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Attrition of ESL foreign-born Hispanic students at CSN

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ATTRITION OF ESL FOREIGN-BORN HISPANIC
STUDENTS AT CSN

By

Luis B. Ortega

Bachelor of Science in Education
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2002

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Science in Workforce Education and Development
Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education

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Attrition of ESL Foreign-Born Hispanic Students at CSN

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Master of Science in Workforce Education and Development

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ABSTRACT

**Attrition of ESL Foreign-Born Hispanic
Students at CSN**

by

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This qualitative naturalistic study examined the retention barriers for foreign-born Hispanic English as Second Language (ESL) students that dropped out of the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) ESL for-credit program and the need for services they perceived would have helped them succeed. The participants for this study were foreign-born Hispanics who were taking ESL 110B, ESL 111B and ESL 120B (levels 1, 2, and 3) during the 2005-2006 academic year and have since dropped out. The main focus of the study was on institutional and social factors that affected the retention rate of this population at CSN. Four in-depth interviews were conducted to better understand those factors. The findings show the need for bilingual instructors and bilingual support service staff. A major factor which affected interviewees' non-continuation in the ESL for-credit program was their lack of knowledge about the availability of support services.

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To conclude, I want to dedicate this thesis to my brother, Jaime Ortega who passed away in May 13, 2007.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Despite the problems which have occurred since the war in Iraq, the United States is still considered the “land of opportunity.” Diverse people from around the world still strive to come here for the “American Dream.” Thus, the United States faces a plethora of issues, primarily in attrition in both secondary and postsecondary education and acculturation into the American way of life.

The Southwestern part of the United States (U.S) has seen an incredible influx of immigrants, most of whom come from Mexico. “In 2000, 43.3 percent of Hispanics lived in the West and 32.8 percent lived in the South. The Northeast and Midwest accounted for 14.9 percent and 8.9 percent, respectively of the Hispanic population” (Guzman, 2001, p. 2). “Among Mexicans [born in Mexico], 55.3 percent lived in the West, 31.7 percent in the South, 10.7 percent in the Midwest, and 2.3 percent in the Northeast” (Guzman, 2001, p. 3). This influx, together with the burgeoning birth rate among the Latino population, has had a tremendous impact on the entire social structure within the Las Vegas community. Whether legal or undocumented, these people soon discover that to succeed in their jobs or to be promoted, they must be literate – meaning they must be able to read and write the English language. They must also assimilate into the way of life that Americans enjoy. Jones (2005) explains, “literacy is the ability to read, write, and speak English, compute/calculate, get a job, work, function as a family member, and

function as a productive member of society” (p. 40). This certainly does not mean that they must lose their cultural identity; rather, success in the U.S. is measured by peoples’ abilities to adapt to the American way of life.

Since educational attainment becomes a necessity to obtain essential job skills, many foreign-born Hispanics seek to better themselves by obtaining an education through the community college systems across the United States. “Some ESL [English as Second Language] students may want to improve their language skills while others may seek vocational instruction or a transition into mainstream academic education” (McElroy, 2006, p. 1). They can pursue job skills training, a certificate or degree, prepare for the General Equivalence Diploma (GED), and take courses that improve English skills at all levels. Regardless of the reason, more and more foreign-born Hispanics are coming to the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) for help, guidance, and direction. “In order to maximize services to the ESL population, community colleges educators need to know what other providers of ESL services are offering and the effectiveness of these varied programs” (McElroy, 2006, p. 1). Thus, successful ESL programs used by other community colleges can function as models to implement changes to an existing program.

Community colleges generally are adapting to the needs of ESL students, but far too slowly to accommodate their needs. What can be done at CSN to better accommodate ESL foreign-born Hispanic students in achieving their goals and allowing them to experience success as contributing members of the Las Vegas community? This study will examine the retention barriers faced by foreign-born Hispanic, English as Second Language [ESL] students, by studying why they dropped out of CSN’s ESL for-credit

program and the need for services they perceive would help them succeed. This can have a great impact on retention of these students so that they can be successful in their career goals.

Hispanics in the United States and Their English

Literacy Struggles

“The Hispanic population increased by 57.9 percent, from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000, compared with an increase of 13.2 percent for the total U.S. population” (Guzman, 2001, p. 2). The number of Latinos who do not speak English is also growing. According to Figure 1 abstracted from Pew Hispanic Center (2005) of the English ability among Hispanic foreign born by the period of arrival of age 18 years and over, before 1990 and from 2000 and after, 72.9% speak English less than very well. The vast majority of Hispanic arrivals to the United States do not speak English very well. Many Hispanics enroll in English as Second Language (ESL) programs to improve or learn the language.

English as Second Language is the largest activity of the literacy and basic skills system in the United States. Post-secondary institutions in today’s society are faced with the challenges of increasing curricular rigor to strengthen the knowledge base of the ESL adult population and of increasing the percentages of this population to successfully complete ESL Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs (Jones, 2005, p. 2).

Table 18. English Ability Among Hispanic Foreign Born by Period of Arrival and Age: 2005

Universe: 2005 Hispanic Foreign-born Household Population age 5 and over

Period of Arrival	Under 18				18 and over			
	English only	English very well	English less than very well	Total	English only	English very well	English less than very well	Total
Before 1990	2,798	35,425	9,089	47,312	349,601	2,257,744	4,430,134	7,037,479
1990 to Before 2000	27,355	459,842	183,297	670,494	146,385	963,847	3,811,053	4,921,285
2000 and After	19,987	266,772	500,869	787,628	106,760	294,693	2,813,346	3,214,799
Total	50,140	762,039	693,255	1,505,434	602,746	3,516,284	11,054,533	15,173,563
Percent Distribution								
Before 1990	5.9	74.9	19.2	100.0	5.0	32.1	63.0	100.0
1990 to Before 2000	4.1	68.6	27.3	100.0	3.0	19.6	77.4	100.0
2000 and After	2.5	33.9	63.6	100.0	3.3	9.2	87.5	100.0
Total	3.3	50.6	46.1	100.0	4.0	23.2	72.9	100.0

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of 2005 American Community Survey

Figure 1. English ability of foreign born Hispanics in the United States from 18 years and over. Source: Pew Hispanic Center, 2005.

ESL students who take ESL classes at community colleges have a purpose in mind.

McElroy (2006) explains,

Some ESL students may want to improve their language skills while others may seek vocational instruction or a transition into mainstream academic education [take classes to pursue a degree a certificate, associate, or transfer].

In order to maximize services to the ESL population, community educators need to know what other providers of ESL services are offering and the effectiveness of these varied programs (p. 1).

Community colleges need to collect background information about the ESL students they are serving in their programs and provide services according to their needs. “The contemporary English as Second Language (ESL) classroom is populated by immigrants, political refugees, and international students or technical elites and their relatives”

(Curry, 2001, p. 3). “Academic advising and psychological counseling can play a role in

supporting immigrants/refugee students to persist in community college courses” (Curry, 2001, p. 20). “In addition to improved teaching strategies, other support services are needed. For students to identify and sustain their educational goals, they must clearly understand what those goals entail in terms of education, credentials, and other factors” (Curry 2001, p. 18). The other factors can include how to navigate the United States’ educational system to reach their goals. McElroy, in her search at Central Piedmont Community College, explains that ESL students need transitional courses to help them to transition from ESL to college-level courses. For example, at Central Piedmont a course on college student success is offered as an

...orientation to the college experience in which students are introduced to all the services the college provides and the various departments that are fundamental to supporting student success. The College Success course also helps students learn basic study skills necessary for students to academically succeed. While the course provides support appropriate for a range of students, the content is especially important to the success of at-risk students (McElroy, 2006, p. 2).

