

# DEFINING THE JOB OF THE ESL PROGRAM DIRECTOR: RESULTS OF A NATIONAL SURVEY

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The ESL program director's job is examined through a national survey and comparison with earlier studies and with data from a group of university department and program heads. It is found that the ESL directors as a group have a higher terminal degree than in a 1981 study, with about half holding a doctorate. As compared with the other academic administrators, the ESL directors oversee a smaller number of full-time faculty and non-faculty staff positions, and they are younger, less experienced, more likely to be female, less likely to hold a professorial rank, less likely to be tenured, less likely to have been appointed from inside the department or program, and with less time available for teaching or research. Like the other academic administrators, the ESL directors are satisfied with their job performance and perceive a relatively good match between the level of skills needed for their job and the level which they actually possess. Of the three administrative skill types of human, conceptual, and technical, the ESL directors rate the first two as more important for their jobs than the third and feel that they possess human and conceptual skills to a greater degree than technical skills. An examination of job activities and concerns finds ESL administrators directing attention to business and managerial affairs, while maintaining their educational interests.

## Introduction

With a short history of about forty years as an independent field, English as a Second Language (ESL) is a relatively new academic discipline in American colleges and universities. In the recent past, the influx of new immigrant groups and the growing need for fiscal responsibility within education have directed greater attention to the ESL field. In the past two decades, ESL has become an increasingly specialized field, and research has flourished in the areas of second language acquisition and instructional methodology. Yet very little research has been conducted to date in the area of ESL administration.

This paper makes a contribution to the literature on ESL administration

by seeking to define the nature of the ESL program director's job. It reports the findings of a survey comparing the characteristics of college/university level ESL program directors with those of a representative sample of department chairs and heads of other academic units at a major research university. The results, which indicate many differences between the two groups, demonstrate the unique position which ESL holds within the context of higher education.

### **Job Skills and Requirements of the ESL Program Director**

As a way to begin an examination of the ESL administrator's position, we can first look at the typical academic administrator, the department chair. A review of published literature shows the department chair to be a key position in the hierarchy of college and university administration, for it is the chair who must supervise the translation of institutional goals and policies into academic practice. However, university department chairs are generally in a paradoxical situation: on the one hand, most of them are drawn from faculty ranks and have little administrative experience; on the other hand, few opportunities for orientation and training are available to them (Bennett, 1983). A 1977 survey of 400 department chairs in the state university system of Florida found that 68 percent had no prior administrative experience (Tucker, 1984). Nevertheless, in their job performance they were faced with an astonishing variety of tasks and duties and had to play, according to Tucker, as many as twenty-eight different roles.

Saltzer (1982) examined the nature of ESL programs from the perspective of the supervisory unit. He stated that in the past, the ESL program was viewed as a testing center for international students, whereas now a program must answer also to criteria of fiscal viability. Nowadays, an ESL program needs to meet its direct costs or to make a "return to overhead." Generally, a program that operates at a loss and requires subsidization is imperiled. Therefore, although ESL programs have mushroomed all over the world, their value often depends more on profits than on academic considerations, a point underscored by Fox (in press).

The special situation of ESL programs may require or encourage ESL directors to adopt a special administrative style. Reasor (1981) conducted a study to identify and evaluate the administrative styles of ESL administrators

in the colleges and universities of the United States, using a standardized instrument, the Educational Administrative Style Diagnosis Test (EASDT). Reasor found that ESL administrators differed significantly from other educational administrators in their administrative styles: 69 percent of those ESL administrators perceived themselves to have a "Separated" style—an administrative orientation which had been determined in previous research to be an uncommon one among elementary and secondary principals and head masters. Those with a Separated style of administration tend to exhibit rule-oriented behavior and to be low in both task-orientation and relationship-orientation. Only 22 percent of the ESL administrators had a "Related" style, defined as high in relationship-orientation. Furthermore, 62 percent of the ESL administrators surveyed in the Reasor (1981) study felt that they were using an ineffectual style in their present position.

Using her own survey instrument, Matthies (1984) conducted a study to ascertain which job skills the directors of intensive English programs in the United States thought they had or needed. Her study found that the respondents rated those skills "most important" that were associated more with the role of a *manager* than with the role of an *educator*. Of the ten skills which respondents rated "most important," two were associated with the educator role, and the others with the manager role. In contrast, of the ten skills which respondents rated as their best, three were associated with the role of manager, the others with that of educator. As in Reasor's study, the ESL administrators surveyed by Matthies perceived a mismatch between their actual skills and the skills required for their job. Thus, the respondents in Matthies' study were found to be "concerned about their performance as managers, but generally satisfied in their role as educators" (p. 14).

Pennington (1985) developed the factors of Katz's (1974) three-skill model of administration—incorporating technical, human, and conceptual skills—into specific educational and organizational skills essential to ESL administration. It was concluded that technical skills are most important at lower levels of ESL administration (e.g., administrative assistant), conceptual skills most essential at higher levels (e.g., program director), and human skills are required at every level, including mid-level positions such as faculty supervisor. Fox (in press) confirms the relative unimportance for success as an ESL program director of technical skills such as budgeting, as compared to human skills such as team-building and conceptual skills such as the ability to develop a "vision" of where

the program is headed.

The above studies suggest that ESL administration is different in some respects from the administration of other university departments, that the usual ESL administrative style does not match well with the situational variables of the job, and that ESL directors' job performance is not consistent with the needs of their programs. Although a few studies have been conducted which have focused on the evaluation of ESL administrators or the job-related skills of ESL directors, there is a definite need for further studies. Questions that remain to be answered include the following: What are the common features shared by ESL programs with other college or university departments? What are the unique characteristics of ESL administration? What job skills do ESL directors need in order to accomplish their job? How do ESL directors perceive the match between their abilities and the requirements of the job? In what follows, we provide some preliminary answers to these questions.

### Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the review of the available literature, the following hypotheses have been developed to guide the present investigation:

1. The background characteristics of ESL directors are changing towards a higher level of professional qualifications.
2. The situational variables in ESL administration are different from those of other university academic departments.
3. The job skills which ESL directors need are not consistent with those which they actually possess.
4. ESL directors are like other university department heads in assessing their job skills and performance as inadequate.
5. ESL directors have high human skills and conceptual skills.
6. ESL directors view ESL programs from more of a business-oriented than an academic-oriented perspective and consider themselves more as managers than as educators.

Hypothesis 1 derives from the increasing specialization of the ESL field. Hypothesis 2 is motivated by the fact that most ESL programs are outside of



the regular university structure. Hypothesis 3 is based on both Reasor's and Matthies' studies, which found that there was a mismatch in the skills ESL directors have and the skills required of them on the job. Hypothesis 4 is based on the latter two studies and the discussion in Bennett (1983) and Tucker (1984) of the lack of preparation and training of most academic department chairs for their multi-faceted jobs. Hypothesis 5 is generated by Pennington's claim that human skills are essential at every level of ESL programs and that conceptual skills are needed at higher levels of ESL administration. Hypothesis 6 is motivated by Saltzer's analysis of the nature of present-day ESL programs as being evaluated in terms of fiscal viability and Matthies' finding that those skills rated as "most important" by ESL administrators were associated more with the role of manager than with the role of educator.

## Method

### Design

This study administered two surveys, using the same instrument: a national survey of ESL program directors and an on-campus survey of department chairs and program heads in non-ESL fields at one university. The national mailing was sent to individuals who had identified themselves as ESL program directors on a mailing list compiled by the Association of Administrators of Intensive English Programs [AAIEP], a national body of ESL directors at college, university, and proprietary intensive programs drawn from the membership of the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs [NAFSA]. The university survey was sent to a random sampling of department chairs, heads of institutes, and non-ESL program directors at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. One hundred questionnaires, each with an accompanying cover letter introducing the researchers and the purpose of the study, were mailed to each group, with thirty-four returned from ESL directors, and twenty-eight from on-campus chairs and program or institute heads.<sup>1</sup>

The rationale for choosing these two groups as subjects is to test the hypothesis that ESL administration is different from that of other university department chairs by comparing situational variables in the two cases.

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<sup>1</sup> Values of *df* (degrees of freedom) or *n* (number of observations) reported below are sometimes less than expected from this number of subjects, reflecting occasional gaps in the data for individual subjects.

However, since the return rate of the on-campus group was twenty-eight per cent, which is somewhat below the level considered acceptable for statistical analysis and since the data are drawn from only one campus, the data from this group could not serve as an equivalent comparison set. Thus, the focus of the investigation is on the analysis of the ESL director survey, with the department chair data serving mainly for comparative purposes.

### Instrument

The survey instrument was designed by the authors based on their review of the relevant literature on department chairs and ESL program administrators, with survey items developed on the basis of attributes described in Tucker (1984), Saltzer (1982), Matthies (1984), and Pennington (1985). The survey instrument (See Appendix) consists of 37 questions, which embed 71 items. The following categories of information, drawn from questions 1-20, 22-28, and 37 are reported here:<sup>2</sup>

1. Biodata such as sex and age, and professional background data such as academic rank and highest degree.
2. Program data on budget and staffing.
3. Experiences prior to and after becoming a director in terms of overseas teaching, administration, and administrative training.
4. Subjects' perception of what they need for their job and what they possess in the way of 24 job-related skills, as evaluated on a 4-point scale of *weak* (1) to *strong* (4).
5. Subjects' estimation of how much time they spend in teaching, scholarship, and administrative activities, as evaluated on a 4-point scale of *very little* (1) to *a great deal* (4) and by percent estimates for time spent in supervision, scholarly activities, and routine paperwork.
6. Subjects' supervisory and scholarly activities.
7. Subjects' perception of the most time-consuming, important, difficult, and enjoyable aspects of their job.
8. Subjects' general satisfaction with their job performance.

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<sup>2</sup> Analysis of the data in questions 21 and 29-36 is included in a separate report of the survey results focusing on issues of training and evaluation of ESL administrators.

### Analytical Procedures

Thirteen procedures were developed for analysis of the survey data.<sup>3</sup> Each of these analytical procedures is described below, with an indication of the questions from which the data are drawn.

**Procedure 1** (Questions 7-8). Frequencies and percentages of respondents were calculated in the categories of highest degree [*Master's/Bachelor's* vs. *Doctoral/A.B.D.* - "all but dissertation"] and major subject [*ESL* (ESL, SLA, TEFL, TESOL) vs. *Other Closely Related Field* (English, Linguistics, Education) vs. *Other Field*], and these were compared to the data of Reasor (1981) using a chi-square analysis to determine significant differences in the pattern of the distributions. In addition, the highest degrees in the two groups were compared by rating Doctoral=4, A.B.D.=3, Master's=2, and Bachelor's=1 and calculating means and t-values to see if they differ significantly.

**Procedure 2** (Questions 3-4, 7-8, 10-16). Frequencies and percentages of respondents categorized according to sex, age, academic rank [*Professorial* - professor, associate professor, assistant professor; *Instructional* - instructor, lecturer, senior lecturer, master teacher; *Non-Faculty* - director, administrator, non-faculty/administrative appointment), highest degree [*Doctoral Ph.D.*, Ed.D. or M.D.; A.B.D.; *Master's* - M.A., M.Ed., M.F.A.; *Bachelor's* - B.A.], job status [*Tenured / Untenured*], length of time in the present job, previous job as a director or chair, previous coursework in administration or management, coursework in administration or management while in the job, method of appointment/recruitment to the position [*Inside Hire/Outside Hire* hired from inside or outside of university or program], and experience teaching abroad were computed for the two groups surveyed, and a chi-square analysis was performed in each category to determine significant differences in the pattern of the distributions of these variables in the two groups.

