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Factors Affecting Adult Speakers of Other Languages' (ESOL) Enrollment in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Courses: A Multicase Study

Jacklyn Smith

Nova Southeastern University, drjacklyn23@gmail.com

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by
Jacklyn Smith

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
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Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Jacklyn Smith under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Delores Smiley, EdD
Committee Chair

Maryanne Roesch, EdD
Committee Member

Kimberly Durham, PsyD
Interim Dean

Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

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Jacklyn Smith
Name

March 30, 2018
Date

Acknowledgments

The journey of pursuing and achieving the Doctor of Education was one that was not taken lightly. I am eternally grateful to my family, friends, and everyone who supported me along the way. To all of my LEP students, you have not only made me a better educator, but you have also made me a better person.

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In memory of my mother, Andeya Mildred Cabral, I dedicate this dissertation; your love of God and family have set the foundation for my life and shaped my convictions to achieve whatever I "put my hands to" with tenacity, integrity, and purpose. I thank my late father, Alfred A. Smith, Sr., who was the epitome of hard work and perseverance. To my daughters, Lauren and Jourdan; sons, Maurice, Jr., and Joshua; you are all amazing young people! To my wonderful husband, Maurice Jackson, Sr., I could not have accomplished this milestone without your inspiration, support, unwavering commitment, and love. You are my hero!

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Abstract

Factors Affecting Adult English Speakers of Other Languages' (ESOL) Enrollment in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Courses: A Multicase Study. Jacklyn Smith, 2018: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education. Keywords: adult education, andragogy, english language learners, english for academic purposes, second language instruction, english instruction, second language learning, english (second language)

This applied dissertation provided insight and identified impediments and obstacles in the areas of educational and societal assimilation, career and monetarist support, and academics to ascertain the effects they have on students transitioning from ESOL classes to EAP courses. Adult non-native speakers have evolved into an important segment of the adult population in the United States. Many Limited English Proficient (LEP) students lack the aptitude as it relates to the English language, often translating into lower wages, higher rates of poverty, and limited upward movement in the workplace. Researchers have identified several factors that may potentially influence the program participants including academic and social assimilation, curriculum and institutional support and cultural and educational mores.

A qualitative approach with a multicase study analysis allowed an exploration of the factors affecting enrollment of ESOL students into EAP courses. The researcher interviewed respondents who are representative of the English Language Adult Learner population and were enrolled in the ESOL program in the previous 24 months. From the individual case analyses, the researcher sought to identify strategies that assisted students in the transition from non-credit ESOL courses to credit based EAP courses. The researcher used Malcolm Knowles' philosophy of andragogy, the study of adult learning, as a theoretical framework. The researcher also incorporated the areas of second-language acquisition including Language 1 (L1) and Language 2 (L2) skills, and cognitive academic language proficiency. The researcher used an electronic survey and face-to-face interviews with respondents to gain an in-depth understanding of textual categories and fundamental themes to ensure consistency and reliability within the study.

An analysis of the data revealed that the reasons LEP students were not continuing to EAP classes upon completion of their ESOL courses were not related to the cost of the EAP classes. The respondents in this research study cited full-time work responsibilities and family obligations as being the primary reasons for not continuing with their English Language classes. Although students reported overall satisfaction with their instructors and ESOL staff, they opted to put off their studies for a variety of reasons.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As the immigrant and refugee populations in the United States continue to grow, the need for adult English language and vocational training has increased as well. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2015), as of the school year 2012-13, 40% of the students in government-funded adult education programs in the U.S. are English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners. Chun (2015) posited that just under half of this population tested at the three lowest levels of proficiency on the National Reporting System: ESL beginning literacy, ESL Beginning Low, and ESL Beginning High. However, unlike typical basic adult education courses, ESOL education is expected to provide far more than literacy skills. ESOL students are expected to master, oral, communication and written skills, as well as procure information processing skills in a number of social contexts. Thus, in this population of adult learners, the more effective the andragogy, the higher the success rate as it pertains to second-language acquisition (Chun, 2015; Goddu, 2012). Knowles (1990) postulated,

> The andragogical teacher . . . prepares in advance a set of procedures for involving the learners (and other relevant parties) in a process of involving these elements: (a) establishing a climate conducive to learning; (b) creating a mechanism for mutual planning; (c) diagnosing the needs for learning; (d) formulating program objectives (which is content) that will satisfy these needs; (e) designing a pattern of learning experiences; (f) conducting these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials; and, (g) evaluating the learning outcomes and rediagnosing learning needs (p. 102).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this multiple case study is that ESOL students, at the research study site, are not enrolling in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses at a rate that depicts future success for the students and the college. The principal purpose of EAP courses is to serve as a conduit for many Limited English Proficient (LEP) students planning to pursue higher education in the United States (Chun, 2015; Cummins, 1996). For immigrants and refugees, the primary objective of EAP is to introduce the language and philological requirements they will need to pursue a traditional college education and to be successful once they enter a post-secondary institution.

Starr (2016) contended that there are functional grammar and accompanying skills that are acquired in the EAP classroom thereby allowing the ESOL student to engage in and with the representations and discourses of the everyday world. Providing language and dialectal support are, therefore, fundamental in helping to realize these students' ambitions in higher education. Since academic language is the unseen curriculum (Chun, 2015), it is vital to render more overtly in the classroom how meaning and knowledge are classically produced through this language, which differs considerably from their everyday language (Cummins, 2000). Without this lifeline, the students' difficulties in completing a post-secondary degree increase exponentially and failure to do so may influence their ensuing life paths. Particularly for adult refugee and immigrant students, the execution of EAP has significant consequences for societies that claim to be inclusive and multicultural (Perry & Hart, 2012; Rhodes, 2013; Starr, 2016).

This state college was established as a junior college in 1965 and recently celebrated 50 years in 2015. In that time, the college has successfully transitioned from a Junior College to a State College. According to this state college's website, it is a

member of the Florida College System; however, it is not associated with any other public or private university or college in Florida. With an initial enrollment of just over 2,600 students, the college officially opened in August of 1966. Today, the institution boasts five campuses and two satellite learning centers while serving over 52,000 students yearly. As of the 2014-15 report from the Office of Institutional Analytics and Research, the college offers more than 150 degree and certificate programs with an annual operating budget of 143 million dollars. In 2007, the College received accreditation to offer baccalaureate degree programs. Presently, the degree programs include 13 Bachelor's degrees, over 46 Associate of Science degrees and over 100 Workforce and Technical certifications.

Adult Education at the college includes a wide range of instructional programs that help adults garner the rudimentary skills they need to be productive workers, family members, and citizens. The major program areas are Adult High School, General Education Development (GED) Preparation: High School Equivalency, Adult Basic Education (ABE) and ESOL. These programs emphasize basic skills such as reading, writing, math, and English language competency. Adult education programs also help adult learners gain the college and career readiness skills needed to enter and succeed in the workforce and/or postsecondary education.

The purpose of ABE is to give students an opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills in the area of basic literacy and life skills for adults who are performing below the ninth-grade level. The content develops primary literacy in all areas of knowledge. ABE involves non-credit courses designed to develop literacy skills necessary for both soft and hard skills. Soft skills may include communication and behaviors required for various social situations while hard skills involve technical knowledge for a specific trade. ABE

also prepares students to enroll in GED preparation or adult high school and ESOL courses.

Two of the college's five campuses offer non-credit Adult ESOL classes ranging from Level 1 (Basic) to Level 8 (Conversational). At the various levels, these classes can provide English language instruction to adult learners who are literate in a language other than English.There is a significant emphasis placed on English speaking, writing, grammar, listening, and vocabulary. The ESOL program is designed to prepare adult learners to use English for employment, career and technical and postsecondary education, and most importantly, participation in day-to-day interactions in the United States. The College uses the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) and Computer-Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System (COMPASS) exams to assess the students' skill sets in the areas of reading, listening, writing and grammar.

The CASAS is used by government entities, community colleges, correctional facilities and many other industries as an assessment tool for non-native speakers of English to evaluate aptitudes that include reading, speaking, math, listening, and writing. Additionally, the CASAS assesses student evolvement on a homogeneous scale that ranges from the lowest literacy skills to secondary exit and transition to postsecondary education and training (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

Similar to the CASAS, the COMPASS tests various modalities of math, reading, writing and English as a Second language. However, unlike traditional tests, there is no passing score. Instead, the COMPASS scores serve as indicators and underscore learners' strengths and weaknesses in a given subject area (Florida Department of Education,

2013). This approach affords the student the ability to prepare for advancement by taking the necessary requisite courses.

According to the 2014-15 Fact Book distributed by the Florida college under study, ESOL focuses on seven critical topic areas. They include (a) Communication; (b) Employment; (c) Consumer Education; (d) Community and Civic Engagement; (e) Health and Nutrition; (f) Travel and Transportation; and, (g) Safety and Security. Admission into the ESOL program requires that students be U.S. citizens or in lawful immigration status; thus, their immigration or refugee status are not inhibitors to college enrollment. The focus of the study is to investigate the inhibitors ESOL students' face as they move from ESOL classes to EAP courses. The study specifically focused on factors including academic and social assimilation, curriculum and institutional support and cultural and educational mores. The researcher utilized a qualitative approach with a multicase study to investigate critical information as it pertains to the impediments that cause ESOL adult learners to postpone or circumvent enrolling in EAP courses. Creswell (2012) proffered, "Survey research is a useful design to use when researchers seek to collect data . . . Study attitudes and opinions, and survey geographically dispersed individuals" (p. 405).

The researcher's primary function at the institution is as that of an adjunct professor. The researcher has taught at the College for three years. Recent non-scientific polling of the immigrant and refugee population revealed that students were not immediately enrolling in EAP classes, but delaying enrollment in these classes or deciding to go straight into the workforce. Due to this survey and various cursory informal conversations with a variety of ESOL students, the researcher requested approval to conduct the study at the research study site. The researcher examined ESOL

students' impediments and obstacles when attending college; their educational and societal assimilation; and the academic, career and monetarist support that affect transitioning from ESOL courses to EAP courses.

Phenomenon of interest. Huang, Tindall, and Nisbet (2011) purported that adult ESOL students come to secondary institutions with a variety of expectations and with varying levels of English language acquisition. For many immigrants and refugees, learning English is crucial to fully embracing their new culture. Additionally, these adults need English for a vast range of reasons including, communicating with their employees, corresponding with their children's teachers, negotiating the various loopholes in the legal and governmental systems and business situations. Cavanaugh (2014), a professor at the University of North Florida, asserted, "ESOL students often are facing not only challenges of learning a new language but also assimilating into a new culture and learning subject matter in a new language" (p. 1).

College and career readiness are also crucial components of this transition as ESOL students embrace their new motherland. As defined by the American Council on Education (2016), college and career readiness mean that a high school graduate has acquired the requisite English and math knowledge and skills needed to succeed in credit-bearing courses in a college, university or the postsecondary job training and/or education necessary for their chosen career. Some examples include, but are not limited to, technical and/or vocational programs, community college, apprenticeship or substantial on-the-job training. In short, the primary aim is to improve their potential job prospects.

Background and justification. Presumably, there is no typical ESOL student, and therefore, they should not be treated as a uniform group. Conversely, Dobbs (2005) concluded, "Blindly throwing Limited English Proficient (LEP) students into the

accountability system without considering their unique needs constitutes treatment that is neither equal nor equitable" (p. 1). Regarding their exposure to previous educational settings, these may range from no formal instruction to post-graduate degree holders, and in "mother" language literacy levels, from advanced to pre-literate (Devici, 2014). Each adult student brings unique experiences, abilities, and goals to the learning environment. These students come from a vast array of backgrounds and circumstances. As a social phenomenon, multiculturalism is not merely a matter of diversity, but a critical cultural and linguistic challenge for educators.

Admittedly, LEP students, have presented educators in the United States with a complex set of cultural and philological challenges. Thus, the need for adult English language and job-related training will predictably require more social efforts on the part of educational institutions given the exponential growth of the immigrant and refugee populations in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau (2011) reported that between the years 2000 and 2010, the Latin American population grew by 43% or four times the growth in the total population. This exponential growth represents more than half of the increase in the total population in the U.S. in that same decade. Additionally, the same report stated that the Asian population grew faster than any other dominant race group between 2000 and 2010. These statistics underscore the importance of identifying areas of the country where residents require specific services, such as health, housing, and educational programs.

The premise of adult learning must begin with a fundamental understanding of the way in which adults learn. Andragogy, the adult learning theory that examines the study of adult learners, plays a crucial role in the way in which this population of learners assimilates and processes English language skills (Devici, 2014). This same

principle is critical in commencing, sustaining, fostering and supporting conversations with second-language learners. Perry and Hart (2012) concluded that needs assessment is the initial basis for andragogy and encompasses the students' relationship to the content of the material to be attained. Barnitz (2015) posited, "Speaking, listening, writing, and reading development are inseparable in the communication process and the comprehension process" (p. 12).

Admittedly, learning is a process and defined as a permanent change in behavior or as knowledge acquired by consistent study (Gartman, 2016). According to Laird (1985),

> Andragogic Learning designs involve features which recognize the essential maturity of the learner: they are problem-centered rather that content-centered; they encourage the learner to introduce past experiences into the processes in order to reexamine that experience in light of new data; the climate of the learning process must be collaborative as opposed to authority-oriented; planning and evaluation are mutual activities between learner and instructor; evaluation leads to a reappraisal of needs and interest moreover, activities are experiential . . . (pp. 125-126).

Cummins (1981b) hypothesized that there are two kinds of English aptitude. The first is Basic Interpersonal Conversational Skills (BICS) that LEP students need when engaging in conversational English. Cummins (1996) further theorized that it takes only two to three years for LEP students to attain BICS English because it is context-embedded and cognitively less challenging. In short, BICS English is relatively simple and can be acquired in an abbreviated period.

The second is Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency or CALP. Unlike BICS,

CALP English is seen as context-reduced. Cummins (1996) purported that to become proficient at this level; it will take at least five to seven years as it requires a higher level of reasoning skills. As students transition from ESOL to EAP classes, they are required to perform tasks including participating in debates, writing research papers, and making oral presentations, all of which demand English language skills beyond BICS. It is critical for these adult students to be provided with the practical English language skills they need in their everyday lives, as well as English skills that will help them advance in post-secondary education and career and technical training.

Deficiencies in the evidence. Perry and Hart (2012) asserted that Adult Literacy and English Language programs encounter challenges indigenous to adult learners that often result from the nature of the programs. Budgetary constraints and poorly trained teachers also compound the fact that little research has been done as it relates to adult learners' characteristics. Furthermore, the social contexts of their daily lives, how they learn, the efficacy of the learning environment, and the challenges they face as they endeavor to learn a second language require further investigation (Ruijuan, Ruiting, & Van Tai, 2014).

