

Florida State University Libraries

Electronic Theses, Treatises and Dissertations

The Graduate School

2007

Mind the Gap: ESL Composition Instruction in Community Colleges in North Florida

Lisa Colletti Nash



THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

**MIND THE GAP: ESL COMPOSITION INSTRUCTION IN COMMUNITY
COLLEGES IN NORTH FLORIDA**

By

LISA COLLETTI NASH

A Thesis submitted to the
Department of English
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Degree Awarded:
Fall Semester, 2007

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of Lisa Nash defended on July 27, 2007.

Kathleen Yancey
Professor Directing Thesis

Michael Neal
Committee Member

Bruce Bickley
Committee Member

Approved:

Ralph M. Berry, Chair, Department of English

The Office of Graduate Studies has verified and approved the above named committee members.

This work is dedicated to my family–
past, present, and future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis director, Dr. Kathleen Yancey, for her invaluable input, encouragement, and support. Her knowledge and wisdom have helped me turn a vague idea into a full-fledged research project.

I would like to thank Dr. Michael Neal for his assistance, particularly in the planning stages of this project. What I learned from his class on research methods made an enormous difference when I actually ventured out into “the field.” I would also like to thank Dr. Bruce Bickley whose encouragement, support, and unerring knowledge of grammar and style have enabled my work to appear much more polished and presentable than would have been otherwise possible.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband Ben, without whose love and encouragement I would never have aimed so high.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations	vii
Abstract.....	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	5
Identity Negotiation: The Field of ESL Composition	5
Identity Negotiation: The Community College.....	8
Identity Negotiation: ESL Students.....	12
Toward a Vision for the Future: Theory and Practice	16
Theory	17
Practice.....	21
Conclusion of Review of Literature.....	24
2. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS	26
Methodology.....	26
Results: Structure of Programs	27
Institution A.....	27
Institution B.....	30
Institution C	31
Institution D.....	32
Institution E.....	34
Conclusion of Methodology and Results	36
4. MIND THE GAP	37
The Gaps.....	37
Gap 1: Recruitment	38
Gap 2: Placement.....	43
Gap 3: Advocacy	48
Gap 4: Exit Criteria.....	51
Gap 5: Continued Support.....	53
Gap 6: Connection with the Surrounding Community	54
Bridging the Gaps: The ESL Liaison Team.....	56
Goal 1: Increase Recruitment.....	59
Goal 2: Improve Placement Practices	60
Goal 3: Advocate for ESL Student Rights.....	61
Goal 4: Improve Exit Criteria	62
Goal 5: Establish Continued Support for Students	63
Goal 6: Connect with Surrounding Community	64

Variations on a Theme.....	65
Suggestions for Further Research.....	66
CONCLUSION	69
NOTES	71
APPENDIX A: Interview Discussion Questions for Program	
Administrators	73
APPENDIX B: Survey of ESL Composition Instruction in the	
Community College in North Florida.....	74
APPENDIX C: Results of Teacher Survey	76
REFERENCES.....	78
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	80

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	American College Testing [Assessment]
CCCC	Conference of College Composition and Communication
CPT	College Placement Test
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
ELLIS	English Language Learning and Interaction System
ENS	English for Native Speakers
ESL	English as a Second Language
GED	[Tests of] General Education Development
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
NS	Native Speaker
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

ABSTRACT

This study places the experiences of administrators and teachers of English as a Second Language and composition at five community colleges in North Florida within the three larger contexts of the field of ESL composition, the community college, and ESL students' own experiences. Six "gaps" are identified from the research results – sites at which ESL students are subject to fall through the cracks of the systems of instruction that are currently in place. A solution for bridging these gaps is proposed as well, with specific discussion regarding the ways in which the solution would bridge each of the six gaps while benefiting administrators, teachers, and students alike.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, researchers in composition have become increasingly aware of the diversity of the student population entering colleges throughout the United States. For example, in 2005 and 2006, the program for the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) lists a category of sessions designated as "ESL and Generation 1.5." In 2005 this category featured 22 different sessions, from "Dialect Dilemmas" to "Concerning Diversity: The Role of the ESL Individual in the Writing Center." In 2006, 12 sessions were listed, including "American Academic Writing for ESL Graduate Students in Technical Fields" and "When 'The Middle' is a Chasm: Where and How Shall We Meet?" The number and diversity of these sessions highlight the fact that English as a Second Language is becoming a more and more important part of teaching college composition. ESL students can be born in the United States and raised in households where a language besides English is the primary language spoken. They can also be students from other countries visiting only for their college education, recent immigrants who intend to stay in the United States permanently, or 3. ESL students can have any home language as their native language, and can have any level of literacy in their home language as well. While ESL students are a diverse population, there are also some similarities among them. First, their concerns are different from those of basic writers. The intricacies of English that they struggle with may be those which differ from those in their native languages.

The cost of learning English can be very high for these students as well. This cost can be in dollars or in years, since often several semesters of ESL courses must be completed before students can begin their standard college-level studies.

When beginning their college education, many ESL students choose the community college. In her article “English as a Second Language in the Community College Curriculum,” Elaine Kuo notes that the “community college has become a key resource for English Language learners” (69). The community college’s accessibility and affordability make it an attractive alternative to beginning a college education in a four-year public or private college. In addition, Kuo adds, “Immigration rates directly affect the demand for ESL courses” (70) and what may be an even greater cause for concern: “The demand for ESL courses is beginning to exceed the supply” (71).

Yet the challenges present in the community college, like the challenges present for ESL students, are unique. Often, the student population looks different than in a four-year college. For example, often holding full- or part-time jobs while they are enrolled in classes, community college students may face more situations in which they might be “derailed” from their educational goals.

Like ESL, the community college has received increased attention in the past few decades. For example, “TYCA History,” an article available on the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) website, notes that in the mid-twentieth century, community colleges went through a period of “tremendous growth,” and that by the end of the century, NCTE had formalized a network of support for teachers in community colleges, establishing the Two-Year College English Association (TYCA) to give the two-year college “a stronger national voice to impact the academy as a whole.” The journal *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, which has been in publication for over thirty years, provides a forum for discussion of all issues related to composition instruction in the community college. This focus on the two-year institutions shows that composition reaches farther than the four-year college classroom.

The Fact Book: Report for the Florida Community College System, published by the Florida Department of Education, reports that in Florida, the community college system enrolls 793,517 students, compared to just over 220,000 undergraduate students currently enrolled either full- or part-time in public universities throughout the state, according to the most recent data available from the Board of Governors State University System (SUS) website. As the fourth most populous state in the United States, and also one of the most diverse, Florida faces a special set of circumstances when it comes to designing a community college to serve its students well.

While research on the community college is available, both within the composition community and outside of it, there is currently very little published research in ESL composition within the community college. This subfield will become increasingly important as ESL populations continue to rise not just in Florida but throughout the United States. In her conclusion, Kuo writes that as ESL populations rise, it “will create additional pressure on ESL programs for improved quality and increased quantity. In fulfilling their mission to serve their communities, community colleges will certainly respond to this increasing demand” (79). If there are areas in which ESL composition in the community college can be improved, it would seem that now would be an excellent time to begin recognizing those areas and implementing any necessary changes.

In this article, I will present an overview of published literature regarding ESL, the community college, and composition studies as they related to the overall subfield of ESL composition instruction in the community college. I will then introduce a study I carried out on a small part of the community college system: five community colleges in North Florida, the area in which I live, study, and work. I will present my research findings regarding six “gaps” in which ESL

composition instruction in these schools could improve, and I will also detail one possible method of bridging the gaps I have identified.

1.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

ESL composition instruction in the two-year college takes place in a context where many identities are being negotiated. Among these various identities are the identity of the discipline itself, the identity of the community college, and the identity of the ESL composition student. Each of these negotiations has affected the field in the past and continues to affect it today. By tracing the history and implications of these three identity negotiations, we can gain a better understanding of what ESL composition field will need to move successfully into the future.

Identity Negotiation: The Field of ESL Composition

In his article, "Composition Studies and ESL Writing: A Disciplinary Division of Labor," author Paul Kei Matsuda presents this identity negotiation of the ESL composition field in terms of the professionalization of the fields of Composition Studies and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). He notes that the professionalization of TESL in general established the idea that specialized training was necessary in order for an individual to be qualified to teach ESL courses effectively. He chronicles the decline of interest in ESL workshops among members of the Conference of College Composition and Communication, which resulted in a 1966 decision to discontinue these workshops at CCCC meetings in subsequent years; he also writes that as a result of the professionalization of the TESL field beginning in the 1940s,

Composition teachers were being told by applied linguists and TESL specialists that they lacked the needed expertise to teach ESL students... composition teachers might have welcomed the same argument because it would release them from the "burden" of acquiring new knowledge and

skills to teach ESL students and from the extra time that they had to spend in working with the unique problems that ESL students brought to the classroom (712).

Thus, while professionalization had a positive effect on the fields of composition studies and TESL – among these being an increased respect for practitioners and researchers in both fields – it had the added effect of demarcating and dividing the two fields and encouraging a lack of communication between them. The hybrid field of ESL composition draws on the knowledge of both composition studies and TESL, and the division between the fields of composition studies and TESL complicates the negotiation of ESL composition's own disciplinary identity.

Tony Silva and Ilona Leki present this negotiation of identity in a slightly broader context in "Family matters: influence of applied linguistics and composition studies on second language writing—past, present, and future," tracing it back to the historical orientation of what they term the "grandparent disciplines," rhetoric and linguistics, and its parent disciplines, composition studies and applied linguistics (1). They write that the discipline of rhetoric, from the time of the ancient Greeks, has been concerned in large part with the "nature of knowledge," (2) and that in the twentieth century the focus of the field turned to the idea of rhetoric as a "(social) construction, rather than the individual discovery of knowledge" (2). Linguistics, on the other hand, focused largely on form and grammar and "by the end of the [twentieth] century, [it was] looking for formal and substantial universals that all languages share, thus endorsing a multilingual approach to language research" (3). From the grandparent disciplines of rhetoric and linguistics came the parent disciplines, composition studies and applied linguistics. Silva and Leki write that in this parent generation, a significant dichotomy emerges: "applied linguistics tends toward a positivist inquiry paradigm; composition studies, toward a relativist

paradigm” (7). This difference in research style leads to differences in the way that knowledge is conceived, gathered, synthesized, and presented in the two parent disciplines (8).

Both the article by Matsuda and the article by Silva and Leki help to explain why ESL composition finds itself at the intersection of two “sometimes antithetical fields of study” (Silva 7), and we can begin to imagine how this division might stand in the way of establishing a consensus on what the goals of the ESL composition field should be, and further, how those goals ought to be reached. In her 1995 study titled “ESL Composition Program Administration in the United States,” Jessica Williams shows how these disparities in theoretical orientation manifest themselves in the physical reality of ESL composition programs. She reports that, of the 78 colleges and universities that she surveyed throughout the United States, 29 institutions offer ESL courses in their English departments, 18 do so in an “ESL unit within [the] English Department,” and 14 do so in a completely separate ESL unit, with the remaining schools offering ESL courses in other locations, such as an “Intensive English program” or a “Speech communication department” (161). From these results, it would seem that no consistent method exists for delivering ESL instruction, and both the physical and theoretical location of such classes varies, essentially, by school, with no one structure occurring in an overwhelming majority of institutions.

Significantly, Williams also reports that of the institutions which reported that native speakers and ESL students were taught composition classes in separate locations, 64 percent rated the level of communication between the two locations as either “little” or “none” (161). Overall, Williams’s results suggest that the opposing theoretical orientations outlined by Matsuda and Silva and Leki do find expression in the administrative structure of ESL composition programs. It seems that the divided nature of such programs throughout the

academy could complicate the development and implementation of ESL composition programs, making it difficult to determine what should be done in an ESL composition program, who should be responsible for carrying it out, and how the effectiveness of such efforts might be measured. With no clear theoretical or physical home, an ESL composition program might bounce back and forth from parent to parent, expending energy and resources on the process of defining itself rather than in the delivery of instruction to its students.

Identity Negotiation: The Community College

ESL composition also occurs within the site of another area of identity negotiation: the community college itself. A key debate within the community college system is whether the two-year college should consider itself primarily as a site for preparation for students planning to transfer to four-year institutions, or as an institution devoted mainly to vocational training, certification, and two-year terminal degrees, or as a school that serves both of these functions.

Arguments are made for both sides, with varying degrees of persuasiveness. Close to the heart of this debate are issues of economic and social class. Ronald Weisberger, in his article "Community Colleges and Class: A Short History," reports that in its early stages, the two-year college was conceptualized by its proponents as a way to "protect the elite nature of the university." Students enrolled in these colleges would "get a 'taste' of higher education and, in addition, would be prepared for something less than an academic career" (130). Transferring to the four-year college or university was seen as something reserved only for the "most capable" of students (130).

Since the inception of the community college system, however, this vocational track was seen as "second-rate" by the public, many of whom believed that "the transfer function was most important, since it provided students with equal access to higher education" (130). Despite this hierarchy, the

vocational track came into favor at various times throughout the twentieth century, particularly at times of economic difficulty or transition. These points include during the Great Depression, directly following World War II (131), during the “economic downturn of the 1970s” (133), and most recently, in the 1990s, when concerns of globalization and a “significant decrease” in public funding for postsecondary education fostered a more streamlined model for community college instruction, including an emphasis on what Weisberger reports as “a ‘business-like orientation, with its attendant behaviors of efficiency and productivity’” (135).