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<sup>3</sup> The ANOVA statistics and a posteriori comparisons were performed using the SAS (version 6) GLM procedure with the MEANS option on a mainframe computer. Simple statistics (descriptive statistics, t-tests, and chi-square) were performed by hand with a calculator or on an IBM PC using the EPISTAT (version 2.0) DATA-ONE, T-TEST, and CHISQR subroutines. The decision level for all statistical tests was set at  $\alpha = .05$ . This means that all results reported here as significant (marked with \* in the text) meet a statistical criterion of at least 95% confidence.

**Procedure 3** (Questions 3, 17-18, 20a-k). Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for age, number of full-time faculty, number of non-faculty staff, annual budget, and time and effort put into job-related activities were calculated for the two groups surveyed, and a t-test analysis was performed to determine the relationship of the two groups in terms of each these items.

**Procedure 4** (Question 19). Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed within and between groups to compare the level of 24 job-related skills that the administrators and the heads of other academic units believe they need in order to do their jobs vs. the level of those skills that they believe they actually possess.

**Procedure 5** (Question 19). The relationships between and within the two groups surveyed of (1) their perception of the level of skills needed for their jobs vs. (2) their perception of their actual level of those skills were examined using one-way analysis of variance with four groups and Tukey's HSD test to compare the overall means for the 24 scales of job-related skills.

**Procedure 6** (Question 37). Descriptive statistics for overall satisfaction with job performance were calculated, taking the response choices as a scale, where *very satisfied*=4 and *very dissatisfied*=1, and a t-test performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between the two groups.

**Procedure 7** (Question 19). Based on the means, the five top job-related skills and the five bottom job-related skills surveyed were sorted out from the perspectives of what the ESL directors believe they need vs. what they believe they possess.

**Procedure 8** (Question 19). The relationships between the three skill types from the perspective of what each group surveyed believes they need and what they possess in the way of those skills were identified using one-way analysis of variance and Tukey's HSD test to identify significant differences within groups. The division of the 24 skills into the three categories of technical, human, and conceptual was conducted independently by each

author, obtaining 100% interrater agreement according to the definitions of the three categories of the skills based on Katz's (1974) model:

**Technical skills:** An understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of activity, particularly one involving methods, processes, procedures, or techniques.

**Human skills:** Ability to work effectively as a group member and to build cooperative effort within the team he/she leads.

**Conceptual skills:** The ability to see the enterprise as a whole, including recognizing how the various functions of the organization depend on one another and how changes in any one part affect all the others and extending to visualizing the relationship of the organization to the entire field, the community, and to political, social and economic forces.

**Procedure 9 (Question 19).** The relative position of the mean of item *j*, *Making profits*, within the ranking of skills needed to do their jobs were compared across the two groups.

**Procedure 10 (Question 19).** Items were extracted from among the 24 job-related skills which showed a large gap, operationalized as more than .6 score points, between the ESL directors' perception of what is needed for the job and what is possessed, and these compared to the same items for heads of other academic units.

**Procedure 11 (Question 20).** Based on the means, the top and bottom ranked items in terms of time and effort put into job-related activities were extracted for the ESL director group and these compared to the same items for the group of university administrators.

**Procedure 12 (Questions 22-24).** The means for percent of time spent in *supervision*, *scholarly activities*, and *routine paperwork* were compared for each group using one-way analysis of variance and Tukey's HSD test to discover significant within-groups differences and t-tests to discover between-groups

differences in each category.

**Procedure 13** (Questions 20.1 and 22-28). Open-ended responses about how the directors spend their time and what they consider their most important, most enjoyable, and most difficult job-related activities were listed, tabulated, and grouped to determine the most common responses.

The procedures were aimed at testing the individual hypotheses of the study as follows:

Procedure 1 tests Hypothesis 1.

Procedures 2 and 3 test Hypothesis 2.

Procedure 4 tests Hypothesis 3.

Procedures 4, 5 and 6 test Hypothesis 4.

Procedures 7 and 8 test Hypothesis 5.

Procedures 9–13 test Hypothesis 6.

## Results

Of the 28 department chairs or program heads who returned the on-campus survey, 13 (46%) came from science fields and the rest from 13 other non-science fields, including 3 from language-related fields, 2 from area studies, and 2 from education departments. Of the 34 ESL program directors who returned the survey, 19 (56%) came from various Western states of the U.S., 7 (21%) from the Midwest, and 8 (23%) from the East. The geographical distribution of respondents is similar in overall pattern to that of Reasor's (1981) final sample, where approximately half of the responses came from Western states, approximately 18% from the Midwest, and approximately one-third from the East.

Hypothesis 1, that the background characteristics of ESL directors are changing towards a higher level of professional qualifications, is partially confirmed by the data of this study, as shown in Table 1. While the distribution of major subjects in the two studies is not significantly different ( $\chi^2=.49$ ,  $df=2$ ), the distributions of highest degree in the categories of *Doctoral/A.B.D* and *Master's/Bachelor's* are significantly different ( $\chi^2=5.97^*$ ,  $df=1$ ). The mean for highest degree is also significantly different across the two



groups ( $t=2.62^*$ ,  $df=135$ ), with a higher average terminal degree<sup>4</sup> obtained in the present study ( $\bar{X}=3.09$ ,  $sd=0.93$ ) as compared to Reasor's study ( $\bar{X}=2.57$ ,  $sd=1.02$ ).