According to Reed, Rosenberg, Statham, and Rosing (2016), despite the increasing responsiveness coupled with the demand for English language and literacy programs, little is known about the specific language skill levels of adult immigrants and refugees. The U.S. Census Bureau (2015) provided a limited amount of information on immigrants' and refugees' oral proficiency. However, to date, no data has been collected on their ability to comprehend or use printed documents, such as trade magazines, newspapers, and their skill set on digital media. Rhodes (2013) noted that not only do LEPs studying in non-credit courses

remain an understudied faction in the study of second language acquisition but the research studies that are often cited also lack a theoretic foundation and thus remain disconnected from each other. This collection of isolated and individual studies has fallen short of what can be deemed as an interrelated or organized body of literature (Creswell, 2012; Rhodes, 2013). This study served as another tool in the limited literature currently available as it relates to the adult ESOL student and hopefully direct future instructional ESOL practices. The intention of the researcher is to contribute to the limited research currently on ESOL and thus support the broader area of research related to ESOL adult learners in higher education. Creswell (2012) maintained, "Armed with research results, teachers, and other educators become more effective professionals . . . this translates into better learning . . ." (p.4).

Audience. This study informed educators of adult learners about the specific needs of the ESOL student relevant to the particular needs of immigrant and refugees' English acquisition skills. Administrators, case managers, faculty, practitioners, researchers, school policymakers, and the general public gained awareness into how this population of students chooses to interact with the English language. Additionally, it offered some understanding of the impact of why these students are not enrolling in college-credit courses at a more rapid pace. Admittedly, many ESOL students often feel ostracized, rejected, silenced or not heard in American society (Chun, 2015). Furthermore, adult ESOL students derived an added benefit by being able to identify the ways in which to overcome some of their personal apprehensions; explicitly, by drawing from their peers' inhibitors and engaging in more culturally responsive programs.

Definition of Terms

The following section provides definitions of terms germane to the study. Due to the constant changes occurring within the higher education industry, there may be variations in the definitions of terms. The concepts of the terms used in context with this study are in line with the overall consensus of the education industry professionals and subject matter experts as presented in the literature.

Adult learners are a population of students having specific characteristics, such as autonomy, self-direction, cumulative life experiences, and goal oriented (Knowles, 1990). They are typically well beyond high school age. In higher education, the adult student population may be comprised of students over 22 years of age. These students are traditionally entering college for the first time, transferring from another college, working professionals entering college, and those returning students who may have attended college in prior years but decided to delay college due to work obligations, familial status, and life circumstances.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) refers to programs that are designed for adults and out-of-school youth ages 16 years or older who are currently performing below the eighth-grade level or equivalent. are not enrolled in secondary school; do not have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent; and, are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance under State law (The Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators, 2015). The primary goal of most ABE programs is to promote career pathways as a framework for assisting ABE students to successfully transition to postsecondary programs and begin careers in high-demand fields (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

College and Career Readiness means, according to the American Council on

Education (2016), that a high school graduate has the English and other requisite skills needed to succeed in credit-bearing courses in a college or university or the postsecondary job training and/or education necessary for their chosen career (i.e., technical/vocational program, community college, apprenticeship or significant on-the-job training).

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) provides English Language Learners with essential language and academic preparation necessary to enroll in college credit instruction (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a term that refers to the use of English by speakers with different native languages. Instruction for this population of learners may also be referred to as English as a second language (ESL). This non-credit course is designed to prepare adult students for further education by providing concentrated instruction in ESOL Academic Skills competencies (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

General Educational Development (GED) are benchmarks that measure proficiency in science, mathematics, social studies, reading, and writing. Passing the GED test gives individuals who do not complete high school, or who do not meet the requirements for a high school diploma, the opportunity to earn their high school equivalency credential also called a high school equivalency diploma (American Council on Education, 2016).

Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) refers to individuals who, because of ancestry or foreign birth, speak a language other than English and either understand, speak, read or write little or no English (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). In some instances,

the acronym LEP is used interchangeably with English Language Learner (ELL) or

Second-Language Learner (SLL).

Non-credit courses are those designed for students taking classes for personal or

professional interest. Non-credit is a term indicating that college credits are not

awarded. It applies to the instructional classifications of non-credit continuing

education, adult general education, citizenship, recreational, community education, and

community instructional services. The unit of measure is hours of instruction (Florida

Department of Education, 2013).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate and identify impediments and

obstacles in the areas of educational and societal assimilation, career and monetarist

support, and academics to ascertain the effects they have on students transitioning from

ESOL classes to EAP courses. The researcher explored variables that include a

theoretical framework that incorporated the areas of Andragogy/the study of adult

learning and Language 1 (L1) and Language 2 (L2), second-language acquisition and

cognitive academic language proficiency. The three primary areas of concern that

potentially influenced the program and participants are academic and social assimilation,

curriculum and institutional support and cultural and educational mores.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Globalization and the change in the demographics of the U.S. population and workforce have produced a specific type of student, the adult ESOL learner. Coon and Jacobsen (2014) at the Center for Applied Linguistics noted that non-native speakers of English are part of a significant and cumulative percentage of the adult population in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau (2014) via the American Community Survey (ACS), an organization that provides vital annual data information about the nation and its people, concluded that over one-fifth of U.S. residents now speak a language other than English at home. Zeigler and Camarota (2014) reported that the Center for Immigration Studies concluded that immigrant dispersal has grown to include 40 states over the past two decades. Thus, adult non-native speakers have evolved into an essential sector of the adult population in the United States. Many LEP students are keenly aware that a lack of adeptness with the English language often translate into lower wages, higher rates of poverty, and limited upward movement in the workplace (Grover, Miller, Swearingen & Wood, 2014).

For most immigrants, ESOL and EAP adult education courses provide the principal source of information about the English language and American culture (Rhodes, 2013). Researchers have suggested a plethora of educational recommendations for best practices for English language instructors at postsecondary institutions (Chun, 2015; Eyring, 2014; Huang, 2013). Eyring (2014) proffered several instructional practices including, fostering positive effective environments in the classroom and creating an atmosphere that encourages communicative teaching methods that promote learner to learner interactions. Mathews-Aydinli (2008) further suggested solidifying

constructive relationships with the school and students' indigenous communities, encouraging the professional development of teachers who can relate to the students' cultural backgrounds, and the role of the LEP instructor as "caring, patient, cultural mediators." (p. 207). This literature review focused on how support programs with curriculum specifically designed for the adult learner, second-language acquisition theory, and the andragogy theory can potentially support adult ESOL students with the successful transition to EAP courses.

State of Knowledge Summary

According to the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education (2014), 40 percent of current adult education students are English Language Learners (ELLs). This population of adult immigrants, expatriates, migratory workers, and naturalized citizens studying English as a second language in the United States is growing exponentially. Larsen-Freeman (2013) posited that in addition to learning English, this populous subgroup of learners must navigate cultural and linguistic issues on a daily basis. The ways in which this population of learners varies may be by age, education, exposure to a second language, trade/occupation, religion, or cultural norms. For many ELLs, acquiring a second language is more than simply learning another language; instead, it is a means to an end. In short, it fosters a "social process of reconstructing a new self in the target language culture" (Mathews-Aydinli, 2008, p. 203).

Eyring (2014) discussed how one's immigration status plays a crucial role in determining the importance of education; and, thus, it is crucial to address the various categories of immigrants. The first segment is often referred to as long-term immigrants. This faction has typically come to the United States for reasons including to find better employment, as a response to a natural disaster or to reunify with

members of their respective families. Refugees, another classification of immigrants, have left their mother countries due to human rights violations, political unrest or religious intolerance. There are also those who come to America on F1 visas. Their primary objective is to improve their English language skills and ultimately return to their homeland. Another category of immigrants is migrant workers. This group characteristically works temporary jobs in construction or agriculture and move from state to state with a fair amount of regularity. Some may even transmigrate back to their native countries in search of work or other opportunities.

Alfred (2009) examined the plight of professional immigrants, those who come to the United States with professional or advanced degrees, and found that their limited English language skills often relegated them to entry-level status in their respective professions. This segment of the immigration adult LEP population often face a significant economic downturn upon arriving in the United States due to a loss of their professional status and ultimately assimilate with the ranks of the working class (Alfred, 2009; Barnitz, 2015; Rhodes, 2013). Alfred (2009) noted that this is often the case of many emigrating from Asian countries; although extremely educated, many remain marginalized at the bottom of the social and financial societal echelons.

Arguably, there is a direct correlation between English proficiency and low wages (Rhodes, 2013; Welch-Ross & Lesgold, 2012). The position proffered by many researchers (Huang, 2013; Rhodes, 2013; Smith, 2012) is that the best predictor of economic success for adult immigrants is an adequate education; specifically, one the provides a wide-ranging exposure to the American educational system. In effect, there must be a broadening of "their knowledge of cultures, histories, and expectations" (Alfred, 2009, p. 5) while improving retention rates in English language programs.

Barnitz (2015) argued it is for these reasons that learning conversational or even academic English creates a significant challenge not only to the student but for instructors as they seek to find the most efficient andragogical approaches for their adult non-native English-speaking learners.

Admittedly, in an age of ever-increasing global competition and technological advances, academics and policymakers have cheered the facilitation of English preparatory classes as a critical part of developmental education. Researchers have made numerous recommendations on how to institute EAP programs using the most favorable practices and research. Remedial and age-related courses have prepared students for post-secondary work for several decades (Barnitz, 2015). Presently, experts and specialists in the field have amalgamated their individual research to underscore the importance of studying this population of adults. Moreover, proponents have recognized the importance of modernizing developmental education and focused their efforts on the efficacy of diverse methodologies to remediation. Developmental education offers educative classes that play an intricate role in addressing the needs of academically underdeveloped students to improve their financial positions.

Furthermore, scholars have agreed that andrological ideologies have served as a consistent underpinning for program development (Barnitz, 2015; Chun, 2015). Admittedly, researchers and scholars have attempted to clarify adult learning and all of its related nuances and distinctions. However, for andragogy to remain a primary focus in college-based English Language programs, educators must disclose measurable data related to andragogy. Specifically, giving EAP program advisors and program managers the necessary tools to quantify adult learning approaches in an effort to meet the LEP students' educational needs. In short, creating a conduit to connect interactive

communication skills and intellectual academic-language aptitude as part of second language acquisition can assist students to succeed in their desire to become "college ready" (Huang, 2013).

Defining Adult Educational Theories

Learning theories are abstract or intellectual contexts relating how information is immersed, managed, and remembered during the learning process. Intellectual, emotional and psychological barriers, as well as previous experience, all play a part in how understanding is acquired or transformed, and knowledge recalled (Barnitz, 2015). The Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy Center, a project of the U.S. Department of Education (2011), suggested that there is no one explanation or theory that can explain how adults learn. However, the literature has yielded a plethora of models, instructional strategies, and methods that comprise the foundational aspects of adult learning. Some of the most fundamental adult learning theories include cognitive theory, transformational learning (TL), experiential learning (EL), self-directed learning (SDL), and andragogy (Corley, 2008).

Adult learning must begin with a rudimentary understanding of that how adults learn. Galbraith and Fouch (2007) surmised that learning is "defined as a permanent change in behavior or as knowledge acquired by study" (p.35). Huang (2013) posited that adult learners learn best when teaching is consistently grounded in evocative, pertinent perspectives and draws from learners' storehouse of knowledge. In short, adults tend to be more enthusiastic about learning if the learning is directly related to their everyday lives.

Five pillars of learning. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizaton (2009) or UNESCO, and their initiative known as The Education

of Sustainable Development introduced the Five Pillars of Learning. They are (a) Learning to know; (b) Learning to be; (c) Learning to live together; (d) Learning to do; and, (e) Learning to transform oneself and society. UNESCO's primary object was to provide viable human development while fostering quality education around the world. Delemios (2015), suggested these pillars provide a foundation for all learning.

The first pillar, Learning to Know, seeks to acknowledge that satisfying indigenous needs often have international significance and consequences. It also recognizes the evolving nature of sustainability, the development of skills and knowledge needed to function as a member of society. These skills include critical thinking, literacy and general knowledge (Delemios, 2015).

The second pillar introduced the notion of Learning to be. This pillar suggests that learning contributes to a person's overall welfare; that is, the mind, body, and spirit. Skills include creativity and personal discovery, acquired through reading, the Internet, and activities such as the arts and sports (Delemios, 2015). The concept of Learning to Be attempts to build on the principles that underscore sustainable development. It was also intended to deal with the well-being of all three realms of sustainability---environment, society, and economy. (Delemios, 2015).

The third tenet, Learning to Live Together, accentuates the growth of social skills and values such as human dignity, concern for others, and the appreciation of cultural diversity. Cultural diversity ideas such as social tolerance, environmental stewardship, adaptable workforce and quality of are stressed in this pillar. Olson (2012) argued educators with culturally intolerant patterns create obstacles for ESOL students due to their reluctance to accept cultural differences. This pattern includes destructive attitudes and practices toward LEP students.

The fourth pillar is Learning to Do. The objective here is to contribute to a concrete reality for daily decisions and actions and to build a viable and safe world for everyone. Here, the learner evolves and aims to find ways in which to apply the knowledge acquired. Delemios (2015) postulated that the acquisition of applied skills is connected to professional success.

The fifth and last pillar is Learning to Transform oneself and society. This last pillar is anchored in incorporating values integral in sustainable development into all aspects of learning and empowering people to assume responsibility for creating and enjoying a sustainable future.

Ouane (2009) argued that continuous learning has the power to transform individuals, societies, and the world. Therefore, learning on all levels, learning to know, learning to be, learning to live together; learning to do; and, learning to transform oneself and society creates a solid foundation for adult learners. All these pillars are necessary to create a significant change in education so that everyone can address the global issues related to a sustainable and quality education for all (Delemios, 2015). Ouane posited,

> "Everyone is a learner, with learning needs varying according to the different
> roles they play – as wage earner, self-employed or unemployed worker,
> manager, parent, citizen, volunteer, migrant, neighbor, religious believer or
> consumer. The wider and more diverse the provision of learning opportunities,
> the greater the likelihood that the learning journey will prove a fulfilling one,
> the broader the range of options and opportunities afforded the individual
> throughout life, the more extensive the possibilities for empowering the
> disempowered, and the better citizens' capacity and ability to cope with the

changes that they will inevitably encounter in the course of their lives" (p.8).

Cognitive theory. According to Merriam (2007), cognitivism is the dominant theoretical framework within which human learning is studied and explained. Cognitivism incorporates multiple viewpoints like information processing theory, constructivist and contextual perspectives that all add to our understanding of how human beings learn and think. Olsen (2012) recommended that in order to encourage the kind of cognitive activity necessary for learning; diverse tasks are essential including, but not limited to, having students produce oral output and in turn receive oral input to mitigate the possibility of students committing to memory or merely repeating specific forms. Merriam and Bierema (2014) posited that the study of pathways of adult cognitive development is often consistent with a combination of factors of maturational and environmental factors.