Another important factor to consider for the ESL population is the level of education attained in their country of origin. “Within this population [ESL students in community colleges programs] are some students who, like international students, have been well educated in their native language, but there are many who are not” (Blumenthal, 2002, p. 47). The level of persistence of educated ESL students is higher compared to less educated. Curry’s (2001) research paper on student attrition in an ESL basic writing course at Monroe Community College (MCC) explains the following,

The less-educated immigrant/refugee students were the first to leave the course, which ended with a 75% attrition rate. The better-educated students drew on economic and cultural capital to take advantage of the free programs offered by the community college. Of those who left the course, less-educated students struggled to persist in higher education, while those with more cultural capital managed to persist at the community college or in four-year institutions (p. 2).

“The community college has become a key resource for English Language Learners. The community college is designed to be flexible and to serve a multiplicity of needs, from academic transfer to preparation to adult education” (Kuo, 1999, p. 69). The community colleges are an excellent choice for Hispanics who want to learn English for functional and academic purposes. In this case, functional means students take ESL classes for personal enrichment or job related purposes. Hispanics understand learning English is vital to be part of American society. According to the Pew Hispanic Center (2006),

A clear majority of Latinos (57%) believe that immigrants have to speak English to be a part of American society while a significant minority (41%) says that they do not. Latino immigrants are slightly more likely (57%) to say that immigrants have to learn English than native-born Latinos (52%) (p. 1).

Learning English for Latinos is viewed as critical to be part of American society and also to be integrated into the U.S workforce. “The majority of immigrants foreign-language speakers need assistance in English in order to take advantage of various educational and employment opportunities” (Kuo, 1999, p. 71). Research (National Center for Public

Policy & Higher Education [NCPPE], 2005) shows that minorities are the least educated and the fastest growing segment of the U.S population. According to the NCPPE (2005),

The U.S workforce (generally ages 25-64) is in the midst of a sweeping demographic transformation. From 1980 to 2020, the white working-age population is projected to decline 82% to 63% ... and the Hispanic/Latino portion is projected to almost triple (from 6% to 17%) (p.2).

We live in a knowledge-based economy; thus, workers need to be well educated. The Hispanic workforce in the United States is projected to increase rapidly in the coming years. If the level of education drops drastically, it will have an impact in the economy by decreasing the nation's tax base (NCPPE, 2005). They further describe this problem by stating that,

As other developed nations continue to improve the education of their workforces, the United States and its workers will increasingly find themselves at a competitive disadvantage. In addition, a drop in the average level of education of U.S. workers would depress personal income levels for Americans, in turn creating a corresponding decrease in the nation's tax base (NCPPE, 2005, p. 1).

On a larger scale, the relationship between education and poverty goes hand in hand. Biggs, Brindis, Driscoll, and Valderrama (2002) explains that "Lower rates of high school and college graduation in the Latino population translate to lower incomes for Latino families and higher proportions of Latino children living in poor families" (¶4). NCPPE (2005) supports this idea in stating, "The projected declines in educational and

income levels can be reversed, however, if states do a better job of increasing the education of all their residents, particularly those populations that are growing fastest” (p. 1). Every state must find the proper solutions to minorities’ lack of education because the future of this country depends on the educational success of minorities. Foreign-born Hispanics must learn English to have better opportunities and to assimilate into the “American Culture.”

The State of Nevada’s demographics have changed dramatically. Pratt (2002) explains census data and by stating, “The Census Bureau (2000) report also confirmed another characteristic of the state that has become common knowledge – a boom in foreign-born, mostly Hispanic residents who struggle with the English language” (Pratt, 2002, p. 1). The state of Nevada, foreign-born population is expected to increase even more. Pratt (2002) points out, “Several experts said the report’s figures on foreign-born residents may be the most significant for the state in the coming decade. During the ‘90s the number rose statewide from 104,828 to 316,593 – more than 60 percent from Latin America...” (p. 2). These foreign-born adults register in the state of Nevada community colleges for functional purposes or academics, as previously mentioned.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study examined the retention barriers for foreign-born Hispanic, English as Second Language [ESL] students that dropped out of the CSN ESL for-credit program and the need for services they perceive would help them succeed. The findings of this study can increase the knowledge and influence educators in, and administrators

of, these kinds of programs at CSN and throughout the State of Nevada of the needs of this student population.

Significance of the Study

The number of ESL students is growing and is projected to keep growing exponentially the community college system provides the opportunity for these individuals to receive a quality education which can help integrate them into American society by helping them to learn the language. The results of this study can inform educators, administrators and support staff of the barriers to completing the ESL for-credit program and to advocate solutions that may help this population to succeed, and in turn, raise the educational level of the fastest growing population in the state of Nevada.

Research Questions

This qualitative study examined the retention barriers for foreign-born Hispanic ESL students that dropped out of the CSN ESL for-credit program and the need for services they perceived would help them succeed. The CSN ESL for-credit program is a 10-level program where students are enrolled at a level which is reflective of the outcome of a grammar assessment. The research questions which guided this study are:

- 1) What are the characteristics of foreign-born Hispanic ESL students?
- 2) What perceived barriers do the foreign-born Hispanic ESL students experience in completing the CSN ESL for-credit program?
- 3) What services does the foreign-born Hispanic ESL student believe they would need to be successful in the CSN ESL for-credit program?

Theoretical Framework

Many of the retention models found in the literature review of adult education were not specific to ESL for-credit programs. However, the theoretical framework for this study comes from the many works on college student retention. This qualitative study examined the retention barriers for foreign-born Hispanic ESL students that dropped out of the CSN ESL for-credit program and the need for services they perceive would help them succeed, specifically, those factors related to institutional and social factors affecting the retention rate of this population. Students who register for the ESL for-credit program at CSN are able to get credit for their classes as regularly enrolled college students. The theoretical framework for this study is based on Watson's Geometric Model of Student Persistence and Achievement (see figure 2). In the case of foreign-born Hispanics, not all the factors in this model apply. The model is more inclusive in explaining the difficulties all students encounter in achieving their educational goals in higher education institutions. Some of the factors from Watson's model do impact Hispanic ESL students and will be supported in the literature review. Watson(2004) explains the following:

The Geometrical Model of Student Persistence and Achievement provides a user-friendly method for discussion and focus on (a) the cognitive and social attributes that the student brings to campus; and (b) the institutional role in the student experience. The geometric model differs from others by placing the student at the center of the model, rather than an indifferent element to a flow chart or structural equation model (p.12).