**Table 1.** Comparison of Highest Degree and Major Subject with Data from a Previous Study (Reasor, 1981: 67-71)

	PREVIOUS STUDY (n=103)		PRESENT STUDY (n=34)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>DEGREE</b>				
Doctoral	31	30%	16	47%
A.B.D.	6	6%	5	15%
Master's	57	55%	13	38%
Bachelor's	9	9%	0	0%
<b>MAJOR</b>				
ESL	33	32%	12	35%
Closely Related				
Field	46	45%	16	47%
Other Field	24	23%	6	18%

Hypothesis 2, which predicts that the situational variables in ESL administration are different from those of other university academic departments, is mainly supported by the data drawn from this study. Table 2 presents the frequencies and percentages for the two groups surveyed of age, sex, academic rank<sup>5</sup>, highest degree, job status<sup>6</sup>, length of time in the present job, previous job as a director or chair, previous coursework in administration or management, coursework in administration or management while in the job, method of appointment/recruitment to the position, and

<sup>4</sup> Four of the ESL directors had two Master's degrees.

<sup>5</sup> For the ESL directors, the Professorial category includes three full professors, five associate professors and six assistant professors.

<sup>6</sup> Two of the ESL directors in the Untenured category said that they were on tenure track.

experience teaching abroad.

**Table 2.** Comparisons of the Two Groups Surveyed in the Categories of Sex, Age, Rank, Highest Degree, Job Status, Time in Job, Previous Position, Previous Coursework, Concurrent Coursework, Appointment/Recruitment, and Overseas Experience

CATEGORIES		ESL Directors (n=34)		Other Academic Heads (n=28)	
Sex	Male	15	44%	21	75%
	Female	19	56%	7	25%
Age	30-39	10	29%	0	0%
	40-49	20	59%	6	21%
	50-59	4	12%	13	47%
	60-70	0	0%	9	32%
Academic Rank	Professorial	14	41%	28	100%
	Instructional	6	18%	0	0%
	Non-Faculty	11	32%	0	0%
	No answer	3	9%	0	0%
Highest Degree	Doctoral	16	47%	25	89%
	A.B.D.	5	15%	0	0%
	Master's	13	38%	3	11%
	Bachelor's	0	0%	0	0%
Job Status	Tenured	11	32%	27	96%
	Untenured	23	68%	1	4%
Time in Present Job	New	4	12%	2	7%
	1-5 yrs.	18	53%	4	14%
	Over 5 yrs	12	35%	22	79%
Previous Director/ Chair Job	Yes	10	29%	13	46%
	No	24	71%	15	54%

Table 2. (continued)

<b>Previous Management /Admin.</b>	Yes	12	35%	7	25%
	1-3 courses	10	29%	5	18%
	4-6 courses	2	6%	2	7%
<b>Coursework</b>	No	22	65%	21	75%
<b>Concurrent Management /Admin.</b>	Yes	12	35%	4	14%
	1-3 courses	10	29%	4	14%
	4-6 courses	2	6%	0	0%
<b>Coursework</b>	No	22	65%	24	86%
<b>Appointment to Job</b>	Inside Hire	20	59%	24	86%
	Outside Hire	14	41%	4	14%
<b>Overseas Teaching</b>	Yes	21	62%	11	40%
	No	13	38%	16	60%

Chi-square analysis demonstrates statistically significant differences between these two groups in terms of the first six of these variables and the last one, including age ( $\chi^2=31.00^*$ ,  $df=3$ ), sex ( $\chi^2=5.93^*$ ,  $df=1$ ), academic rank ( $\chi^2=11.65^*$ ,  $df=2$ ), highest degree ( $\chi^2=18.24^*$ ,  $df=2$ ), job status ( $\chi^2=26.71^*$ ,  $df=2$ ), length of time in the present job ( $\chi^2=10.48^*$ ,  $df=2$ ), and method of appointment/recruitment to the position ( $\chi^2=4.16^*$ ,  $df=1$ ). No significant differences emerge for the other variables, including previous job as a director or chair ( $\chi^2=1.06$ ,  $df=1$ ), previous coursework in administration or management ( $\chi^2=.24$ ,  $df=2$ ), coursework in administration or management while in the job ( $\chi^2=2.26$ ,  $df=1$ ), and experience teaching abroad ( $\chi^2=2.27$ ,  $df=1$ ).<sup>7</sup>

Five of the categories in which t-test comparisons were performed show significant differences between the ESL program directors and the other academic unit heads. First, according to the results of this survey ( $t=4.35^*$ ,  $df=60$ ), the ESL director is on average approximately 10.5 years younger ( $\bar{X}=43.79$ ,  $sd=6.40$ ) than the heads of the other academic units ( $\bar{X}=54.27$ ,  $sd=12.16$ ), as shown in Table 3.

<sup>7</sup> The subjects in the comparison group were drawn from a relatively international population that may not be representative of academicians at other universities in the United States in terms of overseas experience.

**Table 3.** Comparison of Means ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Standard Deviations (SD) in the Categories of Age, Number of Full-Time Faculty Positions, Number of Non-Faculty Positions, and Annual Budget

CATEGORIES	ESL Directors (n=34)		Other Academic Heads (n=28)	
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
Age	43.79	6.40	54.27	12.16
Full-Time Faculty	7.95	11.62	13.25	10.07
Non-Faculty Staff	2.66	3.41	6.19	6.26
Annual Budget	277,543	189,305	295,073	277,040

Second, there are on average 40% fewer faculty members in the ESL programs, with an average of 7.95 (sd=11.62) full-time positions, as compared with the other academic departments or programs, with an average of 13.25 (sd=10.07) full-time positions ( $t=1.90^*$ ,  $df=60$ ). Third, there are on average 3.53 fewer non-faculty staff positions ( $t=2.67^*$ ,  $df=54$ ) in the ESL programs ( $\bar{X}=2.66$ ,  $sd=3.41$ ) than in the other academic units ( $\bar{X}=6.19$ ,  $sd=6.26$ ).<sup>8</sup> Fourth, according to their own estimations, the ESL directors put significantly less effort into teaching ( $t=2.00^*$ ,  $df=60$ ) than the heads of other academic units ( $\bar{X}=1.77$  vs.  $\bar{X}=2.30$ ). Finally, the ESL directors are significantly less involved in research ( $t=2.17^*$ ,  $df=60$ ) than the comparison group of department chairs and heads of the other academic units ( $\bar{X}=1.85$  vs.  $\bar{X}=2.40$ ). T-tests reveal no significant differences in any other category tested. These categories include: annual budget, interaction with students, professional interaction with colleagues, department affairs, university affairs, professional activities, outside service, time spent in study and reading, social interaction with colleagues, and paperwork. ESL directors' mean scores for these categories are shown in Table 4.

