take the English 620 course.

Table 2: Number of individual test ratings performed by OEPT raters in calendar year 2012

Academic period	Number of ratings
August 2012	605
Spring 2012	294
Summer 2012	53
Fall 2012*	875
Total 2012	1222

*Fall 2012 includes August numbers

Table 3: Number of students tested with OEPT by College; Number and percent of passing/failing scores for calendar year 2012

College	Students Tested	Pass	Fail
Agriculture	29	7 24%	22 76%
Health and Human Sciences	22	10 45%	12 55%
Education	8	0	8 100%
Engineering	213	106 50%	107 50%
Graduate School	18	8 44%	10 56%
Liberal Arts	22	12 55%	10 45%
Management	17	10 59%	7 41%
Pharmacy	16	8 50%	8 50%
Science	127	55 43%	72 57%
Technology	31	18 58%	13 42%
Veterinary Medicine	4	3 75%	1 25%
TOTALS	507	237 47%	270 53%

Table 4: OEPT score distribution for calendar year 2012

Score Level	35	40	45	Fail	50	55	60	Pass	Total
Number of Students	40	87	143	270	127	66	44	237	507
% of total	7.9	17.2	28.2	53.3	25	13	8.7	46.7	100

See Appendix D for test score interpretation and comparison information.

Table 5: OEPT examinee numbers by country of origin (top 10) for calendar year 2012

Country	Examinees	% of total
China	233	45.6
India	71	13.9
South Korea	57	11.2
Taiwan	30	5.9
Iran	14	2.7
Colombia	12	2.3
Turkey	10	2.0
Japan	6	1.2
Thailand	5	1.0
Egypt	4	0.8
Total	442	86.6

B. Instruction: English 620

Course enrollment

Students are enrolled in the ENGL 620 course, Classroom Communication in ESL for Teaching Assistants, at the request of their academic departments. Those students who are most needed to work as teaching assistants in an instructional position receive top priority for the course. Others, such as those with research assistantships or other sources of funding and who are not immediately needed as teaching assistants, are accepted as space permits.

Table 6: Number of students by College enrolled in ENGL 620 course during calendar year 2012

College	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Total 2012
Agriculture	9	1	2	12
Health and Human Sciences	7	4	1	12
Education	1	1	2	4
Engineering	18	7	31	56
Graduate School	2	0	3	5
Liberal Arts	5	0	1	6
Management	6	0	1	7
Pharmacy	1	0	8	9
Science	29	6	34	69
Technology	2	2	4	8
Veterinary Medicine	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	80	21	87	188

Brief description of ENGL 620 course

ENGL 620, a five credit-hour course designed, taught, and administered by OEPP staff, helps students develop skills for effective presentation and interpersonal communication for a variety of professional contexts. Students are taught skills for negotiation of meaning, paraphrasing, non-verbal communication, question and answer, as well as compensatory strategies. There are generally 10 sections of the course offered each fall and spring semester. A few summer course sections are offered when funds are available. A Professional Development (PD) section is offered in the spring semester when funding is available; this section is reserved for students who are already certified, to help them prepare for professional activities such as conference presentations and job interviews. In 2012 both the PD section as well as three summer course sections of ENGL 620 were offered.

There are two instructional components to ENGL 620: the classroom component and the tutorial component. Each class session is two hours in length and class meets twice a week. Students meet individually with the classroom instructor for thirty minutes each week, and each student also meets for fifty minutes each week with a tutorial instructor for one-on-one instruction.

ENGL 620 Assessments and Evaluation

Instructors and individual students begin the semester by reviewing the student's OEPT test recording and discussing individual goals. These goals are finalized at midterm and instructors indicate at that time whether or not the student is making progress. Throughout the semester, students are evaluated during a series of classroom presentation assessments and face-to-face conversational interaction assessments. Progress made in the performance assessments and towards the midterm goals is reviewed at the end of the semester. The course grade is Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory but is distinct from English certification. That is, a student may receive a grade of Satisfactory for the course but not be certified in English.

Certification recommendations at the end of the ENGL 620 course

Each student's two instructors (classroom and tutorial) make English certification recommendations to the Director of the OEPP. The Director reviews student portfolios which include videos of performance assessments, and makes the final English certification decisions. Most students who take ENGL 620 are certified after one semester of the course, but some are required to repeat the course a second, or in some cases a third time before being certified for oral English proficiency. Although it is rare, some students are not certified after three semesters of the course, the maximum number of semesters allowed. About 21% of ENGL 620 students who took the course in 2012 were recommended to repeat the course.