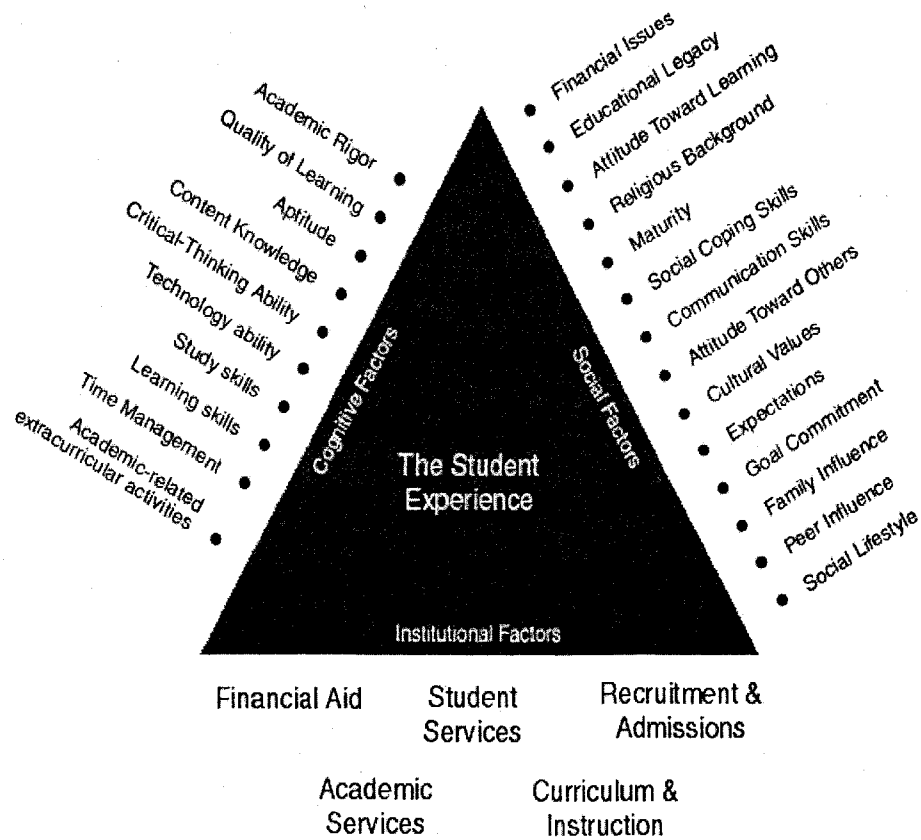


Figure 2. Watson’s (2004) The Geometrical Model of Student Persistence and Achievement.

The Geometrical Model of Student Persistence and Achievement explains the factors which lead to student attrition, and these attrition factors are a combination of cognitive, social and institutional. According to Watson (2004), “These three forces must combine to provide a solid foundation for student growth, developmental, and persistence. When stability is lost, students risk reducing their academic and social integration with the institution, and therefore risk dropping or stopping out” (p. 13). Institutions need to collect ESL students’ biographical data (personal information) or student characteristics to better serve them. In other words, who are the ESL students and what are they trying to accomplish in their community college for-credit programs? These factors are called

institutional variables within the Geometric Model of Student Persistence and Achievement. “The institutional side of the triangle relates to the ability of the institution to provide appropriate support to students during the college years, both academically and socially” (Watson, 2004, p. 15). The student services provided by the institution are important for students’ academic success. “Issues related to course availability, content, and instruction affect a student’s ability to persist, as do support mechanisms such as tutoring, mentoring, and career counseling” (Watson, 2004, p. 15).

Cognitive factors within the Geometrical Model of Student Persistence and Achievement are also important in retaining students. “The cognitive factors relate to the intelligence, knowledge, and academic ability a student brings with him or her to the college environment” (Watson, 2004, p. 14). Cognitive factors of ESL students include the level of education completed in country of origin before registering to the community college program. Ignash (1992) explains,

Variations exist, too, in the educational backgrounds of students. Some have adequate listening comprehension and speaking abilities in English, but almost no reading and writing skills. Others are unable to read or write in either English or their native languages. Still others have university educations from their home countries and must learn English at an advanced level to obtain a specific goal (p. 3).

According to Curry (2001), a research study of students who are professionals in their country of origin are more cognitively ready to learn a second language because of their first language academic background. “Cognitive factors are important because they directly relate to the student’s ability to comprehend and complete the academic portion

of the college curriculum” (Watson, 2004, p. 15). It is also important in the “student’s decision-making process” (p. 14) which reflects the commitment of the student to stay in college. The student’s decision making process is the result of the “the social and cognitive factors interconnecting” (Watson, 2004, p. 14). These cognitive and social factors are as relevant to ESL, Hispanic, foreign-born students as it is to college students in general.

Curry (2001) explains the following, “For students to identify and sustain their educational goals, they must clearly understand what those goals entail in terms of education, credentials, and other factors” (p. 19). As it was mentioned previously, ESL students who take ESL classes in community colleges have a purpose in mind. As it was stated by McElroy (2006), “Some ESL students may want to improve their language skills while others may seek vocational instruction or a transition into mainstream academic education” (p. 1).

Social factors relate to the student’s integration inside and outside the college campus. “Such factors include parental and peer support, the development or existence of career goals, educational legacy, and the ability to cope in social situations” (Watson, 2004, p. 14). “The research field generally agrees about the importance of social integration with regard to student retention and the fact that students have a difficult time persisting when they are not socially integrated into campus life” (Watson, 2004, p. 14). “It seems evidently clear that the social life of many adult learners is filled with family and the concomitant socioeconomic responsibilities and commitments” (Garrison, 1985, p. 26). “In other words, ABE [Adult Basic Education] students will be more concerned with meeting the institution’s scholastic expectations (measured by grades) as compared

to achieving positive interrelationships with their peer group (evidenced by extracurricular activities)” (Garrison 1985, p. 26).

Operational Framework

The operational framework for this study represents factors which determine student persistence and achievement for Adult ESL populations. The social and institutional factors are explained by different authors who are quoted in the literature review.

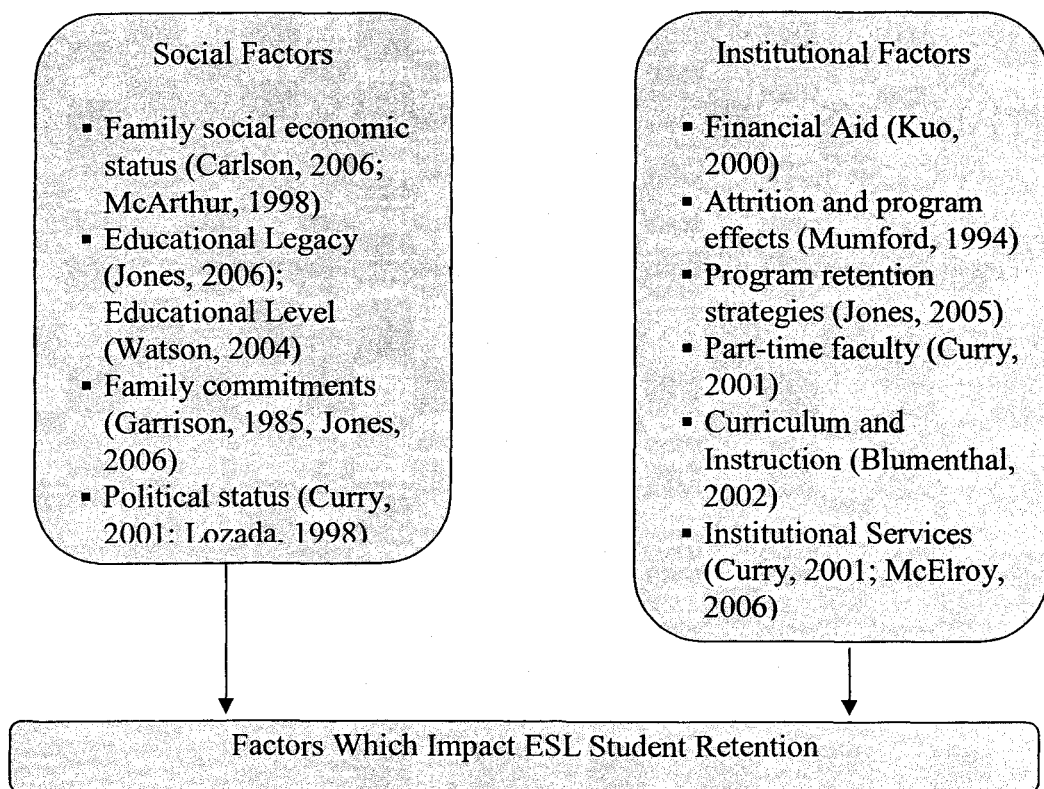


Figure 3: Factors Which Impact ESL Student Retention

Limitations of the Study

The researcher obtained the list of students who had dropped out from the ESL for-credit program during the 2005-2006 academic year from the Department of Institutional Research. The researcher was limited to the information which was provided on the list. Many of the people listed had changed their phone numbers or were no longer living at the same addresses provided to CSN at the time of their enrollment. Others had also returned to their country of origin. .