<sup>8</sup> In responding to question 17, the two groups also listed some different positions under "Other:" some ESL directors listed volunteers and work-study students, while some of the academic heads listed graduate assistants and research assistants.

**Table 4.** Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Standard Deviation (SD) of Time and Effort Put into Job-Related Activities of the ESL Directors (n=34) Calculated based on a Scale of Very Little (1) to A Great Deal (4)

CATEGORIES	$\bar{X}$	SD
Teaching	1.77	1.14
Other Interaction with Students	2.61	0.79
Professional Interaction with Colleagues	2.88	0.81
Research	1.85	0.99
Departmental Affairs	2.73	0.78
University Affairs	2.44	0.91
Professional Activities	2.76	1.02
Outside Service	1.88	0.86
Study and Reading	2.06	0.86
Social Interaction with Colleagues	1.97	0.81
Paperwork	3.44	0.70

Hypothesis 3, which predicts that the level of skill which ESL directors need to do their jobs will not be consistent with the level of skill which they possess, is not supported by the data of this study measuring self-perceived skill level. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient calculated for the two sets of grouped data indicates that there is a substantial degree of agreement ( $r=0.75^*$ ) between their needed and actual skills as evaluated by the ESL respondents, as can be extracted from the figures in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) of Self-Assessment by the ESL Directors of the Level of 24 Job-Related Skills Needed and Possessed Calculated based on a Scale of Weak (1) to Strong (4)

JOB-RELATED SKILLS	Need	Have
a. Motivating faculty members	3.65	3.33
b. Supervising faculty and staff	3.50	3.06
c. Communicating program goals to faculty	3.68	3.39
d. Computer skills	2.56	2.30
e. Budgeting	3.22	3.03
f. Writing proposals	2.50	2.59
g. Dealing with immigration affairs	2.36	2.15
h. Managing time	3.74	3.09
i. Controlling office procedures	3.22	2.88
j. Making profits	3.21	3.17
k. Cooperating with other academic units	3.37	3.42
l. Keeping in touch w/academic organizations	3.15	3.09
m. Communicating effectively across cultures	3.63	3.45
n. Maintaining a teamwork environment	3.89	3.48
o. Developing a staff "team"	3.77	3.31
p. Anticipating problems, conflicts	3.63	3.43
q. Making changes	3.30	3.33
r. Maintaining enrollments	3.44	3.36
s. Recruiting new students	3.04	2.85
t. Formulating long-range plans	3.50	3.18
u. Teaching courses	2.67	3.37
v. Evaluating faculty and staff	3.44	3.15
w. Overseeing testing and placement	3.40	3.19
x. Managing crises	3.63	3.36

Hypothesis 4, which predicts that ESL administrators are like other university academic department heads in rating their own job-related skills



low is not supported by the data, which shows that ESL directors are satisfied in general with their level of job skills and performance. The first test of this hypothesis, by correlational analysis, shows that the other department heads are like the ESL directors in perceiving that the match between needed and actual job-related skills is relatively good ( $r=0.79^*$ ), indicating that both groups rate their own skills as relatively high in relation to the level needed to accomplish their jobs. The two groups are less comparable in their ratings of the 24 individual job-related skills, as the between-groups correlations ( $r=0.50^*$  for perceptions of the level of needed skills across groups and  $r=0.62^*$  for perceptions of the level of actual skills across groups) are not as strong as those within the two groups.

Analysis of variance of the means of the 24 job-related skills for the needed and actual skills of the two groups, which reveals a significant value of  $F$  ( $F=5.38^*$ ,  $df_1=3$ ,  $df_2=92$ ), also does not support Hypothesis 4. While Tukey test comparisons indicate no significant difference within groups for needed vs. actual skills, they show that the ESL administrators rate their own possession of the 24 job-related skills significantly higher ( $\bar{X}=3.32$ ) than do the heads of the other academic units ( $\bar{X}=2.81$ ). Likewise, the  $t$ -test comparison indicates no significant difference in overall satisfaction with self-rated job performance between the two groups ( $t=0.56$ ,  $df=56$ ), both of which have high mean scores ( $\bar{X}=3.47$ ,  $sd=.52$ , for ESL directors;  $\bar{X}=3.38$ ,  $sd=.50$ , for other academic heads). Thus, while ESL directors differ from the other department heads in some aspects of their perception of performance, on all three of the general measures they rate their job skills and performance relatively high.

Hypothesis 5, which predicts that ESL administrators have high human skills and conceptual skills, is fully supported by the data drawn from the present study. The five top skills that the ESL directors believe they need for their jobs are: (1) *Maintaining an environment conducive to teamwork* [item n], (2) *Developing a staff "team" (hire, orient, assign, etc.)* [item o], (3) *Managing time* [item h], (4) *Communicating program goals to faculty* [item e], and (5) *Motivating faculty members* [item a]. Of these five skills, four (1, 2, 4, 5) are human skills and one (3) is a conceptual skill, as identified in this study. The five bottom job-related skills the ESL directors believe they least need are: (1) *Writing proposals* [item f], (2) *Computer skills* [item d], (3) *Recruiting new students* [item s], (4) *Teaching courses* [item u], and (5) *Keeping in touch with national/international academic organizations* [item l]. All of these five skills are

identified as technical skills in this study.

