The English Language Studies program at Passaic County Community College offers English language instruction to non-native speakers of English who wish to pursue a college education. The four-level program offers instruction in academic reading, writing, and oral communication with the objective of preparing students to transition to college-level coursework.

In 2011, PCCC joined “Achieving the Dream,” a national initiative that is focused on improving student success rates among community college students, especially low-income students and students of color. ATD provided the framework for examining the performance of ESL students and identifying program changes that could improve student success. As a first step, the faculty examined data that revealed the following challenges:

1. **Emphasis:** Community colleges have changed their focus from access (open enrollment) to success (attainment of a degree or other credential).

2. **Status:** While approximately 80 percent of ESL students were part-time, retention was greater for full-time students.

3. **Persistence:** Lower level students were typically less likely to complete the ESL program.

4. **Passing Rates:** 75-80% passing rates in ESL reading and grammar courses; 58% in ESL writing courses; level one students were passing at a lower rate.

5. **Student Performance:** Analysis of ESL student writing samples at all levels indicated incorrect grammar as the primary reason for not passing writing. Yet, students were passing grammar courses at a disproportionately high rate.
Based on best practices in community college instruction and incorporating the latest developments in TESOL, a new English Language Studies program was created. Implementation of the new program began in Spring 2013.

Students who score high-beginner on the ELS placement test are enrolled in a non-credit ELSC-PREP course. It offers intensive, academically focused accelerated learning sessions for students seeking entrance into the ELS credit program.

**ELS-PREP Courses**

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**ELS-INT Second-Chance Workshops**

Borderline writing students who receive a non-passing grade at levels 020, 030, 040, or 107 and have a satisfactory portfolio, teacher recommendation, and level leader approval can enroll in the ELS INT Workshops. These intensive 2 week courses run prior to each semester and provide borderline students with the opportunity to advance to the next level.

**ELS Paired Courses**

Paired Courses provide opportunities for students to earn college-level credits while they are still in the ELS program. In paired courses, ELS students join college-level students in a content course, and their work is supported in a special ELS reading section. Currently, students may take special sections of Psychology, Sociology, Early Childhood Education and Computer Information Systems. A pairing of an ENW107 course with Composition I is also offered. Plans are underway to expand paired course offerings.

**ELS Course Redesign**

Based on best practices in community college instruction and incorporating the latest developments in TESOL, a new English Language Studies program was created. Implementation of the new program began in Spring 2013.

**ELS Academic & Career Pathways**

A Child Development Certificate pathway includes and ELS bridge course, an ELS/Early Childhood paired course and an opportunity to study for a national credential test. Course work applies toward completion of the academic ELS program and Early Childhood Education Certificate. Additional pathways are currently being explored in Culinary Arts and the trades.