Eastern Washington University
EWU Digital Commons

EWU Masters Thesis Collection   Student Research and Creative Works

2016

College-level ELLs in two English composition courses: the transition from ESL to the mainstream

Andrew J. Copley
Eastern Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: http://dc.ewu.edu/theses

College-level ELLs in two English composition courses: the transition from

ESL to the mainstream

A Thesis

Presented To

Eastern Washington University

Cheney, WA

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Master of Art

Teaching English as a Second Language

By

Andrew J. Copley

Spring 2016

THESIS OF ANDREW COPELY

APPROVED BY

_____   _____

Dr. Tracey McHenry, Committee Chair   Date

_____   _____

Dr. LaVona Reeves, Committee Member   Date

Abstract

This study will analyze patterns' in ESL student academic behavior particularly related to classroom learning during their transition between English 101 and English 201. The student academic behaviors are particularly linguistic, based on the five langauge skills reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar. These behaviors will be analyzed separately through participant observation in class, and through two surveys given to participants in the study. Data will be analyzed for patterns in student academic behavior in each classroom context. Then, patterns in student academic behavior will be compared between the classroom contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LANGUAGE LEARNING PROFILE

My name is Andrew Copley. I am a committed Christian, husband to my wife Carly, and I have my Master's in Teaching English as a Second Language. It has been a long road to this point in my life, but I am thankful for every moment of that road. My time at graduate school has been well spent. I learned so much about myself and about the process of learning—especially learning a second language. I value language first and foremost because God created language. I value culture because God made all cultures, and wants people to worship him from every tribe, tongue, and language. This is who I am and why I am in this program.

During high school and college, I studied Spanish. Spanish is a beautiful language, and I loved learning it. After graduating high school, I had the opportunity to travel to the Canary Islands. This was the first time I really put my language learning to the test. It was the first time that I realized that what I had learned actually worked—I could communicate with people from another culture in a language that was not my own. After the first year of college, I returned to the Canary Islands again. This time, my Spanish acquisition was a little more difficult. I felt the frustration of being locked into certain ways of speaking, and I experienced the impatience of not being able to fully communicate what you want to. Nevertheless, I fought through these struggles and continued to work hard at learning Spanish.

My academic Spanish began to grow in leaps and bounds my sophomore year of college. For almost the whole year, the majority of my classes were in Spanish. I wrote multiple essays in Spanish, watched films in Spanish, and conversed extensively with my

professors and my peers in Spanish. I remember leaving class and finding it weird to actually speak to my friends in English. Spanish was becoming second nature to me.

Junior year was much the same. I took a number of Spanish classes, and my writing in particular was challenged constantly. It was always satisfying to write something in Spanish and revise it and revise it again, to the point where I knew that I was communicating effectively.

Senior year, I started my TESL minor, and the number of Spanish classes I took waned. Unfortunately, I became much less comfortable with the Language during this last year. Nevertheless, I still maintained my ability and successfully completed my senior thesis.

Even if I don't use Spanish in the future, I am thankful for the time I spent learning a second Language. It gives me the ability to understand language learners' struggles and successes. It gives me the ability to sympathize with the frustrations of not fully communicating. It gives me the ability to understand how good it feels to master a language, and how difficult it is to see that mastery start to decline.

I had some experience teaching before entering into this program, but not very much. The teaching experience I was most grateful for was in the English Language Institute. I began to learn how to teach ELLs, and it was truly a blast.
When I began my Master's program, I was a little disappointed. I did not want to teach mainstream students. It felt like a waste of my time. Moreover, I was scared that mainstream American students wouldn't care about their learning, and that it would be constantly frustrating. While there were some students who clearly didn't care, I was for the most part sorely mistaken. Teaching mainstream classes taught me a lot about how I

teach. This also helped me identify exactly what my ELLs were in for when they transitioned to these classes.

I am thankful for my time at Eastern. During my last two years here, I have taught and I have learned. It is an honor to say that I am an EWU graduate twice over.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 2: Mainstreaming Practices for ESL Students in K-12 and

Postsecondary Education

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, & IDEAS FOR FUTURE

RESEARCH

LIST OF FIGURES

APPENDICES

Chapter I: Background, assumptions, and questions

I felt like a failure after my first quarter as a graduate student instructor. Sure, the quarter went just fine overall: I got all of my grades in, I had a handful of successful lesson plans, and it even seemed as though my students actually liked me as a teacher. Most would say it was a pretty good start. But there was one problem—I was studying TESL, or at least that was my plan, and my only ESL student in the class failed miserably. His name was Faisal. I already knew Faisal from previous work I had done with the English Language Institute on my university's campus, and I was really excited when I saw his name on the class roster. Even though I had to teach mainstream classes for the first year of graduate school, having an ESL student in my class was one small way to feel like I was actually doing something that connected directly to what I was studying for. Faisal was that student.

For the first few weeks of the quarter, he seemed to do fine. He came to class, did the majority of the homework, and even participated in classroom discussion. The first time I became concerned was when I graded his essay exam. Students were to read five academic articles, which we then discussed in detail in class, and then they wrote an in-class essay connecting them together and discussing key themes between them. Faisal bombed his essay exam. It was not even close to passing. But, I took comfort in the fact that this wasn't worth that much of his grade, and that the time constraints for this assignment probably made a deeper level of analysis really difficult for him. So I pushed forward to the next unit—the autobiographical essay. Faisal's topic for this personal narrative

essay was interesting—he told about how he learned responsibility from his father in high school. The story was well thought out. It had a beginning, a middle, and an end. It made sense. Unlike many students in the class, Faisal was actually telling a story, rather than just writing another essay disguised as a story. He was getting it! Or, at least it seemed that way. But his grammar was bad. Really bad. Almost every sentence seemed to have some error in it that really impeded full comprehension. So I went to town on it. When I graded and responded to Faisal's draft, I really tore it apart. I made note of as many mistakes as I could find, tried to explain how he could revise each one, and really tried to help him see how he could improve.

Two weeks later, I had not seen Faisal at all. He disappeared. He just stopped coming to class, and he never once came back. He completely missed the entire last unit, and at the end of the quarter I had to fail him. Of course, I do not know everything that led up to Faisal dropping the class, but I have always felt partly responsible—I think that my comments on his second draft were too overwhelming. I think that when he saw how much I had written on his essay, he figured there was no way he could change the way it was. It was just too much feedback. And after already receiving a failing grade on the previous assignment, and missing classes, and feeling left behind, Faisal had had too much. And so he just stopped coming—even though he could have passed!

Faisal is not alone. As I continued to teach composition classes, I noticed the same pattern among other ELLs. In fact, the first ELL to successfully pass a class was not until a year after I had failed Faisal. What had originally seemed to

be a one-time fluke, I began to see as a fundamental problem, not with students, but with the process itself. The ELLs who had matriculated from ESL programs into my composition classes had specific struggles that I was not ready to face as a mainstream teacher. This was a problem that I was confronted with from the beginning of my time as a graduate student, and that is why it is the topic of my Master's thesis.

Other researchers have identified problems associated with the ones I started to see in my mainstream Composition courses. Mount (2014) addresses her assumptions about teaching ESL students in composition courses: "The teaching of reading skills is not emphasized in English composition and when it is addressed, various skills and steps are shared and emphasized rather than working through the text together in class (p. 111). Her conclusions are interesting to consider especially in light of the difficulties I had at the outset of my graduate student teaching career:

> Student voices in the journals and questionnaires confirm these feelings. Therefore, it is important for composition instructors to recognize how the affective domain will influence their learning. As echoed throughout this thesis, students' epistemological connection to the Koran will encourage them to strive toward "perfection" and will leave them feeling frustrated and even at times ashamed at not being able to achieve it (Mount, 2014, p. 112).

Faisal did not attain "perfection" in my class. My comments on his autobiographical essay proved that to him. In retrospect, it does not surprise me

that my comments were discouraging to him. I thought I was helping him be more accurate and attentive to detail; he saw it as overwhelming evidence of his failure as a writer.

The topic of this thesis is mainstreaming. More specifically, it is about mainstreaming English Language Learners at the college level. Because a majority of the research on this phenomenon (mainstreaming) has focused on issues related to the teachers themselves, it is my aim to study English Language Learners and analyze their own perspectives as well as their behavior during the transition. I will do this by identifying patterns of ELL student behavior during the transition from ESL to mainstream classes at EWU. I will look specifically at the transition from English 101SL to English 201. Mapping students' transition between these two English classes will be a sufficient cross-section of student transition from being in classes with ELLs and Generation 1.5 students to being in a class with mostly L1 students.

Of course, I have made a few important assumptions about this topic. First of all, I assume that the large majority of ELLs, especially at the college level, have transitioned to the mainstream from an intensive English program of some sort. While there are some ELLs who have lived in the United States for longer periods of time, this is a much smaller section of the ELL population on most college and university campuses. Moreover, ELLs who come to the United States for the express purpose of learning English so that they can go to an American college are generally on a much faster track than those ELLs who have lived in the United States for years and consider it home. Second, I am making the

assumption that mapping students' transition from ESL to composition does in some sense speak to their overall transition from ESL to mainstream postsecondary education as a whole. Finally, I am making the assumption that two quarters is enough of a time period to see changes in student behavior. Because the classroom contexts are varied enough between English 101SL and English 201, and because the teacher is the same, this rules out some variables that would make it difficult to separate differences in student behavior from differences in classroom instruction and teaching style.

Research questions

o   Does student behavior differ in terms of the five language skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Grammar) when comparing an ESL class to a mainstream class?

o   If so, how does student behavior differ? In which areas?

o   If not, how does student behavior stay the same? In which areas?

o   How does student output in terms of of speaking differ between English 101SL and English 201?

o   How does student output in terms of writing differ between English 101SL and English 201?

o   How do student listening patterns differ between English 101SL and English 201?

o   How does student reading differ between English 101SL and English 201?

o   What factors, if any, impact different student behaviors in

mainstream classes than in ESL classes?

Previous Research

A variety of researchers have looked into the phenomenon of

mainstreaming over the last 20-25 years. Most of the research was conducted in

the 90s, although there have been some recents studies as well. A majority of

these studies focus particularly on K-12 education (Clair, 1995; Harklau, 1994),

while a few consider postsecondary mainstreaming (Razfar & Simon, 2011;

Rosenthal, 1992). Considering all the research done on this phenomena, most

focus particularly on role that teachers play in the process of mainstreaming. Only

one article highlights specific strategies employed by ELLs that aid in this process

(Clair, 1994). Therefore, my research aims to fill this existing gap in the literature.

Although the role that teachers play in mainstreaming is significant, my research

will focus on the students themselves and will identify similarities and differences

in student behavior between ESL and mainstream classes.

Overview of thesis

In all research, it is necessary to look back to see from where we have

come. What have scholars already discovered about this topic? How do their

findings determine the future of research on this topic? This is what I detail in

chapter two of this thesis. I discuss the research that has been conducted on

mainstreaming in both K-12 and postsecondary education, and I discuss the

implications of these studies for the purposes of my thesis. Then, in chapter three,

I give my own methodology, based on qualitative methods and built on the

foundation of other similar studies that have been conducted on this phenomenon.

Chapter II: Literature Review of Mainstreaming Practices for ESL Students in K12 and Postsecondary Education

Almost all ESL students in the K-12 system and in postsecondary education in the United States face a fundamental transition in their educational journeys: the transition from ESL to the mainstream class. After spending a few months to a few years in ESL classes, these students are dropped into mainstream classes, where they must navigate through the challenges of a fundamentally different classroom environment. Their success or failure in this transition could impact the rest of their educational lives. The difficulty or ease of the transition from ESL to the mainstream puts ESL programs and classes, as well as students' own resilience and motivation, to the test. But many researchers agree that this transition proves difficult for a number of reasons (Clair, 1995; Harklau, 1994; Matsuda, 1999; Pappamihiel, 2002; Razfar & Simon, 2011). Moreover, a wide range of studies indicate that more energy must be devoted to the study of ESL students in mainstream classes (Harklau, 1994, p. 242; Youngs & Youngs, 2001; Yoon, 2008, p. 496; Reeves, 2006, p. 131; Watts-Taffe & Truscott, 2000, p. 258).