Instructor course evaluations

ENGL 620 Instructors routinely receive high ratings from students in their course sections.

Table 6: Average overall scores awarded by ENGL 620 students on university course and instructor evaluations, out of 5 possible points

	Rate Classroom Instructor	Rate Course	Rate Tutorial Instructor	Rate Tutorial Course
Spring 2012	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.7
Fall 2012	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.6

See Appendix A for a sample of students' written comments from ENGL 620 course evaluations in 2012, and Appendix B for a list of all ENGL 620 Instructors in 2012.

2. OEPP Facilities and Web Presence

A. OEPP Offices, Classroom, and Testing Labs

The OEPP offices are located on the 8th floor of Young Hall. In addition to staff offices there are two mini ITaP instructional labs, a small library for OEPP staff use and student tutorials, a conference room that is shared with other programs on the 8th floor, a ‘breakout room’ for small group work, and a reception and waiting area. English 620 classes meet next door in the basement of the Krannert building. OEPT tests are administered in Stanley Coulter ITaP labs.

B. OEPP Website and OEPP Web App

The OEPP website located at <http://www.purdue.edu/oepp/> provides an overview of the OEPP, the OEPT, and the ENGL 620 course with information targeted for graduate students, departmental liaisons, faculty, and undergraduate students. The Resources menu includes links to community ESL resources and information for prospective ENGL 620 TA Instructors.

The OEPP secure web application allows OEPP staff to register examinees for the OEPT; assign raters to OEPT tests; rate tests; view the test score data base; and retrieve test score, survey and rating reports. Departmental liaisons log on to access the departmental score reports and retrieve student scores.

C. The OEPT Practice Test Website

All prospective OEPT examinees are asked to take the OEPT Practice Test at least once before taking the OEPT. The OEPP website provides a link to the OEPT Practice Test page at <http://oepttutorial.org/Default.aspx?p=test>. There are two versions of the Practice Test which are available for anyone to download. In 2012, the OEPT Practice Tests were downloaded 990 times.

Items on the Practice Tests are taken from earlier versions of the OEPT, and the test format is identical to that of the current OEPT. Practice test takers may record, save, and review their test responses. The OEPT rating scale with descriptions of response characteristics associated with different score levels is also available on the site, along with OEPT sample responses consisting of test response recordings of two examinees who passed the test.

The OEPT Practice Test page also has links to the OEPT Video Orientation which introduces viewers to Purdue, its policies about international teaching assistants, and the OEPT. There are also video clips of graduate students talking about life and study at Purdue, and a contact form for users to report technical difficulties or ask questions directly to the OEPP.

Watching the orientation videos, listening to the sample recordings, and taking the practice tests are activities intended to help examinees understand the context of the OEPT, the format of the test, and the types of speaking and listening skills test takers will need in order to pass the test.

3. OEPP Staff Positions

Director: April J. Ginther, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English

Program Coordinator: Jennifer Redden, Administrative/Professional

The Program Coordinator handles many of the details of what occurs after a student takes the OEPT, such as managing the ENGL 620 course waiting list, preparing the ENGL 620 course schedule, and assisting departments with registering their students for the class. Departments also work with Jennifer when completing the ITA (International Teaching Assistant) Verification Report each semester.

Testing Coordinator: Nancy L. Kauper, Ph. D., Administrative/Professional

The Testing Coordinator is responsible for supervision of testing assistants, administration of the OEPT test, test rating and scoring, rater training, reporting of test and rater statistics, creation of technical reports associated with the OEPT test, and maintenance of the OEPT test program, OEPT data bases, and OEPP web app. As a former instructor, curriculum developer and mentor teacher for the OEPP, Nancy also consults on ENGL 620 instructional matters and English certification decisions.

Program Secretaries: Nina Barron-Burke, Donna C. Baker

The Program Secretaries are the front line of the OEPP, performing a myriad of tasks that keep the program running smoothly. They work directly with departmental liaisons to register international graduate students for the OEPT test. They also help manage the OEPP volunteer program for undergraduate volunteers. Located in the reception area of the OEPP, the program secretaries provide support to the director and assist ENGL 620 students and instructors, as well as visitors to the OEPP, on a daily basis.