Transformative learning. Transformative Learning (TL) has undeniably become one of the most promulgated and incendiary ideas in adult learning (Devici, 2014; Hoggan, 2016; Newman, 2012). Mezirow's (1991; 1994; 1997; 2000) seminal research in the area of TL has proven to be a great benefit to the learning the nuances of education, specifically as it relates to the adult learner. The transformative process embraces ten distinct stages: (a) facing a disorienting dilemma; (b) examining one's beliefs such as fear, anger, and shame; (c) examining and assessing beliefs and feelings about assumptions; (d) becoming discontent with the assessment results and noticing that the possible transformation process is experienced by others; (e) exploring alternative options for new actions, roles and relationships through dialogue with other and further self-evaluation; (f) planning a course of action to carry out initial plans; (g) gaining necessary knowledge and skills

to implement plans; (h) trying out new roles and new actions to see how effective

they are, and if content; (i) further practicing roles and actions to build competence

and self-confidence; and, (j) reintegrating into new life and new perspectives

(Mezirow, 2000). Hoggan (2016) asserted that TL provided the academic

groundwork for understanding multifaceted learning phenomena.

Transformative Learning refers mainly to "processes that result in significant

and irreversible changes in the way a person experiences, conceptualizes and

interacts with the world" (Hoggan, 2016, p. 71). Transformational Learning reaps its

greatest rewards when adult students can make connections with their peers and the

instructor while engaging in projects that have relevance to their personal lives and

experiences (Foote, 2015; Goddu, 2012; Jordi, 2011). Furthermore, TL can provide a

sense of self-efficacy and foster students' critical thinking skills. Learning connects

prior understandings to new experiences or firsthand information, and when it is

transformative, learning outcomes in the revision of former understandings to foster

new guides for future actions (Brancard & Quinnwilliams, 2012; Mezirow, 2000).

Ouane (2009) proffered that the transformative power of learning must be

"…mobilized for the benefit of individuals, communities, and societies" (p. 8).

Learning can no longer be seen as something that is relegated to juveniles, colleges,

or alternatively, what was previously deemed as the scholastic sector (Ouane, 2009).

Transformative Learning is not without its critics and criticisms (Bridwell,

2012; Hoggan, 2016; Newman, 2012) further challenged the core tenets of TL and

argued that "transformative learning only exists in the realm of theory . . . With little or

basis in everyday practice" (p. 40). Newman (2012) stressed that all learning theories

share fundamental characteristics and what many identify and TL is essentially "good learning" (p. 41). Bridwell (2012) concluded that adults learn in a variety of ways due to factors such as sex, race and socio-economic status. In short, their alignment as it relates to knowledge and information construction is consistent with their way of knowing. Taylor (2008) asserted that this knowledge, or lack thereof, requires that educators be cognizant of the impediments imposed by transformative learning. It is imperative that varied learning environments create contexts that focus on fostering and developing introspective dialogue while engaging learners as opposed to just task completion (Bridwell, 2012). Hoggan, Malkki, and Finnegan (2017) discussed the major issues related to transformative learning. Devici (2014) advised that not all transformative learning experiences are positive and thereby approached with some restraint. Hoggan et al., (2017) purported that within the collective research done in the area of Transformative Learning, the objectives of transformation as it relates to specific conclusions are at times ignored resulting in different expectations for the outcomes.

Experiential Learning. Learning in the Experiential Learning (EL) theory is defined as a process of knowledge creation with experience transformation. Thus knowledge is birthed out of experience understanding and transformation (Artino, 2012; Dernova, 2015; Kolb, 1984). In essence, adults learn from experience. John Dewey's (1938) groundbreaking contributions in the area of experiential learning rested on a significant principle, " . . . Amid all uncertainties, there is only one permanent frame of reference: namely, the organic connection between education and personal experience" (p.5). Dewey viewed learning as a constant reorganizing of experiences, and the learning progression and outcomes are simply the same ideas. Zeivots (2016)

explained that a fundamental premise of experiential education is that the learner will reflect on tactile experiences to build new ones.

In today's culture with continuous changes, the adult learning environment requires that the emphasis be placed on learning as opposed to teaching (Zeivots, 2016). This shift demands the facilitation of the experience accumulation and takes into account numerous critical features of adult learning. Dervnova (2015) noted that these include (a) the assessment of the incentives, needs and professional challenges of adult learners; (b) adult learners need to be independent and self-regulated; (c) the process of learning does not focus on the procurement of knowledge, instead the emphasis is placed on problem-solving and achieving specific objectives; (d) the learning occurs within specified parameters, such as social, time, professional, etc.; (e) the learning is designed as a supportive activity of both the instructor and the learner; and, (f) the previous skills, knowledge, and practices of the adult learners be taken into consideration. Joplin (1981) further developed the experiential learning theory with her Five Stages Model. Joplin contended that experience alone could not result in experiential learning because a reflection alters the experience into experiential learning. Joplin's first stage, Focus, set the tasks to be executed and points students' to the problem at hand. In stage two, Action, students take part in mental, physical or emotional activities. Stages three and four, Support and Feedback respectively, are incorporated in the entire learning process. In the last phase, Debrief, learners and educators receive information and reflect on it. Research suggests that experiential learning can foster positive attitudes, encourage responsibility and acceptance, stimulate the desire for community involvement, and ultimately inspire growth through the expansion of global experiences (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984).

Admittedly, experiential learning is an adaptable instructional methodology that can contribute to numerous positive outcomes and improved intellectual capacities (Artino, 2012; Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984). However, while experiential learning techniques have proven to be beneficial to the adult learner (Knowles, 1990; Zeivots, 2016), there are some limitations (Caulfield & Woods, 2013; Jordi, 2011), particularly in the area of learning transfer. Learning transfer occurs when the learner can clearly see the connection between the learning content and the application context (Dernova, 2015). Learning transfer is a uniquely challenging variable for instructors and program facilitators to influence. Caulfield and Woods (2013) contended that there is little agreement in the pedagogical community about what constitutes a transfer and more importantly the extent to which it occurs, how to investigate it and the nature of its primary devices. Additionally, experiential learning is often challenging, time-consuming and inconvenient for instructors to implement in the learning environment (Jordi, 2011). Experiential learning is best suited for adult learners who have the life experiences required to make crucial mental and emotional connections, the willingness to direct their learning and the desire to fit the instructive content into a readily available context (Dernova, 2015; Zeivots, 2016).

Self-Directed Learning. Self-Directed Learning (SDL), also referred to as Self-Guided Learning (SGL) or Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), is one of the renowned theories in the field of adult education. Knowles (1995) defined SDL as a "process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes" (p.18). The primary strategies associated with SDL are monitoring,

setting clear objectives and controlling are considered to be critical in fostering a sense

of personal control over the learners' educational journey. Knowles (1990) supported

the importance of communal planning in the program: this underscores the premise that

adults, by nature, are self-directing. Knowles (1990) theorized that one of the

fundamental findings of applied behavioral science research that an individual's

dedication to a particular resolution or activity is directly correlated to their

"participation in or influence on its planning and decision-making" (p. 109).

Sahin-Kizil and Savran (2016) focused on self-instruction as an essential and

distinct part of learning outside of the classroom because it thrusts learners into

environments where they are forced to locate resources to help them improve the

prescribed language. Lai and Gu (2011) noted that activities such as radio, television

and English language movies serve a plethora of functions in shaping and guiding

constructive learner identities, self-perception and self-expression.

Celik, Arkin, and Sabriler (2012) noted the idea of learners' autonomy,

independence and self-assessment are a shift in language pedagogy in that it

emphasizes a transition to a more student-oriented approach. Autonomy for language

learners has been used to assist students to garner a sense of individual control, which is

believed to be a fundamental basis of inherent motivation to continue learning on their

own, namely outside of the formal classroom (Brinton, Celce-Murcia, Snow & Brinton,

2013; Grover & Miller, 2014; Lai & Gu, 2011).

Unfortunately, the research on the SDL instructional model in the LEP learning

environment is insufficient (Omar, Ebmi & Yunus, 2012; Wang, 2012). However, SDL

can serve as a strong and powerful teaching strategy for students whose second

language is English. The ability to progress autonomously through a course underscores

the importance SDL for adult learners (Davis, 2013). Educators are encouraged to engage in informal learning activities, such as reading magazines on current events, finding native English speakers with which to partner and converse on a regular basis, or using social media (i.e., Facebook or blogging in English) to facilitate learning outside of the formal environment. Likewise, the student should be an integral part of the decision-making and propose ways they can practice English language skills (Davis, 2013; Gartman, 2016; Huang et al., 2011).

  Critical literacy and the LEP student. A plethora of essential theories and perspectives have been used in the educational Diaspora as it relates to English language learners. Recently, terms such as Critical Pedagogy (CP), Critical Language Awareness(CLA), and Critical Literacy (CL) have been used interchangeably to explore the many facets of second language acquisition (Abednia & Izadinia, 2012; Huang, 2013; Jeyaraj & Harland, 2014). Critical theories of literacy primarily are concerned with the creation of "social change, cultural diversity, economic equity and political enfranchisement" (Abednia & Izadinia, 2012, p. 338).

  The focus of CP is principally on the association between learning and authority. Thus, students will more readily learn a language that has intrinsic value to them as opposed to one that is treated as a commodity. Huang (2015) contended the growth of critical language awareness needs to be rooted in discussions related to students' identities and should take into consideration the way that students position themselves in the society as a whole. Jeyaraj and Harland (2014) noted it might be more beneficial for LEPs to spend more time discussing social issues and exploring the consequences of the changing landscape related to instructional, personal and cultural practices. English language learners need educators who will facilitate an appreciation

for the power of words, thus, enabling them to change unfair dogmas and practices. Fajardo (2015) postulated, "…for educators who wish to respond to literacy needs . . . Teach learners about their responsibility toward building a humane society; critical literacy is worth teaching" (p. 45).

Andragogy

Guided by the the zeitgeist of Malcolm Knowles (1968; 1970) andragogy, the theory of adult education, is rooted in the humanistic idea of self-directed and independent adult learners. Andragogy plays a distinct and vital role in effectively teaching adult LEPs. Knowles (1990) posited that learning is required during one's life to acclimatize to life's situations and the environment. Additionally, Knowles advanced several assumptions about the adult learner, they included: (a) as people mature and develop, their self-perception moves from that of a dependent personality to one that is more self-directing; (b) adults amass a growing pool of experiences, resulting in a rich storehouse for learning; (c) the inclination of an adult to learn is closely related to the evolving tasks of his or her familial or social role; (d) due to a change in time perspective as people develop, the adult learner tends to be more problem-oriented as opposed to subject-centered in learning; (e) the more substantive motivations are intrinsic rather than peripheral; and, (f) adult learners need to know the reason they need to learn something.

In the first principle, Knowles (1968) postulated that as humans develop, they become more autonomous, thus increasing their desire to direct their learning. Knowles stated, " At the point at which this change occurs, there develops in the human being a deep psychological need to be perceived by himself and by others as being indeed self-directing" (p. 351).

In the second assumption, Knowles (1968) explored the role of experience in adult learning. Knowles (1995) surmised that young people tend to view experience as something that is external and, thus, forms their identity based on the accouterments that are derived from community, school, and family.

The next principle, Knowles (1975) examined how the notion of readiness to learn evolves from childhood through adulthood. Knowles (1970) summarized, "Whereas the developmental tasks of youth tend to be the products primarily of physiological and mental maturation, those of the adult years are the products primarily of the evolution of social roles" (p. 46).

In the fourth principle, Knowles (1968) argued that the orientation to learning is fostered because adults have diverse viewpoints of time compared to children. Knowles posited, "…children have been conditioned to have a subject-centered orientation to most learning, whereas adults tend to have a problem-centered orientation to learning" (p. 47).

In the fifth assumption, Knowles (1990) explained, "While adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries and the like), the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, and the like)" (p. 63). In the sixth and final principle, Knowles emphasized the need for adults to know why they should learn something before engaging themselves in learning. Knowles contended "…real or simulated experiences in which the learners discover for themselves the gaps where they are now and where they want to be" (p. 58) inspire cognizance and the need to know.

Merriam (2007) suggested that Knowles' theory of andragogy is limited in that it ignores the intricacy of learning. In short, it conflates the idea that adults have

amassed more experiences than children with the notion that the quality of these experiences immediately become a resource for learning. Conversely, Merriam further warned that they could serve as impediments to learning and the assumption about self-direction is "more of a desired outcome than a condition" (p. 86). This notion is further underscored by Holyoke and Larson (2009) posited, "materials should be delivered focusing on problems as opposed to just context" (p. 20). To meet the diverse challenges of the adult learner, Mezirow (1990; 1997) encouraged educators to give deference the knowledge, expertise and experiences brought to the classroom by the adult student.

Postsecondary Institutions: English Language Instruction

Admittedly, there is a great deal of controversy among policymakers, researchers, administrators, and educators about the best approach to ensuring the academic success of English language learners (Baran-Lucarz, 2014; Carter & Henrichsen, 2015; Cox, 2015; Han, 2015). There are numerous variables that impact learners' views, learning styles and beliefs; these variables contribute to the difficulty of language acquisition, and thus, create differences in learners. Smith (2012) noted that adult learners "enrolled in family literacy programs have significant pressures exacerbated by financial struggles that negatively affect their full participation" (p. 11). Welch-Ross and Lesgold (2012) concluded that the efficacy of English literacy programs for adult LEP learners has shown that too often these students fail to complete their coursework for a number of reasons, most of which are never specified.

English language learners come to class with their individual set of expectations and judgments about the learning environment (Chun, 2015; Han, 2015). Calderon, Slavin, and Sanchez (2011) purported that the quality of instruction is the most critical

aspect of educating English learners. Calderon et al., (2011) asserted effective programs must incorporate certain structural components.

First, data must be collected on an ongoing basis. Precisely, data as it relates to teaching, attendance, behavior, and learning. School personnel must be attuned to which students are succeeding and failing, and more importantly, why this is the case (James, 2012; Rachal, 2002; Vaynshtok, 2012). Educators who wish to improve their pedagogical competency for English learners must be keenly aware of not only student outcomes but how well specific programs are implemented.

Second, special attention must be given to ongoing professional development for all staff members and administrators. This development should include peer and expert coaching and an open and honest exchange of information (Barnitz, 2015). Johnson and Owen (2013) reviewed multiple professional development studies and examined instructors who work closely with ELLs and found professional development to be effective when given the opportunity for hands-on practice coupled with teaching techniques that were readily adaptable to the classroom setting. Perry and Hart (2012), noted that instructors often feel ill-prepared to teach adult LEP learners. Educators expressed a need for a variety of resources and techniques, including teaching materials and activities, curriculum and lesson plans and pedagogical content training.