Yet, the research still remains sparse at best. This literature review is a compilation of what has been written on the phenomenon of mainstreaming in terms of ESL students. The purpose of this literature review is to highlight the most common difficulties involved in the mainstreaming process, as well as to trace the notion of mainstreaming through K-12 and Postsecondary educational settings, in view of the future of mainstreaming. It is my intention that ESL as

well as mainstream educators take these factors into consideration as we seek to improve our teaching for the sake of our students.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming in K-12 education

Much of the research conducted on mainstreaming has focused on K-12 education (Clair, 1995; Harklau, 1994; Pappamihiel, 2002; Rance-Roney, 2008; Yoon, 2008). Within the K-12 paradigm, researchers have noted a number of features of education that must be considered when looking into the notion mainstreaming. The majority of these researchers have conducted case studies that focus primarily on the practices of the teachers (Clair, 1995; Creese, 2010; Harklau, 1994; Youngs & Youngs, 2001; Young, 1995; Reeves, 2006; Rosenthal, 1992; Yoon, 2008). The reasoning behind this stems from the fact that teachers, especially at the K-12 level, have a high level of authority over the way that their class is designed and executed. Moreover, teachers provide a more consistent and stable research population, especially because the ESL student population is often changing. Therefore, it is not surprising that much of the research is teacher-focused. As Harklau (1994) observes: "At Gateview, perhaps the most pressing concern was to increase mainstream practitioners' and administrators' awareness of and sensitivity to learner needs" (p. 268). In other words, the ball is in the court of mainstream educators, who often fall short of providing enough support for their ELLs. Harklau's analysis here is indicative of a much larger problem: the disciplinary divide between ESL and mainstream disciplines. This will be discussed later in this literature review.

9

Harklau's suggestions are furthered by Nancy Clair, who proposes "ongoing teacher study groups" specifically designed to train mainstream instructors to handle ESL concerns (p. 195). This, argues Clair, would begin to solve the problem of mainstream teachers learning "on the job" how to deal with their English Language Learners. Between these two studies, a pattern begins to emerge: changes must take place at the instructional level, even the administrative level, in order to narrow the gap students must jump between ESL and mainstream classes.

A wide range of studies suggest similar problems and solutions, all centered around the teachers themselves (Creese, 2010; Youngs & Youngs, 2001; Young, 1995; Reeves, 2006; Rosenthal, 1992; Yoon, 2008). To be sure, this teacher-focused research is necessary, and as these scholars have demonstrated through their studies, students will struggle to succeed unless mainstream educators and administrators take seriously the needs of ESL students. Moreover, it is important to recognize that ESL as a discipline with the K-12 system cannot be relegated to a corner, separated from the rest of the school. ESL must be a central part of the school system, if ESL students are to feel a part of the community as much as their native-English speaking peers.

Mainstreaming in Postsecondary education

Far less research has been conducted on the phenomenon of mainstreaming in postsecondary education (Bifuh-Ambe, 2011, p. 13), but a vast number of English Language Learners transition from ESL to mainstream classes at the college level (Matsuda, 1999; Razfar & Simon, 2011; Rosenthal, 1992). As

Matsuda and Rosenthal highlight, this transition is often between an intensive ESL program and college-level courses. For many students, this transition proves difficult for a number of reasons, and oftentimes students do not successfully transition (Razfar & Simon, 2011). Moreover, researchers have identified a gap between ESL and other disciplines, such as Composition (Matsuda, 1999). Taking these trends into consideration, some researchers have sought to create programs that specifically target mainstream teachers and their own professional development, in order to prepare them to teach transitioning students (Rosenthal, 1992). On the other hand, researchers have also conducted studies in which the students' ability to mainstream is the focus (Razfar & Simon, 2011).

Nevertheless, these studies are far and few between, and even up until now, there is not a sufficient number of studies on the phenomenon of mainstreaming from which to draw any serious or wide reaching conclusions. Almost every researcher at the postsecondary level who publishes on this topic makes an explicit claim about the necessity for further research.

Mainstreaming Problems

Taking the phenomenon of mainstreaming as a whole, it is important to consider the significant challenges that researchers have identified. These problems exist in both K-12 and post secondary, and thus must be considered within both educational paradigms. While solutions will differ between them, the problems experienced are much the same, and educators from all different backgrounds offer possible solutions to these problems.

Researchers have identified some significant problems with mainstreaming in K12 and postsecondary education. These are: rapid mainstreaming, negative teacher perspectives on ESL students and teaching, a wide range of linguistic variability among ELLs, a constantly changing population, and social pressures (Harklau, 1994; Yoon, 2008; Young, 1996). While some of these problems are specifically tied to teachers, other problems stem from students' own backgrounds, family lives, and educational goals.

Researchers have identified many cases in which mainstream teachers experienced significant difficulties when teaching ELLs (Harklau, 1994; Yoon, 2008; Young, 1996). While some of these difficulties are minor, the most significant ones stem from negative assumptions about the ESL students themselves. It is a common theme in the literature that many mainstream teachers assume that ESL teachers are solely responsible for ELLs (Harklau, 1994; Matsuda, 1999; Yoon, 2008).

ESL students' educational backgrounds vary from consistent, formal education to interrupted and poor education (Harper & de Jong, 2000, p. 155). Researchers note the complexity that this linguistic variability adds to the mainstreaming of ELLs (Harklau, 1994; Young, 1996, p. 20). While some students come to the United States academically literate in their respective L1s, others come having no experience in academic discourse even in their native languages (Burt, Peyton, & Adams, 2003; Bigelow, & Tarone, 2004). As the researchers note, this becomes a challenge in light of the rapid mainstreaming that occurs for all ESL students, who are often viewed as a collective whole rather

than individuals with vastly different linguistic and academic needs (Harper & de Jong, 2000, pp. 154-155). In connection with this, not only are students' linguistic backgrounds highly varied, but also the ESL population is in constant flux. This creates added difficulty for ESL teachers, who must be ready to change the way they teach based on the students in their classrooms.

Difficulty 1: Diversity of Experience

One of the most basic challenges that all instructors of ESL students face is the level of diversity common among this population. This diversity encompasses a wide range of issues: linguistic variability, cultural differences, traditional religious affiliations and beliefs, level of educational achievement, and even the most basic worldviews of students (Harklau, 1994; Young, 1996). These fundamental differences within the ESL student population make teaching more difficult—in that the ESL instructor must differentiate his or her instruction more frequently than a teacher in the mainstream. At the K-12 level, this can prove even more difficult because oftentimes, instructors teaching ESL classes have not received formal training in teaching ESL students (Clair, 1995; Harklau, 1994). When it comes time for students to transition, these differences become even more acute, when ESL students are outnumbered by American students. And while teachers in ESL are forced to differentiate instruction because they are only teaching ESL students, mainstream teachers often do not recognize the difficulties that their ESL students face in transitioning to mainstream classes. Even if mainstream teachers don't have negative assumptions about ESL students (which many do), time is often a limiting factor in mainstream teachers' ability to provide

13

a greater level of one-on-one support for their ESL students (Youngs & Youngs, 2001).

These issues are further complicated by the fact that the ESL population is always changing (Harklau, 1994). That is, ESL students are often in a state of constant flux—it is all too common for this population to be transient and unstable because of their social and economic status. A constantly changing and often unpredictable student population can make consistent and effective instruction even more difficult for teachers. Notwithstanding these unfortunate realities, ESL students may also find themselves in difficult social situations, as they learn to navigate relationships with other ESL students from around the world as well as native English-speaking peers (Harklau, 1994; Yoon, 2008). The final issue with mainstreaming that researchers identify is the notion of social pressure put on ELLs by their non-ESL peers, their teachers, and their families.

Difficulty 2: The Disciplinary Divide

Another difficulty within mainstreaming is that a disciplinary divide has developed between ESL and mainstream disciplines (Harklau, 1994; Matsuda, 1999; Yoon, 2008). This "division of labor", as Matsuda calls it, has led to a shutdown in communication between ESL practitioners and their mainstream counterparts (Matsuda, 1999). In fact, Matsuda points out that even the level of attendance at ESL-related workshops at the CCC demonstrates the diminished interest that even composition specialists have in learning more about their ESL students (Matsuda, 1999). This makes collaboration and coordination between teachers very challenging. While Matsuda only addresses the disciplinary divide

at the postsecondary level, there are a multiplicity of K-12 researchers who observe similar patterns (Harklau, 1994; Clair, 1995; Yoon, 1998; Reeves, 2006; Watts-Taft & Truscott, 2000; de Jong & Harper, 2000). For example, Harklau notes in her study that mainstream teachers tasked with teaching ESL classes often consider ESL an undue burden (Harklau, 1994, p. 242). ESL classes in the high school in which she conducted her research were often relegated to a handful of willing teachers, while the rest of the faculty avoided ESL instruction entirely (p. 244).

Harklau recognizes that this problem stemmed ultimately from the school administration and trickled down to the attitudes of mainstream teachers: "The assignment of mainstream teachers to ESL classes was symptomatic of the relationship between the ESL program and the rest of the school. At best, the school administration tolerated the program as a necessary nuisance" (Harklau, 1994, p. 244). What Harklau identifies here is an expansive gap between ESL programs and the entire administrative and departmental complex of K-12 schools. In Harklau's study, we find the same division of labor at the K-12 level that Matsuda identifies at the postsecondary level. The assumption is that ESL classes and ESL students should only be taught by ESL teachers. Furthermore, when money becomes an issue for school administrators, it is all too easy to apply more pressure on teachers to increase class sizes and decrease time spent in sheltered ESL classes, so that the school can save some money (Harklau, p. 244). Once again, the tendency exists to separate ESL from all other mainstream disciplines or classroom subjects, and to see ESL as a burden rather than as a vital

part of the school. The problem with this assumption is that sooner or later, ESL students must transition from ESL classes to mainstream classes.

The further the gap between ESL and the mainstream, the more challenging it becomes for students to succeed. In another study focusing on mainstream teachers' attitudes, Nancy Clair found that the mainstream teachers that she surveyed were underprepared to handle the complexities associated with teaching ESL students. She argues that what K-12 teachers need is more formal education (whether that is pre-service or in-service) specifically on the teaching of ESL (Clair, 1995, pp. 194-195). Clair's research seems to suggest an underlying reason for the division of labor at the K-12 level: a lack of formal training in mainstream teacher education. This makes sense in light of the disciplinary divide that Matsuda identifies at the postsecondary level, because it is at colleges and universities where these mainstream K-12 teachers are obtaining their education. Thus, it seems that the disciplinary division of labor that Matsuda identifies between ESL and Composition also exists between ESL and other disciplines at the postsecondary level—even disciplines that we may assume would be more sensitive to the needs of ESL students, such as teacher education.

Another issue that arises out of this division of labor is the impact that this has on the students themselves. Bogum Yoon addresses this in a study focused on the positioning of teachers and the impact that positioning has on ESL students in mainstream classrooms. When mainstream teachers see themselves as merely subject-specific or as only regular education teachers, this leads to a high level of isolation for ESL students (Yoon, 2008, p. 515). When ESL students feel isolated

in their mainstream classes, this further complicates the difficult transition they are already experiencing. Here at my university, research has been done about this topic by Okabe (2008) and Mount (2014). Mount's work is of particular interest to me because like me, she was a graduate instructor and like me, was interested in her ESL students' (in her case—Saudi males) success at the university.

Difficulty 3: Institutionalized expedited mainstreaming

One major concern among ESL instructors is the rapidity with which students are expected to transition out of mainstream classes (Harklau, 1994; Young, 1996; Yoon, 2008; Harper & de Jong, 2004), even though evidence suggests that students often take up to seven years to attain fluency in academic English (Bifuh-Ambe, 2011, p. 13; Harklau, 1994; Matsuda, 1999; Rosenthal, 1992; Williams, 2001, p. 751). This "institutionalized expedited mainstreaming", as I have titled it in this literature review, is symptomatic of the entire educational system in the United States. It is a phenomenon that often occurs because of misguided assumptions about language learning, a social stigma against ESL, financial limitations of schools, and administrative pressure (Harklau, 1994; Young, 1996). In the K-12 paradigm, there is intense pressure at the administrative level to push students through specialized programs such as ESL at a rapid pace, so as not to waste precious school resources on an oftentimes small and seemingly insignificant student population (Harklau, 1994; Young, 1996). Moreover, the ESL students' needs at the K-12 level are often misunderstood by mainstream teachers as well as administrators, who have not received formal training or had any experience with this population in their daily lives (Yoon,

2008, p. 495). Both Harklau and Young argue that this push for rapid

mainstreaming often stems from a fundamental misunderstanding of the language

learning process itself—that the sooner ESL students are mainstreamed, the better

adjusted they will be to the mainstream classroom environment and to native

spoken English (Harklau, 1994, p. 242; Young, 1996, p. 17). This "folk belief"

(Harklau, 1994, p. 242) has existed among parents of ELLs and instructors of

ELLs since the beginning of TESL as a discipline, and even before, when ESL

students became a significant part of the student population in the United States

after World War II. At that time "many ESL students were forced into the sink-or-

swim approach to language learning" (Matsuda, 1999, p. 702). This approach,

where students are mainstreamed as quickly as possible, with little or no time

spent in the ESL classroom, is still common today even though ESL has long

since been a major discipline (Creese, 2010, p. 99). Rapid mainstreaming goes

against widely recognized and long-understood principles in applied linguistics,

but it is still far too common, and it negatively impacts the ESL population in both

K-12 and postsecondary education.

