



English Learners at Community Colleges: The Good News, The Bad News, and Improving ESL Services

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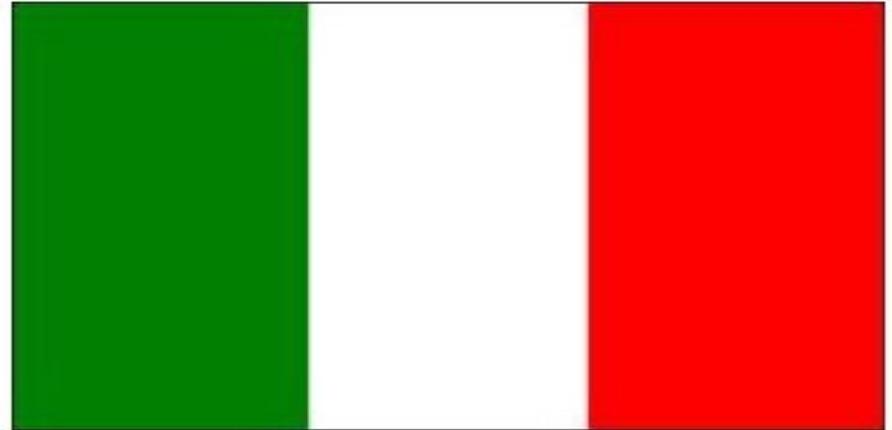
The Good News: Research in a Neglected Field

Non-native English Speakers in US

- 1990 31.8 million
- today 60.5 million+ (Ryan, 2013)

US Schooling and English Learners (ELs)

- 20.7% of US (age 5 and up) speak a language besides English at home (Ryan, 2013)
- 9.3% of students are enrolled in ESL coursework in K-12 settings (Kena et al., 2016)



The Good News: Research in a Neglected Field

As US ELs go from high school to college, they are more likely to choose to go to community colleges than universities (Kanno & Cromley, 2015; Nunez & Sparks, 2010)

Only recently has this group started getting the research attention it deserves



The Bad News: Poor CC EL Student Retention, Persistence, and Transfer to 4-Year University Rates

Razfar and Simon (2011)

- 8% of 1,479 EL students planned to transfer
- 62% of them dropped out of CC after only two semesters
- over 50% of them were unable to advance to regular college courses

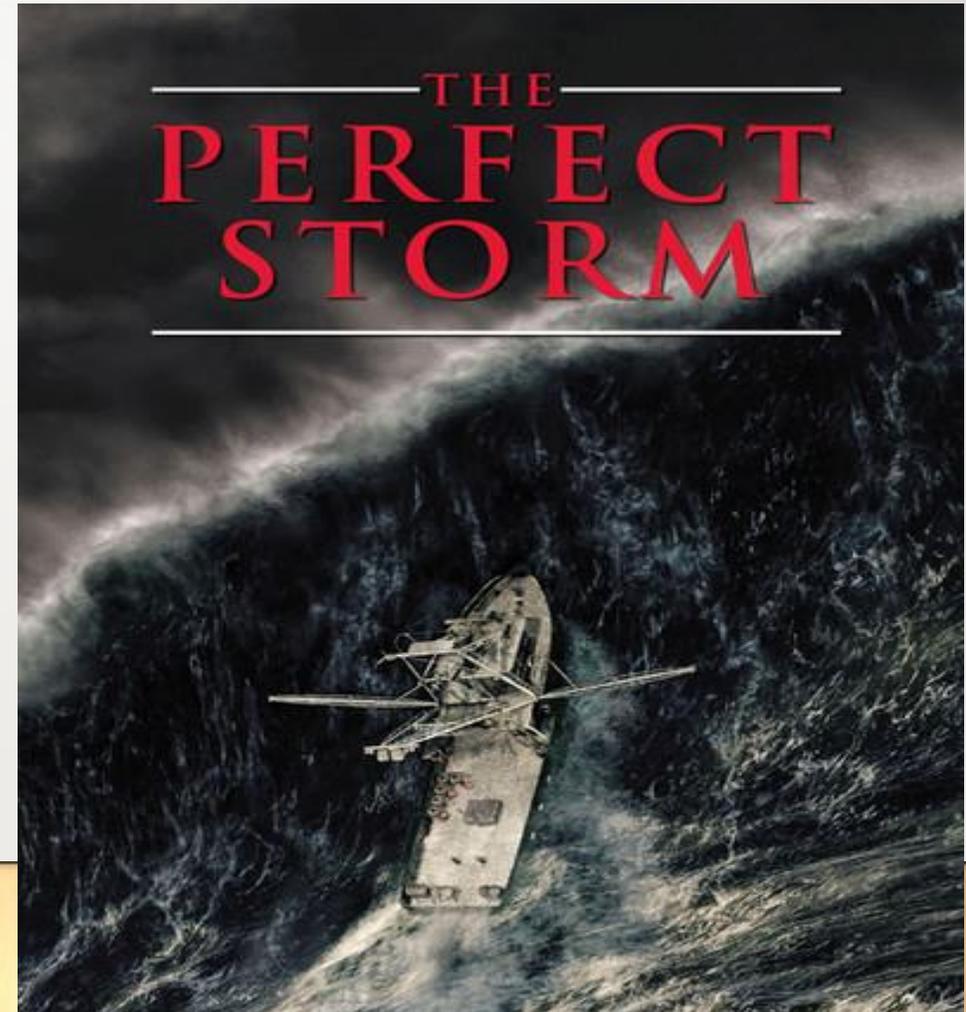
Almon (2012)