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study.

- Adult Basic Education [ABE] - The mission of ABE is to provide literacy services for adults and to make sure they acquire the skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency (Nevada Adult Education, n.d).
- Attrition
 - Negative Attrition refers to the percent of students who leave the college without obtaining a degree or achieving their goals (Polinsky 2003/2004).
 - “Positive Attrition a student leaves the college without obtaining a degree but having met her/his objectives” (Polinsky 2003/2004, p. 362).
 - Hispanic- “Of relating to the language, people, or culture of Spain or Spanish-speaking Latin America” (Berube et al. 2001, p. 524).
 - Services are operationally defined as academic services and student services. Student services include financial aid, counseling, advising, tutoring, child care, transportation (Jones. 2005).

- Program services include, “Services provided to ESL students could include a reading lab, a small library of selected reading for extensive practice, and a writing lab to help the students with specific problems. ESL students should have an academic advisor to help with registration, programs, and personal situations” (McElroy, 2006, p. 6).

Summary

This qualitative study examined the retention barriers for foreign-born Hispanic, English as Second Language [ESL] students that dropped out of the CSN ESL for-credit program and the need for services they perceive would help them succeed. This chapter provided an overview of the study outlining the purpose and significance of the study, the theoretical and operational frameworks as well as establishing a problem from selected research on ESL Adult populations. In general, ESL students are categorized as at-risk students at higher educational institutions. McElroy (2006) explains,

At-risk students, including ESL students, need to develop skills that are outside of traditional academic areas of study. ESL programs must focus on recruiting and retaining students, providing student services that are targeted to the special needs of individual ESL students and providing sufficient academic support in the form of resources and technology (p. 31).

ESL students look for help at community colleges to develop their skills in English. Some of them want to learn English right away to look for a job or to change jobs and others want to pursue a degree or transfer to a four year college. “Creating an effective program means having a real sense of what ‘program completion’ is, how the state and

programs define and measure retention, and how the program is organized and operated to achieve better retention rates” (Mumford, 1994, p 6.). This study attempted to understand the barriers faced by foreign-born Hispanics in completing the for-credit program at CSN and provide college administrators with results to assist them in increasing the number of completers in this program.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This qualitative study examined the retention barriers for foreign-born Hispanic ESL students that dropped out of the CSN ESL for-credit program and the need for services they perceive would help them succeed. The CSN ESL for-credit program is a 10-level program where students are enrolled at a level which is reflective of the outcome of a grammar assessment. The research questions which guided this study are:

- 1) What are the characteristics of foreign-born Hispanic ESL students?
- 2) What perceived barriers do the foreign-born Hispanic ESL student experience in completing the CSN ESL for-credit program?
- 3) What services does the foreign-born Hispanic ESL student believe they would need to be successful in the CSN ESL for-credit program?

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Watson's Geometrical Model of Student Persistence and Achievement (GMSPA), which explains the factors that lead to student retention or attrition. According to Watson, student retention is affected by a combination of cognitive, social, and institutional factors.

Briefly stated, the cognitive factors form the academic ability-the strengths and weaknesses-of the students, such as the level of proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics. Social factors, such as the ability to interact effectively with other persons, personal attitudes, and cultural history, form a second set of

external factors that characterize the individual. The third set of factors, institutional, refers to the practices, strategies, and culture of the college or university that, in either an intended or unintended way, impact student persistence and achievement (Watson, 2004, p. 13).

This chapter is organized so that the reader is introduced to the history of ESL programs in community colleges, the demand of ESL classes by non-English speakers at community colleges and adult and ESL Education in the State of Nevada. It will also be focused on those factors identified in Watson's Geometrical Model of Student Persistence and Achievement (GMSPA) that impact Adult ESL students, specifically those related to institutional and social factors.

History of ESL Programs in Community Colleges

Immigration to the United States has increased to an all-time high. It is expected to continue and grow in the coming years because this country continues to be viewed as the land of opportunity. Many of the immigrants who have come to the United States in the past or present have registered at community colleges or non-profit organizations to learn English or trade. Kurzet (1997) explains,

Historically, ESL instruction was provided by volunteers, often through churches and civic organizations, to enable immigrants to work and participate in community life. The volunteer teachers were not professionally trained; indeed, there was not professional English as a second language discipline. As non- and limited-English-speaking students came to community colleges, programs were set up hastily in various departments of the college, such as

English, foreign language, and adult basic education. The location of the ESL programs, with different goals, in different departments. The results were as uneven as the program. Until fairly recently, there were sufficient numbers of low-skilled, family-wage jobs in the United States, those who lacked English proficiency and educational could still support their families (p. 54).

Community colleges have done an impressive job in coping with the needs of this new student population. Community colleges have come a long way from unorganized English as second language teaching systems to a sophisticated department within the college or as an adjunct department. “At the community colleges, ESL may be housed in developmental education departments, English departments, foreign language departments, separate ESL departments, or adult education programs that are often tuition-free, basic-skills programs” (Blumenthal, 2002, p. 47). The community college system is also concerned with the growing number of immigrants and their special needs. Kurzet (1997) points out, “Instead as the number of immigrants rises, community colleges are concerned that the need of ESL instruction and other remediation will overwhelm their primary commitment to lower-division collegiate and vocational-technical degree and certificate programs” (p. 54). Community colleges are committed to serve their community including the non-English speaking without forgetting they must continue to serve the community needs at large as well.

Many community colleges across the country are aware of their new demographics, as well as social, and political implications of their ESL programs. Kurzet (1997) argued that,

In cities with large immigrant populations, the chief dilemma is that of quantity or quality. Community colleges must decide whether to serve increasing numbers of ESL students in traditional ESL programs—with large classes taught by part-time instructors and volunteers, often isolated from the rest of the college—or the focus instead on improving the quality of their ESL programs and support services to encourage limited-English speaking students to complete their ESL study and matriculate into academic and vocational-technical programs within the college (p. 55).

As stated by Blumenthal (2002) about Portland Community College, “The availability of grant money and student financial aid restrictions can play a role in determining the structure and home of ESL programs and the policies that change them” (p.47). Kurzet (1997) explains, “The school received generous funding under the amnesty provision of the Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. In the spring of 1991, however, Portland Community College lost its amnesty funds” (p. 56). According to Kurzet (1997), when the college lost its funds, the ESL program was cut in half and it laid off part-time ESL instructors. This is a clear example of the kind of problems community colleges encounter when the proper funding is not provided for ESL programs offering ESL courses. Furthermore, ESL students who look for help at community colleges are the most affected.

The Demand for ESL Classes in Community Colleges

The demand for classes by non-English speakers to learn the language is so great that community colleges have chosen in some cases to create a department of English as Second Language (ESL) or revise the English Department structure to comply with the

demand. Blumenthal (2002) states that, “Just as the diversity of ESL student populations presents a complex set of challenges in measuring success, the position or home of ESL within institutions offers similar challenges to the understanding of what works best for ESL students” (p.47). Ignash writes about the importance of ESL programs, he states that, “The importance of English as a Second Language (ESL) programs cannot be overlooked for the estimated 32 million people in the United States whose Native Language is not English” (cited in Kuo, 1999, p. 69). Some of these people [immigrants] look for assistance in community colleges to learn English. Community colleges in order to comply with this demand, not only have to make physical room but provide specific services and contract teaching staff (Kuo, 1999). The community college mission is to serve and meet the community’s needs. In other words, in complying with their mission, the community college system is obligated to serve this non-English speaking student population. Many of the immigrants understand that learning English can improve their chances of better employment opportunities. Language is viewed as the toughest barrier, and one which they need to overcome to keep advancing in their social status. The community colleges will continue to provide and promote ESL courses to keep up with the demand of non-English speakers.