A third element in effectively teaching English learners involve the standards of behavior; this includes both classroom and school-wide management. Han (2015) argued, "Behaviors are a manifestation of what you have learned, and they are largely influenced by your culture" (p. 209). Programs that are comprised of "training in methods of organizing, motivating, and guiding students in class and the school as a whole" (Calderon et al., 2011, p. 109). Cooperative learning is an example of a program

that has been wildly successful. This teaching strategy comprised of small teams, each with students of varied levels of ability, use an assortment of learning activities to develop their understanding of English. Jeyaraj and Harland (2014) warned that while cooperative learning can be an effective tool, this should not be used as a substitute for properly trained and supervised classroom personnel.

The fourth element is what Han (2015) referred to as building a highly accountable organization. This type of organization shares information freely, strictly monitors pedagogy and learning, and hold all stakeholders responsible or forward moving progress as it relates to these learners. Welch-Ross and Lesgold (2012) noted that in programs where English is the principal language of instruction for literacy development, it is important for educators to show respect for the students' native language and cultural mores. Starr (2016) stressed the importance of building of positive relationships between institutions and local ethnic communities.

Additionally, Huang (2015) suggested that adult LEPs with limited literacy in their native language face a twofold challenge of developing literacy skills and becoming adept in the English language. However, their individual talents, oral proficiency, and life experiences are often overlooked in the classroom. Jeyaraj and Harland (2014) extolled the benefits of having instructors who can relate to students' traditional backgrounds as their roles often evolve into tolerant cultural intermediaries. Huang (2013), posited LEP educators need to be sensitive to native customs and norms, learners' mores and understand the familial teaching situation as a means to a mutually gratifying teaching experience. Many researchers believe that this lack of respect has led to reticence in the English as a second language classroom (Belenky & Nokes, 2013; Carter & Henrichsen, 2015; Soo & Goh, 2013). Educators may come to false

assumptions about reticent students. Undoubtedly, this notion poses challenges in the classroom setting. Baran-Lucarz (2014) emphasized, "Speech is not only a product of acquisition but also a precondition for it. Consequently, it is vital for foreign language classes to conducted in a way that encourages student participation in communication activities" (p. 446). Soo and Goh (2013) asserted the ignorance related to reticence led many instructors to categorize these students' ability incorrectly.

Research has shown that any degree of apprehension displayed by second-language learners is inextricably associated their anxiety about performing well in the target language (Al-Amri, 2010; Baran-Lucarz, 2014). Thus, there is no proven correlation between a student's unwillingness to communicate in what is to them a foreign language and their individual ability. Carter and Henrichsen (2015) concluded that while reticence is often a major challenge for the adult ESL learner, it is incumbent on the language teacher to foster a learning environment that nurtures second-language confidence.

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) has been introduced as a platform to assist adult English language learners (Huang, 2013). The CRT strategy has four main components, (a) validation through nurturing; (b) esteeming cultural experiences; (c) constructing a safe learning environment; and, (d) integrating the learners' mother language skills (Johnson & Owen, 2013). Incorporating culturally responsive practices can transform English language instruction with a vision of "educating diverse learners, especially minority and marginalized students who usually come from different social, cultural and economic backgrounds" (Al-Amir, 2010, p. 103).

Students who perceived their instructors as supportive and accommodating are more inclined to be involved in the learning process. Creating an environment of

mutual respect and concern has been shown to foster a sense of empowerment. Johnson

and Owen (2013) claimed that it is in these environments that adult learners feel

comfortable with expressing their feelings and perspectives and ultimately feel as if

they are an intricate part of the learning experience. Welch-Ross and Lesgold (2012)

discussed the vast differences adult learners bring to the classrooms; these

dissimilarities include everything from motivations for learning to socio-economic

backgrounds. Various studies have shown that encouraging native language use in the

learning environment not only validates adult second-language learners; it also can

enhance their English acquisition skills (Ahmadian, 2012; Magro, 2010; Malkki &

Green, 2014). In short, instructors who carefully manage the learning environment and

engender positive self-perceptions of their students realize a more optimal framework

for English language improvement and acquisition.

Second Language Acquisition

Scholars have argued that standard English is an acquired skill, and skill in

which there is not always total agreement (Han, 2015; Soo & Goh, 2013). Han

concluded that long-term English learning does not easily translate into an active

command of written English. Cummins' (1980) first study involved an investigation of

hundreds of referral forms and psychological evaluations conducted with LEP students

in a particular Canadian school system. The forms and evaluations revealed that

educators and psychologists often presumed that students had overcome all challenges

with English when they were conversant in the language. However, these students

consistently got poor scores on rudimentary English academic tasks within the

classroom and were often referred for remediation. The same was true for how they

performed on cognitive exams as part of the psychological assessments. Many students

were labeled as having communication or language challenges even though they had been in Canada for less than three years. Thus, the misconception of the second language (L2) conversational fluency with L2 academic adeptness contributed directly to the disproportionate placement of bilingual students in special education programs (Cummins, 1980).

The need to distinguish between conversational fluency and academic characteristics of L2 performance was further underscored by the reexamination of language performance data from the Toronto Board of Education (Cummins, 1981b). These data showed that there was an average difference of three to five years between the accomplishment of peer-appropriate fluency in English and the realization of grade standards in academic phases of English. Research (Cummins, 1980; James, 2012) has shown, however, that memorizing grammar rules does not necessarily affect and LEP's ability to speak or write proficiently. In essence, a student who has learned or committed to memory the rules of the language may be successful on a standardized English language test; however, but may not be able to speak or write fluently.

Language Continua: BICS and CALP

Admittedly, language is a crucial component of thinking, learning, understanding and communicating. Cummins (1980) posited that language proficiency could be conceptualized along two continuums. To better understand how LEP students learn Cummins (1984; 2000) suggested that there is a clear distinction between what he called conversational fluency and the use of language in decontextualized academic situations. Cummins (1980) coined the terms: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), and Cognitive Academic-Language Proficiency (CALP). Cummins (1980) found that there were vast incongruences between the way students spoke (i.e., –

conversations with their peers) and their academic work (i.e., – performance on a writing prompt). This disparity often led to misconceptions about the intellect or motivation of ELL students. The significance of the stark differences between BICS and CALP for multilingual students' academic development were further supported by two research studies (Cummins, 1981a, 1984; Haynes, n.d.) that identified that teachers and administrators often misinterpreted students' conversational skill with their performances on English language proficiency examinations (Cummins, 1981b). Cummins (1980) cautioned teachers not link lower academic performance with poor cognitive capability.

Basic interpersonal communication skills. Basic Interpersonal Conversational Skills (BICS) or conversational English are language skills needed in social situations. It is the daily language required to interact socially with other people. Cummins (1981a) noted that educators often conflated a student's ability to be conversant with his or her ability to transfer that perceived fluency to their academic work. This miscalculation contributed significantly to the creation of academic difficulties for students who were learning English as a second language.

Cummins (1981b) posited that social interactions are typically context-embedded in that they frequently occur in a meaningful social context (i.e., in a classroom setting). Context-embedded language is supported by context clues in the learners' surroundings; thus, they do not require high levels of reasoning. Furthermore, the language required is not specialized. Baker (2006) noted that English language learners could potentially comprehend social language by (a) discerning speakers' non-verbal behaviors including body language and facial expressions; (b) noticing the reactions of others; (c) utilizing verbal signals such as voice inflections and phrasing;

(d) observing photographs and tangible objects; and (e) requesting for statements to be repeated or explained in simpler terms. Cummins (1981b) concluded that these language skills usually develop within six months to two years after arrival in the English speaking country.

Cummins' (1984) metaphorical Iceberg Theory illustrated that BICS relates to more superficial or familiar tenets of the English language such as fundamental pronunciation skills, reasonable comprehension and essential, everyday grammar. Conversely, CALPS requires a more intricate understanding of the language which is necessary to synthesize, evaluate and analyze more abstract ideas, thoughts, and words.

Cognitive academic-language proficiency. Unlike BICS, where conversational aspects of competency typically reach acceptable levels within about two years of exposure to the English language, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency or CALP, requires approximately five to seven years for students to approach grade norms in academic aspects of English (Baker, 2006).

Academic language proficiency is best defined as "the extent to which an individual has access to and command of the oral and written academic registers of schooling" (Cummins, 2000, p. 67). CALP is referred to as being the context-reduced language of the academic classroom. Baker (2006) postulated that CALP offers (a) less one-on-one interaction; (b) academic language is often intangible; (c) there is an absence of non-verbal clues; (d) the demands of literacy are high; and, (e) prior knowledge of cultural and linguistic mores are required to attain full comprehension.

Summary

As a result of the growing cultural and social diversity of adult learners in the age of globalization, they come to the classroom with different philosophies,

expectations, and perceptions (Al-Amri, 2010). Admittedly, all learning involves transfer to varying degrees. It is imperative that the adult ESOL learner acquire both basic interpersonal skills and cognitive academic-language proficiency to remain competitive in this era of increased competition and globalization. The philosophies of practicality and impartiality in English language courses are evident in class activities and resources that seem to commonly view learning as an intellectual activity (Abednia & Izadinia, 2012; Fajardo, 2015). Adult ESL education in the United States can be a cacophonous quagmire lacking cohesion and often result in a learning gap for adult limited-English learners (Eyring, 2014). The National Center for Educational Statistics' (2012) sponsored an assessment of adult skills called the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. The research made a strong correlation between English literacy and educational success. The research further underscored the need for consistent policies and procedures for those whose English literacy skills are in need of development. According to Wrigley, Chen, White, and Soroui (2009), "This investment in educational programs would mean not only an investment in new Americans but could serve to strengthen communities and the nation as a whole" (p. 23).

By exploring the topics related to adult education and English Language Learners, the researcher sought to assist stakeholders in developing andragogical approaches that foster the most effective and mutually beneficial learning experience for the adult LEP student. Also, the researcher examined the variables that influence the program and participants in the areas of academic and social assimilation, curriculum and institutional support and cultural and educational mores. Based on this premise, the following research questions were established.

Research Questions

1. What factors influenced adult LEP students to postpone or not enroll in EAP classes upon completion of the prescribed ESOL courses at a state college in Florida?

2. What is the level of efficacy of the student services currently provided to by the college to the adult ESOL students?

3. How do adult ESOL students' academic and social assimilation, curriculum and institutional support and cultural and educational mores affect the likelihood of enrolling in EAP courses?

4. What andragogic strategies can faculty and stakeholders integrate into the current ESOL program to enrich and augment higher levels of student enrollment in EAP courses?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the major barriers that keep ESOL students from progressing to EAP courses at a state college in Florida. Creswell (2012) determined that research is important for three reasons: first, it adds to the existing knowledge; second, it proposes improvements for practice; and, third, it provides information to policymakers in areas critical of various educational topics. The limited literature regarding these inhibitors and how they hamper the forward progress of adult ESOL students underscored the need for further studies to better understand how postsecondary institutions can better assist this multilingual population to go on to institutions of higher learning.

The researcher analyzed the LEP students' views of their experiences while enrolled in ESOL classes to provide a gestalt of the research problem. The researcher anticipated a collective case study that assisted in identifying the specific impediments and challenges that foreign-language adult learners face when transitioning to EAP courses. Merriam and Bierema (2014) suggested that case studies explore and examine current real-life phenomenon through comprehensive contextual analysis of a restricted number of conditions or events and their connections. Creswell (2012) noted that case studies focus mainly on the specificity of cases and how their individuality contributed to further understanding of the phenomena and are used to pull similar themes from various situations.

As it related to the adult ESOL students investigated in this study, learners came from many different walks of life, a variety of nationalities and cultures, and had a diverse set of expectations and agendas. The researcher sought to provide a platform for

these adult learners through the analysis of a web-based questionnaire and one-on-one interviews. Creswell (2012) likened research to "bricklayers who build a wall brick by brick, continually adding to the wall and, in the process, creating a stronger structure" (p. 4). This approach also added to the reliability and validity of the study.

Qualitative Research Approach

The researcher conducted a collective case study of a group of adult ESOL students, 18 years and older, to garner an understanding of the factors that inhibit them from enrolling in EAP classes. Creswell (2012) noted that research is a series of steps used to collect, evaluate and disseminate information to increase our understanding of a topic. The researcher considered four specific steps for the study:

1. The researcher sought approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to gain access to the site and related participants. Maxwell (1996) noted that the IRB process requires assessing the possible risks, including, but not limited to, societal, mental, physical, emotional or legal harm.

2. From the target population, the researcher selected the sample population by using an electronic questionnaire (see Appendix A). From the questionnaire, a sample population was randomly chosen to participate in the study. Those chosen to participate were notified by electronic mail (see Appendix B) and subsequently scheduled for one-on-one interviews with the researcher using the approved interview protocol (see Appendix C).

3. After the data was collected, the researcher analyzed the data and explored for emerging themes to develop a general understanding of the research problem and to describe the cases. Qualitative researchers rely on a few instances with many variables (Creswell, 2012).

4. The researcher disseminated and discussed the findings in Chapter 5 of this research; specifically, those with commonalities using a cross-case approach (Creswell, 2012).

The primary objective of this study was to explore variables that include Malcolm Knowles' philosophy of andragogy, the study of adult learning, as a theoretical framework. Knowles (1990) purported, "Adults are motivated to devote energy to learn something to the extent that they perceive that it will help them perform tasks or deal with problems that they confront in their life situations" (p. 61). The researcher also incorporated the areas of second-language acquisition including Language 1 (L1) and Language 2 (L2) skills, and cognitive academic language proficiency. The three primary areas of concern that potentially influenced the respondents were academic and social assimilation, curriculum and institutional support and cultural and educational mores.

Participants

The participants in this study were adult ESOL students over 18 years of age. They were previously enrolled in the ESOL program at the study site from January 2015 through December 2016 and did not pursue EAP courses. The researcher chose a method universally referred to as purposeful sampling that was used with the target population. This methodology is commonly used in qualitative research for the identification and collection of evidence-rich cases for the most efficient use of limited resources (Maxwell, 1996). This encompassed identifying and choosing individuals or factions of individuals that are conversant or well-informed as it relates to a specific phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). The target population was representative of several ethnic groups in the program, including, European (including Eastern European), Middle Eastern, African, Asian and Latin American (Carribean,

South, and Central America) adult populations to reach a maximal variation sampling. Within the target population of 100 adult ESOL students, the researcher selected a random sample of 20 students who were enrolled in ESOL classes at the study site from January 2015 to December 2016. Creswell (2012) defined a sample as a "subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for generalizing about the target population" (p. 142).