Weisberger then goes on to argue that “while the comprehensive structure of community colleges does not necessarily have to be scrapped, the main priority should be to help students gain access to a four-year college or university” (137). Thus he seems to argue that emphasizing or possibly even providing vocational and terminal-degree programs at two-year colleges is tantamount to “‘cooling out’ the aspirations of students who deserve a chance to reach their fullest potential” (139). Presumably, in Weisberger’s view, this “fullest potential” must include attendance at a four-year college or university. Yet given the ability of vocational and terminal-degree programs to facilitate students’ reaching clearly-defined career-related goals, while generally requiring smaller investments of both time and money than that which would be required for attendance at a four-year institution, it seems likely that vocational and terminal-degree programs will continue to play an active role in the community college into the future.

Additional data suggest that Weisberger’s view may be a limited one in terms of ESL students’ needs. For instance, students in ESL programs specifically make use of both the four-year transfer and the vocational / terminal-degree offerings of community colleges. In a study tracking over 200,000

community college students “starting their composition instruction with remedial or English as a Second Language (ESL) composition classes at any time from spring 1990 to spring 1998,” G. Genevieve Patthey-Chavez, Paul H. Dillon, and Joan Thomas-Spiegel report that of these students, about 40,000 of whom enrolled in either beginning or advanced ESL composition classes, 40% indicated that their reason for attending was a terminal degree or “vocational goals, 20% indicated transfer, [and] 15% indicated a desire to improve their basic skills” (263). While the subcategory of ESL students’ goals was not reported separately in this study, it seems likely that some ESL students were counted in each of these categories.

Simply stated, what this data suggests is that ESL students have a vested interest in the identity of the community college, and that the debate and negotiation surrounding this identity is highly relevant to them in the context of their education. For instance, if preparation for the four-year institution became the focus of a community college at the exclusion of vocational and terminal-degree programs, or vice versa, the goals of the diverse ESL student population would not be as well-served as if both tracks continue to have a place in the two-year college.

Negotiating the identity of the community college is not a simple prospect. As Weisberger states, “Community colleges, like all educational institutions in our society, are not neutral... they are subject to the ongoing class struggle that has characterized this country since its inception” (138). It is likely that this debate will continue in the near future.

While we cannot determine with overwhelming certainty what the outcome of the community college’s identity negotiation will be, there are some issues within ESL composition in the community college about which we can make some limited predictions. For instance, we know that ESL composition

programs will continue to be relevant in the community college. In part, we know this because, as Elaine Kuo cites in "English as a Second Language in the Community College Curriculum," "two year institutions find themselves closely tied to their mission of being 'a community college meeting community need'" (69). Weisberger reflects this concept when he writes that "community colleges should be viewed as being in the service of the entire community.... Conceived of in this way, community colleges can truly be worthy of their name" (139). From these examples we can see that in theory, the community college is envisioned as being more closely tied to its surrounding community, possibly more so than the four-year institution.

This close link to the community manifests itself in practice as well. For example, Patthey-Chavez, Dillon, and Thomas-Spiegel note the "unparalleled access" provided by the community college as compared to the four-year institution (261). They point out that "Community colleges enroll the majority of U.S. students seeking higher education, particularly for traditionally underrepresented minorities and immigrants" (261). It is likely that many ESL students can be counted among such groups. As Kuo writes, "Immigration rates directly affect the demand for ESL courses" (70). In addition, she notes that information from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that "immigration from non-English-speaking countries will continue at a steady rate," and that the Hispanic and Asian immigrant populations, which are currently the largest immigrant groups in the United States, "will dramatically increase in size" in the future (71). With such estimates predicting a continued increase in the diversity of the U.S. population, it seems reasonable to expect that community college populations will reflect this change as well.

Whatever the institutional identity of the community college may be, the almost certain increase in need for ESL resources in the future necessitates a

dedication to taking proactive measures in order to be prepared for the increasing numbers of students when they arrive and indeed, to better prepare to serve those students who are already attending ESL classes. Just as in the 1960s “there was a willingness to invest in infrastructure to expand access to higher education (Weisberger 132), we must be willing at the present time to invest in infrastructure within community college ESL programs to be ready to accommodate the ranks of students who will surely be joining academia within the next few decades.

Identity Negotiation: ESL Students

On a different scale, community college ESL composition programs also occur at the site of students’ own negotiation of identity. Students entering ESL composition programs can be struggling with their own identity in many ways. This can include not only a negotiation of linguistic identity, but also cultural and social identity, and students’ academic identity in the context of the college environment.

Linguistically, community college ESL students face a variety of challenges. They have come to the community college from a variety of backgrounds; they may be foreign- or native-born, and as a group they can have a wide range of proficiency levels in American academic English. Frank W. Harmann, in his article “On Wine, Cheese, and the Superlative Role of Time in the Acquisition of English as a Second Language” suggests as his title indicates that time is a key element for students acquiring English as a second language. He notes that while most ESL composition programs allot “a meager two or three years” in which to reach their goals of increased proficiency (242), much more time is needed to truly reach proficiency, suggesting that, according to existing research from Stanford University, “five to eight years may be a more realistic time frame” for acquiring proficiency in academic English (243). He suggests

that instructors can improve their students' chances of success by accommodating ESL students in minor ways, and by "realizing that we can influence our students' performance as writers even though there may be little we can do to improve their actual writing ability" (244). In addition, teachers should "establish a rapport with their students and, through careful examination of their work, must evaluate each student's potential" and consult colleagues with knowledge of "TESOL or applied linguistics" (244). Interestingly, just as time is required for students to gain proficiency in academic English, a certain amount of time is also necessary for teachers to establish the kind of understanding of each individual student in order to provide relevant and helpful instruction.

In "Generation 1.5 Students and College Writing," Linda Harklau points out a particular segment of the ESL population that indicates the larger fact that not all ESL students are linguistically similar. She highlights the unique position of what she refers to as "generation 1.5 students," a group that includes students who emigrated to the United States while they were school-age, or native-born speakers who "grew up speaking a language other than English at home" (1). These students, Harklau writes, need special attention because often they will have conversational command of English, but "are usually less skilled in the academic language associated with school achievement, especially in the area of writing" (1). In an ESL composition program in which instructors do not have adequate time to individually assess such a student, the needs of the generation 1.5 student may be overlooked or inadequately addressed. In fact, some students in this category "may have problems with academic English but do not need ESL classes" at all (1). She argues that "to be successful in college, generation 1.5 students... need access to instruction that recognizes that they are different from other English language learners" (2). It is possible that many English language

learners could potentially benefit from the same sort of individual attention that Harklau proposes. Like Hermann's suggestion, the practices advocated by Harklau would also require teachers to invest a certain amount of extra time in their students.

A student in the process of negotiating linguistic identity within an ESL composition program may employ a variety of adaptive techniques in order to succeed in an American academic environment. In a case study of a Turkish student who emigrated to the United States in his college years, Natasha Lvovich writes of the adaptations employed by this student, Serdar. Lvovich, who was one of Serdar's ESL instructors, notes that this student established communication with her "after the very first class.... He spoke slowly but quite intelligibly, and asked me if I could suggest any ways for extra help with English" (183). This "first contact" (183) was the beginning of an exchange in which Serdar "kept in touch one way or another" (185). Lvovich writes, "By creating a support system and opening the channels for communication, Serdar empowered himself for learning in a potentially meaningful communicative environment, where his identity was socially fostered and negotiated" (185). Thus a student's own adaptive actions, and instructors' dynamic response to these actions, can be seen as a large part of the student's own identity negotiation in the college environment.

Pointing out a distinctly academic adaptation, A. Suresh Canagarajah, in his article, "Toward a Writing Pedagogy of Shuttling between Languages: Learning from Multilingual Writers," challenges "monolingualist assumptions that conceive literacy as a unidirectional acquisition of competence" (589). He goes so far as to suggest that "bilingual competence integrates knowledge of two languages and is thus qualitatively different from monolingual competence" (590). This seems to suggest that our definition of what constitutes language

proficiency may not accurately reflect the reality of ESL students' linguistic identity. By recognizing that "language learning does not happen in separation from the individuals' external and internal struggles" (Lvovich 185), or in other words, that acquisition of a second language does not take place in a vacuum, we can see that students' individual adaptations, the bridges they construct between their personal linguistic background and their future goals, are as much a part of their identity as the languages they are working with.

ESL students may also be negotiating their own cultural and social identity. In some ways, this can mean that students are finding a position relative to their home culture and the new culture in which they find themselves. Lvovich's case study provides examples of this as she writes of Serdar's work in adapting to a new culture: "Serdar often focused on the importance of social life; friends, parents, relatives, teachers, neighbors have always been his grounding mechanism, his support system... which he tried to replicate in a new environment" (187). Thus Serdar developed a strategy for adapting to his new cultural and social surroundings by connecting with a support system analogous to the network that had been effective for him in his previous environment.

While this kind of personal adaptation to a new culture can be a significant concern for ESL students, another type of adaptation appears as students work toward adapting to not just American culture, but specifically to American *academic* culture. Weisberger refers to this concept when he notes that ESL students "entering college often lack what Pierre Bourdieu refers to as cultural capital, which in a broad sense is knowledge of how a system works, and social capital, which is access to important social networks" (138). In the context of the four-year transfer function of the community college advocated by Weisberger, he writes that the "primary mission" of the two-year college "includes providing students with the cultural and what might be called the

emotional capital needed to succeed in four-year institutions” (138). ESL students’ need for this kind of capital can extend to those students who are seeking vocational training or terminal two-year degrees at the community college; to a certain extent they need it in order to successfully negotiate their path through the community college itself.

Patthey-Chavez, Dillon, and Thomas-Spiegel refer to a concept closely related to cultural and social capital, which they refer to as “academic literacy.” In their analysis of success rates of students placed in various precollegiate writing classes, they write that their findings “underscore the importance of that academic literacy in college success or failure” (275). They come to the significant conclusion that “students coming into the institution with better academic literacy, even in another language, are more likely to acquire the written communication skills they need and succeed in college coursework” (275). Thus it becomes clear that students’ negotiation of identity and acquisition of the cultural and social knowledge of academic life are two very significant factors in determining their potential success, both in their ESL studies and in college overall.

ESL students’ negotiation of identity, from linguistic, to social and cultural, to academic identity within the college environment, is very significant in students’ future success in college (and, one might argue, in life). The fact that ESL composition occurs at the site of this negotiation indicates that as a field, ESL composition has a responsibility to respond to this struggle for identity which ESL students can face, and to provide access to resources which will support them in this effort.

Toward a Vision for the Future: Theory and Practice

While ESL composition instruction is a field that is continually changing as a result of the negotiation of the identity of the discipline itself, the community

college, and the ESL composition student, some theorists and practitioners offer suggestions about how we might conceptualize the goals of an ESL composition programs, and how we might work toward those goals.

Theory

Some commentators tackle the question of the goals of ESL composition from a theoretical standpoint. This is a useful perspective because it allows educators to consider the underlying motivations of their actions, question goals within a broader context, and situate themselves within the current discussion. The arguments that are put forth by such commentators include the idea that multilingualism should be considered as a theoretical orientation, that a more robust theory of the ESL student should be developed, and that educators should actively foster the further development of theory in the ways that they approach ESL composition pedagogy and administration.

The argument in favor of a multilingual orientation comes from many different voices. Bruce Horner and John Trimbur, in their article, “English Only and U.S. College Composition,” suggest that the prevalent view, that composition instruction in the U.S. college setting necessarily must occur in English, is not inevitable but rather is a reflection of “a tacit language policy of unidirectional monolingualism” which “has a history and a cultural logic that have gone largely unacknowledged in our field” (595). They note that this exclusive emphasis on English in composition instruction has not always been in place. The authors tie this exclusive viewpoint to the rise of modernization in the late 1800s and early 1900s, which espoused “a language policy that replaced the bilingualism (in principle if not always in practice) of the classical curriculum with a unidirectional monolingualism” (595). In short, the same movement that sought “to replace the pietistic college with a secular education in the

vernacular” also unseated the classical languages in favor of a heavy emphasis on English (595).

The implications of this shift are far-reaching, and according to Horner and Trimbur the policy needs to be reexamined. First, they point to the tendency of such a monolingualist approach to view language “as a fixed, idealized entity removed from the vagaries of time, place, and use” rather than as something dynamic and context-specific (596). This is harmful, they argue, in part because such a view easily leads to the conflation of language, social identity, and nationality; it is also problematic because it is “used to locate individual learners on a sequence of development fixed in its order, direction, and sociopolitical significance” (596). Such a sequence may very well ignore important individual variations between students, and the various ways in which students negotiate the divide between the privileged English and their own linguistic background.