Adult Education in the State of Nevada

The State of Nevada has eight federally-funded programs and three state funded programs. English as a Second Language (ESL) is a program which is funded by federal dollars as well as subsidized with state monies. An article titled *Nevada Adult Education: Who Are Our Students?* published in a state newsletter states, “The eight federally funded AEFLA (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) programs served

9,506 students in 2005- 2006” (Nevada Adult Education, 2006, p. 1). The population of students registered in these programs varies. “Eighty three percent of these students in these programs were enrolled in ESL classes; twelve percent were Adult Basic Education (ABE) students; and just five percent were in the higher Adult Secondary Education (ASE) level” (Nevada Adult Education, 2006, p. 1). All of these programs are offered at community colleges, county libraries, and at smaller community-based organizations. The majority of students registered within AEFLA programs are ESL students.

The State of Nevada also offers Adult High School (AHS) programs funded by the state. These programs are administered by the different state school districts with a student population of approximately of 24,000 for the academic year of 2005-2006. The article in Nevada Connections reports that, “... 62 percent of Adult High School students studied for the Adult High School Diploma or GED; one-third were ESL students” (Nevada Adult Education, 2006, p. 1).

Student demographics for participants who served in both the federal and state supported programs were reported in the article. Fifty-six percent those enrolled in the AEFLA funded programs were between the ages of 25 and 44; five percent were between the ages of 16 and 18, and two percent were over 60 years of age (Nevada Adult Education, 2006). Furthermore, fifty-seven percent of the student population were employed. On the other hand, the Adult High School program (funded by the state) reported twenty-six percent of students served were between the ages of 16 and 18; twenty seven percent were between 19 and 24; and thirty-nine percent were between the ages of 25 and 44 (Nevada Adult Education, 2006). The Adult High School programs have a higher percentage of participants who were younger as compared AEFLA funded

programs. The AEFLA funded programs served a majority of adults who were older ESL students and already in the workforce.

In the state of Nevada, there are two state programs from which adults can choose when they decide to learn English, Adult High School Diploma (AHSD) or Adult Basic Education (ABE). Adult High School Diploma programs are hosted in public schools and the teachers must have a teaching license from the state of Nevada for employment.

According to Nevada Adult Education (n.d.), the programs are comprised of the following:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE) / English as Second Language (ESL)
- Adult High School Diploma Programs (AHSDP)
- General Education Development (GED) (p. 1)

Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs are federally-funded programs under the AEFLA and subsidized with some state money. The mission of ABE is to provide literacy services for adults and to make sure they acquire the skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency. ABE is also concerned with the education of the parents, so they can become involved in the education of their children. Finally, ABE participants are 17 years of age or older with less than a high school education (Nevada Adult Education, n.d., ¶1).

Adult High School Diploma Programs are programs are funded by the State of Nevada. Participants are 17 years of age or older without a high school diploma. Students complete their core high school requirement classes, as well as support services which consist of open enrollment, preparatory classes for GED tests, and ESL classes for the increasing demand from the immigrant population (Nevada Adult Education: About Us,

¶2). General Educational Development has 20 different test sites in the state of Nevada. The GED test offer the opportunity for individuals to earn the equivalent of their high school diploma (Nevada Adult Education, n.d., ¶3).

ESL students register for different programs depending on their academic, work-related, or personal needs. The majority of students who register in AEFLA funded programs are ESL students whose purpose is to learn English. In addition, there is a small percentage of ESL students enrolled in AHS who are working toward their General Equivalence Diploma (GED).

English as a Second Language at CSN

The College of Southern Nevada (CSN), originally named Clark County Community College, opened its doors in August 28, 1971. At the time, the English as a Second Language (ESL) program was under Developmental Education. The mission of Developmental Education was to provide one-on-one assistance to students in the areas of reading, writing, and listening to prepare them for college-level studies. In 1995, the ESL program was transferred to the International Language Department which is housed in the division of Arts and Letters. The International Language Department is a large department which houses all the language courses offered at CSN.

The CSN General Catalog and Student Handbook (2006-2007) states, “CSN offers beginning through advanced ESL courses for non-native speakers to help improve speaking and writing skills in English” (p. 32). Students are required to take a grammar placement test to determine at which level they are to begin. The ESL course sequence is arranged into ten different course levels. Although the sequence has ten different levels,

there are eighteen different courses in the sequence. Students are not able to register for more than one class until they reach level four (ESL 121) in the ESL sequence (see figure 4). The disadvantage for ESL students placed in lower levels is that they cannot take conversational classes until they reach level seven in the course sequence. If an ESL student is placed in level one (ESL 110B), he/she will take approximately five years to complete the ESL sequence taking classes during the regular semesters. Students who want to register for classes take a placement test to accurately define their English grammar proficiency.

English and ESL Course Sequences

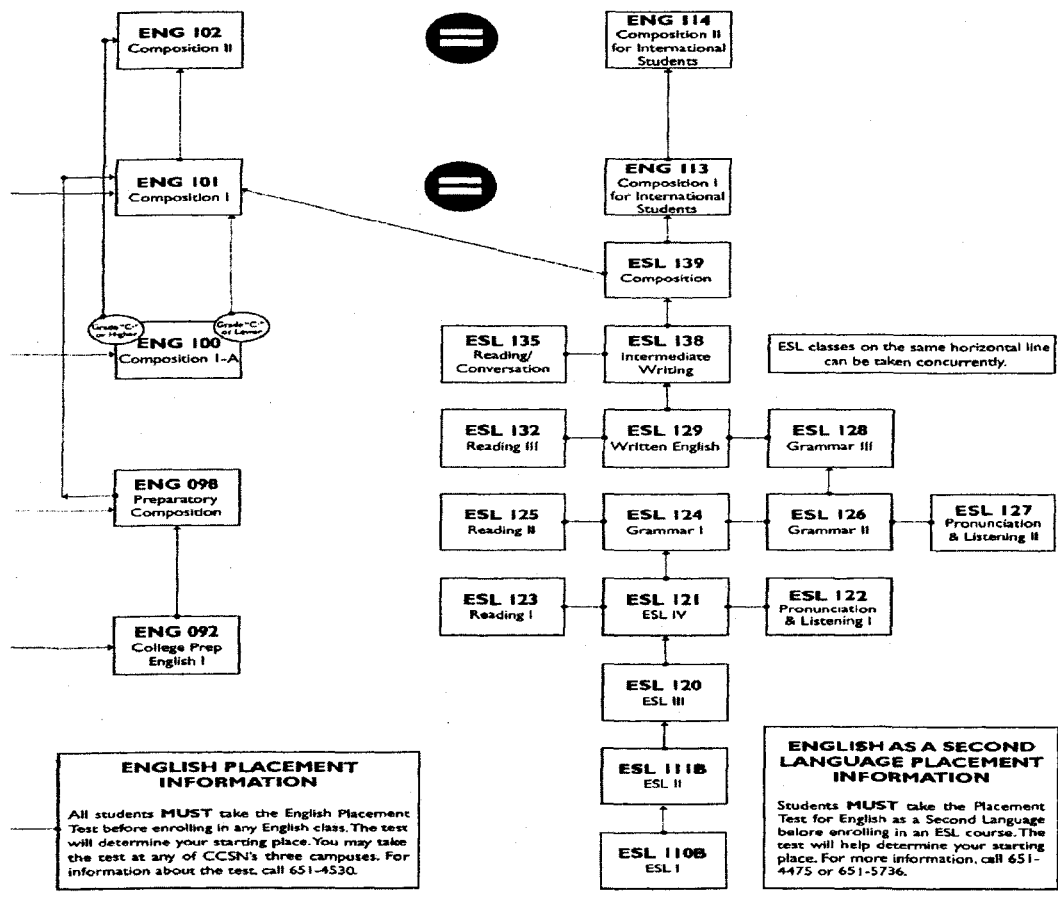


Figure 4: English and ESL Course Sequence. College of Southern Nevada Class Schedule, Fall 2006, p.71.