Testing Assistants: Xun Yan, Suthathip 'Ploy' Thirakunkovit

Testing Assistants are graduate TAs with a professional interest in language testing who assist with OEPT test administration, OEPT statistical analysis and research, data base maintenance, OEPP technology, and special projects.

Classroom Instructors/OEPT Test Raters

All Classroom Instructors during the 2012 academic year were graduate student TAs from doctoral programs in English, Linguistics, Comparative Literature, and Curriculum & Instruction. In addition to teaching the classroom component of the course, English 620, *Classroom Communication in ESL for Teaching Assistants*, classroom instructors conduct weekly half-hour conferences with each of the 8 students in their course section which allows them to tailor instruction to individual needs. Classroom instructors are also OEPT test raters and must complete an initial 20-hour rater training program and an apprenticeship of several months in order to be certified as trained OEPT raters. Both trained and apprentice raters complete monthly rater training assignments, participate in monthly group rater training sessions, and rate OEPT tests every month that the test is administered.

Tutorial Instructors

All but one of the Tutorial Instructors during the 2012 academic year were graduate student TAs from programs in Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences; Linguistics; Second Language Studies/ESL; and Communication. Tutorial instructors work one-on-one every week for 50 minutes with each of the 8 students in their course section. Typically, tutors work with students on areas such as pronunciation, intonation, fluency, vocabulary and grammar, depending on the needs of individual students.

Mary Gitzen

Sadly, we lost our long-time colleague, Mary Gitzen, in 2012. Mary started her career with the OEPP as a graduate teaching assistant in the late 1990s. After receiving her PhD in English in the spring of 2002, Mary continued her work in the OEPP as a lecturer. With a reputation as an excellent ESL tutor, she also privately tutored many Purdue students and faculty over the years. Mary was an excellent teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend, and is greatly missed.

See Appendix B for a list of all OEPP Staff in 2012.

4. Engagement/Collaboration/Discovery/Professional Development/Recognition

A. OEPP Undergrad Volunteer Program

The OEPP has established a unique undergraduate volunteer program that helps prepare international teaching assistants (ITAs) to become effective instructors at Purdue University and gives undergraduate students a voice in the preparation of their future TAs. The program also provides opportunities for international graduate students and Purdue undergrads to become familiar with each other and learn about grad and undergrad student culture. Volunteer opportunities include participation in classroom presentations and conversation roundtables.

An important component of the ENGL 620 course, *Classroom Communication in ESL for Teaching Assistants*, is the series of 3 or 4 presentations prepared and presented by students. These presentations give students practice speaking English in front of an audience. To make this exercise as realistic and beneficial as possible, we ask Purdue undergraduates to play the part of students in class. Volunteers observe two presentations in a 50-minute class period, take part in Q&A during the presentations, and complete a brief written evaluation for each presenter. These evaluations are reviewed by the ENGL 620 instructors who share the information with their students.

Undergraduate volunteers are also needed each semester to participate in conversation roundtables in the ENGL 620 class. During these informal activities, advertised as 'Cookies & Conversation', undergraduates from all language backgrounds are invited to come and enjoy an hour of light refreshments, friendly conversation and the opportunity to learn more about fellow Purdue students from around the globe. ENGL 620 students may ask undergrads about American undergraduate college life and what students think are the characteristics of a good instructor. Undergrads may ask about the international grad students' home cultures and experiences as grad students at Purdue. These roundtables give the international students in ENGL 620 the opportunity to practice speaking English in a comfortable setting.

Table 7: OEPP Undergraduate volunteer program numbers and hours volunteered

	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Total 2012
Number of volunteers	834	1004	1838
Hours volunteered	1134	1175	2309

Some Purdue faculty and instructors offer incentives to their undergraduates to volunteer in the OEPP, such as extra credit or community service credit. Participation by faculty in this way is greatly appreciated by the OEPP and accounts for the success of our volunteer program. Faculty refer undergraduate students to the OEPP website where students may learn more about the volunteer opportunities available to them and sign up online at <http://www.purdue.edu/oepp/volunteer/undergrad/index.html>

Anyone wishing to make their undergraduate students aware of this opportunity may contact the OEPP for more information at oepp@purdue.edu. If desired, an OEPP staff member can visit classes to present a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation on the OEPP volunteer program. We are also able to supply fliers or bookmarks for students that list the OEPP Web address and contact information.