Interestingly, Horner and Trimbur trace the way in which “subordination of the modern languages to English was reinforced by drawing linguistic borders around the continental U.S. and separating the nation’s English monolingualism from a polyglot Europe” (606). Thus, in an attempt to clearly define and imbue American culture with a sense of its own legitimacy and uniqueness, the multilingual aspects of European culture were rejected. This differentiation seems to echo the identity negotiations that partly constitute the context in which community college ESL composition takes place; just as ESL composition, the community college, and ESL students are all in the process of negotiating their identity, so too we can see some ways in which the identity of the English language itself is in negotiation. And as Horner and Trimbur argue, the question of “whose English” (624) is being enthroned by monolingualist language policy is a very important one. The way in which we answer this question of theory has

far-reaching implications for the future of ESL composition instruction, and such a response should be undertaken with care.

Horner and Trimbur's argument reflects Canagarajah's position, which supposes that "Using English doesn't mean using a single way of writing" (601). By means of a text analysis of two essays written by the same author, one in the author's native Tamil and the other in academic English, Canagarajah shows the ways in which the author varies his written discourse depending on his anticipated audience for each piece. For instance, the article written in Tamil for a Tamil-speaking academic audience is marked by a "casual and relaxed opening" which reflects "the fact that one doesn't have to market a scholarly paper aggressively in the local [Tamil] academic community" (592). In the English-language essay on the same topic, in contrast, the author shifts to a slightly "more formal and explicit orientation to the research subject" in the introduction, reflecting the author's "recognition of the English-educated ethos of the readers of this article" (596). By highlighting this particular example of an author operating in a multilingual context, Canagarajah challenges the linear view of proficiency and suggests that as multilingual writers "move between languages and discourses, they use the conventions of one to critically orient themselves to the conventions of another" (600). This example indicates that multilingual writers are not just moving from lack of proficiency to achievement of proficiency, but rather tend to actively engage with both languages, and doing what Canagarajah describes as "shuttling between languages" (600).

Thus Caragarajah's discussion highlights the particular importance of developing a robust theory of the multilingual student, one that takes into account the myriad ways in which these students negotiate between various languages and "use the competing literacy conventions on their own terms"

(600). Such a view requires a revision of the idea that ESL students' lack of proficiency in English is simply a problem to be "fixed."

In "Introduction: Cross-Language Relations in Composition," Bruce Horner provides a succinct summary of Canagarajah's directive:

...rather than locating students on a trajectory from a home or primary language toward competence in a target language, it is more appropriate to examine the process by which writers shuttle between texts, types of texts, and languages, and to work at assisting our students themselves to shuttle creatively among these in their writing. (572)

At the end of his introduction, Horner suggests that we should specifically consider "how and why we involve students in engaging language(s) in the ways we do, and how and why we might involve them, and ourselves, more productively in cross-language relations in writing" (573). This approach reinforces other arguments in favor of an awareness of the theoretical basis of classroom practice and administration, and also suggests a growing consensus among members of the ESL composition discourse community that the current theoretical orientation of the ESL composition field warrants some examination.

Matsuda also points out the importance of theory in the development of strategies for ESL composition instruction. He writes,

In conducting empirical studies, composition researchers should acknowledge the presence of ESL writers in writing classrooms and try to include second-language writers in their research design, analysis, and discussion of implications – rather than excluding them as 'outliers' or 'exceptions'" (716).

In other words, ESL student perspectives should be actively considered in the work that leads to the formation of new theory in the field of composition overall, and in the continued re-imagining of current composition theory.

Practice

In the conclusion to her study, Jessica Williams points out some specific strategies to compensate for lack of teacher experience, placement of ESL students, and lack of institutional support for ESL composition program staff. Williams points out that many of the institutions included in her study reported that “they must often staff their classes with instructors with little knowledge of the problems of NNSs [non-native speakers] or with ESL teachers who have taught little, if any, writing” (167). As if this weren’t difficult enough, “Just when the administrators feel their instructors are becoming experienced and effective teachers, the instructors often leave because they cannot manage on one or several part-time salaries, or they cannot be rehired for budgetary reasons” (167). In response to this crisis, Williams suggests that “One way of alleviating the problems presented by an underexperienced staff is to provide orientations and other forms of on-the-job training” (170). In this way, while institutions may not be able to always hire and retain teachers with extensive ESL experience, at least those teachers they do employ will be sent into the classroom with some exposure to the issues faced by ESL students.

Williams also points to a trend within the institutions that she surveyed: the tendency to place ESL students in separate classes made up entirely of non-native speakers. In contrast to this model, Williams suggests that “NSs [native speakers] and NNSs [non-native speakers] could benefit from learning together” (175). As evidence that this might be the case, Williams presents the fact that ESL students who are permanent residents may have quite a bit in common with native speakers, in that both groups may “have little experience in writing, but are conversant in the oral language and culture” (175). The benefit of a combined-class approach is not limited to permanent resident students, but also extends to those ESL students who are visiting in order to pursue educational

goals before returning to their home countries. These students, Williams argues, “Might be seen as a resource in the university community, where diversity and multicultural experience are increasingly being stressed” (175). Thus the practice of combining ESL students with native speakers in composition courses could actually enhance the educational experience of both groups of students.

Finally, Williams points out the need for stronger institutional support for ESL composition program staff. She makes the argument that “there is an urgent need for academic institutions to make the same long-term commitment to the professionals who teach NNSs that they make to other teaching staff, so that those teachers can, in fact, be professionals” (176). Such a commitment would surely benefit teachers and students, as well as the larger institution as a whole.

Another resource for practical suggestions regarding ESL composition programs is the CCCC Executive Committee, whose January 2001 “Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers” carries with it the endorsement of TESOL, a professional organization for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. In this statement, the CCCC Executive committee draws a broad sketch of the ESL student, pointing out that such students come from a wide variety of linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. Specifically, the committee emphasizes that ESL students “may have special needs because the nature and functions of discourse, audience, and persuasive appeals often differ across linguistic, cultural, and educational contexts” (1). Toward the goal of providing comprehensive instruction for ESL students of composition, the committee suggests, among other things, that students should be placed in programs based on their writing proficiency, and that assessment of this proficiency should be based on more than just “the scores from standardized tests of general language proficiency or of spoken language proficiency” (2). The committee also recommends that a variety of course options be made available to

students, from “mainstreaming, basic writing, and second-language writing as well as courses that systematically integrate native and nonnative speakers of English” (2).

With this statement the committee presents the same idea as Williams: that some students may benefit from learning in integrated classes enrolling both native and nonnative speakers of English. The committee suggests a maximum class size of fifteen students, and it speaks out strongly on the issue of ESL students receiving college credit for the work that they do in ESL classes (2). Like Williams, the committee also points out that teachers should be prepared to address the needs of ESL students in their classes, and that the larger programs in which instruction takes place should offer instructional support, such as “pre-service and in-service teacher preparation programs in teaching second-language writing” and incentives for teachers to attend conferences and workshops that deal with the issues involved in teaching ESL composition.

On an individual level, Muriel Harris and Tony Silva, in their article “Tutoring ESL students: Issues and Options,” suggest some ways in which tutors can use their unique role to help ESL students learn to improve their English writing skills. They begin by emphasizing the importance of approaching ESL student errors with a view of a “hierarchy and some sense of what is most important” (526). A helpful rule, they write, is for tutors to “distinguish between errors that will interfere with the intended reader’s understanding of the text (global errors) and those that will not (local errors) and to give priority to the former” (526).

More importantly, though, Harris and Silva write that it is best not to base all of our instruction of ESL students on patterns of “cultural preferences that are reflected in writing, such as the often-cited Asian preference for indirection” (527). Such patterns can be useful to know, they argue, but can be limiting if they

are seen as the only way in which such students will write. They report that one project synthesizing several pieces of research suggests tentatively “that adult ESL writers plan less, write with more difficulty..., reread what they have written less, and exhibit less facility in revising by ear... than their ENS peers” (529). This, Harris and Silva write, can inform a tutor’s attempt to “stretch out the composing process” of ESL students, to give them more opportunities to develop effective writing strategy.

With these suggestions, Williams, the CCCC committee, and Harris and Silva all bring up some important issues and provide some practical advice regarding how to approach the instruction of ESL students on the institutional, classroom, and individual student level.

Conclusion of Review of Literature

Overall, these articles and suggestions offer, in a general way, some common-sense guidance: that when dealing with ESL students, we should remember that they are individuals and interact with them as such, we should keep ourselves informed of the issues which might affect an ESL student of writing, and we should actively pursue improvements in the way that we conceive and carry out ESL writing instruction. In addition, it is also important for us to understand the theory that lies beneath the surface of ESL writing instruction, and we should never set aside our willingness to be self-critical in the interest of providing better instruction to students.

In view of these suggestions, I formulated a list of overall research questions:

- What is the structure of ESL composition instruction in each school?
- How many ESL students does each school enroll?
- How many ESL instructors does each school employ?
- Are teachers hired with training? Are they trained after being hired?

- What kinds of ESL-related services and resources are available to teachers and students?
- What specific ESL-related challenges do teachers face in the classroom?
- How do teachers address these challenges?

With these questions in mind, I began designing my study.

2.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

Methodology

In order to determine how ESL composition instruction is delivered in community colleges in North Florida, five community colleges in North Florida were studied. Initially, both English/Communications Department Chairs and ESL Program administrators from ten community colleges from Pensacola east to Jacksonville were contacted via email to determine whether they would be interested in participating. From these initial ten, five institutions emerged at which administrators were interested in talking with me. At some institutions I was only able to communicate with the English/Communications department, in one school, only the ESL program, and in one school I was fortunate enough to be able to speak to both. For those schools at which I was unable to speak to both units (and the one school at which there was only one unit that covered both subjects), I gathered information on the administrative structure of the programs from school catalogs and websites.

In order to collect data from both program administrators and teachers, I designed interview questions for the program administrators (Appendix A), and a written survey for teachers at the various institutions (Appendix B). I traveled to four of the five schools and interviewed the program administrators there who had expressed an interest in participating. At the one remaining institution, I was able to conduct an interview with the Communications Department Chair via email, and the Chair provided me with written responses to my questions. At the time of my visits, I delivered copies of the teacher surveys to as many teachers as possible, via their faculty mailboxes, in cooperation with the program administrators. I distributed a total of over 75 surveys, but received back only

three individual responses, from only 2 different schools. Since the teacher survey responses were so sparse, and did not cover a cross section of the institutions I surveyed, I have included the results from those three teacher surveys as an appendix (Appendix C). The results of the surveys are interesting and relevant, but as a whole they do not offer information that is robust enough to be used as a basis for recommendations or conclusions.

I arranged and conducted interviews with administrators over a four-month period. Interview questions were designed to be open-ended, and to allow for expansion in the event additional questions emerged as a result of administrators' answers to the initial queries. Four of the interviews were tape recorded by permission of the participants and transcribed at a later time. Because of equipment malfunction, the interview at one school was recorded in written notes, and as mentioned above, the interview at the last remaining school was conducted via written response to email interview questions. After transcribing the tapes and compiling interview results, I began to see several emerging patterns.

Results: Structure of Programs

At each institution included in the study, the administration of composition instruction and ESL composition instruction is done differently, although there are many similarities. A short description of the structure of such instruction at each institution follows:

Institution A

Institution A is a well-established community college with a total enrollment of approximately 20,000 students. The official count of LEP (limited English proficiency) enrollment in 2005-06 was 29 students. At Institution A, all instruction labeled "ESL," whether in writing, speaking, reading, or listening, is done in one of two separate units. For ESL students who are admitted to the

school at a college level, instruction takes place in a small separate developmental education unit. For ESL students at a pre-college academic level, instruction takes place in the Adult Basic Education unit, which assists students in obtaining their GED. For the purposes of this study which aims to focus on college-level ESL composition instruction, of these two sites of ESL instruction I contacted individuals only within the college-level ESL unit. At Institution A, I also interviewed the department chair of the Communications department, to discuss ESL student transition to mainstream classes that take place in that department.

At Institution A, students take the College Placement Test (CPT) before registering for classes. The CPT is a standardized, multiple-choice test which yields scores that are then used to determine student placement. For example, students earning between 39 and 68 on the writing portion of the CPT are enrolled in a beginning preparatory writing class, and students scoring between 69 and 82 are enrolled in an intermediate preparatory writing class. Students scoring 83 and above are placed in the standard first-semester composition class, ENC1101. These preparatory writing classes, however, are not geared toward ESL students in particular, but rather toward any students who simply do not score high enough on the standardized test to be placed in ENC1101. This group could include native speakers of English, US citizens who learned a language other than English as their first language, and international students who may come from any number of backgrounds. Students enrolled in these courses do not receive graduation credit, but they are able to count the hours of ESL courses they take toward financial aid enrollment requirements.

At the time that I spoke with representatives of Institution A, the developmental education unit was proposing a series of two new courses that would place ESL students who score below 83 on the CPT in a writing and

grammar class designed specifically to meet their needs, rather than in one of the two preparatory writing classes geared only toward the basic writing student. These courses are envisioned as a way to combine grammar and writing skills in a class that will meet the same overall instructional goals of the preparatory writing classes, while addressing concerns specific to ESL students.

When students test into these preparatory writing courses, which are labeled “developmental” in Institution A, they must then pass each course with a C or better in order to be placed in ENC1101 without having to pass an exit test. Conversely, students scoring lower than a C can take and pass the exit test to be placed in ENC1101 as well. Once ESL students either pass the developmental courses with a C or pass the exit test, they are placed in ENC1101 courses along with native speakers of English, and all organized ESL support effectively ends.