- CC graduation rate: EL (13%) versus non-EL (23%)
- less than 50% of EL students passed their ESL programs

Challenges CC ESL Programs Face

A huge variety of EL student backgrounds

- Some students not literate in L1
- Some had interrupted educations
- Many are non-traditional students
- Many have significant family and work responsibilities
- Many are attending part-time
- Many are first generation college attenders
- etc.



Challenges ESL Programs Face

College administrative decisions to cut back on ESL programs and resources

Program administrative efforts to both staff and coordinate ESL programs while having to justify them



EL Student Success and Transfer

The definition of EL student success really depends.

- Whether students increase their educational expectations after entering community college
- Whether students progress into next level ESL courses
- Whether students transfer to a four-year institution



EL Student Transfer

Research gap: no research has specifically documented the transfer process of EL students.

Existing research:

- Focuses on general students
- Focuses on after-transfer adjustment
- Asks students to *recall* their transfer processes

EL Student Transfer

CC Student Bachelor's Degree Attainment Rates (Kanno & Cromley, 2016)

	NS	EP	EL
bachelor's degree attainment (%)	23	20	16.2
bachelor's degree attainment for students with transfer aspiration (%)	31.7	27.1	22.6

EL Student Transfer

- Community colleges' abilities to overcome students' initial inadequate academic preparation are limited (Kanno & Cromley, 2016; Roksa & Calcagno, 2008).
- Educational attainment of ELs in community colleges cannot be viewed simply as a community college issue (Roksa & Calcagno, 2008).

EL Student Transfer

Is the transfer process *automatic*?

Transfer milestones:

- Aspiration to transfer
- Transfer qualifications
- Four-year college application
- Four-year college enrollment

EL Student Transfer

Barriers to Transfer (Ornelas & Solorzano, 2004)

Students	Institutional barriers (CC commitment and a lack of transfer information)
	Non-traditional student (work and family responsibilities)
	Financial aid process
Faculty	Institutional barrier (lack of a transfer culture)
	Insufficient knowledge and information on transfer process
	Insufficient innovative teaching strategies
	Inadequate academic preparation

EL Student Transfer

Barriers to Transfer (Ornelas & Solorzano, 2004)

Counselors	Non-academic responsibilities
	Inadequate academic preparation
	Student self-doubt
	Financial aid process
	Institutional barriers (CC commitment and inconsistent approach to transfer)
	Counselor-student ratio
Administrators	Multiple missions
	Limited resources
	Student educational disadvantages
	Cultural deficit thinking

EL Student Transfer

Frequently asked questions:

- How long will it take me to transfer?
- How about if I want to transfer to a private four-year institution?
- How far in advance do I need to apply for a transfer program?
- Which is more important for transfer, my GPA or my course completion pattern?
- How many credits can I transfer?
- What is my cc's transfer rate?

Recommendations for Teachers and Administrators

International ELs are different from domestic ELs, so don't feel like you have to teach them similarly

- 4 skills instruction versus content-based instruction (Bunch & Kibler, 2015)

ELs often need the content instruction they would have gotten in high school if that hadn't been enrolled in ESL coursework (Bunch & Kibler, 2015)



Bridging the Gap to College Work

Work on bridging the gap between ESL programs and college coursework

- The longer the course sequence in ESL, the less likely students are to move on to college work (Patthey-Chavez et al., 2009)
- Figure out what these students' goals are: just English proficiency, or college graduation



Making Their Time in ESL Count

Offering ESL courses for college credit (CCCC, 2001; TESOL, 2012)

Having ESL courses serve as adjunct coursework for GE courses

Offer for credit content courses in the students' first language if there is a predominant L1 group (Artiaga, 2013)



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Thank you!

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