At the college level, Intensive Language Institutes were the first programs

to accept international students in the second half of the twentieth century

(Matsuda, 1999). The purpose of these programs was to teach students academic

and spoken English at a rapid pace so that students could matriculate into the

university associated with the intensive program. Thus, even from the inception of

college-level ESL programs, the assumption was that students could attain to a

high enough level of academic English proficiency that they could be successful on the American college campus.

What is interesting about the assumptions made both at the K-12 and the postsecondary level is that research in Second Language Acquisition has for over fifty years demonstrated that it takes five to seven years to become fluent in academic English (Harklau, 1994, p. 242; Matsuda, 1999, p. 715; Rosenthal, 1992). Okabe (2008) also addresses how ESL students report their experiences in classes. In order for these programmatic decisions to be made about ESL students at the K-12 and postsecondary levels, this research much be at best forgotten or at worst intentionally disregarded due to a number of ulterior motives. Unfortunately, it has been noted that money is one significant factor in this, especially at the K-12 level (Harklau, 1994, p. 242).

Possible solutions to these difficulties

In light of these difficulties, researchers have suggested a variety of strategies to aid in the mainstreaming process (Pappamihiel, 2002; Rance-Roney, 2008; Razfar & Simon, 2011; Rosenthal, 1992). These strategies include teaching practices based on theoretical principles in Second Language Acquisition such as comprehensible input (Harklau, 1994; Young, 1996). These researchers propose that mainstream teachers must receive either pre-service or in-service ESL training so that they understand the specific challenges that they face in mainstream classes (Clair, 1995). Other strategies involve the students themselves. Some strategies students employ in mainstream classes are positive, such as learning to write about experiences, while others are negative, such as

19

tuning out teacher talk (Harklau, 1994). Although researchers offer analyses of students' strategies, the focus in the research is generally on teachers (Harklau, 1994; Clair, 1995; Youngs & Youngs, 2001; Young, 1995; Rosenthal, 1992; Yoon, 2008).

Conclusions

Although the data is sparse within the postsecondary paradigm, there are many concepts that can be carried over from the research done within the K-12 system. The theoretical basis of these studies, Second Language Acquisition Theory, provides common ground between K-12 and Postsecondary education. Therefore, the much more established foundation of research in K-12 proves helpful for those seeking a deeper understanding of the issues related to postsecondary mainstreaming. Nevertheless, there are major differences between K-12 and postsecondary education, and thus, it is important to consider the research on mainstreaming that has been conducted specifically within the postsecondary paradigm. Furthermore, because the dearth of research within postsecondary education is so acute, researchers must put a greater amount of energy into better understanding the phenomenon of mainstreaming among this student population.

There is a surprising lack of research on student-focused strategies in mainstreaming. Although some studies analyze student-related issues with mainstreaming (Harklau, 1994; Razfar & Simon, 2011), a large majority of them focus primarily on the instructors themselves. And as such, the solutions that many of the researchers identify have only to do with the teachers, not the

students. While it is important to address instructional concerns and find ways to improve overall teaching at both the K-12 and the postsecondary level, it is also necessary to look to the students themselves so that we as instructors can better understand their personal experiences with mainstreaming.

The purpose of this literature review has been to point out the areas within the notion of mainstreaming that have been researched fairly thoroughly, and to point out a few of the most important difficulties that both K-12 and postsecondary researchers identify within this topic. In light of these ever-present challenges, it is important to answer these researchers' calls to improve mainstream teachers' understanding of ESL students, and of the issues related to their successful transition to the mainstream. Nevertheless, it is also important to answer these researchers' collective call for more research on this topic. With this in mind, I have identified one significant hole in the research—that is, research on students themselves. A large majority of the research on mainstreaming is focused only on the teachers and how they can improve. But there have not been significant studies done on how ESL students themselves experience the process of mainstreaming. Therefore, my thesis seeks to begin to fill this gap in the research, and to give students the voice to talk about their experience during this often difficult transition.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

The goal of this research is to identify patterns of ELL student behavior during the transition from ESL to mainstream classes at EWU. I looked specifically at the transition from English 101 to English 201. These two English classes are a case study of student transition from being in classes with ELLs and Generation 1.5 students to being in a class with mostly L1 students.

Research Questions

1.   Does student behavior differ in terms of the five language skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, Grammar) when comparing an ESL class to a mainstream class? If so, how does student behavior differ? In which areas? If not, how does student behavior stay the same? In which areas?

2.   How does student's output in terms of of speaking differ between English 112 and English 101?

3.   How does student's output in terms of writing differ between English 112 and English 101?

4.   How does student listening patterns differ between English 112 and English 101?

Research Methodologies

Researchers of mainstreaming ESL students primarily use qualitative methodologies (Harklau, 1994; Clair, 1995; Yoon, 2008) or mixed methodologies (Razfar & Simon, 2011; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). Case studies were conducted by Harklau (1994), Clair (1995), and Yoon (2008). The instruments used in these

case studies included: in-depth interviews, classroom observations, participant observation, and reflective journals. I have based my study primarily on these three qualitative studies.

The research conducted by Linda Harklau (1994), which compares ESL and mainstream classroom environments, provides the most complete and thorough analysis of student behaviors in both ESL and mainstream classes. Harklau also identifies two major areas in which she identifies and analyzes the differences between the ESL and mainstream classroom environments. These three areas are: instructional goals/organization, and the function of each classroom in student's social lives (p. 248). This is significant because it provides a helpful framework for identifying differences in student behaviors in the two classroom environments. Although the lens through which I will identify student behaviors is different (the 5 language skills), my study design will parallel Harklau's in that it will outline and compare student-use of these five skills in the two classroom environments.

My study will be qualitative, but will also use some quantitative instruments such as surveys. Therefore, it can be classified as a mixed methods study. In order to understand ELL students' challenges during a transition from ESL to mainstream classes at the college level, I have gathered data using the following methods:

Participant observation: I conducted my research largely by means of participant observation. As I was the instructor in the classes, I took on the role of a teacher-researcher. In English 101SL, I talked openly about my research to all

students. In English 201, I openly discussed my research a few times, but really only discussed it in detail with the ESL students participating in my study.

Surveys: I distributed a survey to all English 101SL students at the end of Winter quarter as well as to the ESL students in my English 201 section during the last half of Spring quarter. These surveys serve as a way to analyze student behavior based on the language skills previously identified. The survey questions were generated by factors I noticed during my classroom observations. Appendices B and C contain the survey questions for English 101SL and English 201, respectively.

Setting

My study site is a regional comprehensive public university in the Pacific Northwest.

Subjects/Population

I am currently a graduate student on this campus and also a graduate instructor of record. As such, I had easy access to the ELL community, as many of them were my students during the 2015-16 school year. I had access to this population as their teacher—I taught both the 101 ESL section as well as the mainstream 201 section. I selected this group because TESL is my research focus for my Masters program. I specifically selected English 101SL and English 201 because this is one major transition that early mainstreaming students will experience. Therefore, students in these classes will be particularly aware of the differences between ESL and mainstream classes. Because these are both English classes taught at the same university, it will be easier to identify the subtle

changes in student behavior solely due to the difference between the classroom environments.

Survey Administration

Surveys were hosted by Survey Monkey and were administered by email on the campus course management system called Canvas. Students received a link to complete the survey within 1 week. Participation was entirely optional and there was no punishment for not participating. Participation was confidential and not anonymous: I knew the students who were being surveyed but there were no identifying names or marks on the surveys to link them to specific student names.

Limitations

Because of the localized nature of this study, generalizing findings to a wider range of ELLs is difficult. While these surveys followed students for two quarters, student transitioning behaviors may take longer to develop than two school quarters. However, the biggest limitation to my study was my inability to do the intended interviews. I prepared the IRB approval for both surveys and interviews, intending to use the surveys to get more basic demographic info before I elaborated on open-ended interview questions with six students. My time constraints made it very difficult to conduct, transcribe, and analyze multiple one-on-one interview sessions.Thus, I had to make the decision to abandon the interviews and hope that some of the "comments" from the survey questions would provide me some insight. I was glad that I had a culturally diverse research population—this was not what I expected. Having a more diverse population gives the case study more applicability.

Timeline

The data collection spanned two academic quarters (20 weeks) and the data analysis took place over one academic quarter (10 weeks). This study was broken into three major phases:

Phase 1: Subject Selection/Data Collection

Phase 1 took place during Winter and Spring 2016. The first step in the data collection phase was to select subjects in English 101SL for my case study. Subjects were chosen based on their willingness to participate in the study and their plan for enrollment in English 201 the following quarter.

The second step in the data collection phase was to observe student behaviors in class. Because I taught the classes, I attended every class, and as an instructor I was constantly observing student behaviors in class.

The next phase was survey administration. The English 101SL survey was given to the entire class, whereas my survey for English 201 was only given to the six ELLs who continued on in the class. I gave the first survey as a preliminary analysis of multiple ESL students. This allowed me to spread my net wide in terms of understanding the whole student population. Moreover, this gave me flexibility as I did not know who would be taking English 201 the following quarter. The more students that took the survey in 101SL, the higher the chance that I would have research participants for Spring quarter.

Phase 2: Data Categorization

Phase two occurred during Spring quarter 2016. As my data began to saturate, I categorized my findings based on student behaviors in the five

language skills. The data from my observations were compiled and sorted into different categories. Within each language skill (writing, reading, speaking, listening, and grammar), similarities, differences, and outliers in student behavior were identified.

Phase 3: Data Analysis

Phase three occurred during Spring quarter 2016. After completing Phases 1 & 2, I achieved necessary saturation in the data. Step three was to analyze the data and identify patterns in student behavior in writing, reading, speaking, listening, and grammar. These results illuminate possible answers to my original research questions. I then analyze my findings based on the phase 2 categorization of the data within the different language skills.

Survey Design

Two student surveys were designed and distributed in March & May 2016, after approval by the university's internal review board. The review board oversees research involving human subjects with the responsibility of protecting these subjects. The surveys were developed in consultation with my thesis advisor in the English department and after my observations teaching ENGL 101SL. The surveys were specifically designed to identify learning behaviors through the lens of the five language skills. I surveyed almost all of my English 101SL students, which offered a broader perspective on this population as I started out. In English 201, I focused more specifically on the students that continued on with me. Complete random assignment of survey participants was not possible given time limitations.

Student Survey Protocol

Approximately 20-30 minutes was required for completion of the survey, including instructions. I sent messages through Canvas to my six ELLs who had come through English 101SL with me. The emails contained a link to the survey hosted by Survey Monkey. Because these students had already volunteered to participate in my research during English 101SL, it was not necessary to go through the consent form process again (Appendix A). Nevertheless, I clarified that it was still voluntary for students long before I administered the surveys. I closed the survey two weeks from distribution.

Threats to Validity

While a large, random sample size is considered a goal, the survey size of 18 for English 101SL and 6 for English 201 is suitable for the purposes of this thesis. Every attempt was made to make the questions neutral to avoid influencing the respondents. Furthermore, by conducting the surveys anonymously, my potential impact on the students' responses was minimized.

In English 101SL, I prepared my students ahead of time to take the survey. It was held on the last day of Winter quarter, 2016. Attendance was not mandatory, but students would receive extra credit for participating. Out of 25 students total, 22 students participated in the survey.

In English 201, I sent my students a link to the survey through the Canvas education software that our university uses. Because the students participating in the study Spring quarter had previously participated, it was not necessary for me

to explain the survey process. Students were able to take the survey at their leisure.

Chapter IV: Results and Discussion

Overall results

In this chapter, I interpret the data recorded over the course of my two-quarter-long research project. First, I will discuss the general survey data. The general surveys, especially the one given in English 101SL, offer a holistic perspective on how students judge their own use of English in their ESL and mainstream composition classes. This holistic perspective provides a foundation for understanding the more specific characteristics of the six students that make up the case study portion of this research project.

I was surprised by the number of students that took my survey during Winter quarter. Even though I knew that extra credit would be a draw, it was encouraging that almost all of my students attended on the last day of class, our allotted survey day. Administering this survey was an interesting experience. I stayed up late the night before, stressing over the wording of questions and the one-off nature of a survey like this. I had one chance to get good results, and if it did not work, or if students did not understand the questions, then I would be put in a very difficult position. Thankfully, the survey day went well overall, and it seemed that students were happy to participate.