The researcher requested that the Office of Research, Technology, and Accountability at the study site supply electronic mail addresses for students enrolled in the ESOL program from January 2015 through December 2016. The researcher invited potential participants via email or by phone to participate in the study. The letter of invitation (see Appendix A) was comprised of six questions requesting that participants provide information about specific characteristics and demographics pertinent to the research. The questions were: (a) What is your gender?; (b) Were you at least 18 years old when you were enrolled in ESOL classes?; (c) In what country were you born?; (d) Were you enrolled in ESOL courses between January 2015 and December 2016; (e) What is the highest level of ESOL that you completed; and, (f) Upon completion of your ESOL classes, did you enroll in EAP courses at the state college? This information helped the researcher to identify ESOL students who met the study criteria.

After that, the researcher scheduled face-to-face meetings, whenever feasible, and gave prospective respondents consent forms. The researcher utilized the Informed Consent Form approved by the IRB to ensure that the respondents' rights were outlined. These rights included his or her right to voluntarily participate in the interview process as well as withdraw at any time from the study. The consent form included the purpose of the study, a detailed description of the procedures, and the participants'

ability to obtain a copy of the findings. The participants had the right to ask questions and have their privacy respected (Maxwell, 1996). Also, the participants were informed of any policy changes that accrued as a result of the study. Signatures of the researcher and participants agreeing to these prerequisites were incorporated into the consent form (Creswell, 2012). The Informed Consent Form was given to the participants once the IRB process was completed and the study had been approved.

Data Collection Tools

The data in the study were derived from the analysis of one-on-one interviews with the sample population. There were several options for obtaining a data collection instrument. Creswell (2012) contended the researcher might create and develop the instrument; locate a data collection instrument that has been previously approved and administered; or, locate an instrument that has been previously approved and administered and adapt it to the specific study. The researcher located and received permission to use an interview protocol (see Appendix C) implemented in a previously approved study.

Procedures

The procedures for this collective case study specifically presented how the researcher anticipated the collection of data based on the research questions. To remain in compliance with the federal regulations to protect human subjects in research studies, the researcher obtained permission from the IRB at Nova Southeastern University. Upon receipt of the approval from the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education, the researcher contacted prospective participants via electronic mail. Participants were apprised of the rationale of the research study; their right to voluntary participation and withdrawal at any time; the procedures of the study and what they should expect; how

the study would protect their anonymity; and, its potential benefits (Creswell, 2012). The respondents were asked to complete the electronic questionnaire within a 14-day period. The questionnaire took approximately five to ten minutes to complete.

The researcher used a probability sampling tool called stratified sampling. Respondents were divided or stratified into groups according to their respective ethnic groups, European (including Eastern European), Middle Eastern, African, Asian and Latin American (Carribean, South, and Central America). Four respondents were chosen from each ethnic category. This process ensured that the sample included specific characteristics that the researcher wanted to be represented in the sample. Creswell (2012) purported that the process of choosing a stratified random sample consists of (a) dividing the group by stratum; and, (b) sampling within each group to the participants chosen are proportional to their representation in the target population.

Once the selection was completed, the selected candidates were contacted via electronic mail, the interviews were scheduled, and face-to-face meetings ensued. The one-on-one meetings were used to ascertain the efficacy of the services provided to ESOL students at the institution and how the program fosters a desire to take EAP classes and ultimately college courses. Creswell (2012) posited that "one-on-one interviews are useful for asking sensitive questions and enabling interviewees to ask questions or provide comments that go beyond the initial questions" (p.384).

After the researcher acquired the desired number of participants and received their consent forms, the necessary steps were taken to schedule the one-on-one meetings. During the meetings, the researcher interfaced with the participants and used probes to encourage them to elaborate on their ideas and answers (Creswell, 2012). To use the appropriate data collection procedures, the participants and researcher met at the

research site for the face-to-face interviews, using the approved interview protocol (see Appendix C), in a private room that is free of potential disruptions and allow the respondents to answer any additional questions. To maintain confidentiality, the researcher assigned alpha-numeric pseudonyms to the participants.

The one-on-one meetings sought to provide the researcher with information about adult ESOL students. In the interviews, the researcher examined the major factors that prohibit ESOL students from progressing to EAP courses. Thus, the researcher asked questions related to the participants' feelings and experiences as ESOL students. The researcher also explored variables that included a theoretical framework that incorporated the areas of andragogy, the study of adult learning; second-language acquisition including Language 1 (L1) and Language 2 (L2) skills; and, cognitive academic language proficiency. The interview protocol was divided into three distinct sections: Section A provided the researcher with demographic information about participants; Section B queried the participants about cultural and educational mores, internal and external motivations and beliefs systems as they relate to education; and, Section C elicited feedback about their experiences as adult ESOL students at the study site. These questions assisted the researcher in identifying the three primary areas of concern that potentially influenced them: academic and social assimilation, curriculum and institutional support and cultural and educational mores.

The data collected from the participants' one-on-one interviews were applied to the research questions developed from this project. Research question one was developed to examine factors identified in the literature that influenced adult LEP students to postpone or not enroll in EAP classes upon completion of the prescribed ESOL courses at a state college in Florida. Research question two was established to

investigate the level of efficacy of the student services currently provided to ESOL students. Research question three was formulated to assess how ESOL students' academic and social assimilation, curriculum and institutional support and cultural and educational mores affect the likelihood of enrolling in EAP courses. Research question four sought to explore potential andragogic strategies that faculty and stakeholders may integrate into the current ESOL program to generate higher levels of student enrollment in EAP courses.

Creswell (2012) encouraged the importance of checking the validity of qualitative phases of the study. Creswell explained the validity is a critical component of qualitative research because various strategies can be used to determine the authenticity of the researcher and respondent accounts. The researcher employed four techniques to enhance validity. First, the researcher piloted the interview protocol with two ESOL instructors, one currently working at the study site and the other at another local university, to confirm that each question in easy to understand and addressed the andragogical principle being explored. Second, the researcher enhanced the meetings by taking notes and including personal observations of the respondents. Finally, to strengthen the validity of the overall study, the researcher enlisted the help of a peer debriefer throughout the process to ask and clarify questions and offer interpretation beyond the researcher's purview.

Creswell (2009) defined reliability as "stability or consistency of responses" (p. 190). Litwin (2003) supported Creswell's premise and surmised that reliability is the "statistical measure of the reproducibility or stability of the data gathered by the survey instrument" (p. 6). To safeguard reliability in qualitative research, the examination of credibility is paramount. To underscore trustworthiness, the researcher (a) read and

reviewed each interview transcript entirely while listening to the recordings to ensure that the transcriptions were accurate; and, (b) personally conducted all of the data analysis while ensuring consistency in the coding and analysis of the interviews.

Data analysis. The purpose of the qualitative analysis is to construe the data and the resultant themes and facilitate understanding of the phenomenon of interest being studied (Patton, 2002). Using the NVivo platform, the researcher utilized a method called coding. Creswell (2012) noted, "The process of coding data occurs during data collection so that you can determine what data to collect next" (p. 441). The researcher also used in-depth face-to-face interviews to collect data. The researcher utilized an electronic survey tool, SurveyMonkey, to score the obtained data. A technique called stratified sampling was used to select the sample population. Once the interviews with the sample population were completed and transcribed, the researcher organized, consolidated, managed and evaluated the data using the statistical software program, NVivo. The researcher analyzed the data garnered from the interviewees using descriptive and inferential statistics by organizing the data into individual computer files using alpha-numeric pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the participants (Creswell, 2009). The relevant data were then coded to distinguish pertinent data from that which does not provide evidence.

After the qualitative process of data analysis, the researcher used the statistical software, NVivo to identify themes that developed based on the elements addressed in the one-on-one meetings. Ultimately, the researcher sought to create a narrative that summarized and connected the findings in a cohesive, cogent and comprehensive fashion.

Functionality of NVivo. NVivo is a statistical software program that supports

qualitative research. The software is designed to help the researcher consolidate,

evaluate and find thematic patterns in qualitative data such as interviews and surveys.

O'Neill (2013) purported the plethora of tools accessible to the researcher within

NVivo afford the researcher specific and powerful techniques to safeguard the

dependability and meticulousness of a higher degree study. The researcher utilized an

electronic survey tool called SurveyMonkey to score the obtained data for input into

Nvivo. From the collected data, the researcher provided a summary of results that

detailed the impediments or challenges that ESOL students face when transitioning to

EAP courses. The researcher used the multiple phases of the NVivo software to (a)

enter the data; (b) organize and encode the data; (c) analyze the data; and, (d) develop

themes from the data sources. Each stage contained important progressions that were

finalized before commencing subsequent phases.

In the first or Descriptive phase, the data were entered, attributes assigned, and

values and classifications created. The researcher entered all of these descriptive details

of the research project into NVivo sources, which contained the sub-sections of

internals, memos, and externals (O'Neill, 2013). These details included transcribed

interview recordings, respondents' demographics, and interview notes. NVivo's

Livescribe, the audio component, allowed for the playback of the transcripts. The

Memos feature, embedded in the software, allowed the researcher to record thoughts

and analyses of the data. The Memos feature of the software allowed for the storage of

pertinent annotations and footnotes about the interview transcripts.

The Topic or second phase, was where topics were identified, and initial nodes

created. In this phase, recognizable issues were extracted from the transcripts. In short,

the prolific software grouped related ideas into nodes or organized "containers." The researcher linked the nodes to each of the respondents' values and characteristics. O'Neill (2013) surmised that for queries to be generated in the software program, a node classification sheet has to be created. All respondents' aliases were imported, and a source and reference to each were designated. Once a node classification was devoted and subsequently linked to all respondents, the result served as the gateway to the next crucial step needed to create queries. Queries, as proposed by O'Neill, distinguish the parts of the sources in a data set that contain unambiguous and desired information.

The next phase, or the Analytic phase, encompassed the preliminary amalgamation of nodes and the running of queries. O'Neill (2013) suggested that this is the stage of examining more intricate aspects of the nodes. The nodes were merged into a categorized arrangement to allow for a higher proliferation of analytical coding using queries. This merging of the higher order nodes allowed for the streamlining of the data set and the garnering of basic themes.

The final stage was the Conclusions phase. In this stage the data were verified, interpretations deduced from the data, and findings were drawn. O'Neill (2013) noted that NVivo can assist in organizing the data, so the researcher can hypothesize conclusions that are trustworthy and straightforward. O'Neill posited that the qualitative researcher has a limited number of guidelines for consistent and comprehensive outcomes. Thus, the varieties of tools available to the researcher within NVivo provide the researcher with methods to ensure the dependability and thoroughness of a higher degree study.

Creswell (2012) postulated that descriptive statistics are useful in summarizing results for individual questions and to "describe the trend in the data" (p. 190). The

researcher made recommendations that outline strategies for enabling ESOL students to progress to EAP courses and ultimately meet their educational goals.

Ethical Considerations

To avoid potential pitfalls involving ethical considerations, the researcher adhered to the standard procedures and ethical norms required for the study (Creswell, 2012). Fink (2003) purported that the survey system should operate ethically and have adequate resources to achieve its goals. In the late 20th century the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research published *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Protection of Human Subjects of Research*. Today, this report is still regarded as the "gold standard" of ethical research, including survey research (Fink, 2003a). Ethical issues in survey research are comprised of best practices. According to Creswell (2009), the privacy of responses must be protected, in addition to reducing associations between data respondents and participants. The researcher has kept the stored data in such a way that only the researcher will have access to the files through security codes. The researcher will not share data with colleagues, peers or any individual outside of the study. The researcher thanked the participants and assured them of confidentiality upon completion of each survey and subsequently at the end of the interviews. Maxwell (1996) cautioned about the importance of ethics and noted that it should be paramount in the researcher's agenda.

Trustworthiness

The researcher used a collective case study to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and capitalize on diversity in the individual cases. A fundamental issue in qualitative research is trustworthiness otherwise known as dependability or credibility.

The researcher incorporated the core principles of andragogy during the interview process by building rapport with the participants and fostering a comfortable and warm environment for interaction. The researcher began each interview by outlining the purpose of the study, why he or she was chosen to participate, as well as how the questions would be asked during the meeting. If the questions were ambiguous to the interviewee, the researcher restated and clarified the questions as needed. According to Fink (2003; 2003a), there are many different ways of establishing trustworthiness, including interviewer support, peer debriefing, protracted engagement, negative case analysis, auditability, and confirmability.

Potential Research Bias

Currently, the researcher is an adjunct professor at the research site. The researcher sought to manage any potential bias and avoid any assumptions that could arise because of the researcher's position at the College. Creswell (2012) asserted,

Survey researchers emphasize sample selection of a sample from a

to which they can generalize results, collection data using

questionnaires, web-based questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, . . .

and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each; administer

well-tested instruments with good questions and scales; and seek a high

response rate from participants using procedures that will ensure a high

return rate and will not be biased (pp. 403-404).

The researcher safeguarded the names and identities of potential participants and assured them that all their collected information would remain confidential both before and after the study. Their responses did not affect their grades or their participation in any of the institution's educational programs.

Limitations

There were limitations pertaining to the study. According to Creswell (2012), surveys involve limitations and constraints. The researcher suggested generalizing study findings to ESOL programs that are similar in nature. Another limitation was the number of participants in the study. The sample size may limit the ability to generalize the results (Creswell, 2009); however, it provided a useful tool for recommending subsequent studies. Web-based questionnaires have an inherent bias toward certain demographic groups that use computers regularly. Electronic questionnaires are often not based on arbitrary sampling so that drawing conclusions about a specific population may present a challenge to the research (Creswell, 2012).

Maxwell (1996) observed that prejudices might occur, either by not receiving a response from the intended participants or in the nature and truthfulness of the established responses. Other issues may arise from respondents intentionally misreporting their behaviors or participants not being able to recall the circumstances that caused them to make particular decisions (Creswell, 2012). The primary objective of the researcher was to examine the ESOL program and various services afforded to adult learners upon completion of the ESOL program. Therefore, the study did not offer the viewpoints of students who continued their postsecondary studies at the study site or withdrew before the completion of the ESOL program. Additional limitations to the study included the use of a purposeful sample and qualitative interviewing, as the findings cannot be generalized to the entire population of adult ESOL students.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the major barriers, as demonstrated in the literature, which deters ESOL students from pursuing EAP courses. The researcher employed a collective case study in addition to conducting one-on-one meetings to gather data. The researcher responded to several research questions related to a multifaceted set of issues that affect the academics of ESOL students. The study focused on addressing the following qualitative research questions:

1. What factors influenced adult LEP students to postpone or not enroll in EAP classes upon completion of the prescribed ESOL courses at a state college in Florida?

2. What is the level of efficacy of the student services currently provided to by the college to the adult ESOL students?

3. How do adult ESOL students' academic and social assimilation, curriculum and institutional support and multicultural and educational mores affect the likelihood of enrolling in EAP courses?

4. What andragogic strategies can faculty and stakeholders integrate into the current ESOL program to enrich and augment higher levels of student enrollment in EAP courses?