In some cases students enroll in mainstream English composition courses even though they may not have the skills necessary to successfully complete them. The Communications Department Chair at Institution A reports that in such a case, if teachers are able to determine the cause of the student’s difficulty, the student can be referred for extra individual help in an informal process. In one case, noted the Chair, an international student who plays on one of the institution’s athletic teams was struggling with mainstream second-semester English composition and a Literature course due to ESL-related reasons. Because he had coaches and a team of teachers who were able to recognize the issue, he was provided with individual help from “two or three teachers who work with him” on an informal basis. The Chair noted that often athletes receive this kind of special attention “because the coaches help that happen.” At other times, English composition teachers will volunteer their time for “half an hour to an hour a day for the duration of the term” in order to help a student (not necessarily an athlete) to succeed. Certainly, such interventions are helpful for

the student who is identified and tutored, but there is no formalized process in place to recognize and provide instruction for all students who may find themselves in similar situations. Rather, owing to time and staffing constraints, these students are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The Communications chair specifically expressed concern with the current system and acknowledged that it would help if they had more time to consider and implement a better solution. Without additional time and increased staffing, however, it seems that such a goal will remain hard to reach.

Institution B

Institution B is somewhat smaller than Institution A, serving a total of about 13,000 students, with 15 of those identified as having limited English proficiency. At Institution B, students are also placed in English composition courses according to their scores on the CPT. As at Institution A, Institution B also places students who score below 83 on the writing portion of the CPT into developmental writing courses that serve native speakers and ESL students alike. These courses also do not carry graduation credit. Maximum class size for these courses (as well as other courses within the institution) is 24 students.

Developmental writing instruction takes place within the English department at Institution B, rather than in a separate unit, and free tutoring is available in several subjects on campus. Students who test into the developmental writing program are placed in either the basic or intermediate course. When they have finished the course of study, the students are then required to pass the state exit exam before they are allowed to proceed to college credit classes in the subject area.

At Institution B, when a student completes the developmental writing sequence and still is not prepared for ENC1101, the school offers an optional “bridge class” that can help students transition from developmental writing

classes to mainstream writing classes. Unlike the developmental classes, this connector class carries graduation credit, and students are strongly encouraged to take it. Since it is optional, though, some students choose not to.

The English Department at Institution B recently hired a coordinator to oversee the developmental writing and reading programs. The English Department Chair at Institution B reports on the function of this new position:

So that person is a full-time employee, and she teaches three sections of Prep [courses], and in her other time is supposed to coordinate, or help out the other prep instructors with materials, or workshops, and she really facilitates the practice grading sessions for the exit tests. So she's got those kinds of jobs. She sort of oversees the Prep English and Prep Reading... she concentrates on that, and goes to conferences, and sort of whatever would be applicable outside the area to then bring things back here.

This position can perhaps help to identify and address issues that face developmental writing students in general, and possibly ESL students in particular.

At Institution B, as at Institution A, an Adult Basic Education program also offers ESL instruction, with a goal of helping students to earn their high school equivalency. Since these programs are not part of the college-level instruction at the institution, however, they were left out of the study.

Institution C

At institution C, a relatively large college with a student population of slightly under 30,000 and an identified LEP student population of 131, ESL writing instruction takes place in a unit separate from the Communications Department where mainstream English composition is taught. I was unable to arrange a meeting with anyone from the Communications Department but did

interview the director of the ESL unit. An instructor with the program also sat in on the interview and contributed to the discussion.

Students at Institution C are placed in EAP (English for Academic Purposes) writing courses based on their CPT scores. Just as in the first two institutions, students in these courses can be ESL students as well as native speakers of English who need further instruction in academic English. Students who place into this system attend class four days a week and spend one day a week in the skills lab, which provides them with individual instruction and gives ESL students in particular a chance to use a language lab program called ELLIS (English Language Listening Interactive System), which is in place to help improve listening comprehension.

After completing the prescribed courses, students are then required to take an exit exam before entering mainstream classes. Both individuals I spoke with at Institution C indicated that there is a need for more individual levels of instruction, and more classes in general, but like the other institutions included in this study, given their resources, their goal is to serve students as well as they can.

As with the first two institutions, Institution C provides separate ESL instruction within the Adult Basic Education department, but the college-level instruction was the only ESL component included in the study.

Institution D

Institution D is a very small community college in a rural setting. The English Department Chair I interviewed indicated that at a given time, only three to five of the total student enrollment of about 3,000 are international students. Information regarding how many US citizens qualifying as ESL students might be enrolled is unavailable, but it stands to reason that at such a small institution, the number is probably not very high.

At Institution D, students are placed in developmental writing classes based on their CPT scores. The Chair reports that since there are too few international students to warrant separate ESL classes, “most international students that we get end up in developmental classes although they are not developmental students.” Establishing separate courses or hiring separate teachers for ESL students is beyond the reach of Institution D, since its rules state that each full-time teacher carries a course load of 5 sections, and in order for a section to be established it must enroll at least 12 students. With only 5 international students enrolled at Institution D at a given time, it would be very difficult to establish a consistent program of ESL courses.

Unlike some other institutions included in this study, Institution D does not have a separate ESL unit, due to low ESL enrollment numbers. The English Department Chair reports:

One of our employees has been given the “care” of those few international students to help them through the complexities of taking a course of study at an American college. She “runs interference,” making sure the students bring themselves to the attention of their instructors and so on. However, as far as I know, she has no professional qualifications and is more like a “sponsor” or “counselor” than anything else. I know she isn’t a faculty member.

Such a position, like the coordinator position at Institution B, is likely very beneficial for students. However, the Chair also reports that beyond that informal support, “we do not have a sufficient number of students to generate any separate program goals or to do anything other than mainstream out ESL students.” While she expresses the possibility that this state of affairs will change in the future, at present the question of ESL support services “cannot help but be put on the back burner financially considering all of the needs of the

vast majority of our students.” Just as at the other institutions included in the study, the Chair at Institution D is aware of the fact that ESL students might be served better than they are at present, but at the same time she is not in a position currently to effect immediate change, mainly due to financial constraints.

Institution E

The final institution included in the study, Institution E is also a relatively small community college in a slightly more populated setting than Institution D. Institution E enrolls about 7,000 students, with only about six ESL students per term. Most of these students, according to the English Department Chair, are recruited to the school through the baseball program, and the majority of them arrive from Puerto Rico or other Spanish-speaking areas.

Instruction at Institution E is labeled as EAP, but it is geared in large part specifically toward ESL students. Students are identified by means of their CPT scores, as is the case in all the institutions included in the study, but unlike the other institutions, Institution E does not require students to complete ESL coursework prior to enrolling in either preparatory writing classes or mainstream academic classes. As a result of this policy, oftentimes students are concurrently enrolled in ESL courses and standard college courses.

Another aspect of instruction that differs at Institution E is the fact that ESL courses are set up as independent study courses, meaning that each student meets with a teacher individually at an appointed time each week, rather than meeting in a class with either other ESL students or a mixture of ESL students and native speakers of English who are receiving additional instruction in academic English. A learning lab is also available, where an instructor assists students at limited times.

In addition to the ESL classes, students also take preparatory writing classes. These classes more closely parallel the preparatory and developmental

writing classes available at the other institutions studied, and like the other schools, Institution E does not offer college credit for either the ESL courses or the preparatory writing courses. So, while ESL students are required to follow the no-credit, two-course curriculum of developmental writing classes, in which they share the classroom with native speakers of English, they also have available to them the ESL course offerings which are meant to provide a transition from developmental writing classes to mainstream writing classes such as ENC1101 and ENC1102. While these additional ESL courses do not carry college credit, they provide a means for improving student academic success and they “count” for financial aid purposes.

The instructor who teaches the ESL course at Institution E is fluent in English and Spanish, and because of this is able to provide additional assistance to ESL students whose first language is Spanish. While the majority of the ESL students who enroll at Institution E fall into this category, for students whose first language is something else entirely, the transition can be more difficult since their instructor will not necessarily be well-versed in the conventions of the students’ native languages. The English Department Chair I interviewed noted that for ESL students whose first language is something other than Spanish, “we don’t even have the facilities or the resources to even understand how to help them.” Like so many other individuals I spoke with, the English Department Chair at Institution E expressed a desire to be able to serve students more effectively, but cited financial constraints. For instance, she offered that she would like to be able to hire

Somebody that would know, “Okay, I don’t personally know anything about Russian, but I know these resources; let’s see if these work for you.” And then works with the student to see what to do next. Right now we don’t have that. And... one person isn’t that much, but, you know.

[Laughs.] It's a budget issue. [...] And since we're in North Florida, almost in Georgia, our population hasn't demanded it of us yet. So, when you have like five foreign language speakers a term, people don't understand how to justify that claim [for additional staff and funding]. It seems that at Institution E, like other institutions, it is not the will to improve student services that is missing, or the vision of how to effect different parts of that change, but rather the financial means to begin.

At Institution E there seemed to be an integrated vision of services, perhaps made possible by the small size of the school, which is present to smaller degrees at the other institutions included in the study.

Conclusion of Methodology and Results

In all of the institutions I studied, I was struck by the dedication of the administrators and staff I talked to. Even the busiest individuals in charge of entire programs or departments seemed to have a vision of how the structure and delivery of ESL composition instruction at their respective institutions might be improved. Aside from giving me time in which to conduct our interviews, these individuals also presented very specific, detailed visions of what they would change about their programs if resources were unlimited. In fact, this question enlivened the interviewees when I posed it, with a discernible spark often shining in their eyes as they described their hypothetical plans. These administrators and staff seem to know best what their ESL students need. And ironically, no one knows better than they do how limited they are in providing for those same students. Yet they continue in good faith.

The following discussion points to ways in which institutions like those I studied might approach at an administrative level, the increasing ESL student enrollment in order to continue to improve quality and effectiveness of student instruction with limited budgets.

3.

MIND THE GAP

In my discussions with administrators and staff, several prevalent concerns quickly became clear. Among them are those which have already been discussed, such as the difficulty of providing resources for a small number of ESL students, and the challenges involved in providing detailed instruction with limited staff and funding. But after collecting interview data and looking at it as a whole body of information, a pattern emerged which was so insistent that I could not ignore it. Though the individual situations differed, what came through in these interviews, over and over again, was the sense that students were subject to “falling through the cracks” of the system. While the structures in place do serve students, there is a sense of the various pieces of the structure being disconnected from one another, like a series of stepping stones set too far apart. Often, ESL students lack the cultural and social capital to know how to demand the services and support they need. The Department Chair at Institution E explained it this way: “The students who need the most help often don’t have the voice to ask for that help. And they’re not demanding enough to get those resources. So it’s easy to forget about the silent student.” As a result, the stepping stones are less a clear path to a destination than they are one more obstacle for students to overcome in an unfamiliar landscape.

The Gaps

These cracks in the system, or “gaps,” as I will refer to them, can be narrowed into six categories: (1) recruitment, (2) placement, (3) advocacy, (4) exit criteria, (5) continuing support, and (6) connection with surrounding community. These categories are not mutually exclusive; in fact, one seems to lead directly into the next, and they are all interconnected. Isolating them into six separate

areas allows us, for the purpose of discussion, to examine the ways in which these gaps have come to exist, and the ways in which we might work at closing them.

Gap 1: Recruitment

The individuals I spoke with were very open about the basic fact that current methods of identifying and recruiting students to ESL instruction are not as effective as they could be. Often, institutions reported that there is no set procedure for identifying students who could benefit from ESL instruction, resulting in an “ad hoc” recruitment system. An Institution A administrator remarked that ESL instruction is often obtained for students when mainstream classroom teachers happen to notice that students are having trouble. In cases like these, “the teachers basically just have to take time out and try to help send [students] to the lab. If it’s just not working out at all, try to get the student to go get some tutoring help. It’s just done on a case-by-case basis.” The administrator acknowledged that this set-up was not ideal, saying, “We probably should have something better set up, but we don’t.” An Institution C representative reported a similar situation, in which some students are only recruited via “word of mouth” from other students. This suggests that there may be some students who are never reached.

Other representatives reported that they are prevented in some ways from assisting students because of rules and regulations. For instance, Institution B offers a class for students who have completed the first two required preparatory English classes, but still might not have the skills to succeed in a mainstream classroom. However, the Institution B representative reports that “since the state won’t let us make it [the additional course] mandatory, we just strongly encourage people, and the academic advisors encourage people, but, you know, not everybody chooses to take that.” In this case, the resource exists, but it is not

benefiting some students. Regardless of the reason, students are still not receiving the best instruction available.

At Institution D, in part because there are very few recognized ESL students, justifying even one staff position to deal directly with them has proven to be very difficult. The administrator I spoke with noted that “it would be nice to have an international coordinator and an ESL instructor. However, our course load [per instructor] is 5, and our ‘make’ number for each class is 12.” Within these parameters, it would be difficult to justify such a position. However, evidence suggests that there is a very real need for such a position within Institution D, even with its small ESL population. The school has improvised, providing for students the best way it can. As previously quoted, the individual assigned to help students has quite a few duties to cover:

One of our employees has been given the “care” of those few international students to help them through the complexities of taking a course of study at an American college. She “runs interference,” making sure the students bring themselves to the attention of their instructors and so on. However, as far as I know, she has no professional qualifications and is more like a “sponsor” or “counselor” than anything else. I know she isn’t a faculty member.