The survey that I administered towards the end of Spring quarter was different. Because I was teaching a mainstream class, I did not administer it during class. Rather, I emailed my six continuing ESL students a link, and they were to take the survey on their own time. Within the first week of opening the

survey, four out of six had completed it. It was interesting to me that two of my six students did not take the survey within the first week.

The surveys themselves were very similar. See Appendices B and C for survey questions. Both surveys asked students a variety of questions about their perspectives on different aspects of their English language acquisition process. These different aspects were determined by the structure of the class itself (curriculum design, major assignments, course goals) and by the notion of the five language skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and grammar). Although the surveys were structurally similar, it is important to note that the difference in participants is a factor in the results. In English 101SL, all but three of my students participated. This meant that the responses were much more varied. Moreover, the large majority of participants in 101SL were not continuing on with the research. This speaks to the fact that these students did not have anything to lose if they reported negatively on the survey. Nevertheless, the survey responses were generally positive or neutral, with only a handful of negative student answers. In English 201, the students were much more invested in the research. It is important to note, though, that these students did not have to do anything extra in English in order to take the survey. Their registration in my course was all that I required for them to continue being participants in the study. Thus, students did not have to be that much more invested in the study. They only had to take 10-20 minutes of their time to participate.

The major difference in interpretation of the two surveys is based on the number of participants. The first survey is much more general, and provides a

more balanced understanding of how an entire class perceives their own language use. The second survey is much more specific: six identified ESL students in a class of 25. The data put forward in the second survey is not as generalizable, because the population is much smaller and their participation in the survey was not random. I surveyed them because they continued on from 101SL, rather than because they happened to enroll in 101SL.

The first survey had a total of 22 responses to fourteen questions. Of those fourteen questions, only one was skipped (question six) by one respondent. Respondents had the option of explaining their response on all questions but one and seven. This allowed for open-ended respondent feedback while still being able to analyze and interpret the overall data. Respondents commented on questions four, six, eight, nine, and fourteen. Most of these comments corresponded with and expanded on a specific answer in the main part of the question, while some of the comments contradicted or made note that the respondent could not accurately answer the question based on the possible responses given for the question (more on this later).

Detailed analysis of 101SL survey

It is important to look at a number of the survey questions, though not all were significant. Of the fourteen questions asked, questions one, three, four, eight, nine, and fourteen are especially interesting in terms of beginning to answer my research questions.

Q1 For how many quarters have you been
taking classes with mostly American (or
native-English-speaking) students?

Answered: 22   Skipped: 0

13.64%	68.18%	9.09%	4.55%	4.55%
1 quarter	2 quarters	3 quarters	4 quarters	5 or more quarters
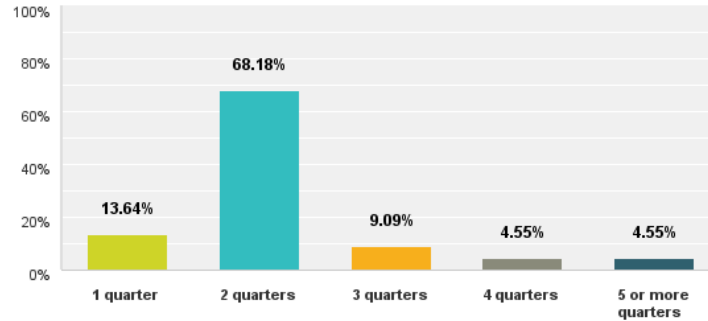
Figure 1

I asked question one because it helped me recognize concretely where the majority of my students were at in the transition process. What I assumed to be the case for most of my students appeared to be true: the majority of the class (81.82%) had only taken mainstream classes for 1-2 quarters. This meant that these students were still in the beginning stages of their transition. They had, at most, only taken three mainstream courses before taking my course. This makes sense because the majority of my students matriculated in the Fall from our university's intensive English program, while some matriculated at the beginning of Winter quarter. Although 68% of my students had already taken a full quarter of classes with American students, I still consider them to be in transition. They were not yet taking classes in their majors, and most of them had spent longer in the intensive English program than in the mainstream. For these reasons, one quarter of mainstream classes is not enough to consider these students fully mainstreamed.

Although the percentage of students who had taken classes with mostly American peers for four quarters or more was just 10%, the results are still significant. This means that two students out of twenty-two surveyed were sufficiently mainstreamed. An entire year (four quarters) of mainstream English classes is probably enough, depending on one's level of success, to be considered fully mainstreamed. One student in my class did report that he or she had taken four quarters of mainstream classes, and another student reported that he or she had taken five or more quarters of classes. These students are outliers in the data set, because chances are they had already been mainstreamed into the university. In fact, the respondent who reported taking five or more quarters of mainstream classes also commented on question fourteen: "I never take any ESL classes." So, this student, though considered by the university to be an English Language Learner, had actually not been classified as one at previous educational institutions. There are many questions that arise from this, but the most important question is: how does a student get re-classified as an ELL after not being one in previous education? All of the students in my class clearly spoke English as a second language, and only one student was almost as proficient with spoken English as an L1 English speaker. Thus, if it is true that this respondent had not previously been considered an ESL student, then it is possible that he or she experienced a certain level of institutionalized mainstreaming at a previous institution (Harklau, 1994, p. 242). Should this student have been classified as an ELL and enrolled into ESL classes previously? It seems that all the students in 101SL benefitted from taking the class. Did this student experience the effects of

34

administrative pressure to classify students as mainstream in order to save money? These questions are not necessarily answerable, but the fact that this student had not previously taken ESL courses speaks to the possibility that these factors could very well be involved.

Overall, question one provides a basic understanding of where the majority of my students were at in the mainstreaming process—at the beginning. The question also has some underlying implications for the students who had already transitioned and were taking English 101SL retroactively or as their very first ESL class.
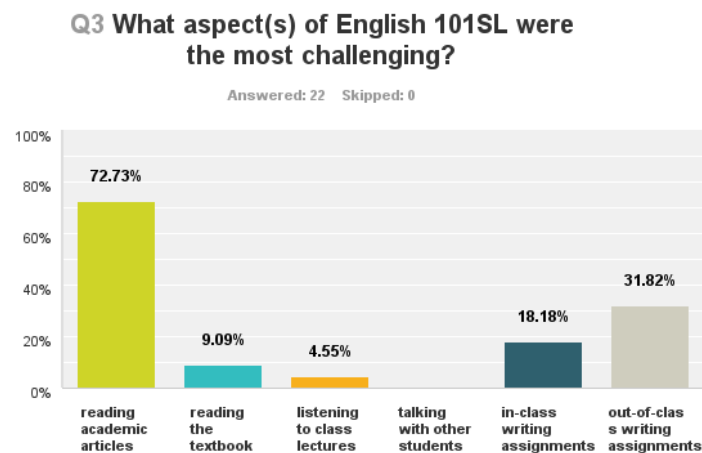
Figure 2

In question three, students had to choose which aspects of English 101SL were the most challenging. There were six major aspects to the class that had to do with the five language skills. Respondents were able to choose more than one answer. The results for this question were overwhelmingly clear: reading academic articles was rated by almost 73 percent of the class as most difficult. What is the significance of this response? First of all, it is important to note that

English 101SL is not primarily a reading class. While the first unit does emphasize understanding of academic articles, it is short and condensed, and given under the assumption that students come to English 101 with basic reading skills. It seems the a majority of the students enrolled in English 101SL were at very best underprepared to handle the reading requirements. This is affirmed by multiple conversations that I had with students about the challenges they had reading through academic articles during the academic argument unit. Over the course of about three weeks, students were required to find five to seven peer-reviewed articles, read them, analyze them in the form of an annotated bibliography, and create their own argumentation essay based on the academic conversation among the articles. If students felt that the reading requirements were most difficult, this means that their energy was most invested in this, rather than the actual focus of the class: writing. If students come into the mainstream unable to handle extensive reading requirements, it sets them up for failure in other aspects of their classes. That is, if students invest all of their time into comprehending academic articles in English 101, this puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to actually putting that understanding into a five to seven page essay that is itself supposed to be academic.

Out-of-class writing assignments, which make up the bulk of the workload for the quarter, were rated by students as the second most challenging aspect of the course. This is significant, but a mere 32 percent of students reported this as a difficult requirement—that is less than half of the amount that said reading academic articles was the most difficult requirement. When the focus of a course

is not the most challenging aspect of it, this indicates that something needs to change.

Q4 What aspect(s) of your English improved the most during English 101SL?

Answered: 22   Skipped: 0
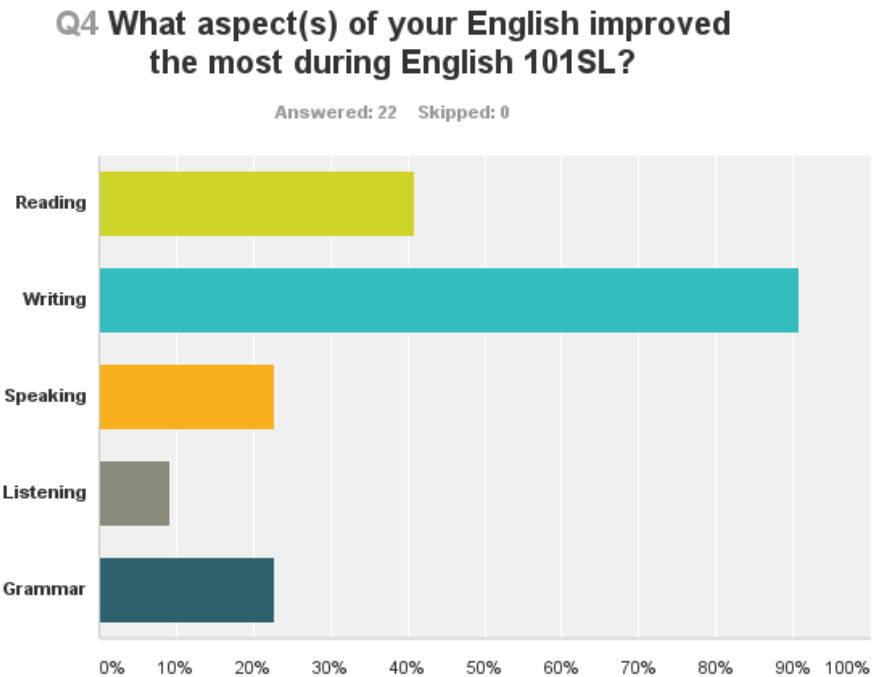
Figure 3

Question four is connected conversely with question three. The emphasis of question three was students' reporting on the most challenging aspects of the course, while question four asks students to report on the most helpful aspects of the course. The response options given were much more general than in question three, but were still divided in much the same way—by the five language skills. The results for this question fall much more neatly within the goals and expectations of English 101SL. Students reported overwhelmingly (90%) that their writing was the linguistic feature that improved the most. This makes sense

based of the amount of writing that was done by students during the quarter. What this speaks to is that English 101SL is at the very least giving of the students who reported that their writing improved also reported that their reading improved. This is interesting in light of students' responses to question three. The most challenging aspect of English 101SL was also an aspect that did not improve as much in comparison to writing. In one sense, this is expected, since reading is not the major emphasis of the course. But the fact that not as many students reported an improvement in reading could spell disaster for their future classes because students will likely read more in future classes than they will write.

Q8 Had you read academic, peer-reviewed articles in English before this class?

Answered: 22   Skipped: 0
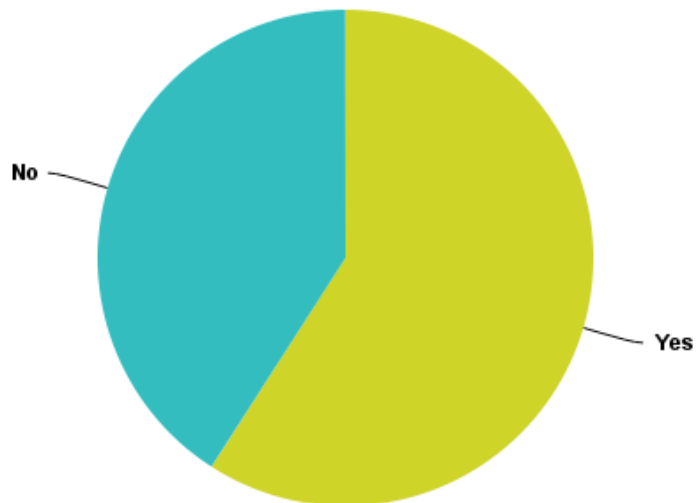
Figure 4

Although question eight is a simple yes/no, it is interesting to note that a sizable amount of students had not previously read articles from scholarly

journals prior to entering English 101SL. This means that for many of the students, English 101SL was their first experience of mainstream writing requirements as well as mainstream reading requirements. About 40% of the students had to navigate the challenge of understanding the characteristics of academic articles for the first time while also navigating the challenge of writing in academic English.