B. OEPP Departmental Liaisons

The OEPP serves all departments on campus. Each department or program on campus that employs international graduate students as teaching assistants has a faculty or staff member who has been appointed their department's liaison to the OEPP, usually a graduate administrator, secretary, or advisor. Liaisons are the link between the OEPP and the international graduate students needing our services. The OEPP staff works through the departmental liaison on all administrative matters rather than directly with students. OEPP Departmental Liaisons are responsible for:

- Serving as their program's resource person on the university's policy on the hiring of international graduate students;
- Serving as their graduate program's primary contact with the OEPP;
- Scheduling prospective TAs for the Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT);
- Confirming the OEPT test date, time, and location with their scheduled students;
- Informing students of the need to take the OEPT Practice Test prior to taking the OEPT;
- Retrieving students' OEPT scores (and/or post-course certification results) and storing this information with other student records;
- Identifying students who should be enrolled in the OEPP's course, ENGL 62000, *Classroom Communication in ESL for Teaching Assistants*;
- Ensuring that all non-native-English-speaking graduate students who are appointed to teaching assistant positions involving the direct instruction of undergraduates have been certified for oral English proficiency;
- Completing the ITA Verification Report each fall and spring;
- Assisting the OEPP with any other matters involving the international graduate students in their program.

See Appendix C for a list of OEPP's Departmental Liaisons during calendar year 2012.

C. ITaP Support

ITaP's Enterprise Applications group, supervised by Pat Wilson, supports the Oral English Proficiency Test and the OEPP secure web application. In 2012 OEPP staff met regularly with Judy Rantz, their liaison from ITaP Enterprise, to collaborate on keeping the OEPT test and OEPP web application current.

D. OEPP Staff Presentations, Lectures and Talks in 2012

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Convention. Philadelphia, PA. March 2012.

McIntosh, Kyle, et al. “‘Cherish city-cherish’: Linguistic landscapes as pedagogical tool in EFL settings.”

Pelaez-Morales, Carolina, Tony Silva, Crissy McMartin-Miller, and Mei Hung Lin. “Scholarship on L2 writing in 2011.”

Georgetown University Round Table on Language and Linguistics. Washington, D.C. March 2012.

Ginther, April & Soohwan Park. “Temporal measures of L2 English.”

Central States Communication Association Conference. Cleveland, OH. March 2012.

Spinetta, Christine. “Finding voice together: Exploring the intersection of social networking, an activist community, and social support.”

American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. Vancouver, BC. April 2012.

Burke, April. “Examining the relationship between English proficiency and NCLB test performance.” Poster presentation.

West Virginia Teachers of English as a Second Language Conference. Inwood, WV. April 2012.

Iddings, Josh, et al. “Grammatical metaphor and the language of science.”

Purdue Graduate Symposium on Second Language Studies and ESL. West Lafayette, IN. April 2012.

Atilgan, Aylin & Beril T. Arik. “English in Turkey: A sociolinguistic profile.”

Cheng, Lixia. “Chinese EFL learners’ spoken performance of requests.”

Jayne, Veronica. “An analysis of the interaction between international and American participants of a blog.”

McIntosh, Kyle, Tyler Johnson, & Beril T. Arik. “The ecology metaphor in interdisciplinary studies, in SLS, and in the language classroom.”

Central States Communication Association Conference. Kansas City, KA. April 2012.

Spinetta, Christine. “Panelist for the Panel: When will my mentor appear? Exploring ideas for mentoring diverse students.” “Communicating group theory: With community anything is possible.”

U of Gothenburg Special Topics in Testing and Assessment Speaker Series. Gothenburg, Sweden. May 2012.

Ginther, April. “Purdue’s Oral English Proficiency Test.” Invited Guest Lecture.

International Communication Association Conference. Phoenix, AZ. May 2012.

Spinetta, Christine. “Changing the collective by chance: An examination of the unintended effects of health communication campaigns at the societal level.”

International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference, Savannah, GA. June 2012.

McIntosh, Kyle. “WAC and WE: Expanding awareness of World Englishes in Writing Across the Curriculum programs.”

Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching. Vancouver, BC. August 2012.

Ginther, April. "Measuring characteristics of spoken English: Roundtable on pronunciation assessment." Invited Featured Speaker.

Conference on Intercultural Rhetoric and Discourse, Indianapolis, IN. August 2012.

McIntosh, Kyle. "Submission guidelines for international applied linguistics journals: An analysis of a 'throwaway genre.'"