The researcher conducted the study during the spring 2018 semester at a state college. Initially, the researcher secured permission to conduct the study from Nova Southeastern University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Then, the researcher received the authorization of the IRB at the state college. Next, the researcher sought respondents for the study via a survey conducted in Survey Monkey. Fink (2003) posited that surveys are methods of collecting information about people's attitudes,

experiences, and customs. Researchers who implement qualitative surveys do not necessarily aim for generalities; instead, they seek deep and individual meaning to the questions of interest (Fink, 2003; 2003b).

Last, to explore the inhibitors that face LEP students from transitioning to EAP courses, the researcher interviewed 10 former students. These students were enrolled in the state college from January 2015 to December 2016 and opted not to pursue EAP courses upon completion of their ESOL classes. Upon meeting the students, they were each given a hard copy of the questionnaire to review and take notes as needed. This action fostered a more relaxed and stress-free environment. Overall, students expressed that their responses would be more cogent and well-thought-out if written before the audio-recordings commenced. The researcher also took notes as necessary. The first seven interview questions provided essential demographic information about the respondents including their educational background in their native countries. The next 13 questions probed the participants and were related to their cultural and educational mores, peripheral and internal influences and personal expectations. The remaining questions, 21-26, prompted feedback about the level of efficacy of the services provided to the ESOL students (see Appendix C).

During the face-to-face interviews, study respondents outlined their experiences as ESOL students. Such meetings are in-depth explorations in which participants are encouraged to converse without restrictions about whatever comes to mind regarding the topics related to the interview (Creswell, 2012; Fink, 2003; Litwin, 2003). Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher transcribed the recorded meetings, to ensure the accuracy of the garnered data. Subsequently, the researcher utilized the qualitative data analysis software program, NVivo. Upon analysis of the collected data,

various themes evolved. These themes were further solidified based on the interview respondents' answers and the consistency of responses to the factors identified in the literature, including academic and social assimilation, curriculum and institutional support, and cultural and educational mores. Oishi (2003) purported, "Researchers often use software programs that can assist them with the process of noticing recurring themes in text data" (p.177). Researchers typically scrutinize the data from interviews by organizing themes and topics that come up in the exchanges and interpreting meanings theoretically rather than statistically (Fink, 2003a; Oishi, 2003). The analyzation of the data helped the researcher to examine the significant barriers, as demonstrated in the literature, which prevent ESOL students from pursuing EAP courses.

Description of the Participants

The research site for this study was at a state college located in Florida. The college offers an array of English Language Learning Programs under its Academics umbrella. These include English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); English for Academic Purposes (EAP); and, the English Language Institute (ELI). Students whose second language is English make up approximately 4% of the total student population currently enrolled at that college. The typical ESOL student is over 18 years of age. These adults need to be proficient in English for a plethora of reasons including communicating with their employers, corresponding with their children's teachers, negotiating the myriad of loopholes in the governmental and legal systems, and necessary daily interactions in business and personal situations. The researcher chose the study respondents from those that answered a survey (see Appendix A), who were

at least 18 years old and did not immediately pursue EAP courses upon completion of their ESOL classes.

To mitigate the projected limitations in study responses, the researcher solicited survey responses from a diverse and representative sample of students. The respondents were illustrative of several ethnic groups in the program, European (including Eastern European), Middle Eastern, African, Asian and Latin American (Carribean, South, and Central America) to reach a maximal variation sampling. Litwin (2003) maintained that when you are administering surveys in populations with a variety of ethnicities, creeds, or nationalities, you must make sure that your questions translate well into both the language and the culture of your intended audience.

Survey research has a tendency to be negatively affected by slow and limited response rates (Creswell, 2012; Fink, 2003b). Due to limited participant availability and time constraints, the resulting target sample size was 50% less than the original target. Fink (2003) added that all survey researchers anticipate a high percentage of responses; however, no single response rate is considered typical. Survey samples are not significant in themselves. The significance of a sample lies in the accuracy with which it characterizes or emulates the target population (Litwin, 2003). Within the target population of 100 adult ESOL students, the researcher selected at target sample size of 10 students. The researcher chose the first five female and five male students who qualified through the initial survey and who responded to the letter of invitation. The researcher ascribed alpha-numeric pseudonyms to respondents to ensure their privacy and identity were protected.

The participants had a range of demographic characteristics. Respondents came from a variety of backgrounds and had varying educational and career objectives. As

shown in Table 1, participants provided data on gender, age, country of origin, native

language, the highest level of ESOL completed, and educational background and future

educational/career objectives.

Table 1

Respondent Demographics

Student	Age	Country	Native Language	Highest Level of ESOL completed	Educational Background	Future Educational/ Career Objectives
F1	42	Myanmar	Burmese	800	High School Diploma	None at this time
F2	47	Puerto Rico	Spanish	800	High School Diploma	None at this time
F3	55	Panama	Spanish	800	4-year degree, Teacher	EAP, undetermined
F4	41	Haiti	Creole	800	High School Diploma	EAP, 4-year degree, Nursing
F5	33	Cuba	Spanish	800	4-year degree, Accountant	EAP, 4-year degree, Accounting
M1	57	Colombia	Spanish	800	Advanced degrees, Attorney	EAP, Certificate program, Paralegal
M2	30	Italy	Italian	800	High School Dropout	GED program, 4-year degree, Engineering
M3	45	St. Lucia	St. Lucian Creole French	700	High School Dropout	GED Program, 4-year degree, Business
M4	44	Cuba	Spanish	800	4-year degree, Agriculture	None at this time
M5	36	Eygpt	Arabic	700	Advanced degrees, Pharmacist	None, practicing pharmacist in the U.S.

Five respondents reported that they had attended and completed study at a

college or university in their respective countries of origin. The Pew Research Center

(2015) reported that more than 40% of immigrants who have arrived in the U.S. in that

last five years have a 4-year degree or higher. The first seven interview questions also included questions relative to the respondents' age at the time they were enrolled at the college, native country, first language, the highest level of ESOL classes completed, and future educational and career objectives. As shown in Table 1, eight respondents achieved the highest level of ESOL classes, Level 800, at the college. None of the respondents reported their lack of proficiency in English as the reason for not continuing to EAP classes. All of the respondents cited a lack of interest or work commitments as being the primary reasons for not moving on to EAP courses once they completed ESOL classes.

To garner a more meaningful understanding of underlying themes and textual categories, the researcher utilized NVivo. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software. The researcher by importing the transcribed interviews into the subsections of memos and externals. The researcher started the coding process by importing the transcribed meetings into the subsections of memos and externals. The researcher used the coding process to create nodes for each of the items in the interview protocol to analyze the findings for each of the research questions. For example, a set was generated for Research Question 1 included the following nodes: (a) college experiences that made the respondents cognizant of their ethnicity, (b) participation in clubs, organizations or on social media with peers, (c) the utilization of college resources including computer labs and the library, and (d) challenges. Using NVivo's text search query feature, the researcher selected emerging themes for each research question. Table 2 highlights some of the keywords around the term *challenges* that helped to identify themes for Research Question 1.

Utilizing NVivo, the researcher explored the frequency of particular words to investigate trends and determine specific emerging themes for each research question. These findings and themes are delineated in the subsequent sections.

Table 2

Word Text Query for Node: Challenges

Word	Length	Count	Weighted %	Similar Words
challenges	10	146	3.53	Challenge, challenged, challenging
college	7	143	.98	college
attending	9	70	.52	Attend, attended, attending
English	7	49	.37	English
working	7	37	.28	Work, worked, working
decision	8	37	.28	Decision, decisions
completion	10	26	.19	Complete, completed, completing, completion
influenced	10	21	.16	Influence, influenced, influencing

Findings of Research Question 1

What factors influenced adult LEP students to postpone or not enroll in EAP classes upon completion of the prescribed ESOL courses at a state college in Florida? Adult students enrolled in ESOL classes are typically well beyond high school age. In higher education, the adult student population may consist of students over 22 years of age (Delemios, 2015; Huang, 2013; Knowles, 1990). These students are traditionally entering college for the first time, transferring from another college, working professionals entering college, and those returning students who may have attended college in prior years but decided to delay college due to work obligations, familial

status, and life circumstances. The researcher defined themes that materialized during the data analysis based on the elements identified in the literature as outlined in Appendix D. Several of the factors identified in the literature is the academic and social assimilation of the students at the college, curriculum and institutional support, and cultural and educational norms.

The respondents typically reported that their ethnic backgrounds positively affected their college experience and they did not feel as if they were treated differently from their American counterparts. The student identified as F5 stated, " I did not feel as if I was treated differently because in my class we were all immigrants chasing after the same goal." The student identified as M3 posited, "Everyone at the college treated me fairly. My classmates, my instructors and the people in the ESOL office treated me nice." As shown in Appendix D, students' responses to the questions underscored some themes that concurred with their academic and social assimilation and the level of curriculum and institutional support.

Social assimilation within the college setting was not paramount to any of the respondents. None of the respondents joined any clubs or organizations during their time at the college. All of the students reported that this was not an essential component for them and cited that their full-time job responsibilities and family obligations made it difficult to join these groups. Only one respondent, Student F5, reported making connections with at least two of her classmates on social media due to their similar familial compositions and Latin American heritage. The student identified as M3 noted, " I was aware of the various groups and clubs around the college campus. However, with the manual labor I did all day long and then coming straight to school at night, I barely had time for anything else." Student M5 had a similar response, "With working

full-time and all of the homework I had, I was not able to help my spouse at all around the house. This made it very difficult for us and my daughter to spend time together as a family." Three other respondents indicated that they were made aware of the various clubs and organizations by other classmates. Student F1 remarked, "I really wanted to get more involved with the International Club but my busy schedule and the times they met during the days conflicted with my classes."

Findings of Research Question 2

What is the level of efficacy of the student services currently provided to by the college to the adult ESOL students? Students' responses related to questions focused on awareness of college resources and other challenges they faced. As noted in Table 3, the study findings showed that students faced numerous challenges as they made their decision to attend the college after they completed their ESOL requirements. Five students noted that their employment situation made it difficult to continue past ESOL. Several students stated that they lacked the residency requirements that would make the costs associated with the EAP classes more affordable. One response from student M5, "At the time I had only been in Florida for a short time. I did not even have a driver license. Without proof of residency, I would have paid three times as much for EAP classes." Another student, identified as F3, noted, "My financials stopped me from moving to EAP classes. Once they told me what the cost of EAP classes was, I knew that I could not afford it." All of the respondents reported that the school's academic advisors were very helpful and having access to them at all times made some these challenges easier to navigate. Pellegrino, Snyder, Crutchfield, Curtis and Pringle (2015) encouraged institutions to explore the significance of academic advising and the role they play in supporting institutional and student objectives. In short, these advisors

become strategic partners as educational organizations seek to influence institutional

knowledge to achieve student success.

Table 3

Interview Questions and Emerging Themes for Research Question 2

Interview question	Emergent themes
13. Challenges faced as students made their decision to attend the college	Difficulty with the English language Finances Admissions process Work schedule
15. Received financial assistance or grants	Received no financial assistance, paid out-of-pocket for tuition Tuition expenses paid by local charitable organizations
22. Challenges/obstacles experienced as Limited English Proficient (LEP) students attending college	Aware that their limited English proficiency has been a deterrent to career advancement Need to improve their English language skills to be successful in the United States

Additionally, eight out of the 10 respondents reported that they paid out-of-

pocket for their tuition expenses. These eight students reported that because

the cost of the ESOL classes was not prohibitive; there was no need for outside

financial assistance. The two students from Cuba noted that their refugee status

automatically qualified them for tuition assistance from a local charity. Student M4

said, "I never paid for nothing. Once I came to Florida, I only had to prove that I

come from Cuba, and they took care of everything."

Findings of Research Question 3

How do ESOL students' academic and social assimilation, curriculum and

institutional support and multicultural and educational mores affect the likelihood of

enrolling in EAP courses? One of the significant emergent themes related to

respondents' educational norms was that they were inextricably linked to their familial

backgrounds. All of the respondents were born outside of the United States. They also reported they came to America after they were adults and never attended school in the U.S. prior to taking ESOL classes at the college. Five students attested to attending college in their native country. The remaining five participants reported that their formal education only went through high school. However, two of the students dropped before receiving their diplomas. Respondents recounted their formative years as being filled with immediate and extended family. They largely described growing up in warm, friendly environments in relative poverty. Respondent F5 reported that both her parents were Russian exiles and earned their Bachelor's degrees in their native homeland. Student M2 stated, "I did not grow up with either of my biological parents" and therefore knew nothing about their educational backgrounds. Students F2 and M1 stated that at least one of their parents were only educated through elementary school. Respondent F2 further noted that it was "My decision to go to the college because in order to get a better job here in the USA, I need to improve my English. This sentiment was echoed by Student F3, " I made the decision to attend this college to improve my English because I know I would not have good job if my English did not get better."

Students also commented about their families' expectations once they decided to attend the college. As shown in Table 4, students' responses were mostly consistent; that is, their families expected them to learn English. Seven respondents surmised that their primary motivator for attending was to get a better job. Student M1 said, "My expectations were that I wanted to go back to school. I was a lawyer in Colombia, and I hope to do something in the legal profession here in the United States. Student F3 was the only student who expressed that her current position as a Customer Service Representative for a local shipping company hinged on completing ESOL classes. The

student added, "My supervisor encouraged me to go back to school to improve my

English. During my last evaluation, she said that the job that I did require me to have

better English skills even though I had been doing it for 15 years. I felt very

embarrassed." Student F4 stated, "I am the primary breadwinner in my family. . . I

work sometimes three jobs . . . but once I get my degree in Nursing, I hope to get a

better job, make more money, and see my kids."

Table 4

Interview Questions and Emerging Themes for Research Question 3

Interview question	Emergent themes
8. Familial background/ Primary wage earner	Do not live with parents
	Live with spouse and/or minor children
	Primary source of financial support for dependents
9. Childhood atmosphere (setting)	Close-knit nuclear and extended family
	Friendly and warm environment
	Poor living conditions
10. Parents' educational background	Some high school
	Graduated from high school
	Graduated from college
11. Influenced decision to attend college	Self, spouse, supervisor/boss
12. Family expectations once enrolled in college	Improved English language skills
	Get a better job
	Attend college and enroll certificate/degree program
23. Accomplished objectives (felt experience at college was successful)	English Language skills improved
	Better job prospects

Several themes emerged in response to participants feeling that they

successfully met their objectives for attending the college. The first theme was that all

10 students thought they had accomplished their goal of improving their English

language skills. Seven respondents noted that they were able to secure better jobs

because of their ability to communicate more clearly. The student identified as M1

stated that he, "Did not feel as confident as he would like to feel at this job." He further

added, "My boss often has me train him on a particular project, then he trains the other

staff. I feel he does this because he does not think people will understand my English."