While this solution may work for individual students, it does not take into account the concerns of ESL students who are not identified as “international” students, such as American-born students who were raised in a household where English was not the primary language. The duties could also require more of this support staff member than she is prepared to address, either due to a lack of ESL-specific training, or simply a lack of time, since she holds another position as well. It may seem that such a case-by-case approach is the most reasonable option for a school with such a low ESL student population. But with the

increasing rate of non-English speaking immigrants entering the United States, it seems fair to assume that the ESL population, even at a small institution, cannot be expected to remain constant. A school with little to no infrastructure in place to address the concerns of these students could find itself in an administrative crisis as immigration increases and non-English speaking students begin to enter the community college system in greater numbers.

At the time of our discussion, the representative for Institution B reported that a position, in some ways similar in function to the position at Institution D, had been recently added to oversee all developmental English courses, which would provide instruction for both ESL students and native speakers of English. This new hire had taken on a dizzying number of responsibilities, as the administrator reported:

This year we hired a coordinator for college prep English and Reading, so that's a new position. So that person is a full-time employee, and she teaches three sections of Prep [developmental English], and her other time is supposed to coordinate, or help out the other prep instructors with materials, or workshops, and she really facilitates the practice grading sessions for the exit tests. So she's got those kinds of jobs. She sort of oversees the Prep English and Prep Reading. [...] So she concentrates on that, and goes to conferences, and sort of whatever would be applicable outside the area to then bring things back here.

While this may seem like quite a bit of work for one person, it is a situation which seems to be quite common. In addition, the fact that these duties are assigned to one somewhat unified full-time position puts it ahead of many of the teaching positions at that institution in terms of focus; the administrator reported that many of the instructors at this institution are hired on a part-time basis and hold multiple jobs, both on- and off-campus. Still, the challenges of performing

so many administrative duties while teaching a three-course load each semester could prove to be overwhelming for just one person.

The discussion about recruitment I had with two representatives at Institution C yielded a very detailed picture of the ways in which the general concerns of understaffing and lack of organized means of recruitment can affect the school's ability to provide instruction to students. For instance, on the application for admission to Institution C, an item allows applicants to self-identify as belonging to one of the following four categories: F-1 Visa holder, refugee, US citizen raised in another country, or L2 student. According to the individuals I spoke with, once this data is collected, it is not used to identify students for consideration for ESL instruction. It may be used for demographic purposes, but the information is never made available to the ESL unit within the school, where it could be employed to identify and recruit potential students. While certainly this one item on the application would not immediately identify all ESL students (nor would all students who chose to identify with one of the categories necessarily need ESL instruction), as I explain later, it seems likely that there would be enough of a correlation between students who identify with one of the four categories and students who need ESL instruction to justify its consideration for use in recruitment.

The Institution C representatives also cited anecdotal evidence for a situation in which the "word-of-mouth" method of reaching some students worked out well. A student in the ESL unit mentioned that two other relatives of hers who were attending Institution C (but not the ESL unit) might benefit from the same sort of instruction she was receiving. She brought them in to the unit and they were then enrolled. While this example shows a good outcome for two individual students, it highlights more poignantly the situation of students who may not have a thoughtful relative or acquaintance to speak up for them. These

students might pass through the entire system without receiving any ESL instruction at all.¹

Lastly, the problems that Institution C reported having with identifying and recruiting students is emphasized by a telling example. The interviewees stated a common occurrence is for an ESL class to be removed from the schedule during drop/add week (the first week of classes in a semester) because enrollment is not high enough. In order for a class to be retained on the schedule, it has to have at least 15 students enrolled. The students who are already enrolled in the eliminated section are then forced to drop the class and, if space allows, to add a different section to their schedules. Following the cancellations, however, individuals staffing the ESL unit report that students attending mainstream classes are gradually identified as needing ESL instruction by their teachers, who will then send them to the ESL unit for additional help, sometimes several weeks after the beginning of the semester. Since some of the original classes have been eliminated due to under-enrollment, there is then not enough space available for these newly-identified students. If these students had been identified in time for registration, then the original sections could have been kept in place, and more students would be able to receive the instruction they need. According to the Institution C representatives, this was not a one-time occurrence, but rather a frequent, predictable situation.

The most troubling effect of the lack of proper means of identifying and recruiting students at these various institutions is the fact students are in effect required to lobby on their own behalf in order to receive services. Yet many of these students have a limited proficiency in English which would make such self-advocacy difficult, even if they had sufficient knowledge of institutional procedure in an American academic environment. The Institution C representatives told of a dramatic instance in which students did just that. At

one point in the early 1990s, faced with being forced to drop their ESL classes because of under-enrollment of the only available section, students banded together and refused to drop the class, demanding that their right to instruction be recognized. Eventually, with the cooperation of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, this episode led to a policy which ensured that some classes would be available every semester for students who needed them. This might seem to be a victory for the students and for the ESL unit, but the fact that students had to go to such great lengths to obtain this instruction (instruction which was *required* by the institution in order for them to progress through the curriculum) shows that their instructional needs were being overlooked on a very basic level. And while the policy change at Institution C has undoubtedly improved the situation, much more could be done to deliver relevant instruction to students who need it, not only in Institution C but in other schools as well.

Gap 2: Placement

The issues of recruitment and placement are very closely connected. While recruitment deals with identifying students who might need ESL instruction, the current placement procedures used by all of the institutions involved in this study identify a somewhat smaller group of students, which includes some but not all of the students who can benefit from ESL instruction.

Currently, placement in various levels of ESL instruction at all five institutions is done via the College Placement Test (CPT). The CPT, a multiple-choice standardized test, is mandated by the state for all students entering without SAT or ACT scores. It tests English, Math, and Reading skills. Depending on the numerical score students receive on the English section, they are placed either in non-credit preparatory classes or mainstream for-credit classes.

This placement test is not the clear and precise measurement that it sets out to be. Individuals I spoke with were not hesitant to point out the flaws of the test and the flaws of the placement system which relies on its use. One representative flatly stated, “I really think it’s an invalid test.”

There are several reasons why this test is problematic. First of all, the English scores it produces offer no differentiation between native speakers of English who may score below the accepted proficiency level for mainstream classes and ESL students whose specific problems with English may be entirely different. In addition, the test does not include a writing assessment component. Since the questions are all multiple choice, students are only tested on their ability to interpret and correctly select an answer from a short list, which does nothing to assess how students might formulate their own writing from scratch. According to one representative at Institution C, the CPT also “doesn’t match whatsoever with the exit exam” for the ESL course of instruction. This means that the types of questions students answer on the CPT may not hold any real-life relevance in terms of the instruction they will receive in the ESL courses, nor to the [also state-mandated] exit exam which they must pass in order to “graduate from” the ESL unit and begin mainstream classes. This is disconcerting in that it suggests that the CPT is almost arbitrary in what it tests and requires. Yet with no other structure in place, and with the CPT mandated by law, schools must rely on its methods of assessment and placement.

The most problematic aspect of the CPT is an issue shared by many standardized tests. The test itself is grounded in mainstream American academic tradition, which can lead to skewed scores for international students (or even American students who are unfamiliar with academic language and culture), not because the students have not mastered the skill which is ostensibly being tested, but because the structure of the test itself is misleading. The most basic example

of this is the fact that the CPT is offered with the instructions only in English. This means that a student with limited proficiency in English could potentially have more difficulty reading and following the English directions than he or she would have answering the questions themselves.

In some cases, though, the problem goes beyond simple language proficiency and moves into more complicated territory. A striking example of this was cited by one Institution C representative. There, a student did very poorly on the CPT and was referred to the ESL unit for further instruction. Upon reviewing the student's CPT answer sheet, the instructor realized that the student, who had some knowledge of English but was not originally from the United States, had interpreted the phrase "multiple choice" literally to mean that she should select multiple answers for each question. This term is common and familiar in the American school system, but even something which seems so basic can cause problems for students from other cultures. Thus the test, in the case of this student, did not measure her skills in the subject areas but rather only tested her ability to interpret the instructions of the test. Failing that, she did poorly on the entire test, and was assigned to classes that were probably below her actual skill level.²

The difficulty in placing students does not begin and end with the CPT, however. Once students have received their scores, finding the right placement for them within the institution's available ESL resources can be just as problematic as the test itself. While the CPT is at least standardized for all students in the state, the ESL options available at the various institutions I visited are anything but consistent.

Some of these inconsistencies are a function of the size of the institutions themselves. One of the most prominent examples of this is Institution D, which due in part to its very small overall enrollment has fewer than half a dozen

identified ESL students per semester. The placement options for these students are limited to “developmental classes although they are not developmental students.” In this situation, ESL students are receiving no specialized ESL writing instruction whatsoever. What little specialized support they get is of an administrative nature, provided by the support staff member assigned as an unofficial counselor.

Institution E faces a similar challenge to Institution D, also because of its small overall size, but has improvised instruction for ESL students in a different way. At Institution E, instead of placing all ESL students in developmental classes, the students who come from a Spanish-speaking background are placed in one of three levels of independent study. Students fortunate enough to be placed in this system (which is technically identified as English for Academic Purposes [EAP] rather than ESL) meet one-on-one with a bilingual instructor for two hours a week, and attend a general learning lab for two more hours a week. In these independent study courses, students and the teacher “set up a regular schedule that’s not assigned beforehand.” This level of flexibility and personal attention is unique among the institutions I visited, and seems interestingly to be possible *because* of the institution’s small size, rather than in spite of it.

Certainly this structure has the potential to be very effective for those students who are able to take part in it.³ However, the administrator I spoke with was quick to point out that as well as it may work, it is not available to all ESL students but rather only those with a Spanish-speaking background. She noted that the EAP instructor was able to focus on the students assigned to her in a very specific way, since they all came from a somewhat similar linguistic background. She expressed regret at being limited in this way, saying, “we have some Asian students, and we have a Russian student; we just haven’t been able to provide that [EAP option]. I mean, we could have put them in the EAP, but it

would not have served them.” Since no other option is available, these non-Spanish-speaking students are placed in developmental writing courses along with native speakers of English. She adds, “We really do struggle to provide services to those [non-Spanish speaking] students. Because there are maybe one or two, we don’t even have the facilities or the resources to even understand how to help them.” Like so many other individuals I spoke with, this administrator had a clear vision of the kind of staff she would like to add if resources were unlimited. Essentially, this would be a person who “works with the student to see, okay, what next?” and matches the student to available resources. In spite of having detailed knowledge of the problems with placement, and a clear idea of what she would like to change, like so many of her colleagues this administrator is limited by what her budget and student population will allow.

Institution A faces challenges with regard to placement as well, although the problems take a somewhat different form because of the larger ESL student population. When speaking with the individual from the developmental education unit of the school, I found out that minutes after her meeting with me, she was appearing before a committee to propose a new series of specific ESL writing courses, which she and others in the unit had been researching and designing for quite some time. She explained that these new courses would fill in the gap between the developmental writing classes and the ESL students’ needs, and would keep ESL students from being funneled into developmental writing classes only. She went on to elaborate: “The courses I’m getting ready to recommend right now will put them [ESL students] into EAP courses, which I hope will be taught by a trained TESOL person that will focus on their needs, but still meet the same goals as the paragraph and essay-level writing.” The establishment of these new courses (which have since been approved) marks the end of one chapter of an effort at Institution A to bring ESL students better, more

relevant instruction. While this advance does not mark the end of the effort, it highlights an important point which cannot be overstated: *the gaps that exist between ESL services and the students who need them should not be interpreted as being a result of a lack of effort or concern on the part of the faculty and staff involved.* In so many cases, these individuals are doing as much as they can, often devoting large amounts of time to organized as well as anecdotal research in their field, on top of their standard administrative and teaching duties. For example, the individual I spoke with who was proposing the new courses had spent several months on a research sabbatical, gathering information from various institutions in the state to inform the future direction of these new courses and the entire developmental education unit at her institution.

Gap 3: Advocacy

Advocacy on behalf of ESL students is another site at which students are subject to fall through the cracks of the systems that are in place. While advocacy on behalf of ESL students could potentially take on a wide variety of issues, in my research I found that advocacy is particularly absent for students with regard to two key issues. The first is the issue of whether or not ESL students are eligible to receive any college credit for the English language classes they take. The second issue is the distinction between “ESL” and “developmental” in a school’s composition curriculum.

The Conference on College Composition’s “Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers” contains the following guidelines regarding college credit for second-language writers: “Second-language writing courses prerequisite to required composition courses should be offered for credit that can be used toward satisfying the foreign-language requirement and should receive the same credit accorded other prerequisite composition courses” (2). While all of the participating institution do offer prerequisite composition courses for

“credit,” the credit offered is not college credit, nor can it be applied to transfer or graduation requirements such as the foreign-language requirement. In all of the participating institutions, students receive “credit” which allows them to count their prerequisite classes for purposes of financial aid or their student visas, but that is where the credit ends. Students must, of course, pay for these classes, and in most cases they receive letter grades for their performance, but they may not apply the completion of the course to any requirements other than the course of study in the developmental or ESL unit.