International Conference Dedicated to Linguistic Impoliteness and Rudeness. Urbana, IL. August 2012.

Cheng, Lixia. "Effects of pragmatic task features, English proficiency, and learning setting on Chinese ESL/EFL learners' spoken performance of English requests." Poster Presentation.

Symposium on Second Language Writing, West Lafayette, IN. September 2012.

Jayne, Veronica. "Blogging practices and perceptions of a freshman writing class."

McIntosh, Kyle, et al. "Expanding graduate education in second language writing: Perspectives from five recent PhD candidates."

Pelaez-Morales, Carolina. "Conventional wisdom: Testing the ESL bias in L2 writing literature."

Midwest Association of Language Testers. Urbana, IL. October 2012.

Cheng, Lixia. "Task difficulty in ESL/EFL speaking performance of requests."

Yan, Xun, SuthathipThirakunkovit, & Nancy Kauper. "A survey of test-taker feedback on a local oral English proficiency test."

Indiana Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. Indianapolis, IN. October 2012.

Burke, April. "Indiana's growth model: Will it work for English learners?"

Atilgan, Aylin & Harris Bras. "L2 writing programs and support in Indiana higher education."

Purdue English as a Second Language/2nd Language Studies Speaker Series. West Lafayette, IN. 2012.

Ginther, April. "Validating Language Tests." February 2012.

Haugen, Mark, & Atsushi Fukada. "Speak Everywhere: A technology-based solution for out-of-class oral practice." September 2012.

McIntosh, Kyle. "ELT professionals publishing in international applied linguistics journals: The case of mainland China." November 2012.

Cheng, Lixia. "Investigating task difficulty in ESL/EFL speaking assessment: The effect of pragmatic task features on response latency." November 2012.

National Communication Association Conference. Orlando, FL. November 2012.

Spinetta, Christine. "Cyber vetting: It is time to put your profiles on lockdown!"

EDPS 531: Intro to Measurement and Evaluation. Purdue, West Lafayette, IN. November 2012.

Burke, April. "Testing and assessing English learners." Invited Speaker

EDPS 611: School Counseling Seminar. Purdue, West Lafayette, IN. November 2012.

Burke, April. "Meeting federal regulations and English learners' needs." Invited Speaker.

E. OEPP Staff 2012 Publications

- Burke, April. & Luciana de Oliveira. (2012). Educational policies in the United States and implications for English learners (Políticas educacionais nos Estados Unidos e suas Implicações para aprendizes de inglês). *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada (Brazilian Journal of Applied Linguistics)*, 12(2), 311-329.
- Burke, A. (2012). [Review of the book *Applied linguistics and primary school teaching*]. *Teachers College Record*, Date Published: February 23, 2012. <http://www.tcrecord.org> ID Number: 16713.
- Ginther, April. (2012). [Review of the book *Practical Language Testing* by Glenn Fulcher (2010). Hodder Education]. *Applied Linguistics*.
- Ginther, April, and Cathy Elder. *A comparative investigation into understandings and uses of TOEFL iBT & IELTS in the United States and Australia: A case study of two university contexts*, Draft Final Report, 100 pages, submitted to the Educational Testing Service, December, 2012.
- Kauper, Nancy. (2012). Professional development skills for International Teaching Assistant training courses. *Conference proceedings of MIDTESOL 2011*. http://www.midtesol.org/midtesol/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=96&Itemid=63

F. OEPP Staff Doctoral Dissertations Completed in 2012

- Cunningham, Aliel. *Investigating the holistic measures of speech prosody*. Spring 2012. April Ginther, Committee Member.
- Hitz, John. *Study of the influence of first language transfer on the acquisition of English relative clauses*. Spring 2012. April Ginther, Committee Member.
- Kauper, Nancy. *Development and implementation of an ESL classroom assessment of face-to-face conversational interaction skills*. Spring 2012. April Ginther, Committee Chair.