Student M5 remarked, "When I first arrived in this country I was working in a

supermarket. It was horrible. Now I am working at a bank, and I feel much more

confident about speaking in English to customers." Student M2 added, "I dropped out

of high school in Italy. I had no confidence in my English at first. I felt I really

improved in just six months. I know I can get my GED once I come back to school."

Findings of Research Question 4

What andragogic strategies can faculty and stakeholders integrate into the

current ESOL program to enrich and augment higher levels of student enrollment in

EAP courses? Respondents' answers shown in Table 5 underscored students' feelings

about attending the college, their career objectives and the reasons why they did not

take EAP classes upon completion of their ESOL requirements. Generally, students

enjoyed their classes and felt that the instructors were fair and caring. For example,

Student F3 commented, "I took two classes with the same professor. She was great and

really cared about me personally. She helped me with a lot of things. She was

amazing!" Several students did not see themselves attending classes at the future for a

number of reasons. Student M4 noted, "I had taken the TOEFL exam over 30 times

prior to coming to the college. I could not pass the reading portion of the test." The

student further noted that after enrolling in the ESOL program, he finally passed the test

and is currently studying for the exam to qualify as a licensed pharmacist; thus, there is

no need to return to the college. Student F1 stated, "I went to another school to get my

certificate as a Certified Nurse Assistant. I passed the test the first time. I am a nun and

being a CNA is all I ever really wanted to do." Two of the respondents express a desire

to return and complete the GED program. They both felt that their English had

improved to the point where they did not need to attend EAP classes.

Table 5

Interview Questions and Emerging Themes for Research Question 4

Interview question	Emergent themes
21. Feelings about classes and instructors	Enjoyed ESOL classes Felt instructors cared them personally Instructors cared about their progress
24. Career objectives	None at this time Complete GED Pursue a certification Go on to EAP, attend college and earn a 4-year degree
25. Enrolling in EAP, certificate, degree programs in the future	Yes, will enroll in the future No, see no benefit in future enrollment
26. Influenced decision not to immediately take EAP classes after completing ESOL	Family/job obligations Tuition too expensive Not required based on career goals Had to wait until state residency requirements were met so tuition would be more affordable

All of the students interviewed reported a positive experience while attending

the college. However, only three respondents were certain that they would be taking

EAP classes at the college in the future. Student F4 said, "I will definitely be attending

school and taking EAP classes in the Fall 2018 term. I have to become a registered

nurse. This is my American dream, and I will not give up until I get it." Student M5

mentioned that she planned on enrolling in EAP classes in the Spring 2018 semester

now that she met the residency requirements. She stated, "My plan is to go all the way

and get my Bachelor's degree in Business. I want to be an accountant just like I was in

my country." Student M4 was confident that he would go on to trade school and

become a journeyman and ultimately become a certified plumber. The student further added, " I am very proud of my English. When I first came here, I could hardly speak a word to anyone. Now look at me, I am having a full conversation with you."

Summary

Subsequent to the qualitative data analysis, the researcher identified themes related to each research question. The NVivo software allowed the researcher to create nodes, run queries, and matrix coding queries for continuous consideration of the participants' transcripts to underscore critical aspects relevant to the data analysis. Upon completion of the data analysis, the researcher compiled emerging themes to address the findings in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview of the Study

  The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the major barriers, as demonstrated in the literature, that deter adult ESOL students from pursuing EAP courses at a state college in Florida. In this chapter, the researcher discusses how the findings of the study are relevant to adult ESOL students regarding the factors affecting their transition from ESOL to EAP courses. The typical ESOL student is over 18 years of age. These adults need to be proficient in English for a vast array of reasons including communicating with their employers, corresponding with their children's teachers, negotiating the myriad of loopholes in the governmental and legal systems and essential daily interactions and business situations.

  In order to explore factors affecting EAP course enrollment, the researcher employed a collective case study in addition to conducting face-to-face interviews to gather data. The qualitative design involved the analysis of 10 participants' one-on-one interview transcripts for research questions in conjunction with respondent data. The participants responded to several multifaceted research questions related to the academics of adult ESOL students. The respondents' demographics included sex, age, native country and language, the highest level of ESOL courses completed, educational background, and future educational/career objectives. This research also discussed the relationship of the findings pertaining to the literature related to the challenges of adult ESOL students as they attempt to further their education, explicitly those transitioning to EAP courses. In the ensuing discussion, the researcher interprets the results, reflects on the implications of the findings, offers conclusions and limitations of the study, and makes recommendations for further research.

Interpretation of the Results According to the Literature

      Research Question 1. What factors influenced adult LEP students to postpone or not enroll in EAP classes upon completion of the prescribed ESOL courses at a state college in Florida? In responding to this query, the results of questions 7, 8, 10 and 17-20 of the interview protocol demonstrated the academic and social assimilation related to the ESOL students. After the analysis of the literature, Michalski (2014) concluded that some of the primary reasons students withdraw from college are non-academic. Non-academic reasons may range from job conflict to lack of childcare to military responsibilities. While some studies (Tinto, 2012; Vency & Ramganesh, 2013) have shown that there is a direct correlation between social engagement and course attrition rates, this study did not support those findings. All of the respondents reported that social connection was not a factor in why they did not continue to EAP courses. When queried about their participation in college clubs and various campus organizations, all but one of the respondents reported that while they had been made aware of various clubs and organizations, they had not attempted to get involved because their work schedules were too restrictive. One respondent surmised that although the social aspects of college life were appealing, fitting them into her life would be "yet another obstacle."

      Academic involvement and social assimilation do not always go hand in hand. In this research study, respondents expressed that they felt amity and a sense of camaraderie with other students within the confines of the classroom; however, making personal connections outside of the classroom was nearly impossible. One student commented, "We are all in the same boat, so we help each other as much as we can. We are all immigrants, so no one is better than the other one." Overall, students expressed

feeling connected academically and engaged with their classmates and instructors through assigned reading tasks and group discussions, both in the classroom and in instructor-led online discussion activities.

Respondents did not recall any experiences that made them aware of their ethnicity while on campus; however, several commented about how people, particularly those in the workplace, treated them differently because of their conspicuous foreign accents. One student noted that in her line of work, Customer Service, "People are not just nasty, they can sometimes be cruel and often ask to be transferred to some who can speak English." Participants were careful to emphasize that these instances typically occurred outside of school and mostly in their places of employment. All of the respondents acknowledged that they looked forward to seeing their classmates on a nightly basis and mainly felt welcomed on the college campus. Kanno and Cromley (2013) stressed the importance of adult learners feeling a sense of commonality and solidarity with their peers and instructional staff.

Curriculum and institutional support was another area of the literature investigated by the researcher based on responses to questions 14, 15, and 16 of the interview protocol. Respondents'answers to finances being a deterrent to furthering their postsecondary pursuits were unanimous; they all expressed that the ESOL classes were very affordable. Most were not aware of charitable organizations that offered financial support services to immigrants and refugees. One of the two of the participants born in Cuba claimed that once she provided proof of her nationality, she was rewarded the monies necessary to complete the ESOL classes. In response to the utilization of school resources, all of the participants were aware of the variety of college resources at their disposal; however, only three respondents recounted using the

campus computer labs and library facilities. One participant concluded that the only way to obviate the disruptions he encountered in his small residence was to utilize the campus's computer lab to complete his online assignments. Researchers (Ananyeva, 2014; Fernandez, Peyton, & Schaetzel, 2017; Pellegrino et al., 2015) have asserted that accessibility to college resources juxtaposed with adept academic advising have proven to be leading factors in student satisfaction and retention. The following discussion focuses on the value the participants attributed to these free college resources.

Research Question 2. What is the level of efficacy of the student services currently provided to by the college to the adult ESOL students? In responding to questions 13, 15, and 22 of the interview protocol, the researcher examined the quality of the services offered by the college in conjunction with the students' awareness of these services. At he college under study, these services include computer labs, an extensive Library and Learning Commons (LLC) facility, and financial aid advising. The LLC advertises an array of tutoring services for all students. One section of the LLC offers specialty books, including books on tape, primarily aimed at ESOL students. These books aid in the strengthening of the four central language skills: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Ananyeva (2014) asserted that many adult LEP students need "professional guidance and resources in order to understand the gaps in their knowledge and skills to formulate their learning goals" (p.15).

Researchers (McClanahan, 2014; Pellegrino et al., 2015) have advocated for the propagation of financial literacy resources to adult LEP students. Education financing is often an area where international students are most vulnerable and need fundamental budgeting skills to navigate the college financial aid imbroglio. Respondents were primarily impressed and satisfied with the quality of student services offered by the

ESOL office staff at the campus. All of the participants attested to the academic and financial advisors being attentive and extremely helpful.

One recurring theme centered around time limitations. Two of the respondents expressed that this was the first time they were gainfully employed outside of the home. All of the participants had challenges when attempting to balance work-home-school schedules. To strike this balance, Martinez, Ordu, Della Sala & McFarlane (2013) recommended several strategies for adult learners including managing time and priorities consciously; seeking well-being by managing stress levels; and finding support through personal and institutional connections. For adult LEPs, poor time management has been identified as a major obstacle (Shore et al., 2015) and long-term predictor of success. Martinez et al. addressed well-being from the perspective of health; students must make a conscious effort to "maintain their health by managing stress, and find some personal time" (p. 49). As previously noted, finding formalized support through academic advisors, student services, and financial resources are critical to the academic success and may potentially decrease the rates of attrition for adult LEP students (Michalski, 2014).

Another theme emerged around Item 22 of the interview protocol related explicitly to L2 proficiency and employment. In the current study, all of the respondents were employed in full-time positions. Nine participants were the primary breadwinners in their respective family units. Each of the participants had a strong desire to get past what Baurain (2013) deemed "survival English" (p. 136); this is the most basic communication functioning of the English language learner. Admittedly, the primary reason for adult ESOL learners to study English is to secure employment. However, to garner a higher quality of life, LEPs must become functionally literate, the

ability to read and write, in the L2. Literacy is a prerequisite for dealing with the

demands of life in the United States; this includes being able to complete the required

paperwork related to housing applications or having the capacity to read immigration

forms. Ro and Ryu (2013) cited basic needs like comprehending the written driver's

license exam and being able to read and sign a medical healthcare proxy as vital to the

LEP student. Additionally, L2 literacy skills for adult ESOL learners are typically a

precursor to attaining professional advancements or supervisory responsibilities in the

workplace. One respondent, a former attorney in his native country, noted that he knew

he was not advancing on his job because his boss and co-workers had a difficult time

understanding him when he spoke. Also, his inability to communicate in writing

hindered his productivity and opportunities for promotion. To effectively communicate

academically and professionally the ability to write is paramount. Coon and Jacobsen

(2014) articulated this concern, " . . . A lot of students were coming in but weren't

making it out, just because of the writing courses, and sometimes this derailed their

college plans and aspirations completely" (p. 1).

Research Question 3. How do adult ESOL students' academic and social

assimilation, curriculum and institutional support and multicultural and educational

mores affect the likelihood of enrolling in EAP courses? Items 8-12 and 23 of the

interview protocol addressed this query. When adult ESOL students decide to go back

to school, several important matters affect the likelihood of them enrolling in EAP

classes. These issues include their educational backgrounds, parents' level of education

and family expectations. The collected data fostered a deeper insight into the ESOL

students' cultural and educational mores and provided a greater understanding of how

these matters affect transitioning to EAP courses and beyond. Regarding this research

question, all but one of the respondents reported that they felt supported by their immediate families. Additionally, none of the participants' parents had earned a formal education past high school. Subsequent to the analysis of the literature, Michalski (2014) declared that non-academic rationales also play a pivotal role in whether adult students remain in school. Michalski asserted that these factors involve the students' motivations, satisfaction with the way he or she is performing in the class, and impressions of the professor. To mitigate the adverse effects of college course attrition, Bista (2011) observed that LEP students represent numerous philological, ethnic, and societal backgrounds. Bista further emphasized that educational materials should relate to the adult learners' culture, ethnic group, occupation, and background. Additionally, lesson plans should integrate student-centric content; thus putting the importance back on the adult learner.

In response to Question 12 of the interview protocol, seven participants reported that their respective families expected them to earn a certificate or college degree in the future. One respondent commented, "I have to be an excellent example for my daughter, she is going to college next year, and I want her to see me doing that as well." Undoubtedly, cultural and educational mores are essential to international students; the literature supports this notion (Fernandez et al., 2017; Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Tinto, 2012). In this research study, all but one of the participants expressed how successful they felt after completing the ESOL course requirements. In retrospect, nine of the respondents regretted not immediately enrolling in EAP classes upon completion of their ESOL course requirements. They also noted that they felt confident enough to pursue better-paying jobs. Tinto noted that high familial expectations often result in higher grades, more confidence in the L2, and finding a good job.

Research Question 4. What andragogic strategies can faculty and stakeholders integrate into the current ESOL program to enrich and augment higher levels of student enrollment in EAP courses? Respondents chose to attend the college due to the reasonable tuition fees, easy accessibility from work locations and the positive feedback they received from friends and family about the instructional and support staffs. Overwhelmingly, respondents reported constructive and valuable experiences with their instructors. One student recounted that although he was tired in class every night, the energy the teacher brought to the class made him "sit up straight and pay close attention." All of the respondents attested to enjoying their classes and having teachers who were engaged, caring and interested in their overall well-being. The literature previously discussed demonstrated that students who perceived their teachers as caring and helpful are more inclined to be involved in the learning process; and thus, remain in school. Additionally, creating an environment of mutual respect and concern has been shown to engender a sense of empowerment (Ananyeva, 2014; Shore, Lentini, Molloy, Steinberg, & Holtzman, 2015).

Several of the participants earned college degrees in their native countries. The findings from interview questions 24 and 25 revealed that five of the respondents planned to continue to a certification program or four-year degree. Additionally, all five of the respondents knew the exact field of study they would be pursuing once they started their college courses. One participant had already pursued a professional certification as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) since leaving the ESOL program and did not see herself returning to college. She stated, "This is not because I do not like learning but because I am a nun, and my desire is just to serve in this way. I do not need a degree to serve others."

Many adult LEP students begin their college experiences for non-academic reasons, primarily the desire to learn the English language to secure and retain employment (Michalski; 2014; Ro & Ryu, 2013). The Florida Department of Education (2011) reported that students' failure to complete courses results in (a) increased costs to the student and the school, (b) a reduction in the amount of space in the classroom available to other students, and (c) lengthens the amount of time needed for the student to complete their certification or degree programs. Shore et al. (2015) noted that over 90% of adult LEP students found that support services in the areas of orientation, college advising, and mentoring helped them to persist in their postsecondary pursuits. Michalski suggested that community colleges could play a critical role in providing these services to aid awareness and increase commitments to boost retention rates.