It may appear at first that this system is appropriate; after all, ESL students enrolled in prerequisite courses presumably are not proficient enough in English to participate in a mainstream college classroom, so why should they receive college credit? The rationale for awarding foreign-language credit for ESL classes becomes more evident when we consider that a native speaker of English receives foreign-language credit for completing a beginning Spanish course, even one that is taught mostly in English. Both the ESL student enrolled in an English course and the American student enrolled in a Spanish course are doing parallel work – acquiring a language that is foreign to them – yet the ESL student’s work is not valued as being worthy of college credit.

One way in which this imbalance can affect ESL students was revealed in my conversation with the Department Chair at Institution E. She noted that Spanish-speaking ESL students at the school would often enroll in basic Spanish classes at the same time they were enrolled in ESL hours, just “to get some college credits.” This fact points out that in the system in place at Institution E, learning English is so undervalued in terms of being credit-worthy that students must take two classes in order to receive college credit for one class. Ironically the one class in which they are learning new material is the class for which they receive no college credit at all.

It is possible to see how such a system would place additional burdens on an ESL student, particularly one who is not represented to school administration by an advocate of some sort. First, ESL students must pay for all of the additional classes they are required to take, even though they do not receive any college credit for them. In fact, in at least one school, Institution B, the prerequisite class required of ESL students is a 4-semester-hour course, which means it costs even more than a standard 3-hour college-credit course. Second is the fact that ESL students must devote additional time to these prerequisite courses, in many cases before they are permitted to take mainstream courses.⁴ While this additional time may be put to good use, it means that a “two-year degree” for an ESL student may in fact take four or more years to earn, even if that student attends classes full time.

Advocacy is also missing for students when it comes to the issue of drawing a distinction between “ESL” and “developmental” in terms of the curriculum. One individual from Institution A addressed this issue in terms of the design of the prerequisite courses at her institution. She notes,

Well, at one time we were thinking, maybe it shouldn't be in “developmental,” because for some of these people, it's not “developmental;” they need to learn the English language. They may have come from Brazil or Argentina with college degrees; they may have high-level ability to do abstract thinking in their own language; they might have a degree in their own language. And then we have the opposite end of the spectrum, that they're very poorly educated in their own language, you know? So you have all kinds of people.

So ESL students can have a high level of academic literacy in their native languages. On the other hand, they may have very low levels of academic literacy, or literacy overall, no matter what the language. The designation of

“ESL” does not specifically indicate the level of familiarity with academic literacy that the student has in their own language. Native speakers of English who are classed as developmental, however, often do lack academic literacy.⁵

Three of the five schools offer some sort of ESL-specific instruction, but often this instruction is very limited and only augments the required developmental courses. The other two schools make no distinction whatsoever between the two groups of students. This does not account for differences in ESL students’ and basic writing students’ needs, because it attempts to homogenize two groups. Anyone from a native speaker of English who struggles with reading and sentence structure to a foreign-born International student who simply isn’t familiar with American idiom or academic writing might be placed in the same classroom and taught in the same way.

It appears that the placement practices dictated by official policy are responsible for some of this forced homogenization of the student population. As previously discussed, the placement strategy used by these schools makes no distinction between ESL and developmental; it simply relies on one numerical score from one multiple-choice standardized test. Because students’ scores can be influenced by such a wide range of factors, two students can score very low on the placement test for two very different reasons, yet they will both be classed simply as needing remediation. This method does not serve ESL students well, as their individual needs are not being specifically addressed in the instruction. It does not serve developmental students well, either, since they are sharing their classrooms and teachers with students whose concerns can be very different from their own.

Gap 4: Exit Criteria

Another area in which students can fall through the cracks is in terms of exit criteria. When students have finished with the prescribed course of study,

they are required to meet certain standards in order to move on to the first semester of standard mainstream First-Year Composition classes. At Institution A, if the student passes the preparatory classes with a C or better, he or she is not required to take an exit test in order to enroll in standard Freshman Composition courses. At Institution C, students are required to take an exit test, which includes both multiple-choice and writing components, unlike the CPT. And at Institution E, Spanish-speaking ESL students simply take ESL hours concurrently with their other classes; there do not appear to be any exit standards whatsoever beyond passing the classes. Non-Spanish-speaking ESL students must complete the developmental English track in order to be eligible to enroll in mainstream English composition courses.

Regardless of the specific exit criteria in place at an institution, a frequent concern of faculty and administrators was the fact that students who meet the exit criteria are often still not prepared to participate in a mainstream classroom. An administrator at Institution A mentions several specific cases in which he has seen this happen, and indicates that there are likely many more that go undetected. Institution B has sought to ameliorate this problem by introducing a “bridge class” which connects exiting students to mainstream classrooms by providing an extra semester of instruction. However, as previously mentioned, since the state does not allow this class to be made mandatory, it is only partially effective, in that only students who choose to take it can benefit from it. The administrator at Institution E expressed her concern that the structure of ESL instruction for Spanish-speaking students was such that “I don’t even know how some of them are functioning in their regular classrooms.”

What all of the individuals I spoke with have in common is that they would provide more thorough instruction if they were able. As Frank Hermann writes in “On Wine, Cheese, and the Superlative Role of Time in the Acquisition

of English as a Second Language,” proficiency in academic English “may require from four to seven years” (243). It seems, then, that exit criteria would do well to take into account that language acquisition is a process that is ongoing, and that will continue after the student has completed the ESL and preparatory coursework.⁶

Gap 5: Continued Support

Interestingly, in stark contrast to the rigorous requirements for ESL students while they are enrolled in prerequisite classes, the organized support of students who have completed these courses of study is almost nonexistent. Running counter to the ideas presented in Hermann’s article, students can access only small amounts of intense training in English, rather than instruction and support that continues throughout their career at the college. Administrators and instructors are aware of this gap; in the words of one administrator, they “just do the best we can with what we have. We probably should do more, but right now we just don’t.”

What might work better would be a model that acknowledges the dynamic nature of language acquisition. As A. Suresh Canagarajah writes, language acquisition cannot be accurately described as simply moving between non-competence and competence, but rather is a complex system of shuttling between languages. Perhaps it would be possible to develop instruction that would acknowledge this reality for ESL students, rather than forcing them into an artificial deficit-competence model. Yet to develop and promote such instruction would take time and money which is unavailable to the administrators and instructors. Another solution must be sought.

A few institutions have labs that are available to students, but the tutors staffing the labs are not guaranteed to have any sort of specific ESL training. As one study-center administrator noted, “If we required teachers to have ESL

training, those people would be very hard to find. So no, we don't [require ESL training]." An administrator at Institution A commented on the importance of supporting students far into their mainstream college careers, and noted that this need is not currently being met: "people who are used to teaching English as a language, meaning foreign language, need to have more access to these students up to a certain point. When they get to college credit work." Another administrator at Institution A notes that many students end up needing additional help and must rely, basically, on the kindness of teachers who will take "a half an hour to an hour every day" to work with students. If every student who needed help sought it in this way, surely teachers would not have enough time to complete all of their standard duties in addition to this pro bono tutoring. Like so many other issues, this is one that administrators and instructors are aware of but are unable to change. To provide continued support for all ESL students who need it, the institutional structure itself needs to be revised.

Gap 6: Connection with the Surrounding Community

One of the most difficult documented issues for International students who are enrolled in American colleges but have not yet mastered English is the problem of isolation. One example of this is found in Natasha Lvovich's account of her student, Serdar, and his efforts to overcome his isolation in order to become a successful student, described in detail in the Review of Literature. The site of ESL instruction is also isolated in a parallel way. We know that ESL specialists exist, yet they are seldom employed in the community colleges included in this study. It could be that these specialists are too few and far between; it seems more likely that colleges are unable to afford them. For instance, Institution C offers an hourly rate barely over the minimum wage for instructors employed in the tutoring center. With so little bargaining power, the

likelihood that they can attract highly qualified individuals for these positions is, simply put, very low. Likewise Institution B requires only a bachelor's degree (in no specific field) for individuals who work in the tutoring center, and many of these individuals are part-time teachers who must hold other jobs as well. In fact, as David Berry writes in "Community Colleges and Part-Time and Adjunct Faculty," "The largest percentage of increases [in part-time community college faculty] has occurred in English and literature, English as a second language, and remedial courses." These positions carry no benefits, and sometimes teachers do not even have their own office space in which to grade papers and conduct student conferences. However, the isolation of ESL instruction due to lack of teacher training is a problem that can be approached from a different direction than total overhaul of the hiring structure of an institution. Rather than requiring all incoming teachers to be highly trained in ESL, a structure could be put in place to connect existing teachers with instruction, in the form of workshops or short training courses, to help them with their instruction and provide them with theoretical knowledge which could inform, slowly and from within, the structure of the programs themselves.

A connection with the surrounding community could also help students connect with other resources that might be available to them. For instance, the individuals I spoke with at Institution C mentioned that they often refer students who they are unable to help to a volunteer ESL program that is run out of a local church. Knowledge of and systematic referral of students to services like these, in addition to services which assist with immigration law, social services, etc., could greatly improve ESL students' overall experiences in their college career and also improve their chances of success. As with all the other gaps, the resources exist "somewhere out there." We only need to reach over the gaps and connect students with the instruction and support they need.

Bridging the Gaps: The ESL Liaison Team

Imagine that you arrive at your doctor's office for a checkup. There is no receptionist to check you in and let the doctor know you have arrived, no billing specialist to handle insurance details, and no physician's assistant to take your vital signs and update your history. On the day of your appointment, the only staff on hand is the doctor. She is running constantly from the front window to exam rooms to the file room to the supply room, weighing patients, printing bills, calling prescriptions to pharmacies, and in the time left over, attempting to give patients individual attention. You leave the office hours later, not at all sure that you have received the best medical care possible.

We would be shocked to find this scenario in a doctor's office, or any professional setting such as a lawyer's office or an accounting firm. Yet ESL administrators and instructors find themselves in a parallel situation every single day. They must develop and implement an effective curriculum, connect students with available services, stay abreast of issues related to the field of ESL composition, and adapt to any number of issues that their ESL students may bring into the classroom. On top of this, it seems that most of them are also teaching developmental English students, whose concerns can vary widely from those of ESL students. It is almost as if, in the midst of the modern community college, these administrators and instructors have been placed in the center of a one-room schoolhouse. Students of all levels are ranged about; it is a challenge just to discover what each student needs to learn, to say nothing of actually being able to provide relevant instruction in addition to all of the other duties that are assigned to administrators and instructors.

What can we do, then, to free up administrators and instructors to administer and instruct? How can we untie their hands and allow students to benefit from their knowledge and expertise? The first solution would seem to be

to seek institutional change. Yet since so much of the structure of the programs is dictated by law or at least by college-wide regulations, campaigning for change would be time-consuming and challenging at best.

What I suggest in order to help colleges to bridge the gaps I have outlined, as well as to prepare these colleges for the inevitable increase in ESL students, is the establishment of a small “ESL liaison” unit within each college. This unit would consist of a two or three individuals whose entire responsibility would be to address the gaps, thereby freeing administrators and instructors to perform their own duties. This unit would work closely with the administrators of ESL and English programs, yet would be separate from those programs in a way that would free them up to imagine solutions to problems that fall outside of the current system. Each liaison team would be unique; members could include TESOL specialists, administrative professionals, former instructors of English or ESL, curriculum design specialists, even former employees of government agencies or nonprofits in fields related to ESL or education who would be familiar with the workings of state and local government.

Working together, the unit at each school would gather information from all relevant sources: administrators, instructors, and students. Using this information, they would then identify areas of concern for their particular school. Using their knowledge, expertise, and creativity, the team could then imagine solutions for these areas of concern, and unlike administrators and teachers, would have the paid work hours needed to propose new solutions to college administration.

The idea for this ESL liaison team came to me in pieces from the interviewees. Several people hinted at the idea of having one or more people whose function would be to bridge the gaps they were aware of at their particular institution. For instance, as previously mentioned, one administrator

at Institution A has taken on some of the responsibility of this liaison unit in her own work. She took time off from her teaching duties to conduct research on other ESL programs, to see how instruction was delivered in other locations throughout the state. Synthesizing her research, she then proposed the new courses that would address gaps in placement and advocacy, by placing ESL students in more specialized instruction that recognized their concerns as unique from other students' concerns. This intensive research effectively ended when her sabbatical ended. At Institution B, an attempt was made to hire an individual for a purpose similar to that of the liaison unit. However, this person was also assigned teaching duties which could be expected to monopolize at least some of her time on the job, leaving her liaison duties to be addressed in the time left over after planning and teaching three sections of developmental English classes per semester. Institution D has established an unofficial staff member to perform liaison duties, who "runs interference" for ESL students. Like the individual at Institution B, however, this person was also assigned other duties, and her liaison functions are much more unofficial than those assigned to the instructor at Institution B. The administrator I spoke with at Institution E performed some of the liaison duties herself, overseeing the instruction of ESL students, but she also expressed the desire for a position, "even just one person," who could be on hand to help connect students with the instruction they needed. The need for such ESL liaison positions is clear: individuals at four out of the five institutions included in the study volunteered that they needed such a position, if not more than one.