G. OEPP Staff Doctoral Dissertations in Progress in 2012

- Allen, Matthew. Dept. of English, Second Language Studies/ESL. April Ginther, Committee Member.
- Burke, April. Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction, Literacy and Language Education. April Ginther, Committee Co-Chair.
- Cheng, Lixia. Dept. of English, Second Language Studies/ESL. April Ginther, Committee Chair.
- Iddings, Joshua. Dept. of Curriculum and Instruction, Literacy and Language Education.
- Jayne, Veronica. Dept. of English, Second Language Studies/ESL. April Ginther, Committee Member.
- Kopy, Kate. Comparative Literature.
- McIntosh, Kyle. Dept. of English, Second Language Studies/ESL.
- Mishima, Masakazu. Dept. of English, Second Language Studies/ESL. April Ginther, Committee Member.
- Spinetta, Christine. Dept. of Communication.

H. OEPP Staff Professional Appointments, Committees, Grants, Awards 2012

Cheng, Lixia. Doctoral Dissertation Grant, The International Research Foundation for English Language Education, 2012. Small Grants for Doctoral Research in Second or Foreign Language Assessment, The ETS TOEFL Grants and Awards Committee, 2012.

Ginther, April. Co-editor, *Language Testing*, (2012-2017).

Ginther, April. Graduate Admissions Committees for Linguistics and English ESL/SLS. College of Liberal Arts Senate. University Senate Steering and Student Affairs Committees. Graduate School Enrollment Committee.

Pelaez-Morales, Carolina. Purdue University Research Foundation Graduate School Summer Research Grant, Summer 2012. Graduate School Incentive Grant for Applying for a Competitive Fellowship, 2012.

Spinetta, Christine. Top Presentation [First place], Great Ideas for Teaching (GIFTS) Division, National Communication Association, 2012. Purdue Service Learning Grants, 2012.

I. Visiting Scholar

In September 2012 the OEPP welcomed a visiting scholar from Brazil, Paulo José Andrelino, an assistant professor from the Universidade Estadual de Maringá in Paraná, Brazil. While in the OEPP, Paulo has studied the OEPT and the ENGL 620 course, sat in on courses in language testing and quantitative research taught by April Ginther, assisted with OEPT test administration, and worked on his dissertation about the development of a test for English teachers in Brazil. Paulo will be in the OEPP until May 2013.

5. Appendices

Appendix A: Comments and Evaluations

Sample OEPT examinee post-test survey comments in 2012

Responses to: Did you have difficulty with the test? Is there anything else you would like us to know?

The test is proper in terms of timing and number of test questions. It does not take too long but sufficient to present the students' ability of speaking English. Also the test questions can give some ideas of being a teaching assistant as well.

Actually I didn't finish all the sample exam before take OEPT. If I prepared all the sample exam I think I could be better.

The test itself was interesting. I just didn't like to interact with the machine. I think a face-to-face test would give more confidence. But I understand it would be quite complicated and difficult to be made feasible. I myself have to learn how to get on well with tests on computers.

No, everything was good. I just think that I should prepare more before this test. Taking OEPT here was much better than taking iBT TOEFL.

Sample ENGL 620 student comments from official course evaluations in 2012

Comments about classroom instructors

He encouraged students to prepare well for the presentations, and also showed us the great examples how we can make presentations more better. I would like to take his class again if I have a chance.

I am very much satisfied with this class because I feel I am improving my presenting skills in English. Conferences with this instructor had also been valuable to me because she always gave me effective advices and most of them worked out well. Thank you very much for being patient with me. I will keep working to improve my English and teaching.

She understood well our struggles as international students which I appreciate most.

I have never learnt English in this way, and nobody else has taught English to me in such a way. I do appreciate our two instructors, and they really did a great great job. Also I appreciate Purdue University provides such a good resources to international students. I feel that the university cares about us.

Comments about Tutorial Instructors

In this program, my goal was clear and the instructor helped me to achieve this goal. The instructor gave me effective advices and I feel confident with my teaching and studying. I could not have realized my problems if I didn't take this program. Thank you very much for being patient with me.

I liked that she brought different types of materials for us to practice our oral communication skills: puzzles, games, tone twisters, etc. She was patient and helpful to improve my pronunciation.

I had no ideas about how to pronounce some vowels correctly before taking this course. Your teaching helps me a lot.

She is very good at improving students' skill in communication on their level. She also encourages me and gives confidence which makes me improve a lot. I was very lucky to have such a tutor helping with my English.