Q9 How challenging were the required reading assignments in English 101SL?

Answered: 22   Skipped: 0

Relative challenge of reading assignments

■ Not challenging at all   ■ Not very challenging   ■ Moderately challenging
■ Challenging   ■ Very challenging
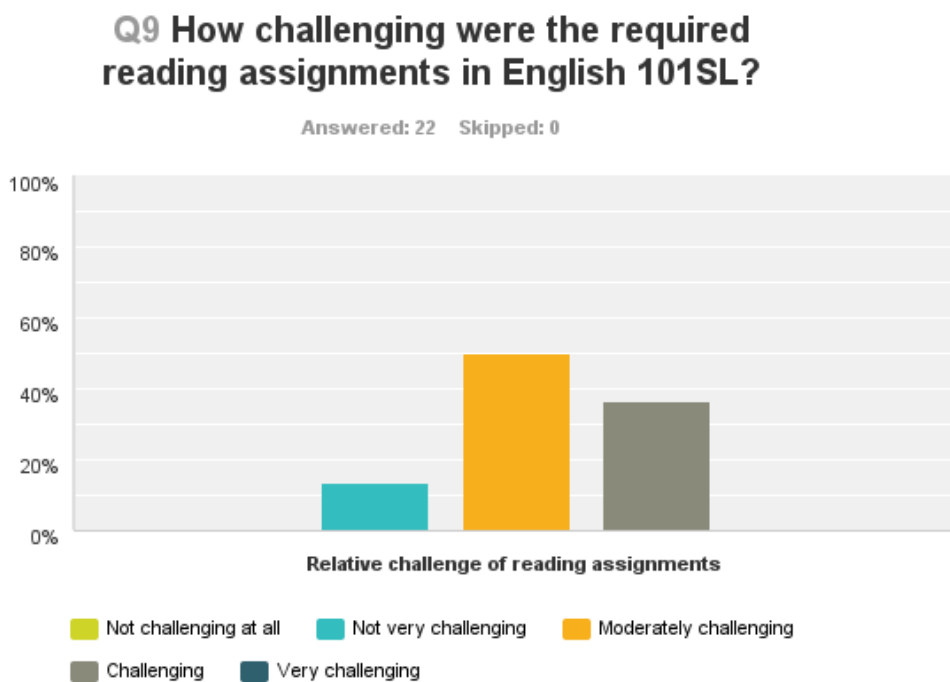
Figure 5

Question nine reaffirms what students reported on question three, namely, that the reading requirements in English 101SL were difficult. Only about fifteen percent of students said that the reading requirements were not challenging. The rest—about 75%—reported that the reading requirements were either moderately

challenging or challenging. In one sense, this should be encouraging because no students reported the writing to be very challenging, so it is safe to assume that they were at least able to work their way through this difficulty. Nevertheless, this still displays that students may not be ready to handle mainstream reading requirements, even after multiple quarters of intensive ESL. I will revisit this observation in my conclusion.

Q14 How would you rate your overall transition from ESL classes to mainstream college classes?

Answered: 22   Skipped: 0

(no label)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Very bad   Bad   Okay   Good   Very Good
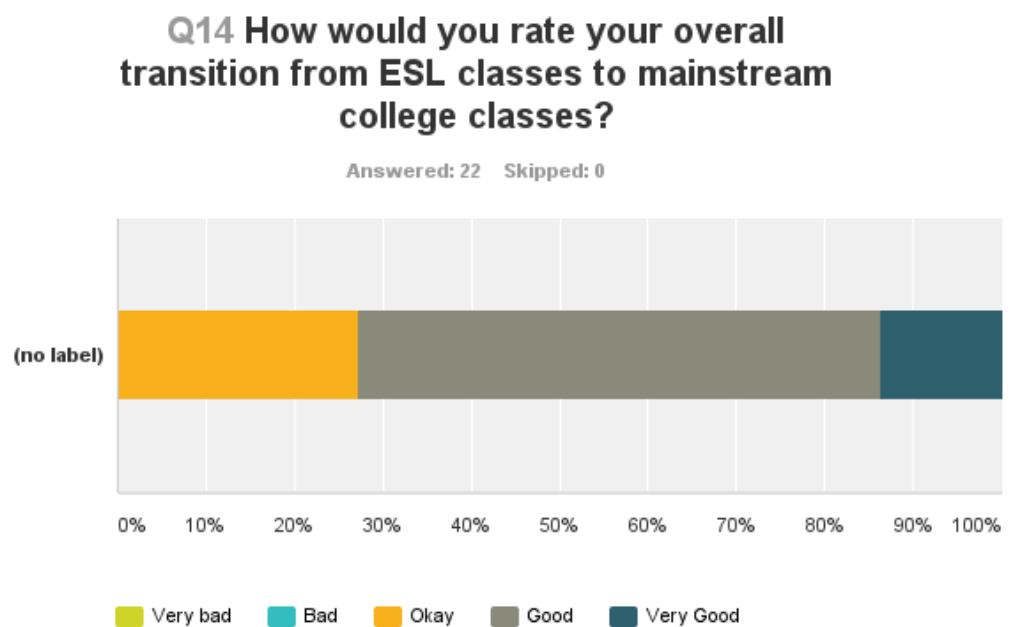
Figure 6

Question fourteen was the most explicit question regarding students' actual transition from ESL to mainstream classes. I chose to ask this question so explicitly because it is important to understand how students perceive their relative success or failure during their transition. The majority of students reported that their transition has been good, while a smaller percentage reported that it has been okay and an even smaller percentage that it has been very good.

40

This question demonstrates that even in light of the challenges that students reported in English 101SL, they see themselves as at the very worst satisfactorily transitioning from ESL to the mainstream. However, this is self-report, as is the nature of survey responses. The question is whether or not students actually are ready for the mainstream. That is, it does not ultimately matter much if students report that they are ready, if they end up struggling to pass classes and barely make it through their college careers. It is important that ESL is not increasing students' level of confidence without actually increasing their level of ability. While this cannot be determined from this one question, the question does arise, especially because in previous questions students voiced some significant challenges to their success in mainstream classes.

Participants in the study from English 101SL to English 201

Omar: Omar is a Saudi Arabian male who spent time in the English Language Institute prior to matriculating into the university. He was generally quiet, and at times aloof. When in class, he would often not participate in group work. This occurred in both English 101SL and English 201. His attendance was inconsistent, and this may have been motivated by an assumption that he did not need to be taking these classes in the first place. This analysis of Omar is based on the fact that his academic English was fairly developed, and he did demonstrate a high level of critical thinking when he did engage in the class. Omar also pushed back harder on decisions that I made as a teacher. For example, he very clearly expressed his discontentment with the grade I gave him for English 101SL. Still,

41

he wanted to be in my English 201 class, and we ended up having a few good conversations after class.

Ahmed: Ahmed is also a Saudi Arabian male who spent time at a different Intensive English program before transferring to our university for his major. He even wrote about his positive experiences in this program and clearly felt that it prepared him well for his college career. At the beginning of English 101SL, Ahmed was very consistent. He always came to class and regularly contributed to group discussion. As the quarter went on, though, his attendance became less consistent, and his involvement in the class suffered. In English 201, the pattern that had formed at the beginning of 101SL persisted for a while, but improved during the last half of the quarter. Ahmed demonstrated a high level of both spoken English and academic English competency. In English 101SL, he had the most natural academic writing style. Moreover, his level of critical analysis of the topics written on and discussed in class was also very high. Ahmed was on of the better students in English 101SL, though his overall grade suffered from lower attendance and the issues associated with it. In English 201, Ahmed continued to produce solid, academically-minded papers, but his involvement in the classroom greatly decreased. He said himself that he was often afraid to speak up in class, because he felt that his native English-speaking peers had better things to say and they would be able to identify every mistake he made if he were to speak aloud.

Mohammed: Mohammed, also a Saudi Arabian male, was a consistent yet quiet student. He went through our university's English Language Institute, but it didn't seem that he benefitted as much from it as Ahmed or Omar. Mohammed's

spoken English was coherent, but it took him longer to speak and it often seemed forced. Mohammed's academic English was not as developed as Omar's or Ahmed's. Nevertheless, Mohammed continually worked hard to improve it, and he ended English 101SL with a solid grade. Mohammed's attendance during English 101SL was very consistent. Unfortunately, his attendance became inconsistent in English 201. This was most likely because Mohammed's family experienced a tragedy towards the beginning of the quarter, and it clearly affected Mohammed's focus and his consistency. As the quarter progressed, Mohammed seemed to improve his focus. It helped Mohammed to continue on with the same topic that he wrote about in English 101SL, though at times this ended up presenting its own challenges. Overall, Mohammed's level of academic English proficiency definitely improved, due to his work ethic and his consistent desire to improve.

Cindy: Cindy, originally from Thailand, immigrated with her family to the United States at some point during her teenage years. She did not attend the English Language Institute, and was only classified as an ELL upon matriculation into our university. She was one of only four females in English 101SL, as well as one of only five students who were not from Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, Cindy was by far the most talkative female in the class, and I observed that she had friendships outside of class with at least one of the Saudi Arabian males in the class. Cindy's spoken English was by far the most fluent, which makes sense because she has been in the United States much longer than the other students had. Cindy's academic English was also fairly advanced, and she tended to score

43

in the B to A range on her papers. Nevertheless, Cindy struggled with some health issues during English 101SL, and this kept her out of class for one full week, which greatly impacted her ability to do excellently in the class. At the end of English 101SL, Cindy did not turn in her final portfolio, which caused her to fail the class. About a week and a half after the quarter ended, Cindy turned in her portfolio and her grade was changed. But this situation caused her overall grade to be much lower, and spoke to the inconsistency that was an underlying feature of her classroom behavior throughout the quarter. In English 201, Cindy was much more consistent overall. Her attendance was much better, and she did turn assignments in on time and seemed to function well among her native English-speaking peers. One consistent difficulty that Cindy faced was not talking openly in class. She struggled to participate in 101SL, and she only spoke aloud to ask a question or give a comment in English 201 one or two times during the entire quarter. This was surprising considering her fluency with spoken English.

Mya: Mya is among the many Karen refugees that have immigrated to the United States. She is originally from Burma, and more specifically from a refugee camp in Burma. There are many Karen refugees in the city near our university campus, so it is not irregular, especially now, that many of the refugee's children find their way to our university campus. Mya was quiet, but extremely hardworking. It was difficult to tell how proficient she was at English because she rarely spoke, and when she did, she did not exude confidence. But it was in her written English that her proficiency shined. In English 101SL, she successfully attained a 4.0 in the class. She was one of five students to get a perfect grade. Her

44

writing style did not sound like that of a college student—it was refined and picturesque, especially in the narrative essay that was written at the beginning of English 101SL. She had a very good understanding of academic English as well, and successfully wrote an argument essay that analyzed academic research. I only wished that she had participated more in class, because she consistently had good ideas and deep critical thinking that would have helped improve our discussion during class. In English 201, Mya remained very quiet. She also seemed to struggle more with following the course curriculum and understanding in-class discussion. Nevertheless, when I explained things to her after class, she caught on quickly and always turned assignments in on time.

Sang: Sang is from Vietnam. Her story is a little less clear, but like Cindy and Mya, she immigrated to the United States with her family. Also much like Cindy and Mya, she was very quiet in class and it was difficult to tell where she was at with her spoken English. She only talked with the three other girls in the class, and I never saw her engage in conversation with anyone else unless it was during group work where I put her in a group with people other than the three girls. Sang's writing was probably the most enigmatic writing I have seen in my teaching experience—it was grammatically hard to read, but she always seemed to be communicating something. It sounded at times like her writing was going through online translation software: sentences were broken up, word choice was awkward, and organization was not totally coherent. Nevertheless, Sang managed to revise her essays and improve this enough to pass on to English 201. Her final essay for 101SL was the most concerning. She struggled to use her own words to

describe and explain her sources, which ultimately led to a high amount of patch writing. As I already said, she was able to fix this, and I decided that she had enough writing ability to pass to English 201. In 201, she continued to write this way, although it did seem to improve. This patchwork-writing was also mirrored in the way that she spoke. It was broken and there were often pauses, and when her friends were with her they often spoke on her behalf.