In a dynamic (and relatively young) field like ESL composition instruction, it is impossible to predict exactly what issues will arrive in the future to challenge administrators, instructors, and students involved in community college ESL composition instruction. Yet with a liaison team like I have

described in place, schools would have a means to deal with the challenges to the quality and availability of ESL composition instruction for students. The following are ways in which this liaison team could address each of the six gaps which are currently keeping the institutions studied from providing the most effective ESL composition instruction possible. For the purpose of the discussion, I am imagining a college at which all six of the gaps are present, and suggesting ways in which the liaison team might address those gaps. As the ESL liaison unit is established at this college, the “gaps” are transformed into “goals,” and the members of the team, in cooperation with teachers and administrators, begin the work of bridging each one.

Goal 1: Increase Recruitment

To help reach out and identify all eligible ESL students, the liaison team is assigned to meet with admissions staff to discuss ways in which information can be shared to the advantage of students and instructors. Having access to data regarding the incidence of classes being unavailable due to underenrollment followed by a late influx of students who are referred to ESL instruction by mainstream classroom teachers, the liaison team can make a more accurate assessment of how well identification and recruitment strategies are working at the school.

The liaison team can also partner with faculty advisors who help students to build their schedules. For instance, the team could suggest that at the students’ initial advisement meetings, which take place before classes begin, the advisor could give the students the option to self-identify as needing ESL instruction, and they could be asked a series of questions that might help the advisor to identify students for ESL placement testing. Working with the admissions office, perhaps the liaison unit could use a self-identification section

of the application, such as the one that is currently included in the application for Institution C, to locate potential students as well.

Other recruitment-related activities might include setting up a table near the bookstore (or some other central location) in the week before classes, handing out information regarding the ESL instruction available at the college, and instructing students on how to seek such instruction if they have not already been identified as eligible. Current and former ESL students could be involved in this effort as well. Flyers could be posted around campus summarizing this information for interested students. In addition to English, materials handed out and posted can be provided in two or three of the most common other languages spoken by students in the area.

An increase in recruitment resulting in an increase in enrollment in ESL instruction holds many benefits for the ESL program and the college as a whole. Increased student numbers can be used to establish greater need for ESL services, which in turn can justify greater allocations of funds and other resources for the purpose of providing ESL instruction. In addition, the higher the number of students who are proactively identified and recruited prior to the start of classes, the less class time will be used by mainstream teachers in identifying students who need ESL instruction. It seems that mainstream and ESL teachers and students would all benefit from this new approach to recruitment.

Goal 2: Improve Placement Practices

Reaching the goal of improving placement practices is a complex goal that will likely take some investment of time before a solution is reached. Since placement of students is determined by a state-mandated test, the College Placement Test, establishing a new method of placement for ESL students is a matter of changing law and policy. One way of approaching this goal would be for the team to gather information on the questionable effectiveness of the CPT

for ESL students in particular. This data could then be compiled into a formal recommendation for another system which takes ESL students' concerns into account. Another way of approaching this goal, which might work better in the short term, would be for the liaison team to research and recommend an additional test for their school to administer to students who have been identified through the various recruitment practices as being eligible for ESL instruction. This test would take into account factors that are ignored by the CPT, such as cultural bias and the lack of a writing component. The results of the test could then be used to more accurately place ESL students in the most appropriate level of instruction available to them.

Goal 3: Advocate for ESL Student Rights

In a way, the entire function of the ESL liaison unit could be described as advocacy of one sort or another. The issues of college credit and differentiation between ESL and developmental English are of particular material concern to ESL students, however, and deserve to receive specific attention.

The liaison unit will be responsible for looking specifically at the ways in which the college credit issue can impact students' educational experience. They can begin asking specific questions and talking with students to discover whether changing school policy on this issue would indeed be beneficial for students. The unit could identify parallel situations in which students have received college credit (for example, foreign language classes), in order to build a case for awarding ESL students with college credit for their work.

Administrators' and teachers' input should also be taken into account, since these individuals work closely with students and are often aware of specific issues which affect them. The liaison unit can compose a recommendation incorporating their findings and suggesting a course of action. With research data at their fingertips, the unit will be able to make a more convincing case to

those with the power to change the system than, for instance, one teacher could, who has come to a similar conclusion only on the basis of anecdotal evidence from his own experience.

In order to advocate for a clear differentiation between ESL and developmental English students, the liaison unit can once again compile data regarding the effect of the conflation of the two groups on students from both. For instance, perhaps developmental English students would benefit from having more class time devoted to the concerns specific to their situation. Likewise, perhaps ESL students would benefit more from instruction which takes into account the particular challenges of acquiring a foreign language, rather than acquiring a different understanding of one's native language, as is the case with developmental English students. Perhaps there are particularly striking cases in which students have been affected by the combination of both groups of students in the same classroom. Perhaps there are overall trends which could be measured and reported. By collecting data on the situation, the liaison unit can present facts to those who might be able to facilitate a change in program structure. These facts, like the recruitment- and placement-related facts, can be used to justify change in a way that anecdotal evidence cannot.

In addition to these two main areas of concern, the ESL liaison team can function as a clearinghouse for concerns of students. For instance, if ESL students are experiencing difficulty because of discrimination in a mainstream class, they could bring the problem to the liaison team, who can help the students find a solution to the problem.

Goal 4: Improve Exit Criteria

In approaching the goal of improving exit criteria, the liaison team might envision it as one part of a three-part whole representing students' progress through the program: placement, instruction, and exit criteria. By analyzing the

entire process, the team can discern how to match exit criteria with the material taught in class. This could be achieved perhaps by adjusting exit testing methods or by redefining objectives for exit criteria. A careful study of the connection between curriculum and exit testing can yield a more detailed response to this situation.

The team can also address the question of whether students who can meet the exit requirements are truly prepared to enter mainstream classrooms. If not, why? Looking at these questions can help the liaison team make effective recommendations for revising exit criteria as well as other parts of the program.

Goal 5: Establish Continued Support for Students

In order to reach this goal, the liaison team can focus especially on feedback from ESL students at various levels of their education. For example, a survey could be conducted of students who are two years out of the program. The survey could ask what level of support they would find helpful if it were available, what kinds of ESL-related services they need but have trouble finding, and on the other hand, what support they are receiving that is working out well for them, or whether they feel they need support at all. Students just exiting the program can be surveyed, perhaps as part of the exit process, to determine what areas they feel anxiety about in terms of not being supported. These students can help pinpoint the areas they would like to continue receiving support in, and the areas they feel confident in.

By compiling and analyzing this data, the liaison team can begin to build a model of continued support that will provide students with what they need while still remaining feasible in terms of the institutional structure. For instance, perhaps TESOL education students in the area could complete their internships by providing continuing tutoring services to students who have exited the program. Perhaps successfully exited students themselves could provide

tutoring to students who have just finished the ESL course of study. Or, perhaps a system could be established wherein students could sign up for individual tutoring time during the week, and teachers could receive a one-section reduction in their teaching assignment in return for being placed on this rotation. The individual solutions will vary by school, but each liaison team can customize the continued support plan to meet student needs within the specific institutional context.

Goal 6: Connect with Surrounding Community

This goal is one of the most important, in that it is one that can have the most immediate positive effect on students, teachers, and administrators, even before the goal is fully reached. To meet this goal, the liaison team can compile a list of ESL-related services available in the community, both free services and those which charge a fee. In addition, the liaison could maintain a calendar of cultural events which students might find interesting. These could be events which highlight students' home cultures, or events which explain the culture of the community to students who may be unfamiliar with it. Practical services could be listed by the liaison team as well, including perhaps pro bono legal advice providers who might speak in students' native language, financial aid resources, or agencies that specialize in immigration concerns.

The liaison team can also approach this goal in terms of improving the connection of the ESL teachers and administrators to the community as well. The team can advertise ESL workshops and training available in the community that teachers and administrators can choose to take part in. They can also work with the ESL experts in the unit itself and with knowledge they might gather from teachers, to develop an ESL workshop for mainstream teachers who may want to know how they can help their ESL students adapt to the mainstream classroom. These workshops could be offered once a semester, with new topics

being introduced as needed. Part of the workshop could include an orientation in which teachers from the entire school are introduced to the functions of the ESL unit. The liaison team could distribute a list which gives the name and contact information for the individual who should be contacted in one of several common situations. For instance, if a mainstream teacher comes across a student who does not seem ready for the mainstream classroom because of ESL-related issues, the list could include the name and contact information of the staff member who handles adding students to ESL classes after the term has begun. In this way, the work of the liaison team can eliminate guesswork for other professionals at the institution who are not trained in ESL issues. The sooner individuals in need can be connected with the correct services, the more time can be used for the primary functions of the community college: teaching and learning.

Variations on a Theme

Perhaps at some schools, this original vision of the multi-person ESL liaison team is simply not feasible due to financial or other concerns. These are several variations of the ESL liaison team that such schools may find helpful. For instance, in a very small school, perhaps one person could do the job. In this case, the one liaison would have to be a TESOL specialist, hopefully with some experience in other applicable areas as well.

Another possible solution could include a traveling liaison team that spends anywhere from a few weeks to an entire semester at one school, then moves on to another. These teams could be established throughout a state, with one team being assigned no more than five schools, all in close geographical proximity to one another. Schools utilizing these traveling teams could assign a permanent staff member with performing the liaison function, connecting students with information, much in the same way as the individual at Institution

D who “runs interference” for ESL students at her school. This staff member would still have the traveling liaison team as a resource, though, in situations which call for the expertise of the liaison team.

One last possibility would be the establishment of a liaison team with a different composition; one member could be a TESOL specialist and team leader, and the other members could be clerical or research staff, tasked with carrying out the plans developed by the specialist. This structure would require a high level of communication between members, but could have the added benefit of providing on-the-job training for individuals who want to acquire experience in working with ESL students. This solution would require the school to find and hire only one member with a high level of experience, which might make it a more viable solution in an area where multiple specialists are unavailable.

Just as the solutions proposed by the liaison team can be creative, so also the establishment of the team itself can be creatively achieved. The only requirement that seems obligatory to me would be that existing teachers and administrators are not simply assigned additional duties to complete in lieu of employing a liaison team. This solution would ignore the fact that these teachers and administrators are often overtaxed as it is, and adding further requirements might cause other areas of their work, such as classroom teaching, to suffer as a result. It could also result in the liaison functions being poorly or partially addressed, instead of receiving the full attention necessary.

Suggestions for Further Research

I have learned a great deal in the course of my research about ESL composition, the community college system, and the people who work and learn in community colleges every day. At the conclusion of this project, though, I realized that the greatest thing I discovered was that there was so much left to find out.

In particular, I believe that ESL composition in the community college could benefit from more quantitative research. For instance, it would be helpful to have research evidence addressing the following questions:

- How effective are the ESL composition instruction methods that are in place now in schools like the ones included in this study?
- How well do community college ESL students perform in mainstream classes after they have completed the preparatory course of study? What, if any, additional instruction would benefit these students?
- How accurately do tests such as the CPT assess ESL students' language skills? Further, to what extent can results from these tests be considered relevant and useful?
- How satisfied are ESL students with the instruction they receive?

In addition to quantitative research, ESL composition in the community college could also benefit from more qualitative research, such as case studies of particularly successful programs currently in place throughout the state of Florida and the entire United States. As part of the research she conducted during her sabbatical, one of the Institution A representatives communicated with the recently established English for Academic Purposes Consortium, a group whose purpose is to facilitate knowledge-sharing and strategizing for educators and administrators working with ESL students. Work like this can certainly benefit ESL composition in the community college by keeping the discussion current and dynamic.

By establishing an effort to “mind the gaps” present in the current ESL composition instruction programs in community colleges in Florida, public educators and administrators can ensure that the goal of providing quality education to all eligible students can be met. By paying attention to the needs of ESL students and convening ESL liaison teams to address relevant issues,

community colleges in Florida can ensure that they will maintain a vital link to those students throughout the state into the decades ahead.

CONCLUSION

This study began with a question about how ESL composition instruction is carried out in the community college in North Florida. To reach my original goal of creating a “portrait” of ESL composition instruction in the community college, I conducted interviews with administrators and distributed fill-in-the-blank surveys to teachers.

From the information I collected during my research, I was able to see the differences between the programs at each of the institutions I visited. More compelling to me, though, were the unexpected similarities I found among the schools; these similarities were often related to points in the ESL course of study in which students or potential students might fall through the cracks of the system. After reviewing the data from the study, I was able to synthesize these similarities as a set of six gaps.

The solution I have detailed for bridging these gaps came not just from my own analysis of the data but from the detailed input provided by the administrators with whom I talked in the course of my study. Each individual had suggestions about how ESL composition instruction might be more effectively delivered in their respective school. Sometimes, the reason why such suggestions had not been implemented was related to finances, sometimes to a lack of teachers or training, and sometimes to a small ESL student population which could not support any larger operation than was already in place. Yet several participants indicated that ESL composition needed more consideration at their institution, if not for the present, than for the future, in which ESL populations are set to increase steadily.