Appendix B: Oral English Proficiency Program Staff 2012**Director**

April Ginther, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English

Program Coordinator

Jennifer E. Redden, Administrative/Professional

Testing Coordinator

Nancy L. Kauper, Ph.D., Administrative/Professional

Program Secretaries

Nina Barron-Burke

Donna C. Baker

Testing Office Assistants/OEPT Raters

Suthathip “Ploy” Thirakunkovit

Xun Yan

OEPP Classroom Instructors/OEPT Raters

Mathew Allen

April Burke

Lixia Cheng

Mark Haugen

John Hitz

Lee Jung Huang

Joshua Iddings*

Veronica Jayne

Tyler Johnson

Kate Kopyy

Kyle McIntosh

Masakazu Mishima

Annie Ou

Carolina Pelaez-Morales

Ann-Marie Simmonds

*Mentor teacher

OEPP Tutorial Instructors

Aylin Atilgan

Mitch Barna

Aliel Cunningham

Sumaya Daoud

Mary Gitzen*

April Grotberg

Mark Haugen*

Sam Helvie

Ashley Kentner

Su Ling Lim

Alice Ying Nie

Krithica Ramiah

Caitlin Rinehart

Whitney Rios

Paula Samorezov

Julie Scalfano

Amelia Shettle

Christine Spinetta

Allison Witte

Allison Winiger

*Mentor teachers

Appendix C: OEPP Departmental Liaisons 2012

A&AE	Linda Flack	HLA	Colleen Martin
AAS	Matilda Stokes	HSCI	Jennifer Franklin, Karen Walker
ABE	Charlie Armstrong	HTM	Maria Campos
AGEC	Lou Ann Baugh	ICM/VET-MED	Sue Wood
AGRY	Karen Clymer	IDIS	Delayne Graham
ANSC	Marlene Miller	IE	Cheryl Barnhart
ANTH	Talin Lindsay	IPPH	Mary Ellen Hurt
AT	Richard Fanjoy	IT	Deb Tutak
BCHM	Kristi Trimble	MA	Rebecca Lank
BCMT	Fran Misch	MCMP	Barbara Mullenberg, Linda Runyon
BIO	Gina Rupp	ME	Julayne Moser, Gail Biberstine
BME	Allison Sieving	MET	Nicky Federer
BMS	Gloria Powell	MGMT	Marcella VanSickle, Kelly Felty
BTNY	Tyson McFall	MSE	Vicki Cline, Patti Finney
C&I	Deb Aldridge	NUCL	Chrystal Randler
CE	Cheryl Kerker, Jenny Ricksy	NUR	Jenny Franklin, Sonia Pierce, Roxanne Martin
CERIAS	Marlene Walls	NUTR	Dawn Haan, Marilyn McCammack
CGT	Angie Schutz	OBHR	Marcella VanSickle
CHE	Debra Bowman	OLS	Deb Tutak
CHM	Betty Hatfield	PULSE	Emily Bramson
CIT	Stacy Lane	PHIL	Vicki Sanders, Chris McKinney
COM	Patty Mason	PHPR	Mindy Schultz, Janine Mott
COMLIT	Cory Brenner	PHYS	Sandy Formica
CPBL-ADDL	Barbara White	POL SCI	Daniele Sharp
CS	Sandra Freeman, Renate Mallus, William Gorman	PSYCH	Nancy O'Brien
CSR	Jeannie Navarre	SLC	Betty Lewis
EAS	Kathy Kincade	SLHS	Vicki Black
ECE	Michelle Wagner, Matt Golden	SOC	Roseanne Rehn
ECET	Nancy Tucker	STAT	Rebecca Miller Pillion
ECON	Marcella VanSickle, Kelly Felty	TECH	Debbie Hulsey
ECOG	Christal Musser	TLI	Deb Tutak, Jill Albrecht, Betty Cottrell
ENE	Eric Holloway	VCS	Jessica Sheely
ENGL	Jill Quirk	VPA-AD	Jill Stickrod
ENTM	Amanda Pendleton	VPA-T	Rosie Starks
ES	Sandi Olson	WS	Julie Knoeller
FNR	Kelly Garrett	YDAE	Roger Tormoehlen
FS	Linda Webster		
FW-MASC	Doug Weakley		
HDFS	Teena Zachary		
HIST	Fay Chan		
HK	Lisa Duncan		

Appendix D: Interpreting TOEFL scores

April Ginther

Director, Oral English Proficiency Program (OEPP)

aginther@purdue.edu**Use and Interpretation of English Proficiency Test Scores in the Graduate Admissions Process**

Current theoretical discussions of test impact and the consequential aspects of test validity have led to increased interest in how test scores are used and understood by stakeholders within particular domains. Adopting an instrumental case study approach, this study examines levels of knowledge about the English language tests (TOEFL, IELTS, and PTE) used for selection in two academic contexts and the uses of test scores in local decision-making by graduate faculty. Data for the study were gathered via an online survey and follow-up interviews examining the basis for participants' beliefs, understandings, and practices. This presentation will focus on the results of the 50-item survey completed by 232 respondents at Purdue, a large Research 1 U.S. university, and 246 respondents at the University of Melbourne, a large Research 1 Australian university, and 30 follow-up interviews at both institutions.