The five top job-related skills the ESL directors believe they possess are: (1) *Maintaining an environment conducive to teamwork* [item n], (2) *Anticipating problems, conflicts* [item p], (3) *Communicating effectively across cultures* [item m], (4) *Cooperating with other academic units* [item k], (5) *Communicating program goals to faculty* [item c]. Of these five skills, four (1, 3, 4, 5) are human skills and one (2) is a conceptual skill. The five bottom job-related skills the ESL directors believe they least possess are: (1) *Dealing with immigration affairs* [item g], (2) *Computer skills* [item d], (3) *Writing proposals* [item f], (4) *Supervising faculty and staff* [item b], and (5) *Recruiting new students* [item s]. Of these five skills, four (1, 2, 3, 5) are technical skills and one (4) is a human skill, as identified in this study. Hence, the group of ESL directors surveyed believe human skills to be the most important and technical skills the least important for their jobs.

Analysis of variance comparing the responses of the ESL directors to questions about human, technical, and conceptual skills yields significant F-values for their perception of the job-related skills needed ( $F=12.50^*$ ,  $df_1=2$ ,  $df_2=21$ ) and actually possessed ( $F=5.83^*$ ,  $df_1=2$ ,  $df_2=21$ ) in these three categories. The a posteriori comparison of means indicates no significant difference between the means in both ratings for human skills (needed,  $\bar{X}=3.58$ ; actual,  $\bar{X}=3.31$ ) and conceptual skills (needed,  $\bar{X}=3.46$ ; actual,  $\bar{X}=3.23$ ), but significantly different means in both ratings for technical skills (needed,  $\bar{X}=3.02^*$ ; actual,  $\bar{X}=2.84^*$ ). The F-value for the comparison of skills for the heads of other academic units is non-significant ( $F=1.43$ ,  $df_1=2$ ,  $df_2=21$ , for needed skills;  $F=2.79$ ,  $df_1=2$ ,  $df_2=21$ , for actual skills).

Hypothesis 6, which predicts that ESL administrators view their programs more from a business than an academic perspective and see themselves more as managers than as educators, is moderately supported by: (1) a comparison of perceived needs in the areas of profit-making, student recruitment, and maintenance of enrollment; (2) an examination of the items on the job skills scales which show the greatest gap between perception of needed vs. actual skills; (3) a comparison of the highest and lowest rated items in terms of time and energy spent on the job; (4) a comparison of the percentage of time spent in supervision, scholarly activities, and paperwork; and (5) a summary of the open-ended responses about how the directors spend their time and what job-

related activities they see as most important.

A comparison of the responses of the ESL directors to those of the other academic program heads reveals that the former group assign a moderately high score ( $\bar{X}=3.21$ ) to item j, *Making profits*, while the latter group rate it lowest of all their priorities ( $\bar{X}=1.60$ ) among the 24 job skills items. As shown in Table 3 above, the only two items where the gap between needed and actual skills is more than .6 score points for the ESL directors is for item u, *Teaching courses*, where the level of perceived need ( $\bar{X}=2.67$ ) is .70 score points lower than the level of skill which they say they have ( $\bar{X}=3.37$ ), and for item h, *Time management*, where the level of perceived need ( $\bar{X}=3.74$ ) is .63 score points higher than the level of skill which they say they have ( $\bar{X}=3.09$ ). This same gap for *Time management* (but not for *Teaching courses*) occurs for the heads of other academic departments, where the gap is .80 score points ( $\bar{X}=3.60$  for needed level of skill,  $\bar{X}=2.80$  for actual level). As shown in Table 4 above, the lowest rated item in terms of time and effort expended by the ESL directors is *Classroom teaching* ( $\bar{X}=1.77$ ), while the highest rated item is *Paperwork* (e.g., reports, budgets, etc.  $\bar{X}=3.44$ ). These results, which reinforce the findings of question 19 for job-related skills in the categories of *Teaching courses* and *Time management*, parallel those in question 20 for the heads of other academic units in the category of *Paperwork*—which is also their highest rated item ( $\bar{X}=3.30$ ) for expenditure of time and effort—but not in the category of *Classroom teaching*—which receives a middle-level rating in question 20 by the latter group.

Comparison of percentage of time figures generated by open-ended responses to questions 22-24 reveals no significant differences within the group of academic unit heads ( $F=5.11$ ,  $df_1=2$ ,  $df_2=68$ ) for any of the three activities of supervision, scholarly activities, and paperwork. In contrast, significant differences are seen for these three variables within the group of ESL directors ( $F=18.25^*$ ,  $df_1=2$ ,  $df_2=93$ ), and the Tukey test shows that the mean for scholarly activities ( $\bar{X}=13.28$ ,  $sd=12.86$ ) is significantly different from the means for supervision ( $\bar{X}=42.97$ ,  $sd=22.75$ ) and paperwork (31.09,  $sd=22.17$ ), which do not differ significantly between themselves. T-test comparisons between the two groups of administrators show that ESL directors have a significantly higher mean ( $t=2.92^*$ ,  $df=53$ ) for supervision ( $\bar{X}=42.97$ ,  $sd=22.75$  vs.  $\bar{X}=26.74$ ,  $sd=16.28$ ) and a significantly lower mean for scholarly activity ( $\bar{X}=13.28$ ,  $sd=12.86$  vs.  $\bar{X}=27.71$ ,  $sd=16.28$ ), but indicate no significant difference ( $t=.96$ ,  $df=54$ ) for

paperwork (ESL directors,  $\bar{X}=31.09$ ,  $sd=22.17$ ; comparison group,  $\bar{X}=26.25$ ,  $sd=12.53$ ). The comparatively low value for scholarly activity and the comparatively high value for supervision suggests more attention on the part of the ESL directors to their role as managers than to their role as educators.