As Elaine Kuo writes, the community college is “a key resource for English language learners” (69). Community colleges provide a unique

institutional context in which ESL students can learn and work toward their goals. It is important, therefore, that research on ESL composition in the community college continues. Countless opportunities for study exist not only in Florida but throughout the entire United States. The existing research related to ESL composition, either in the community college or elsewhere, provides a solid basis for future research and discovery. For example, the review of literature that I included in this study includes research work that ranges from specific case-studies, like those found in Natasha Lvovich's article, to broad nationwide surveys like the one reported by Jessica Williams. Adding to this body of knowledge, continued research can help ESL composition in the community college prepare for the shifts and changes that lie ahead.

NOTES

¹ While some ESL students might succeed without receiving specific ESL composition instruction, it is possible that other ESL students could be negatively affected by not receiving the instruction.

² This example points to a general trend mentioned by Teresa Crowe Mason in her article, "Cross-Cultural Instrument Translation: Assessment, Translation, and Statistical Applications." In this article, Mason writes that standardized tests are often biased against members of linguistic and cultural minorities, and because of this "[m]embers of diverse cultural and language groups may have difficulty with these tests, and present scores that do not accurately reflect their skills" (67). Furthermore, "few assessment tools directly discern between cultural and language characteristics and knowledge" (168). It seems possible that these complications would be magnified in tests (like the CPT) meant to measure language proficiency.

³ No data is available from Institution E to suggest how effective the individual meetings are for ESL students. Such information would be very useful and important to this discussion.

⁴ The one exception to this within the study is Institution E, which offers Spanish-speaking ESL students the option of enrolling concurrently in ESL courses and mainstream classes.

⁵ The relationship between academic literacy and success in college composition courses is discussed in Patthey-Chavez, Dillon, and Thomas-Spiegel's article "How Far Do They Get? Tracking Students with Different Academic Literacies through Community College Remediation." In this article, the authors note that "many upper-level ESL composition students come to U.S. Colleges with academic literacy in another language," which can be used as a basis for acquiring U.S.-specific academic literacy. While this process can be challenging for these upper-level students, "it may be easier than starting from the beginning and learning college 'ways with words' (Heath) later in life, as our precollegiate students may be doing" (273). This suggests that students (ESL or not) who enter developmental programs with lower levels of academic literacy have more ground to cover than ESL students who enter with established academic literacy in their home languages.

⁶ The question of exit criteria cannot be completely separated from the issues of placement and overall course structures, since in order to be most effective, all three should be in tune with one another, taking into account that language acquisition is a long-term process that will not be complete when students exit ESL preparatory classes.

APPENDIX A

Interview Discussion Questions for Program Administrators

Regarding student placement

- What instructional options are presented to your ESL students?
- What is the placement policy for ESL programs and services?
 - Do students determine their own placement?
 - Do test results factor into the decision?
 - Are there other placement methods used?
- What options would you like to offer if there were no limit to resources?

Regarding teacher preparation

- What ESL training do you require for incoming full-time / adjunct faculty?
- What ESL-related in-service / workshops are available to full-time / adjunct faculty?
- What qualifications would your ideal ESL teacher have?

Regarding program administration

- What is the structure of ESL composition instruction?
 - Is ESL composition a separated section of a department?
 - Is ESL composition sharing resources with any other programs?
 - Is ESL composition connected with remediation?
- What are the overall goals of the program?
 - Is there a “mission statement” or similar statement of goals available?
- Are there any additional items you would like to comment on related to ESL writing instruction?

APPENDIX B

Survey of ESL Composition Instruction in the Community College in North Florida

Regarding Students and Courses Taught

On average, how many ESL (English as a Second Language) students do you encounter, **per course**, in your work as a teacher?

- ☐ 0-1
- ☐ 2-3
- ☐ 4-5
- ☐ 5 +
- ☐ n/a – I provide instruction other than teaching traditional courses.

What courses do you teach on a regular basis (even if you are not currently teaching them)?

- ☐ ENC1101
- ☐ ENC1102
- ☐ Individual tutoring
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

What proficiency levels do you see **most often** among ESL students with whom you have come in contact with in your work as a teacher? (Please check up to three)

- ☐ lower fluency in speaking and writing
- ☐ higher fluency in speaking and writing
- ☐ higher fluency in speaking, lower fluency in writing
- ☐ lower fluency in speaking, higher fluency in writing
- ☐ other (please provide brief explanation): _____

Regarding Resources

What ESL-related resources are made available to you as a **teacher** at this institution? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ training classes within the institution
- ☐ training classes outside the institution
- ☐ workshops
- ☐ supplemental texts
- ☐ writing labs
- ☐ other(s): _____
- ☐ I am unsure what resources are available to me.

What ESL-related resources are made available to your **ESL students**? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ credit-bearing courses
- ☐ non-credit-bearing courses
- ☐ workshops
- ☐ ESL-only sections of standard courses (ENC1101, ENC1102, etc.)
- ☐ writing labs
- ☐ ESL-only writing labs
- ☐ individual tutoring outside of writing labs
- ☐ other(s): _____
- ☐ I am unsure what resources are available to students.

Regarding Training

What ESL-related training, if any, was required for you at the time you began teaching at this institution?

What ESL-related training, if any, would you like the opportunity to participate in? (For example, workshops, specific topics of interest, guest speakers, etc.)

Regarding Teaching Experiences

What instruction (if any) do you provide for ESL students in the course of your work as a teacher? (For example, individual tutoring, individual conferencing, classroom instruction, etc.)

What administrative support do you provide for ESL students in the course of your work as a teacher? (For example, referring ESL students to appropriate resources, writing labs, etc.)

What challenges have you faced in providing writing instruction for ESL students?

What strategies have you used to address these challenges?

Please attach additional sheets with any further comments.

Thank you for your time and participation!

APPENDIX C

Results of Teacher Survey

Note: Italics denote a handwritten response. All other responses are multiple choice.

Question	Answer		
	Respondent #1	Respondent #2	Respondent #3
On average, how many ESL (English as a Second Language) students do you encounter, <u>per course</u> , in your work as a teacher?	2-3	2-3	2-3
What courses do you teach on a regular basis (even if you are not currently teaching them)?	ENC1101; ENC1102; <i>Survey in Literature: British, World; Creative Writing: Poetry</i>	ENC1101, ENC1102, MMC2000, JOU1100, 1400, 1303	ENC1101, ENC1102, <i>Basic Speech, Communication, Intro Theatre</i>
What proficiency levels do you see <u>most often</u> among ESL students with whom you have come in contact with in your work as a teacher?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lower fluency in speaking and writing • higher fluency in speaking, lower fluency in writing • lower fluency in speaking, higher fluency in writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lower fluency in speaking and writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher fluency in speaking, lower fluency in writing • lower fluency in speaking, higher fluency in writing
What ESL-related resources are made available to you as a <u>teacher</u> at this institution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training classes outside the institution - <i>funds are available</i> • writing labs • <i>I have extensive experience in ESL having taught English in Peru & Spain – also in Holyoke, Mass. to Puerto Rican students</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing labs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am unsure what resources are available to me
What ESL-related resources are made available to your ESL <u>students</u> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing labs • individual tutoring outside of writing labs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-credit-bearing courses <i>I think</i> • writing labs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am unsure what resources are available to me
What ESL-related training, if any, was required for you at the time you began teaching at this institution?	<i>None</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>NONE required NONE suggested</i>

What ESL-related training, if any, would you like the opportunity to participate in? (For example, workshops, specific topics of interest, guest speakers, etc.)	<i>Our college needs to have an ESL lab with specially trained teachers for these students.</i>	<i>possibly a workshop</i>	<i>Workshops, workshops, workshops: how to aid students, how to equalize assignments/"lower" expectations, how to grade assignments.</i>
What instruction (if any) do you provide for ESL students in the course of your work as a teacher? (For example, individual tutoring, individual conferencing, classroom instruction, etc.)	<i>I encourage students with writing problems to use our writing labs. And I help with essay organization. [ENC]1101 students who are weak in <u>both</u> speaking and writing I encourage to take a prep course.</i>	<i>individual conferences, e-mail correspondence</i>	<i>I'm adjunct – I personally offer none – but often work one on one with a student on <u>one</u> assignment – I also use <u>peer editing</u>, team up ESL w/ accomplished student –</i>
What administrative support do you provide for ESL students in the course of your work as a teacher? (For example, referring ESL students to appropriate resources, writing labs, etc.)	<i>Always – of course!</i>	<i>occasional referral to writing lab</i>	<i>advise them to check in with writing labs</i>
What challenges have you faced in providing writing instruction for ESL students?	<i>Time is the big factor. In a full class of [ENC]1101 or [ENC]1102 there is no class time for the special problems in syntax and usage these students have.</i>	<i>understanding their needs – some ESL students are unwilling to ask questions.</i>	<i>none – they receive <u>oral</u> instruction</i>
What strategies have you used to address these challenges?	<i>1) Encourage them to visit me during office hours. 2) Give them referral sheets with areas they need help in to take to the writing lab – This is mandatory for my [ENC]1101 students. 3) At times, I give them English magazines to encourage them to read more in English.</i>	<i>I encourage the ESL (& all) students to share drafts of writing for suggestions</i>	<i>Peer editing – student to student – both seeking information – a good comp student gains confidence explaining to ESL student, ESL student gains a friend – ripple effect across classroom –</i>

REFERENCES

- Berry, David. "Community Colleges and Part-Time and Adjunct Faculty." *Organization of American Historians* (1999). 30 April 2007 <<http://www.oah.org/pubs/commcoll/berry.html>>.
- Canagarajah, A. Suresh. "Toward a Writing Pedagogy of Shuttling between Languages: Learning from Multilingual Writers." *College English* 58 (2006): 589-604.
- CCCC Executive Committee. "Statement on Second Language Writing and Writers." *Second-Language Writing In the Composition Classroom: a Critical Sourcebook*. Ed. Paul K. Matsuda, Michelle Cox, Jay Jordan, and Christina Ortmeier-Hooper. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.
- Composition in the Center Spaces: Building Community, Culture, Coalitions, Mar. 2007, Conference on College Composition and Communication. 23 Aug. 2007 <www.ncte.org>.
- Florida Department of Education. *The Fact Book: Report for the Florida Community College System*. Jan. 2007. 23 Aug. 2007 <www.fldoe.org>.
- Harklau, Linda. "Generation 1.5 Students and College Writing." *ERIC Digest EDO-FL-03-05* (2003): 1-3.
- Harmann, Frank W. "On Wine, Cheese, and the Superlative Role of Time in the Acquisition of English as a Second Language." *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* 31 (2004): 240-7.
- Harris, Muriel, and Tony Silva. "Tutoring ESL Students: Issues and Options." *College Composition and Communication* 44 (1993): 525-37.
- Horner, Bruce. "Introduction: Cross-Language Relations in Composition." *College English* 68 (2006): 569-574.
- Horner, Bruce, and John Trimbur. "English-Only and U.S. College Composition." *College Composition and Communication* 53 (2002): 594-630.

- Kuo, Elaine. "English as a Second Language in the Community College Curriculum." *New Directions for Community College* 108 (1999): 69-80.
- Lvovich, Natasha. "Sociocultural Identity and Academic Writing: A Second-Language Learner Profile." *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* 31 (2003): 179-92.
- Mason, Teresa Crowe. "Cross-Cultural Instrument Translation: Assessment, Translation, and Statistical Applications." *American Annals of the Deaf* 150 (2005): 67-72.
- Matsuda, Paul K. "Composition Studies and ESL Writing: a Disciplinary Division of Labor." *College Composition and Communication* 50 (1999): 699-721.
- Opening the Golden Gates: Access, Affirmative Action, and Student Success, Mar. 2005, Conference on College Composition and Communication. 23 Aug. 2007 <www.ncte.org>.
- Patthey-Chavez, G. Genevieve, Paul H. Dillon, and Joan Thomas-Spiegel. "How Far Do They Get? Teaching Students with Different Academic Literacies through Community College Remediation." *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* 32 (2005): 261-77.
- Silva, Tony and Ilona Leki. "Family Matters: Influence of Applied Linguistics and Composition Studies on Second Language Writing Studies – Past, Present, and Future." *Modern Language Journal* 88 (2004): 1-13.
- "State University System of Florida Facts and Figures." Board of Governors State University System of Florida. 21 Dec. 2005. State of Florida Board of Governors. 23 Aug. 2007 <www.fldcu.org>.
- "TYCA History." NCTE. National Council of Teachers of English. 23 Aug. 2007 <www.ncte.org>.
- Weisberger, Ronald. "Community Colleges and Class: A Short History." *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* 33 (2005): 127-41.
- Williams, Jessica. "ESL Composition Program Administration in the United States." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 4 (1995): 157-79.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lisa Nash is a native Floridian interested in community college education, composition studies, and pedagogical research. She will graduate with an MA in Rhetoric and Composition from Florida State University in 2007. She also received her BA in Creative Writing with minors in Spanish and American History from Florida State University in 2002. She held several positions in state government before returning to graduate school, and has worked as a Teaching Assistant at Florida State University for two years and looks forward to a continued career of teaching and education-related work. She lives in Tallahassee with her husband.