Responses reveal that English test scores, once entry-level requirements are met, tend to have very limited impact on admissions decisions as compared to evaluations based on other kinds of available evidence. In both contexts, respondents emphasized (1) the importance of English for academic success; (2) dissatisfaction with current levels of English among graduate students; (3) limited knowledge about or understanding of the major English tests used for selection; (4) lack of knowledge about how and why English language proficiency scores were set; and (5) misunderstanding of what cut scores represent.

Purdue's Graduate School cut scores for English language proficiency tests were set on the basis of the following considerations: results of a standard setting study (for the TOEFL Ibt), comparability data provided by the test developers, and alignment with the cut scores set by our peers in the Big Ten. However, faculty should be advised that the cut scores (lowest acceptable scores) were intended as minimums and can actually be understood as minimal. At Purdue, 52% of the respondents indicated that they understood that the Grad School Cut scores represent *minimal* proficiency, 38% indicated that they understood the cut scores as represent *adequate* proficiency, and 8% understood the cut scores represent *advanced* proficiency. In terms, of actual use, respondents often indicated that they typically checked whether an applicant had met the required cut score. Many shared surprise and dismay at students' actual levels of language proficiency despite their having satisfied Grad School requirements; e.g., "I have too many students who have "passed" the TOEFL but simply cannot communicate in English." Score users should note that with a cut score that represents a minimum, students will enter with a wide range of abilities, and given this variability, some users assume that the tests "don't work" or that students are cheating.

However, it is possible to use the information that English proficiency test scores provide more effectively by (1) considering the scale interpretations provided by the test developers and (2) by examining the characteristics of the score distributions here at Purdue.

- The mean TOEFL Ibt score of currently enrolled international graduate students from China is 99, well above the grad school cut off. However a mean score of 99 means that 50% of the currently enrolled students were admitted with a total score between the cut score of 77 and the mean score of 99. Students with this language proficiency score profile are likely to require English language support services.
- If faculty members wish to be more confident about their admissions decisions with respect to English language proficiency, the following higher cuts are recommended (both conditions should be met): a TOEFL Ibt total score of 100 with no single subscale score lower than 22, or an IELTS overall band score of 7.5 with no single band score lower than 7.0.

Suggested Cutscores for internal student admission (without language support):***TOEFL IBT = Total Score 100 with no subscale score lower than 22 ----- 100 & 22***

Appendix D: Interpreting TOEFL scores (continued)

This Chart shows a comparison of TOEFL IBT (Internet Based Test) scores, OEPT scores, and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) language levels and interpretations for university admissions.

IBT Total	IBT Speaking	OEPT	CEFR	CEFR Level Interpretations for Admissions*
110-120	30	60	C1	C1 is a level at which a student can <i>comfortably participate in all post-graduate activities including teaching.</i> It is not required for students entering university at undergraduate level. Most international students who enter university at a B2 level would acquire a level close to or at C1 after living in the country for several years and actively participating in all language activities encountered at university.
	29			
	28			
	27	55		
26	B2 High			
100-109	25	50	B2 Low	B2 was designed as the level required to participate independently in higher level language interaction. It is typically the level required to <i>be able to follow academic level instruction and to participate in academic education, including both coursework and student life.</i>
	24			
87-99	23	45	B1 High	B1 is <i>insufficient for full academic level participation in language activities.</i> A student at this level <i>could 'get by' in everyday situations independently.</i> However, to be successful in communication in university settings, <i>additional English language courses are required.</i>
	22			
57-86	21	40	B1 Low	
	20			
	19			
56 or below	18 or below	35	A1-A2	A1 and A2 are <i>insufficient levels for academic level participation.</i>

*Information retrieved from http://pearsonpte.com/PTEAcademic/scores/Documents/Interpreting_the%20PTE_Academic_Score_Report.pdf.