Social and Institutional Factors Identified by Watson's Geometric Model of Student Persistence and Achievement As They Relate to ESL Student Populations

Social Factors

Where do ESL students come from? The ESL student population in community colleges is very diverse. ESL students' diversity includes different cultures, languages, countries of origin, and levels of education. Curry (2001) states that "The contemporary

English as a second language (ESL) classroom is populated by immigrants, political refugees, and international students or technical elites and their relatives” (p. 3). Lozada (1998) cites the American Association of Community Colleges who says that, “Community colleges serve 55 percent of all Hispanic students and 40 percent of all Asian or Pacific Islanders students reenrolled in postsecondary education” (p. 13). A small minority of ESL students come to the United States’ community colleges as international students with visas with the idea of returning to their home countries upon completion of their studies. According to Blumenthal (2002), “these students are usually well educated in their native languages, have met a TOEFL score requirement set by the individual institution, and were it not for the need for further language study, would be well prepared for college-level work” (p. 46). International students are only one group of students placed in ESL classes at community colleges. The other group is composed of immigrants and refugees. In this group, there are some people who are as well educated as international students, but there are a lot of them who are not. The purpose for enrolling in ESL programs are different for each person. Some students want to learn the language and get better jobs, others want to continue and pursue degrees. It is important to mention that a lot of students do not have formal education in their native language, and when they register for ESL classes at a community college, learning a second language becomes harder for them. Ignash (1992) states the following:

Some have adequate listening comprehension and speaking abilities in English, but almost no reading and writing skills. Others are unable to read or write in either English or their native languages. Still others have university educations

from their home countries and must learn English at an advanced level to obtain a specific goal (p. 3).

One group that represented this diversity was the Guantanamo Bay Refugees who arrived in the United States in 1995. A lot of the newcomers settled in South Florida. Miami Dade Community College created a special program supported by grants for Guantanamo refugees named Guantanamo Refugees Education and Training Program (G.R.E.A.T). Lozada (1998) explains, "G.R.E.A.T is an 18-month intensive program that includes three levels of vocational English as a second language, employability skills training, 12 vocational certificates opportunities, job placement services, technology training..." (p. 12). The program was well designed and combined to meet the needs of the refugees with student services and academics designed especially for this population. Within this group of refugees, there were medical doctors and the rest had some school or college degrees from their countries of origin. Community colleges need to be aware of the diversity of ESL students to help them with their needs. It is important to understand that community colleges across the country have the power to motivate students, in particular Hispanic students, to continue with their education. In other words, the academic experience they received in their community college can affect their views of education for the rest of their lives. The type of services ESL students receive in community colleges and the relationships they develop will be essential to them.

Acculturation of ESL Students

Social factors relate to the integration of students into the college environment and personal coping skills. According to Watson (2004), "Such factors include parental and

peer support, the developmental or existence of career goals, educational legacy, and the ability to cope in social situations” (p. 14). He states, “The research field generally agrees about the importance of social integration with regard to student retention and the fact that students have a difficult time persisting when they are not socially integrated into the campus life” (Watson, 2004, p. 14). This integration process can be especially difficult when the student is an immigrant. Understanding the conditions under which students immigrated can impact the acculturation process. Brilliant (2000) states,

Many of these immigrant students have come to the United States as refugees. Some have come from countries that no longer exist or that are at war. They are beginning new lives in the United States, but they have been ripped apart from their past, their relatives, and tier friends. Many have made painful decisions about leaving behind a parent, a sibling, a child, or a spouse. For many the process of immigration is marked by pain, loss, guilt, and conflict (p. 578).

Social Coping Skills

According to Berube et al (2001) acculturation is “the modification of the culture of a group or an individual as a result of contact with a different culture” (p.8). Acculturation can be a slow process for ESL students depending on what part of the world they come from, level of education, and life experiences. It is no different than a cultural shock some people suffer when they visit another country. ESL students need to cope quickly with the culture off and on campus, so they can be successful in meeting their academic goals. According to Van Lier (1996), “The culture shock that many immigrants experience may

be accompanied by language shock and when the culture shock wears off, the language shock may persist” (p. 47). It is a process for many immigrants to cope with their new culture, but many of them never learn a new language because they feel comfortable speaking only their native language. Van Lier (1996) states that,

...accessibility of exposure-language is the setting or set of circumstances surrounding the language learning process. Recent immigrants and refugees who need to work extremely hard to survive and who seek support from one another often learn little or nothing of the host language (p. 46).

The socialization environment of immigrants or refugees can also determine if they will acquire the host language in a fast or slow pace. Van Lier (1996) explains the following scenario:

A Latin-American immigrant who has lived for a number of years in the USA (female, unmarried) works long hours in a small textile factory in New Jersey, every day traveling an hour-and-a-half each way from Astoria, Queens, to work during the day she is exposed to a considerable amount of English, but it is doubtful that she attends to much of it. She speaks no English beyond a few stock phrases and understands little beyond the standard expressions and instructions at work...She has considerable exposure to English, but uses little of it, and she has arranged her life in such way as to be able to cope without learning English (p. 46).

Many immigrants come to this country, get a job, and make enough money to survive. It seems their lives become a daily routine, and they do not learn English because they do not need it to survive. The fact that some immigrants can arrange their lives in such as

way where they do not need to utilize English is very common. Van Lier (1996) states that, “Finally, language use and language learning are part of the social world in which learners live” (p. 45). In general, immigrants choose to live in neighborhoods with a large number of old or new arrivals of the same ethnicity. In some instances, they live with relatives within the same neighborhood parameters. Within these neighborhoods, immigrants have access to Latino supermarkets, barber shops or beauty salons, nightclubs, clothing stores, restaurants, etc. Furthermore, they get most of their vital services in their native language; thus, English is not deemed an important language to learn.

When immigrants attend community colleges, they also have to integrate to the culture of the college. Tinto (1993) explains that, “Having moved away from the norms and behavior patterns of past associations, the person now faces the problem of finding and adopting new ones appropriate to the college setting” (p. 98). According to Brilliant (2000),

The immigration process involves movement from self-perception in the context of one culture to developing a new self-perception within the context of a different culture. Assimilation suggests absorption by the new culture, whereas integration suggests finding a place for oneself within the new culture (p. 579).

Academic and Social Adaptation

It is always a struggle for some people to adapt to new customs in a foreign country.

By adapting to new customs, immigrants integrate and adapt into the new culture.

Crandall (1979) expands this by stating,

For most adults, the desire to integrate or acculturate that is, the desire to adopt the identity, values, beliefs of another culture or to lose one's foreign nature is not present. Their motivation, instead, is to acquire a language because it will enable them to get something: a better education, a better job, or whatever (p. 5).