Detailed Survey analysis for English 201:

Q1 How would you rate your overall progress in English 201?

Answered: 6   Skipped: 0

Very bad   Bad   Okay   Good   Very good
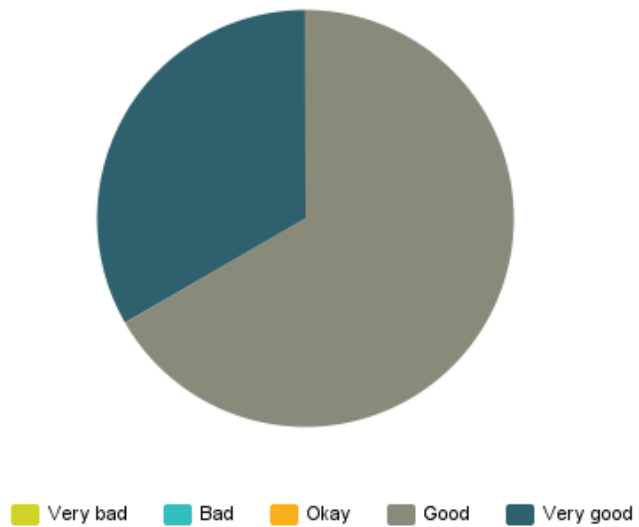
Figure 7

The first question for this survey is identical to the second question I asked in the 101SL survey. The goal was to get students to think about their level of success in the course. The results in English 101SL were more varied—from "okay" to "very good". In English 201, it appears that the six ELLs who

continued on were more positive about their progress. Nevertheless, four students reported that their progress was "good" compared to two that reported it as "very good". What does this tell us? It tells us that students were confident, but not overconfident, with their overall ability to succeed in English 201.

Q2 **Which of the following language-related aspects has been most difficult in English 201?**

Answered: 6   Skipped: 0
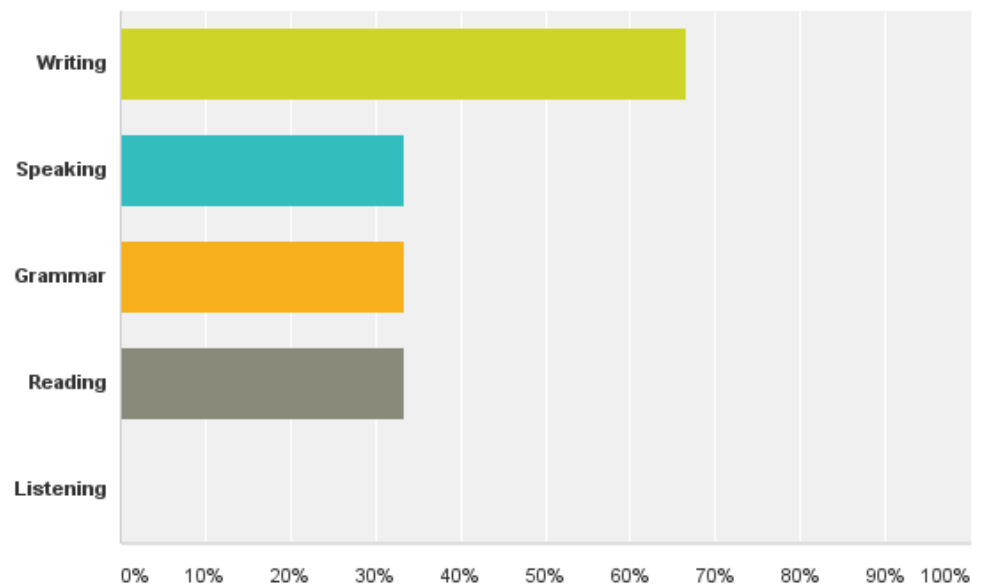
Figure 8

The next question that must be analyzed is also very similar to what was asked in the previous survey. The question was designed so that students could choose multiple language-related aspects of our class. What is intriguing about students' responses to this question is that writing far outweighs any other language-related aspects as far as level of difficulty is concerned. This is completely different than English 101SL, where students overwhelmingly

reported that reading academic articles was the most challenging aspect of the course. While it is difficult to draw a totally sound conclusion from just two survey questions, this does demonstrate how English 101SL seemed to ease the burden on students as far as academic reading is concerned. Conversely, it is unfortunate that writing was so challenging for students, especially because in English 101SL students did not find writing to be nearly as challenging. This may speak to the fact that the most challenging aspect of a class tends to be the one students improve most on, while less challenging aspects are put on the back burner. In light of this, it would make sense that while students focused heavily on reading and understanding academic articles in English 101SL, the time they spend honing their writing dropped off. When six of those students entered my English 201 section, they were ready to handle the reading requirements, but the writing was more difficult because of the insufficient amount of time they had spent on it in English 101SL.

Q7 Rate the level of confidence you have interacting with your American peers in English 201.

Answered: 6   Skipped: 0

16.67%
(1)

83.33%
(5)

Very low   Low   Okay   High   Very high
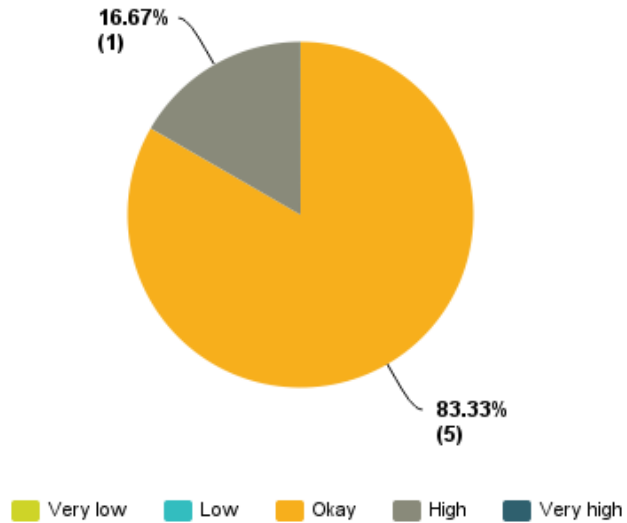
Figure 9

Question eight represents a more specific aspect of the students' transition to English 201. It is interesting that students reported overwhelmingly that their interaction with their American peers was only "okay". In English 101SL, students reported that the class helped them better understand native-spoken English. Nevertheless, it seems that in a classroom setting where the ELLs were far outnumbered, interacting with these peers posed a serious challenge. As I taught the class, I rarely saw my ELLs talking with the Americans in class. They tended to stay in the groups they had already established in English 101SL, and unless I split them up by counting off for group work, they would not naturally sit by or interact with their American peers. This is somewhat disconcerting. At this

49

point in these students' academic lives, they had been mainstreamed for at least two quarters, while some had been mainstreamed for a much longer period of time. If these students are still uncomfortable interacting with their peers, then it calls into question how effective their ESL training was for preparing them to speak with native-English speakers. These issues become more clear because in the next question, only half of the students said they understand native-spoken English better because of English 201. The other half of the class responded that their understanding of native-spoken English only improved moderately. This is still improvement, but it is concerning because by English 201, these students should be ready to participate in class discussion, interact with their peers, and even build and maintain friendships with Americans. If these students cannot do this, they are at an extreme disadvantage when they transition into more important classes, i.e. classes that determine their entrance into their majors.

Q12 Rate your overall transition from the ESL composition class (English 101sl) to the mainstream composition class (English 201).

Answered: 6   Skipped: 0

16.67%
(1)

50.00%
(3)

33.33%
(2)

☐ Very bad   ☐ Bad   ☐ Okay   ☐ Good   ☐ Very good
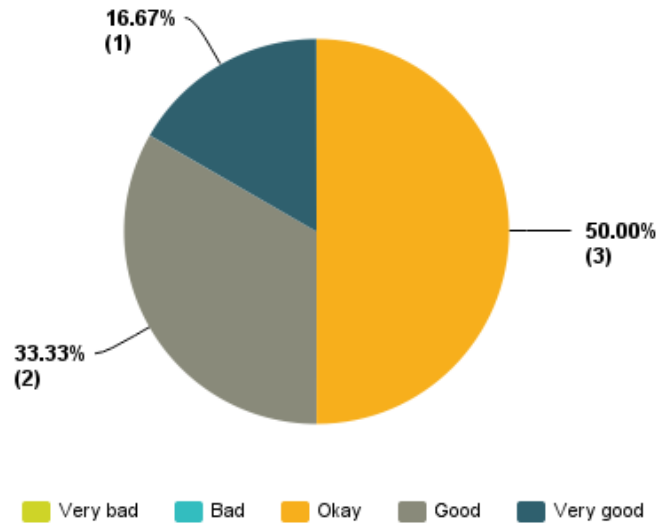
Figure 10

In this final question, students were asked to rate their overall transition one more time. But, this transition was from English 101SL to English 201. This was more specific than the question asked at the end of the English 101SL survey, because it focused on only the composition classes that students had taken. Nevertheless, this offers a unique insight into students' understanding of their own progress through the ESL curriculum at our university. Only one student reported their transition to be "very good", while two reported it to be "good", and three "okay". It is important to note that students did not think their transition was "bad" or "very bad"; this cannot be ignored. At the very least, students thought

51

they had satisfactorily transitioned between classroom contexts. Nevertheless, the question still stands: should we be content if half our ELLs report an "okay" transition to mainstream classes? Is that the goal of ESL? To do the bare minimum in preparing students for the mainstream? It is my view that ESL programs should over-prepared students for the mainstream rather than under-prepared. Wouldn't it be better if our ELLs thought the mainstream was easy compared to their ESL classes? In the comments section of this survey question, one student wrote something that encapsulates much of the problem: "I wish I had the opportunity to interact with American students during ESL before i became their classmate." Because ESL is such a focused time for students, they often come to the United States and spend little time interacting with native speakers. This puts them at a disadvantage from the start. This could also begin to establish a mindset among ELLs that they should not try to interact with native-English speakers until they are completely fluent. Becoming classmates with a large group of students with which ELLs have had no experience is not the best way to introduce them to native-English speakers. And if the goal of ESL is to be able to fully function in the mainstream, then would it not make sense for students to have multiple opportunities to interact with native speakers during intensive ESL?

It is with these questions in mind that I transition now to my conclusion, where we will discuss implications from the survey questions as well as from the analysis of student behavior in class. It is also important to discuss the limitations of this research, and to appropriately apply it to certain situations, while not over applying it to other contexts.

Discussion and Conclusions

As we consider the implications of this research, it is necessary to situate the discussion within the five language skills. These basic aspects of English help to break down the differences in student behavior within these classroom contexts. Moreover, the five language skills help to identify how mainstream classes present both an opportunity as well as a challenge to transitioning ELLs.

Reading

Reading, as we have already seen from the surveys, presented a formidable challenge to the ELLs in both classes. In light of the fact that forty percent of students in English 101SL had not previously read academic articles, it makes sense that they would consider reading to be so difficult. For those students who had previously read academic articles, some commented that they weren't sure whether they were peer-reviewed or not, while some noted that their experience with this type of writing was limited to only one class (Appendix B and C). While it does seem that a handful of students were prepared to handle the reading requirements, many were not. Unfortunately, only a small part of the English 101SL curriculum was geared explicitly toward teaching students how to read academic articles. The most common complaint I received was about the reading load. Many students said it took them a long time to just read and understand one page. Because the language in peer-reviewed journals is subject-specific, many students did not have the vocabulary to understand them. This is especially true when it came to students' research topics at the end of the quarter.

Students were required to find at least three scholarly articles, and they were supposed to understand them thoroughly enough to make an argument based on them (and two other popular sources). Many students struggled to understand their topics and to identify issues specific enough to formulate a thesis from.

The issue, then, in English 201 is that the curriculum assumes students know how to navigate academic articles. Since the entire focus of the 201 class is research, it is exceedingly important that students have the knowledge and the ability to read and comprehend scholarly journal articles. But many of them still did not have these skills, let alone the ability to read articles fast enough to get through 8-10 in one week. While these students were at least familiar with academic articles and the general format, they still struggled in much the same way. This makes sense because the English 101SL curriculum did not emphasize or explicitly teach reading skills.

In terms of reading, many students seemed to stay quite the same between classrooms contexts. This is partly due to the fact that in both contexts, reading was out-of-class work, so the change in context did not exactly apply to the readings. Nevertheless, there was a clear change in the volume of reading, and all my ELLs were underprepared to handle this.