Ten ESL directors added one or more items to question 20.1, as additional areas on which they spend their time and energy. Six responses focus on duties such as curriculum and materials development that can be classified as consistent with the role of educator, while the others, eleven in total, focus on duties such as program management and personnel matters consistent with the role of manager. The areas most often mentioned as areas of supervision in response to question 22 are personnel, including faculty (20 respondents), administrative staff (15 respondents), and other supervisory positions such as assistant director or curriculum coordinator (3 respondents). Other job aspects mentioned by at least four individuals as areas of supervision are curriculum (6), student teachers or teaching assistants (5), student services (5), and testing (4). Specific scholarly activities listed in response to question 23 include presentations at conferences (10 respondents); external research (8 respondents; 2 also mentioned internal research with their own test and enrollment data); publications (7 respondents); reading (7 respondents); and reviewing/editing (4 respondents).

The most time-consuming activities listed by the ESL directors are meetings with students, e.g., for advising or counseling (9 respondents); correspondence related to recruitment and enrollment (6 responses); public relations and personalized marketing (5 responses); and telephone work (4 responses). Only the first of these relates more to the role of educator than the role of manager. The most important activities listed are promotion and recruitment (10 respondents); public relations within the university and the community (10 respondents); faculty hiring, supervision, and evaluation (10 respondents); program planning and management (8 respondents); and curriculum (5 respondents). Except for the last of these, curriculum, all of the other areas fit more into the role of manager than educator.

The most difficult activities usually listed under question 28 are all in the general area of the manager role, including time management (12 respondents); negotiating for recognition and resources within the university (9 respondents); faculty hiring, supervision, and evaluation (7 respondents); and money management (5 respondents). In sharp contrast, the most commonly

listed favorite areas are all in the domain of educator, including developing programs or curricula (11 respondents); interaction with students through advising, program activities, etc. (9 respondents); and teaching or sharing ideas with teachers (8 respondents).

### Discussion

While no significant change was detected in type of academic study for ESL directors at the beginning and the end of the decade of the 1980's, based on a comparison of the data in Reasor (1981) with those of the present study, the data do show ESL directors obtaining higher degrees, with none in the present sample holding less than a Master's degree and 63% having a Ph.D. or A.B.D. qualification. As compared to a group of university department chairs and program heads, the typical ESL program director turns out to be younger, more likely to be female, with a lower degree, lower in academic rank and job status, overseeing a faculty with fewer full-time positions and a smaller administrative staff, with a shorter period of time in the present position, and more likely to have come into the position from outside the program or university.

Although the budgets of the individual ESL programs and the other academic units surveyed vary greatly, the means are similar, showing that ESL directors have fiscal responsibilities similar to those of other academic administrators. The similarity in budget in the context of a smaller program with fewer staff positions perhaps allows for a return to overhead necessary for program survival. The smaller supervisory load also makes it possible for ESL directors to devote their energies to areas they perceive as time-consuming and important such as student services, public relations, promotion, and recruitment.

Like the heads of the other academic units, the ESL directors' perception of the match between what they need to do their jobs and what they actually possess in the way of skills is relatively high. The ESL directors give particularly high ratings to skills in the human skills category, and they rate technical skills as the least important and the least satisfactory of the three job skills categories. The area where the level of skill is seen as most lacking for both groups is for time management, underscoring the fact that both categories



of administrators work in multi-faceted jobs with highly diverse demands and, as they report, a great deal of paperwork. For ESL directors, the only other large gap between perception of needed and actual skills is in the category of teaching, where the directors as a group feel that they are over-qualified in relation to what is actually needed in their jobs.

While ESL directors appear to be basically satisfied with their job skills and performance, responses to open-ended questions indicate a mismatch between what ESL directors most often like to do and what they have to do on their jobs, the former being tasks related to the role of educator and the latter being tasks related to the role of manager—of people, programs, and financial concerns. In spite of the fact that they are busy performing a wide variety of tasks of planning, supervision, and management, some of the ESL directors still make time for their own scholarship and professional development through presentation at conferences, research, publications, and reading. However, the survey results indicate a difference between the amount of time they spend on scholarship, both as compared to other academic administrators and as compared to the amount of time they would like to spend.

### Conclusion

The results of a national survey reported here represent an attempt to define the ESL program director's job with reference to published literature and in comparison to that of the college/university department chair or program head. The study reveals that the 34 ESL directors surveyed have similar educational backgrounds but a higher level of academic qualification as compared to a similar group surveyed by another researcher ten years ago. Otherwise, the results of the present study are generally consistent with previous studies indicating that the ESL administrative position requires high human and conceptual skills and that ESL directors must attend as much if not more to management and business concerns as to educational concerns.

Results also indicate a similarly high level of satisfaction with the level of job skills and performance for ESL directors and for a comparison group of heads of other academic units at a major research university. Several areas of difference between the two types of positions are apparent, and the general profile of the ESL director is one of a comparatively less seasoned administrator. This fact would seem to be a double-edged sword: On the one



side, the ESL director may, as a result of inexperience, make more errors than the seasoned college or university academic administrator; on the other side, the new breed of administrator within ESL could bring a fresh perspective to academic administration and help to introduce new ideas into a higher education setting.

The data of the present study fully support two of the original hypotheses (2, 5), partially support two of them (1, 6), and do not support two others (3, 4). The original list of hypotheses of this study is therefore revised as follows to reflect the findings of the investigation:

1. The background characteristics of ESL directors are changing towards a higher level of professional qualifications as measured by highest degree.
2. The situational variables in ESL administration are different from those of other university academic departments.
3. The level of job skills which ESL directors believe they need are generally consistent with those which they believe they actually possess.
4. ESL directors are like other university department heads in assessing their job skills and performance as satisfactory.
5. ESL directors have high human skills and conceptual skills.
6. ESL directors view ESL programs from both a business-oriented and an academic-oriented perspective and consider themselves as both managers and educators.