If immigrants refuse to integrate, they do not find a place in society. The immigrants' attitude can change, and they might reject the new challenges imposed by the new culture. On the other hand, immigrants who choose to integrate adopt the new culture, including learning the language to better function within society. ESL programs can provide the accommodations to ESL students, so they can assimilate the new culture and learn the language. Crandall addressed these skills:

However, all adults who are immigrants or refugees need to acquire general prevocational English; they need to be able to read the want ads, to fill in applications forms, to participate in job interviews, in short, to survive on the job. The ESL materials must reflect these job survival skills and must help the adults to acquire the terminal job survival behaviors which have been identified in the needs assessment (Crandall, 1979, p. 6).

Many immigrants feel learning English is related to survival skills. Jones' (2005) study found that, "All participants indicated that the English language presented an

academic and social problem” (p. 208). In other words, English skills are important to learn other subjects such as math, and it is a social problem if you are not able to communicate with others.

Financial Issues of ESL Students in Community Colleges

As mentioned previously, many people immigrate to this country looking for better opportunities. They may encounter economic barriers that can affect their aspirations and eligibility to an education. In a statistical analysis by McArthur (1998), “The cost of an ESL class was perceived to be a major barrier even through two-thirds of the adults who took an ESL class within the previous year spent \$100 or less for such a class” (p. 2). Kuo (2000) argues that, “Critics complain that ESL students have a lower rate of persistence and should be ineligible for aid” (p. 4). Many ESL students are not eligible to receive financial aid because of the eligibility restrictions imposed by the Federal Government. Receiving the Federal Pell Grant is contingent upon student income or family income. Students also need to meet other requirements to be eligible for Financial Aid. According to the Guide to Federal Student Aid (2006/2007) they must meet one of the following educational requirements:

- Have a high school diploma [foreign high diploma is good] or a General Education Development (GED) Certificate.
- Pass an approved Ability to Benefit Test (ABT) [which is only given in English according to the CSN Testing Center].

- Complete a high school education in a home school setting approved under state law (p. 3).

Jones' (2005) study found that, "A majority of the participants attended only the primary and/or secondary levels of education in their country of origin" (p. 209). Thus, this excludes this population for federal financial aid.

ESL students who apply for Financial Aid must be U.S citizens or eligible noncitizens. Another requirement stated in the Guide to Federal Student Aid (2006-2007) is that the [student] "...must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a regular student working toward a degree or certificate in an eligible program" (p. 3). As stated previously, most ESL students learn English for job purposes or socioeconomic improvement, and they do not necessarily want to pursue a degree. The other problem ESL students encounter in some community colleges is that they can only take one course per semester until they reach a certain level of proficiency. Furthermore, ESL programs that follow this model can also interfere with a student's academic short term goals. Kuo (2000) argues that, "As a result, ESL students who are unable to apply any of their coursework toward the community college graduation requirements may experience prolonged time and increased costs in their education experience" (p. 4).

If ESL programs at community colleges award college credits to ESL students, then they are able to apply for financial aid. Other problems exist as Kuo (2000) explains, "Current issues being discussed in relation to ESL programs at community colleges include the awarding of course credit, access to financial aid...the status of ESL instruction as a credit or non-credit course centers on the funding of these categories" (p. 4). On the other hand, if the classes are non-credit, students cannot apply for financial aid

because it is a state-funded program or federal grant. Therefore, financial aid can only pay for credit courses. Giacchino-Baker and Baker (1995) address this dilemma of credit or not credit by stating,

The idea of academic credit for ESL classes provokes some very interesting discussions on U.S. campuses. There are those who feel that the nature of these classes is remedial and the foreign students should be required to take them strictly as preparation for real classes (p. 43).

ESL students do receive college credit at CSN for their ESL classes, but the credits only apply to one degree, the Associate Degree in General Studies. At CSN, the only ESL transferable classes are ESL 113 and 114, which are equivalent to English 101 and 102. English 101 and 102 do transfer to in-state and out-of-state colleges and universities.

Nontraditional Students

According to The Nontraditional Student Success Act (NSSA) co-sponsored by New York Senator Hillary Clinton and Florida Senator Bob Graham, Carlson (2006) explains, “They define nontraditional students as minority students and older students who might be going back to school after an absence. They found that nearly 80 percent of Hispanic undergraduate students are likely to be first generation college students” (p. 24).

Nontraditional students can be single mothers, returning students attending college full time and working full time, or transfer students with full time jobs and a family. The Nontraditional Student Success Act also challenges Higher Education Institutions to provide accommodations to nontraditional students. Lane (2004) points out the measure would also,

...reward schools that offer flexible class schedules and child-care services... and offer more counseling to students struggling with social and cultural challenges by providing more funding for Student Support Service Programs, Gear Up and college assistance Migrant Programs (p. 6).

Lane (2004) found that “According to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Statistics about 90 percent of community college students are nontraditional” (p.6). In addition, the challenge for community colleges is how to serve better a diverse population of students. As was mentioned previously, any community college’s mission is to serve and meet the community’s needs in the area of general education.

Nontraditional students in general have advantages by being classified as nontraditional. One of these advantages is the financial support given by the government for educational purposes in college. Carlson (2006) explains, “In addition to scholarships, there are several federal programs of grants and low-cost loans to help those who want to go to a college or university” (p. 25). In fact, nontraditional students are able to receive assistance, but they must research this financial support. According to Lane (2004), New York Senator Hilary Clinton explains that the problem is that nontraditional students do not know they are classified as nontraditional, and they do not look for assistance.

“These students not only grapple with daily-life challenges”, Clinton said, “but many also are intimidated by the college experience and afraid to ask for help if they struggle academically or don’t understand something” (Lane, 2004, p. 6). In the case of ESL students, the language barrier discourages them from requesting assistance in their colleges and most are unlikely to ask the in-depth questions necessary to uncover additional resources. Some ESL students are undocumented so they are not able to

receive any type of federal aid assistance. Tuition and family burdens are some of the reasons why nontraditional students do not continue or start their education. Carlson (2006) explains, "If you are a nontraditional student, a minority student, or both, and you have a family...you might fear that paying the expenses of college would take money away from your family" (p. 24). On the other hand, if students do not prioritize education, it can become a burden in the future to qualify for a good job to support their family. According to Jones (2005), "One participant indicated that she would sacrifice her education to have her children complete their education" (p. 211). Another burden for immigrant ESL students is that many of them support their families in their country of origin. Jones' (2005) study found, "...Participants reported that they are supporting families back in their country of origin and/or America" (p. 211). Education for nontraditional students can have economic instability issues, especially for students who do not have access to information about grants and scholarships.

Retention Strategies for College ESL Students

Students need to make a connection with the institution they are attending. DiMaria (2006) acknowledges, "Research shows that the more actively engaged students are in all of the various aspects of college life, the more likely they are to learn and also to stay in college" (p. 53). When students socialize and identify with the institution, they are more likely to continue with their education. The phenomenon of why students leave the campus is connected to external forces and external choices according to Tinto (1993). He states the following:

Events which occur elsewhere in the student's life may also play an important role in determining what transpires within the college. The actions one's family, of members of one's community, as well as those of external actors in state and national organizations, can play an important part in the decisions of individuals to depart from college (Tinto, 1993, p. 109).

Watson (2006b) supports this theory by explaining, "Without this soft-touch social connection, students become isolated and begin to withdraw from campus. This is, in one respect, academic suicide" (p.1). It is called academic suicide because students withdraw from the institution and many of them do not come back again. In general, colleges do not have exit interviews, and they do not have any record why the students leave campus. Watson (2006a) acknowledges, "...exit interviews are your friend... these are extraordinarily important opportunities to capture information on why your students leave, and what role your institution plays in the departure process" (p. 1). "When the academic and social systems of the institution are weak, the countervailing external demand may seriously undermine the individual's ability to persist until degree completion" (Tinto, 1993, p. 109). In the state of Nevada, the only college which requires an exit interview is the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). This interview is only applicable if a student wants to withdraw from all his/her classes during the semester. The data collected during student exit interviews can help colleges to implement retention interventional services.