Writing

Both English 101SL and English 201 focused primarily on writing. After all, they are both English composition courses. Overall, it seemed that students felt more prepared for the writing requirements, though they were unfamiliar with the structure of some of the actual assignments. Some students, such as Ahmed,

Omar and Mya, seemed to really understand standard academic English. These students were clearly gifted communicators and had creative and interesting ways of writing which had already begun to develop long before they entered my class. Other students, such as Sang, struggled to communicate unique thoughts due to a lack of linguistic variability, especially in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure. Mohammed, who seemed to struggle at the beginning of English 101SL, made a great deal of progress in his use of standard academic English.

Speaking

In English 101SL, almost every student talked at least a few times during classroom discussion every week. While the 18 Saudi Arabian males did seem to talk more than the Japanese male and the four females, everyone still talked in class. Students asked good questions, and always demonstrated investment into the class. The only student who consistently seemed to loath participation was Omar. In both English 101Sl and English 201, Omar avoided group work. He seemed to always stay back and not get involved in classroom activities, and his comments were terse. Ahmed and Mohammed, on the other hand, talked almost every day in English 101SL. They consistently spoke during classroom discussion, and participated actively in group work and other in-class activities. Sang, Cindy, and Mya were very quiet, but when called on or encouraged to speak up, they seemed to always have good ideas. It is important to note that Sang was by far the most shy out of the whole group of English 101SL students, and she seemed uncomfortable speaking aloud in any context.

In English 201, students' spoken language was the most obvious and immediately apparent change. The six ESL students stopped talking—almost entirely. They all chose to sit in the back of the classroom, and they stayed quiet. They positioned themselves as outsiders, and demonstrated they felt that way by being unwilling to even speak during classroom discussion.

Listening

Students' listening in class is probably the most difficult language skill to analyze and observe. Nevertheless, there are a few interesting data points that must be considered. First, my own spoken language use was considerably different in English 101SL than in any mainstream class I had taught. I tended to speak slower and to use fewer American English phrases, metaphors, and other culturally situated illustrations. My students in English 101SL did not report that listening was difficult. It was among the lesser challenges that students faced, as reported on the survey. English 201, on the other hand, seemed to present a greater challenge. Because the majority of the students were native-English speakers, my spoken language use was much less regulated. At least one student reported on the 201 survey that he or she struggled to follow class lectures and discussions. It is also interesting to note that *all* of the English language learners who took my English 201 class sat in the very back of the classroom, which positionally put them at a disadvantage because they were already removed from the rest of the class. Whether this directly impacted their ability to listen and participate in classroom discussions, I do not know. Nevertheless, it at the very

least demonstrates how much less involved these students felt in English 201 versus English 101SL.

Grammar

English 101SL and English 201 are not grammar classes. For this reason, I rarely spoke explicitly about grammar in either class. It is interesting to note, though, that while some students improved in their grammatical use of language from English 101SL to English 201, other students really did not. The two students that stand out the most in this regard are Mohammed and Sang. Mohammed's writing in 101SL was consistently good, but he did not exceed standards and their were various errors that are common in ESL print. In English 201, his writing seemed to jump to an entirely new level. He began to employ academic language in his essays, and the tone of his writing changed. In English 101SL, it tended to be conversational; in English 201, it was academic. Sang, on the other hand, did not seem to develop at all between these two classroom contexts. She struggled to write in complete sentences, and when she did, they were often difficult to understand. She relied heavily on the language from the articles that she had chosen for her research (in English 101SL), and she almost failed for this reason. But, she revised her final essay enough that I felt I could pass her. I told myself that I could help her with her grammar in English 201, and that it would be better for me to pass her. I was unfortunately mistaken. Her writing continued to reveal the same problems, and I was not able to sped one-on-one time with Sang to help her with her writing. In comparing these two students, it becomes clear that ELLs must attain to a certain level of grammatical

competency in order to begin to advance on their own. Mohammed was at this level—his writing was not fully developed in English 101SL—but it blossomed in English 201. Sang's writing was far underdeveloped in English 101SL, and though at times it seemed that she could improve, it was not to a point where she could do this on her own in a more rigorous classroom environment.

Conclusions

Transitioning from new language learner to successful learner in "mainstream" college classes is difficult if not impossible to accomplish in two quarters. While this study does shed light on many interesting aspects of students' transition, it also reveals how little we understand about students' transition. In many ways, the study itself poses more questions than it does answers. But this is not surprising. It was a short-term study conducted in less than 20 weeks, with only 23 total participants, 6 of which were studied in depth. Moreover, a study in which the students' transition was the particular focused has not been conducted prior to this one. Nevertheless, there are a few significant implications that must be discussed by way of conclusion.

First, one important aspect of student success in both composition courses was their own motivation. The students who regularly missed class in both English 101SL and 201 tended to do worse, even those students whose English was more developed. Especially in English 201, attendance became a very significant issue, because students fell even further behind than they would have been. This made interaction with their native-English speaking peers even more difficult, as the students who had poor attendance were naturally more separated

from the rest of the class. The ELLs, who were already distanced from their American peers, had even more trouble coming back into the class after missing multiple days. Attendance is a simple yet important aspect of student success. If the student does not regularly attend class, this puts him or her at a disadvantage. This is the same across the board—for ELLs as well as native-English speakers. But, for students who would already tend to lag behind or to struggle, it is all the more important that they take in the greatest amount of instruction that they can. Unfortunately, what often seemed to be the case was that my ELLs in English 201 responded to the greater level of class difficulty by skipping class, rather than by working harder on understanding the content and participating in classroom discussion. These behaviors must be considered when mainstreaming ELLs. The less prepared ELLs are to handle the mainstream, the more likely these behaviors become. The students who came into English 201 most prepared were also the students who always attended class and consistently asked me for help.

Second, we must consider academic reading and writing, and the level of student preparedness for both of these tasks. I noted that in English 101SL, students overwhelmingly rated academic reading the most difficult aspect of the class while academic writing was rated as much less challenging. Conversely, the students in English 201 rated the writing portion of the class as the most difficult part, while reading was on the same difficultly level as speaking and grammar. This demonstrates that ELLs are often struggling to master these academic reading skills in classes where they are not the focus. The composition classroom is a great example of this, because ideally, students should come into the course

with the ability to read extensively. While part of the English 101 curriculum is designed to help students analyze academic writing, no time is spent teaching students the basic skills required to read extensively.

This is a major challenge for composition and ESL program directors. If students have not read a high-level academic article before English 101SL, then the articles tend to be overwhelming for students. ESL students' reading is limited to a few short excerpts or small articles. American students, while not always ready to handle the academic language, generally have a lot of experience reading extensively, so the length of the articles is not as daunting a task. One solution to this is to implement academic writing into ESL education much earlier than it is implemented now. If students learn to read extensively in English, then mainstream classes will not be the place where they are forced to sink or swim in their academic reading ability. ELLs should be able to focus on the content of the course that they are in, rather than having to put time and energy into a basic skill that they should already have from previous ESL classes. If students have to focus on reading in a writing course, then that puts their writing at a disadvantage. Therefore, it is important to help students reach college-level proficiency in basic linguistic skills so that they are able to focus on the content of their mainstream classes. Unfortunately, the fast-paced structure of a 10-week quarter system makes this difficult.

These two major implications are a start in thinking about how ESL and mainstream teachers can better meet English Language Learners' needs during their transition. It is important that ESL instructors see themselves as preparing

their students for the mainstream curriculum, rather than just making students comfortable in a particular classroom context. Intensive, fast-track ESL must be what its name suggests: rigorous. Oftentimes, the lack of rigor in intensive ESL programs puts mainstreaming students at a disadvantage when they transition into mainstream classes. Students who come into the mainstream confident because they did well in ESL often find that they are still not prepared to handle the challenges associated with learning in a language other than their native one. Add inexperience with native speakers to the mix, and ESL student motivation may decrease greatly. This can lead to multiple fails in basic required courses, which can annihilate ELLs' confidence entirely. In order to prevent this from happening, ESL programs must bear the weight of preparing students for the mainstream, keeping courses rigorous and only passing students to the next level who are truly ready to advance. If these changes are made, the transition from ESL to mainstream classes should be much Myather, and students will find that they come to their classes much better prepared than their native-English speaking peers often are.

When I began this thesis, I did not expect to have six participants. I also did not expect to have participants from multiple countries. Students from Saudi Arabia have been the overwhelming majority of ELLs on our college campus for multiple years. Yet, there are a number of students from other locations. These students are not always traditional international students, who come only to study at the college level. Some are refugees, some are immigrants, while some are American citizens who grew up speaking a different language. It is important to

61

consider the complexities of the "English Language Learner" title. Even in my participant group, student experiences were widespread.

In the next chapter, I'll summarize my research questions and conclusions as I offer ideas for future research.

Chapter V: Conclusions, Implications, and Ideas for Future Research

Although it is time for me to conclude this research project, there is no real end to this study. The ESL population in the United States will always be changing, as will students' specific needs in the classroom. Students coming from countries where English is becoming more common may not need as much support. On the other hand, with the drastically changing immigrant populations of many western countries, there will be a vast influx of students in public school systems that need to learn English while maintaining their native languages. These factors and more present many challenges to TESL as a discipline, but they also provide ways for the discipline to continue to develop and improve for the purpose of better meeting students' needs. As more English Language Learners will be in this process of transition at all levels of education, it is important that research on this phenomenon continues. We must expand our knowledge as educators on how best to prepare our ESL students for the mainstream. For most of our students, this is the ultimate goal. They want to be able to use English effectively. They do not want to be classified as an English Language Learner forever—they want to be competent English speakers. They want to be able to communicate in English with anyone they might need to converse with. And they want to succeed in obtaining advanced degrees on the American college and university campus. ESL teachers must have students' goals in mind as they design curriculum, plan lessons, and talk with students about their progress in ESL. This is one of many implications that we can draw from the data gathered in this short study. Students must be supported throughout ESL, and sometimes this support

means continually pushing them to a higher level of competency, even when their current skills may suffice. If students really want to have a high level of academic English proficiency, then ESL programs must be rigorous enough to get them to this point. This is especially true when we consider that it takes 5-7 years for ESL students to gain academic competency in English. Students spend about one year in an intensive English program, and if they are going to attain to college-level proficiency, then a great amount of work is required. The better-prepared ESL students are to do the linguistic work required in mainstream classes, the easier their transition to higher-level classes in their disciplines will be. Therefore, ESL teachers must determine the specific needs of their ESL population. This is as simple as determining student majors, reaching out to departments, and working applicable language skills into classes. For example, students who are planning to major in engineering might begin working on engineering vocabulary during their ESL program.

Oftentimes, students who have not gained a high enough proficiency in certain aspects of the English language may spend more time in classes catching up in these areas. In our study we saw that many English 101SL students struggled to keep up with the high volume of academic articles required for the course. Although most of these students successfully navigated this challenge, it resulted in students having less time to focus on the writing itself, which was the focus of the class. When these students transitioned to the mainstream English 201 class, they were at a disadvantage from the start, because they were not able to focus primarily on the writing in the previous course. In English 201, the

writing portion presented the most significant challenge to students, according to the survey (See Appendix D). Mainstream classes must make certain assumptions about students' linguistic skills—this is true for both mainstream and ESL students. Ideally, ELLs should transition having already acquired these skills during their ESL education. If students are not given these skills, then they will have to play catch up when they start their major classes.

Another important aspect to consider is the social impact of ESL programs. Even though ESL students get plenty of interaction with American students in ELI and ENGL 112 classes, perhaps they want even more. As one of the students in my study said, "I wish I had the opportunity to interact with American students during ESL before i became their classmate" (See Appendix D). When ESL students have limited interaction with native speakers of English during the most intense period of language acquisition, there is no way for them to judge whether or not they are acquiring the language sufficiently. It is in students' interaction with native speakers that they actually put their learning to the test. If students learn to build relationships with native speakers, and gain confidence in speaking and listening, then interacting in the mainstream classroom will be much less daunting. In order to tackle this problem, ESL programs must find ways to connect ELLs with native speakers, whether this is in the classrooms themselves, in table-talk groups, or by means of students organizations and campus clubs. When ELLs build strong relationships with native speakers of English, their personal motivation to learn the language will necessary increase.

Ideas for Future Research

More research must be conducted on this transitional time period for ELLs. Higher-volume surveys at the college level must be conducted to understand the overarching perspective that ESL have on this transition. Once educators understand exactly how students are experiencing their transition, they can better modify curriculum to meet the needs of students. Longitudinal studies mapping ELLs' complete transition to the mainstream would give a more detailed understanding of what students face during this time period.