Hulbert (2014) further substantiated the need for academic advising and other support services for adult students by concluding what she observed to be an "existing postsecondary educational hierarchy" (p. 4). Hulbert suggested that low-income students, with a plethora of social and academic disadvantages, come to postsecondary institutions with a need for structure, supervision, and guidance and receive little to none of any of them. Conversely, top schools throughout the country marshal their students' college education and experiences from beginning to end.

Implications of Findings

The implications of the research findings put a spotlight on the factors identified in the literature that influenced adult LEP students to postpone or not enroll in EAP classes upon completion of the prescribed ESOL courses at a state college in Florida. Collection of qualitative data via face-to-face interviews provided unique insights for adult LEP students who desire to move to EAP courses and ultimately college-credit

courses but face significant challenges. Numerous practitioners and researchers in the field have opined on the importance of further investigation to underscore successful postsecondary outcomes (Ewert, 2014; McClanahan, 2014; Shore et al., 2015). A study conducted by Spurling, Seymour, and Chisman (2008) at a west coast community college found that more than 50% of English language learners in non-credit classes failed to advance a single level while only a paltry 18% transitioned to credit-bearing courses.

According to Chun (2015), variables such as academic and social assimilation, curriculum and institutional support and cultural and educational mores influence the educational patterns of the LEP adult student population. However, it is critical that institutions of higher learning not lose sight of the fact that LEPs enjoy resources that adult students whose primary language is English do not. These include cultural awareness, bilingualism, and the ability to adapt to new situations and surroundings (Kanno & Cromley, 2013). The analyzed data in this study underscored the many challenges that adult LEP students taking ESOL classes face as they transition to EAP classes. Based on the research findings, respondents showed a great desire to further their education; however, the demands of being the primary wage earners in their familial structure presented obstacles to their educational objectives. In addition to work-related obligations, the lack of childcare options was also a widespread issue. The research findings showed that social connections were not a high priority and did not contribute to the reasons why participants did not further their education aspirations. Blackmer and Hayes-Harb (2016) suggested that researchers take into consideration Knowles' assumptions about andragogy, the study of adult learning. Specifically, adult learners' need to immediately apply what they have learned in real-world settings; the

fact that they are often constrained by internal motivations; and, their constant desire want to know why they need to learn something (Knowles, 1984; 1990).

The results of this study offer several distinctive and practical areas that can aid adult LEP students in their transition to EAP courses, these include: (a) curriculum and institutional support and (b) cultural and educational mores. Curriculum, institutional, cultural and educational supports serve as critical drivers of student retention. A cursory review of the literature further emphasized that very little research has been done as it relates to adult LEPs college-going patterns. Kanno and Cromley (2013) looked at their disadvantages in terms of capital and noted, "Educational opportunities are shaped by a variety of forms of capital . . ." (p. 113). These adults often lack important communication capital or English proficiency; financial capital or monetary resources; and, cultural capital or the educational expectations and support from the family unit. Without these essential components, LEPs tend to lack the fundamental advantages to remain competitive and ultimately successful in a college setting.

Institutions and educators also make the mistake of viewing these students as one-dimensional because of their lack of English language skills. The result is that they unwittingly hinder the LEPs participation in higher education (Ananyeva, 2014; Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Michalski, 2014). Ewert's (2014) study on adult LEP learners found that this population of learners typically faces a challenging developmental path to educational success, namely at the postsecondary level. These learners come to the academic setting not only deficient in English language proficiency but with varying degrees of their first language (L1) literacy in addition to a vast array of schooling experiences in their native countries. In short, it is imperative to look at adult LEPs as multidimensional; as students whose scholastic prospects are formed by a plethora of

influences, and should not be judged solely on their English language aptitude (Kanno & Cromley, 2013).

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this small-scale qualitative study were inherently existent because of the nature and scope of the sample size. The researcher selected 10 respondents to learn more about the research problem at a state college in Florida. Creswell (2012) maintained that the sample size might limit the ability to generalize the results. Despite these limitations, the research provided a useful stratagem for recommending subsequent studies. The literature has shown that web-based questionnaires have an inherent bias toward specific demographic groups (American Psychological Associaton, 2010; Fink, 2003). Additionally, to overcome limitations intrinsic to one-on-one interviews, the researcher consistently encouraged participants to disclose their real feelings without distortions or biases (Sarniak, 2015; Ziniel, 2014). The respondents were further apprised of the importance of the research and how meaningful their participation was in the study.

Recommendations for Further Research

In light of the findings of this study, the researcher proposed four recommendations for further research.

1. Conducting a more comprehensive study that involves interviewing a substantial target population of adult LEP students. The study would focus on identifying the specific work-related issues to expand the findings affecting the obstacles adult ESOL students' face that ultimately keeps them from pursuing EAP courses. The U.S. Department of Education (2014) highlighted that ESOL instruction for LEP adults is the leading and fastest growing sector in the adult education system in

the United States. According to the Pew Research Center (2015), these students

represent more than 40% of college enrollments. Additionally, more than half of the

foreign college students have dependents with 75% working full-time while attending

school (Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education, 2015). Furthermore,

the lack of pecuniary resources, thus, the need to work extended hours, often result in

restrictive college choices and limited commitment to college-related activities.

Potential solutions for stemming the tide of non-academic withdrawals from

postsecondary institutions may involve increasing course scheduling flexibility, an

expansion of childcare services, and access to culturally sensitive, quality college

academic advisors (Michalski, 2014).

   2. Providing students with online options for taking EAP courses including

offering them on weekends or on a schedule that would be more conducive to the

LEPs' work schedule may also be another option. Nguyen (2015) noted that online

learning could potentially "increase the completion rate, reduce time to degree

attainment . . . and offer more access to non-traditional students" (p. 310). This

flexibility may result in more LEP students attaining credentials and college degrees

and thus acquire more marketable skills. McClanahan (2014) acknowledged that to the

detriment of adult ESOL students, college programs have been slow in embracing

technology as an instructional tool. Kilburn, Kilburn, and Cates (2014) posited on the

advances in technology related to online learning and how the added value of flexibility

has created a market for the non-traditional adult student. Ananyeva (2014)

acknowledged the importance of colleges developing programs that are more

convenient for learners rather than institutions. The literature has addressed the

ubiquitous aspects indigenous to online learning and researchers (Kilburn et al., 2014;

Nguyen, 2014) acknowledged that the perceived value is undeniable. Respondents discussed a desire to go back to school; however, many believed that the course schedules mostly accommodated full-time students. Benefits resulting from online courses are demonstrated in the mitigation of logistical constraints such as the need for the students to be present in the classroom on specific days and times (Kilburn et al., 2014).

3. Offering courses geared explicitly towards work-life-school that assist students with balancing work and college studies to better prepare them for fundamental tasks that include time management, managing priorities, and life skills. Admittedly, many things in life detract from maintaining a productive work-life balance. Martinez et al., (2013) posited that time is a fundamental part of achieving the desired school-work-life balance; mainly because as time is allocated to one area; less time is assigned to another. A majority of the participants stressed that they were the primary breadwinners for their respective households. Thus, balancing multiple and often conflicting responsibilities made it difficult to make attending college a priority.

4. Implementing a more exhaustive study that would include meeting and interviewing with adult LEP students who have successfully transitioned to EAP courses. According to the Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education (2015), community colleges are among the most excellent sources of adult LEP education in many states. Future research should explore the experiences of these students by collecting the relevant data as a means of theoretically improving readiness outcomes with a view towards cultivating more significant transitions, and ultimately increased degree completion rates (Fulton et al., 2014; Michalski, 2014).

Conclusions

This study contributed to the paucity of research as it pertains to the needs of adult LEPs in postsecondary education. Despite the aforementioned limitations, this research also informed several vital stakeholders about the non-academic challenges of the adult ESOL student. According to Ro and Ryu (2013), these groups include "policymakers who influence the design, funding, and evaluation of adult ESOL programs; researchers who investigate the success of adult education programs; educators who prepare teachers to work with adult ESOL learners; and, the teachers themselves" (p. 83). Moreover, it offered some understanding of why this segment of the student population is not enrolling in college-credit courses at a more rapid pace.

In summation, this study provided a means of viewing adult LEPs as a multidimensional segment of the adult student population. Michalski (2014) posited that if "raising college completion and graduation rates is a priority, then even small or incremental changes that serve to reduce course attrition are important" (p. 824). This research served as a platform for more significant discussion about adult LEPs through the analysis of various case studies and factors attributing to their educational challenges including the factors that keep them from transitioning to EAP and ultimately into vocational or general education, college credit programs.

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Appendix A

Letter of Invitation to the Target Population

Letter of Invitation to the Target Population

Good Day:

As a student at Nova Southeastern University, I am currently conducting research as part of fulfillment for the Doctor of Education degree. I would appreciate your input and participation in a case study regarding adult ESOL students and the barriers they encounter when transitioning from ESOL classes to EAP courses.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and identify impediments and obstacles in the areas of educational and societal assimilation, career and monetarist support, and academics to ascertain the effects they have on students transitioning from ESOL classes to EAP courses.

This questionnaire will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be used only in statistical summaries, and your name and/or any specific identifiers will be not utilized. Upon completion of the questionnaire, all respondents will be contacted within 10 business days. If you are selected to participate in the study you will receive a separate message via electronic mail confirming your participation in the study. Please note that completion of the electronic questionnaire implies your consent to participate in the study. In order to access the questionnaire, please click on the following link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/jacklynsmithesoltoeap

Respectfully,

Jacklyn Smith

Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?

2. Were you at least 18 years old when you were enrolled in ESOL classes?

3. In what country were you born? What is your first language?

4. Were you enrolled in ESOL courses between January 2015 and December 2016?

5. What is the highest level of ESOL that you completed?

6. Upon completion of your ESOL classes, did you enroll in EAP courses at the state college?

Appendix B

Invitation Requesting Participation

Invitation Requesting Participation

Good Day:

You have been selected to participate in a case study as the result of your responses to the questionnaire you recently completed. As a student at Nova Southeastern University, I am currently conducting research as part of the fulfillment of the Doctor of Education degree. I would appreciate your input and participation. The study will explore adult ESOL students and the barriers they encounter when transitioning from ESOL classes to EAP courses.

You will be contacted within three business days to schedule a time and date that is mutually agreeable. Your responses will be recorded anonymously and kept confidentially.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and identify impediments and obstacles in the areas of educational and societal assimilation, career and monetarist support, and academics to ascertain the effects they have on students transitioning from ESOL classes to EAP courses.

The face-to-face interview will take approximately 45-50 minutes to complete. Your responses will be used only in statistical summaries. Your name and/or any specific identifiers will be not utilized. Your time and efforts are greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Jacklyn Smith

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Script: Hello, my name is Jacklyn Smith. You have been selected to participate in a case study as the result of your responses to the questionnaire you recently completed. I am currently conducting research as part of the fulfillment of the Doctor of Education degree at Nova Southeastern University. The study will explore adult ESOL students and the barriers they encounter when transitioning from ESOL classes to EAP courses. I want to learn more about your experiences in college, and the decisions that you made related to taking EAP courses. I am going to ask you some questions about your educational and cultural background. If you do not feel comfortable with any of the questions, please let me know and will move on to the next one.

Your participation in this study indicates that you have read and understand the explanation provided to you, that you have had all your questions answered to your satisfaction, and that you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study. Also, please note that your participation in this study does not affect your current or future status or standing at the college. Thank you.

Interview Questions

1. What is your gender?

2. Were you at least 18 years old when you were enrolled in ESOL classes?

3. In what country were you born? What is your first language?

4. Were you enrolled in ESOL courses between January 2015 and December 2016?

5. What is the highest level of ESOL that you completed?

6. Upon completion of your ESOL classes, did you enroll in EAP courses at the state college?

7. What was your educational background in your native country?

8. Do you currently live at home with your parents? If not, who do you live with? Do you provide the primary source of income for your family?

9. How would you describe the place where you were raised? (Probe: Additional Information)

10. Describe your parents' educational background. (Probe: Mother's/Father's highest level of education)

11. What/Who influenced your decision to attend _____ State College at _____? (Probe: Job, Family member, etc). How did they influence your decision?

12. What were your family's expectations once you started attending ESOL classes?

13. What types of challenges did you face as your made your decision to attend this college?

14. Was the staff in the ESOL office helpful in making a final decision about attending this college?

15. Did you receive financial assistance/aid of any type of grant that paid all or part of your tuition?

16. Did you utilize any college resources to help you while you attended the college? (Probe: Computer labs, Library/Learning Commons,tutors, etc)

17. Have you had any experiences at _____ State College at _____ which made you more aware of your ethnic background? For example, experiences

where you thought you were treated primarily as a foreign student rather than an individual.

18. Have you ever thought about whether being an immigrant affects your life right now? That is, have you ever thought about whether there are things that are easier or more difficult for you because you are an immigrant?

19. How socially connected do (or did) you feel with students at the college? What types of clubs and/or organizations did you participate in at the college?

20. If you have the chance to share with other people/students at _____ State College at _____ about your culture, what would you tell them?

21. When you were enrolled at _____ State College at _____, how much did you enjoy your classes? Did you feel as if your instructors cared about you and your progress?

22. What specific obstacles or challenges have you experienced as an immigrant attending college?

23. Do you feel that you accomplished your objectives (you were successful) while attending the college?

24. What are your career goals?

25. Do you see yourself enrolling in EAP classes or in a certificate or degree program at _____ State College at _____ in the future? Why or why not?

26. Why did you not immediately go on to EAP upon completion of your ESOL classes?

Appendix D

Interview Questions and Emerging Themes for Research Question 1

Interview Questions and Emerging Themes for Research Question 1

Factors identified in the literature	Interview question	Emergent themes
Academic and social assimilation	17. Experiences that made students aware of their ethnic background	Outside of the classroom people treated them differently because of foreign accent Within the classroom students do not feel different from peers In classroom and on campus, overall experiences were positive
	18. How being an immigrant affects students' lives	Ddi not affect college life Welcome and friendly atmosphere
	19. How socially connected students feel	Felt socially connected Did not feel the need to connect socially Lack of opportunity to connect socially due to employment situation Feel connected with students when group assignments were assigned
	19. Participation in clubs and organizations	Aware but did not participate Not aware of any clubs or organizations
	20. Sharing one's culture with other people/students	Friendly and kind Different from culture in America
Curriculum and institutional support	14. ESOL support staff	Helpful Supportive, available to assist if need arose Registration and placement assistance
	15. Received financial assistance or grants	Did not receive financial assistance Paid out-of-pocket for tuition, self-paid
	16. College resources available to students	Computer lab, library
Cultural and educational mores	7. Educational background in native country	Some high school Completed high school 4-year and/or advanced degrees
	8. Familial background/ Primary wage earner	Did not live with parents Lived with spouse and/or minor children Primary source of support for dependents
	10. Parents' educational background	Some high school Graduated from high school Graduated from college