It is hoped that other investigators might extend the results of this study by continuing to examine the important but generally neglected area of ESL administration.

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**Appendix**  
**Program Director and Department Chair Survey**

Dear Director/Chair,

It will take you about half an hour to answer the following questions. Your efforts will be highly appreciated and your answers will serve as the basis for our conclusions.

1. I.D. No. (e.g., the last 6 digits of your SSN): \_\_\_\_\_
2. State or Region, e.g. Northeast, Midwest, etc.: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sex: M \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_
4. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name of your department/program: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Academic rank: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Highest degree: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Major subject: \_\_\_\_\_
9. If M.A. or Ph.D., thesis topic: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Job status: Tenured \_\_\_\_\_ Not Tenured \_\_\_\_\_  
                                 Full-time \_\_\_\_\_ Part-time \_\_\_\_\_
11. How long have you been in your present position?  
     New: \_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 years: \_\_\_\_\_  
     1-5 years: \_\_\_\_\_ More than 10 years: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Have you ever held a director/chair position before the present one?  
     Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
13. Before your appointment, did you ever take any courses in management or administration?  
     No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Since you took this position, have you taken any such courses?  
     No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_

15. How would you best describe your appointment/recruitment to the position?

\_\_\_\_\_ Recruited from another institution

\_\_\_\_\_ Appointed by the dean with recommendation of department members

\_\_\_\_\_ Accepted position on a rotation basis

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Prior to your present position, have you had any experience teaching abroad?

No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, how long? \_\_\_\_\_

What subject(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Program staffing (as of July 1, 1989):

No. Full-time faculty: \_\_\_\_\_

No. Part-time faculty: \_\_\_\_\_

No. Staff (APT): \_\_\_\_\_

No. Civil service: \_\_\_\_\_

Others (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

18. How much is the annual budget of your program?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

19. Job-related skills

On the next page, you will be asked to relate (1) your perceived level of performance in 24 job-related skills and (2) the degree to which those skills are needed in your program or department. For the first rating, circle the point on the scale that best represents your level of each of the skills a-x. For the second rating, underline the point on the scale that best represents the degree to which each of the skills a-x is needed in your program or department.

In the example below, the circled "1" indicates a perceived weakness on the part of the respondent in "Motivating faculty members," while the underlined "4" indicates that the respondent felt a strong need for "Motivating faculty members" in his/her department or program.

		Weak	Moderate	Strong	
EXAMPLE a.	Motivating faculty members	(1)	2	3	<u>4</u>
	(See the next page.)				

	Weak	Moderate	Stro
a. Motivating faculty members	1	2	3
b. Supervising faculty and staff	1	2	3
c. Communicating program goals to faculty	1	2	3
d. Computer skills	1	2	3
e. Budgeting	1	2	3
f. Writing proposals	1	2	3
g. Dealing with immigration affairs	1	2	3
h. Managing time	1	2	3
i. Controlling office procedures	1	2	3
j. Making profits	1	2	3
k. Cooperating with other academic units	1	2	3
l. Keeping in touch with national/ international academic organizations	1	2	3
m. Communicating effectively across cultures	1	2	3
n. Maintaining an environment conducive to teamwork	1	2	3
o. Developing a staff "team" (hire, orient, assign, etc.)	1	2	3
p. Anticipating problems, conflicts	1	2	3
q. Making changes	1	2	3
r. Maintaining enrollments	1	2	3
s. Recruiting new students	1	2	3
t. Formulating long-range plans for the program	1	2	3
u. Teaching courses	1	2	3
v. Evaluating faculty and staff	1	2	3
w. Overseeing testing and placement of students	1	2	3
x. Managing crises	1	2	3

20. In your present position as director/chair, how much time and effort are you putting into the following activities? Leave item blank if not applicable.

	Very little	Moderate amount	Great deal	
a. Classroom teaching	1	2	3	4
b. Other interaction with students	1	2	3	4
c. Professional interaction with colleagues	1	2	3	4
d. Research and scholarly publication	1	2	3	4
e. Departmental affairs (e.g., committee work)	1	2	3	4
f. University affairs (e.g., committee work)	1	2	3	4
g. Professional activities within your discipline	1	2	3	4
h. Outside service (e.g., lectures, consulting, etc.)	1	2	3	4
i. Study and reading in field	1	2	3	4
j. Social interaction with colleagues	1	2	3	4
k. Paperwork (e.g., reports, budgets, etc.)	1	2	3	4
l. Other: _____	1	2	3	4

21. What did you learn in your education that has proved most useful in this job?

22. What percentage of your job involves supervisory activities? Please specify these activities.



23. What percentage of your job involves scholarly activities? Please specify these activities.
  
24. What percentage of your job involves routine paperwork?
  
25. What are your most time-consuming job-related activities? Why are they so time-consuming?
  
26. What are your most important job-related activities? Why are they so important?
  
27. What are your favorite job-related activities? Why?
  
28. What is the most difficult aspect of your job?
  
29. What is the easiest aspect of your job?
  
30. What do you think is the key factor for your success in your job performance?

31. Have you had any experience of failure in your job?  
What is the most important reason for that experience?
32. In general, what do you think most contributes to the effectiveness of a director/chair?
33. Do you think your job is different from that of other program directors/department chairs in different disciplines? If yes, in what way(s)?
34. What are your main goals/objectives for your program/department?
35. What are your main goals/objectives for your own professional development?
36. Do you have any advice to offer a future program administrator in your position?
37. Overall, how satisfied are you with your performance as a program director?

\_\_\_\_\_ Very satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat satisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat dissatisfied

\_\_\_\_\_ Very dissatisfied

Please comment on your answer to Question 37.