Implications

Mainstream disciplines and departments at the postsecondary level must be more willing to work and communicate with ESL programs. This is important because it is our students who are most affected by this—they are the ones who regularly have to bridge the gap. Professors and other faculty members can stay safely within the four walls of their own departments, but students will inevitably have to face the deep chasm that exists between ESL and other academic discplines. While it is true that most disciplines at the college level are not required to associate with each other, ESL is different, because ESL programs prepare students for a multiplicity of disciplines. Thus, it is the duty of both ESL and mainstream educators to work to narrow this gap, and to open lines of communication, even if it takes more work. Once these lines of communication are open, ESL teachers will have a much easier time preparing their students for the mainstream, and mainstream teachers will be much more prepared to assist their future ELLs in areas where they need more support. Of course, this means

that ESL and mainstream teachers must take time out of their busy schedules to email, meet, or even befriend teachers outside of their own disciplines. This requires work that may not initially seem to benefit anyone. But if these relationships are built, if there is consistent communication between ESL and the mainstream, our students will be better for it. And eventually, our students will thank us for it.

As an instructor of both ESL and mainstream students, it is my hope that I can help bridge the gap between these two often segregated communities. Mainstream students have much to learn from their culturally and linguistically diverse peers—they just need to take the time to realize it. As Cook (1999) argues, we need to consider English language learners "successful multicompetent speakers, not failed native speakers" (cited in Leonard, 2014, p. 231). ELLs have a wealth of learning opportunities as they develop relationships with students who may on the surface seem completely different from them—but over time these students may well discover how much they have in common with native speakers of English. As these connections are made, there may not even be a need for research on the "disciplinary divide." If the divide disappears at the student level, it will inevitably disappear at all other levels as well.

References

Bifuh-Ambe, E. (2011). Recognizing the needs of English language learners in mainstream university classes. *Multicultural Education,19*(3), 13-19.

Bigelow, M., & Tarone, E. (2004). The Role of Literacy Level in Second Language Acquisition: Doesn't Who We Study Determine What We Know*? TESOL Quarterly, 38(*4), 689-700.

Burt, M., Peyton, J. K., & Adams, R. (2003). Reading and Adult English Language Learners: A Review of the Research. National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE).

Clair, N. (1995). Mainstream classroom teachers and ESL students. TESOL Quarterly, 29(1), 189-196. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3587817

Creese, A. (2010). Content-focused classrooms and learning English: how teachers collaborate. *Theory into Practice 49*, 99-105.

Curtin, E. (2005). Instructional styles used by regular classroom teachers while teaching recently mainstreamed ESL students: six urban middle school teachers in Texas share their experiences and perceptions. *Multicultural Education, 12*(4), 36-42.

Daniel, S. M. & Conlin, L. (2015). Shifting attention back to students within the sheltered instruction observation protocol. *TESOL Quarterly, 49*(1), 169-187.

Duke, N.K. & Mallette, M.H. (2004). *Literacy Research Methodologies*. The Guildford Press. New York, NY.

Harklau, L. (1994). ESL versus mainstream classes: Contrasting L2 learning environments. *TESOL Quarterly, 28*(2), 241-272. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3587433

Harper, C., & de Jong, E. (2004). Misconceptions about teaching English-language learners. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 48*(2), 152-162.

Kennedy, S., & Foote, J. A., & Dos Santos Buss, L. K. (2015). Second language speakers at university: longitudinal development and rater behavior. *TESOL Quarterly, 49*(1), 199-209.

Leonard, R. L. (2014). Multilingual writing as rhetorical attunement. *College English 76* (3), 227-247.

Matsuda, P. K. (1999). Composition studies and ESL writing: A disciplinary division of labor. *College Composition and Communication, 50*(4), 699-721. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/358488

Mount, M. (2014). *Academic Reading and Writing at the College Level: Action Research in a Classroom of a homogeneous Group of Male Students from Saudi Arabia.* EWU Masters Thesis Collection. Paper 267.

Okabe, M. (2008). *ESL students report their experiences of anomie in journal writing : action, participant-observer research.* EWU Masters Thesis.

Pappamihiel, N. E. (2002). English as a second language students and English language anxiety: Issues in the mainstream classroom. *Research in the Teaching of English, 36*(3), 327-355. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/40171530

Rance-Roney, J. (2008). Creating intentional communities to support english language

    learners in the classroom. *The English Journal, 97*(5), 17-22. Retrieved from

    http://www.jstor.org/stable/30046878

Razfar, A., & Simon, J. (2011). Course-taking patterns of Latino ESL students: Mobility

    and mainstreaming in urban community colleges in the United States. *TESOL*

    Quarterly, 45(4), 595-627. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/41307659

Reeves, J. R. (2006). Secondary teacher attitudes toward including English-language

    learners in mainstream classrooms. *The Journal of Education Research, 99*(3),

    131-142.

Rosenthal, J. W. (1992). A successful transition: A bridge program between ESL and the

    mainstream classroom. *College Teaching, 40*(2), 63-66. Retrieved from

    http://www.jstor.org/stable/27558524

Rubinstein-Avila, E. (2003). Facing reality: English language learners in middle school

    classes. *English Education 35*(2) 122-136. Retrieved from

    www.jstor.org/stable/40173137

Slama, R. B. (2014). Investigating whether and when English learners are reclassified

    into mainstream classrooms in the United States: a discrete-time survival analysis.

    American Educational Research Journal, 51(2), 220-252.

Sumaryono, K. & Ortiz, F. W. (2004). Preserving the cultural identity of the English

    language learner. *Voices from the Middle, 11*(4), 16-19.

Watts-Taffe, S. & Truscott, D.M. (2000). Using what we know about language and

 literacy development for ESL students in the mainstream classroom. *Language*

 Arts, 77(3), 258-265.

Williams, J. A. Classroom conversations: opportunities to learn for ESL students in

 mainstream classes. *The Reading Teacher, 54*(8), 750-757. Retrieved from

 Proquest.

Youngs, C. S. & Youngs, G.A. (2001). Predictors of mainstream teachers' attitudes

 toward ESL students. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(1), 97-120. Retrieved from Jstor.

Young, M. W. (1996). English (as a second) language arts teachers: the key to

 mainstreamed ESL student success. *The English Journal, 85*(8), 17-24. Retrieved

 from www.jstor.org/stable/820036

Yoon, B. (2008). The influence of teachers' roles and pedagogies on the positioning of

 English language learners in the regular classroom. *American Educational*

 Research Journal, 45(2), 495-522. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/3009454

Appendix A: Research Subject
Consent Form Mainstreaming and
the Five Language Skills

Contact Information:

Principal
Investigator:
Andrew
Copley
Graduate
Student
M.A. English: Teaching English as
a Second Language
(509) 230-9588

Responsible Project
Investigator: Dr. Tracey
McHenry
Professor   of
English
tmchenry@ewu.ed
u x2829

Purpose
This study will analyze patterns' in ESL student academic behavior particularly related
to classroom learning during their transition between English 101 and English 201.
The student academic behaviors are particularly linguistic, based on the five language
skills reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar. These behaviors will be analyzed
separately through participant observation as well as one-on-one and group interviews,
and surveys given to a broader ESL population a few times during the study. Data will
be analyzed for patterns in student academic behavior in each classroom context. Then,
patterns in student academic behavior will be compared between the classroom
contexts.

Procedures
If you consent to participate in this study, you will be observed in class, interviewed
outside of class, and you will participate in a short survey at the end of the quarter. The
in-class observations will consist of me taking notes on your use of English in class
and your overall academic behavior. This information is for my research only and will
not affect your grade. The interviews outside of class will be focused on your English
learning and how your rate your improvement in this class. Finally, the survey at the
end of the quarter will consist of general questions that help me get an overall idea of
your success in this course and how it compares to other English courses you have
taken at EWU.

Risk, Stress or Discomfort & Benefits
Minimal risks may be associated with this study. As this research study will analyze
student academic behavior associated with the five language skills (reading, writing,

speaking, listening, and grammar), this will benefit participants in that they will better understand their own skills as well as challenges in terms of their own English proficiency. This study will give students the tools to analyze their own growth in these 5 categories of language skills. The research study will benefit the ESL population as a whole because it will help identify areas where students need more support as they transition from ESL to mainstream classes at the college level.

Other Information
Your identity will be kept confidential by the principal investigator. You are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Your participation in this study is confidential, not anonymous, since the researcher will know your identity. Although the researcher will protect your confidentiality and will direct members of the study to maintain the confidentiality of the other participants, the researcher cannot guarantee that they will do so. If you feel uncomfortable responding to any of the questions during the interviews or the survey, you are free not to answer.

Signature of Principal Investigator_____Date_____

The study described above has been explained to me, and I voluntarily consent to participate in a focus group.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions.
Mainstreaming and the Five Language Skills

I give permission to record and/or divulge interviews in which I participate during this research study.

I understand that by signing this form I am not waiving my legal rights. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this form.

_____
Signature of Subject   Date

If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant in this research or any complaints you wish to make, you may contact Ruth Galm, Human Protection Administrator, (509) 359-6567 or rgalm@ewu.edu.

Appendix B: ENGL 101 Interview Questions

1. What is your name?

2. Where are you from?

3. When did you begin taking classes at Eastern?

4. What kind of student are you?

5. Since this isn't your first quarter at Eastern, what classes did you take last quarter?

6. What were the most important assignments that you had to complete?

7. What was most challenging for you when working to complete these assignments?

   - Focus on language skills and which ones student struggles with

8. What in-class activities were most memorable?

   - Based on response, follow up with specific questions about language skills

9. What was the most challenging thing about in-class work?

10. Were you taught any grammar lessons last quarter?

    - If yes, ask him/her to explain what he/she learned and how well he/she understood the grammar point before and after the lesson.

11. What writing assignments did you do in and out of class?

    - Ask student to describe his/her writing process and/or the steps that they went through to complete major writing assignments

    - Ask student about how much time in class was devoted to instruction and work on these writing assignments

12. Did you have any presentations or other assignments that required you to speak in front of the class?

13. How much and what kind of required reading did you have?

1. How would you rate your overall progress in English 201?

   Very bad   Bad   Okay   Good   Very good

   Other (please specify)

2. Which of the following language-related aspects has been most difficult in English 201?
   Writing Speaking Grammar Reading Listening

   Please explain your response

3. How prepared were you to handle the reading requirements in English 201?
   Not prepared at all   Under prepared   Prepared   Very prepared

   ○   ○   ○   ○

   Other (please specify)

   =

4. How prepared were you to handle the writing requirements in English 201?
   Not prepared at all   Under prepared   Prepared   Very prepared

   ○   ○   ○   ○

   Other (please specify)

   [   ]

5. Have your previous ESL classes at this institution prepared you for English 201?
   Absolutely notNo   Moderatley   Yes   Definitely yes

   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

6. Explain how your previous college English courses have impacted your level of preparedness for English 201.

   [   ]

7. Rate the level of confidence you have interacting with your American peers in English 201.

   =

Very low   Low   Okay   High   Very high

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

8. Has English 201 made you more comfortable speaking in class?

Absolutely notNo   Moderatey   Yes   Definitely yes

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

9. Do you better understand native-spoken English because of English 201?
Absolutely notNo   Moderately   Yes   Definitely yes

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

10. How different were the requirements and expectations in English 201 compared
with previous English language education you have received?

Very different Somewhat different   SimilarSomewhat similar   Very similar

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

=

11. Has English 201 prepared you to use English effectively in future classes?
    Absolutely notNo   Moderately   Yes   Definitely yes

    ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

12. Rate your overall transition from the ESL composition class (English 101sl) to
    the mainstream composition class (English 201).
    Very bad   Bad   Okay   Good   Very good

    ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Other (please specify)

┌───┐
│   │
└───┘

=

Andrew J. Copley

andrewjamescopley@gmail.com   509.230.9588

Education

Master of Arts in English: TESL, June 2016
Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA

Bachelor of Arts in Spanish Literature: TESL minor, Summer, 2014
Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA

Teaching Experience

Graduate Student Instructor of Composition and TESL, 2014-present

Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA

English 101: College Composition: Exposition and Argument
English 101SL: College Composition: Exposition and Argument for English
Language Learners
English 201: College Composition: Analysis/Research/Documentation

As a Graduate Student Instructor I developed curricula, taught a variety of writing

assignments, handled a diverse population of students, responded to student writing.

Scholarly Presentations

"Post-Process Composition and the ESL Student." EWU Creative Works and Research

Symposium. Cheney, WA. April 2015.

=

Service

English Language Institute: Volunteered and worked in multiple roles within the intensive English program at EWU. Over the course of my undergraduate and graduate degrees I advised incoming international students, coordinated events, tutored in ESL-specific areas, assisted professors with their classrooms, taught grammar workshops, and directed an international student club.

EWU Edge Bible Study: Directed a student Bible study on campus. During my graduate course work I organized club events, led weekly club meetings, and met and counseled students one-on-one.