Peer Influence

Student retention is a collaborative effort of all the college staff, including teachers. Holt (2006) explains, “Many students see me not only as an English instructor, but as a friend, mentor, or counselor” (p. 1). This significant person can be anyone related to the institution. Holt (2006) explains, “However, although everyone plays a part, the responsibility of retaining students ultimately rests with the faculty. To keep students in college and produce more graduates, we must first keep them in the classroom” (p. 2). The professors do have the power to make a difference in the students’ lives because they have contact with them regularly. Professors know when their students are not doing well in their classes because their students’ performance is reflected in their grades. In this case, the professor has the power to take the proper steps to help the students. If the professors cannot help the students, they can refer them to other student services to obtain appropriate help. Holt (2006) points out, “I usually utilize the contextualized learning model, showing students how they can apply the skills they are learning in English to other classes, projects in the workplace, and situations in their personal lives” (p. 2). It is important for students to know why they need to learn the material given in class or independent assigned reading. It is in a student’s nature to ask why this information is important, and how the textbook readings help one do well in class; furthermore, it seems everything must have a purpose to be viewed as important. The professor has the power to make the class interesting or boring for the students. The students will always prefer to take a class with a professor who makes the class interesting. It is no secret that one always remembers teachers or professors who made you think outside the box or cared for you.

There are some elements which need to be taken into consideration within the program structure including a student orientation about support services for students, etc. Mumford (1994) acknowledges the following retention strategies list for ESL students:

- Intake and orientation should help students understand the program, set realistic expectations, build on a working relationship with program staff, and establish learning goals.
- Program and teachers should recognize student achievement.
- Referral services should coordinate with other agencies to ensure that all students are connected to the support services they need.
- Non-instructional activities should help form a bond between the program and its students and their families (as cited in Jones, 2005, p.39).

A well designed ESL program is one that emphasizes success for students, and provides services according to the students needs.

Goal Commitment for ESL Students

The importance of setting academic goals for ESL students is also related to their short and long terms goals. What perceived barriers do ESL student experience in taking ESL courses in higher education institutions. McArthur's (1998) statistical analysis found the following:

Of the population of interest who participated in ESL classes, 42 percent did so as part of a college program. An additional 29 percent said they took ESL classes to improve communications skills, 14 percent said they took ESL classes for a personal, family, or social reason, and the remaining 15 percent

said they took the classes for job-related reasons, to improve basic skills, to meet requirements for a diploma or some other certificate or for some other reason (p. 1).

The reasons for ESL students taking ESL classes are very exhaustive, but colleges can help them if a goal commitment system is designed by their professors. Bello(2000) designed a stick-figured student with arrows pointing at the student from the front and back (see figured 5). He explains the following:

Above the arrows coming to toward the student I wrote: What holds you back? What inhibits your learning? Above the arrows coming from behind the student wrote: What motivates you, what helps you learn? Below the arrows I put a space for Short-term goals and another for long-terms goals (Bello, 2000, p. 3).

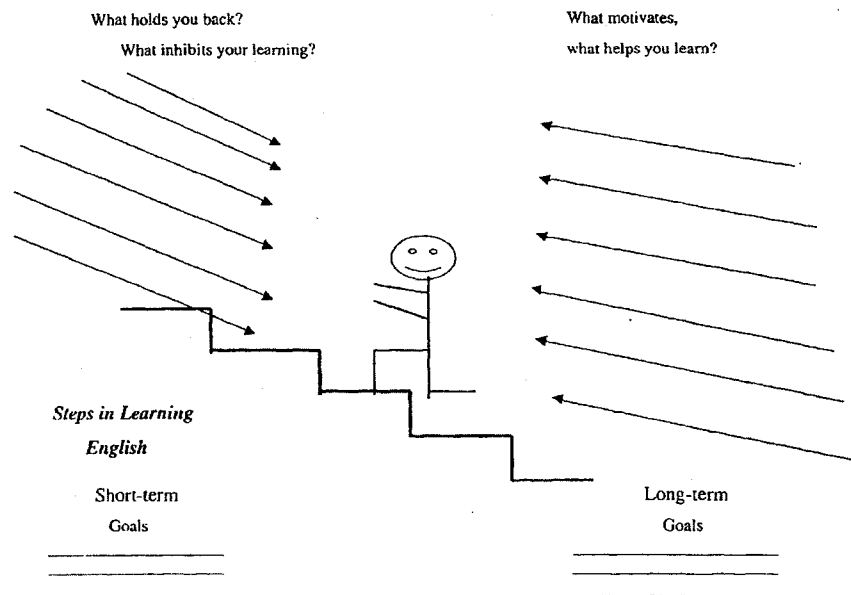


Figure 5. Bello (2000) Steps in Learning English.

The ESL students fill in the blanks of the “stick-figured student” and they could have class discussions oriented towards goal commitment. “Thus we had on the board four different positive and four different negative forces that affected our student. All of the discussion and the choices were theirs” (Bello, 2000, p. 3).

Bello(2000), as part of retention commitment for ESL students, developed a “goals for life and for class,” (p. 6) and he had class discussions as the previous activity. He addresses the benefits of students setting goals was, “...22 of the 23 original students finished this class, a retention rate of 96%” (Bello, 2000, p. 5). He concludes by stating,

I would suggest that any adult ESL teacher should think about doing some form of goals work with their students as a level appropriate to their students, and any adult ESL program at any level should devise program-wide strategies to address learner motivation and retention (Bello, 2000, p. 5).

Institutional and ESL Program Factors

One of the main focuses of this study was on institutional factors and examining the causes of retention barriers which are very critical for ESL students to succeed in college. According to Watson (2004), “The third set of factors, institutional, refers to the practices, strategies, and culture of the college or university that, in either an intended or unintended way, impact student persistence and achievement” (p. 13). He explains the factors involved, “examples include faculty teaching ability, academic support programming, financial support, students services, recruitment and admissions, academic services, and curriculum and instruction” (Watson, 2004, p. 13).

Mumford (1994) explains that programs must define “program completion” and set realistic goals for students. “Without a clear understanding about completion, programs cannot convey realistic expectations to the learners and learners cannot make a commitment” (Mumford, 1994, p. 10). She addresses three important program factors that promote student retention:

1. What “program completion” is,
2. How the state and programs define and measure student retention, and
3. How the program is organized and operated to achieve better retention rates

(Mumford, 1994)

“Having a student retention vision sends a powerful message to students. The message is the program’s commitment to student success. The vision becomes a tool for initiating program improvement and assisting students in achieving their learning goals”

(Mumford, 1994, p. 6). In other words, the vision and the mission of the program must have clear objectives in order for students to be successful.

Mumford (1994) provides a good example of a program he calls Middle City (MC). In this program, students set high standards of success for themselves and they also acknowledge how to achieve their expectations for success. The staff and instructors also assist the students to reach their goals and students’ program goals. He also points out that in a program, “Students tend to show a change in their long-term goals after eight weeks. In class, instructors conduct monthly reviews of student achievement in light of student end-of-program goals” (Mumford, 1994, p.11). “They find, as students feel more comfortable in the adult learning environment, their expectations increase for their own learning capability and their program outcomes...learning plans are modified and the

new educational goals are incorporated” (Mumford, 1994, p. 11). The vision and commitment of the program is noted in three ways:

- The support system is in place to easily identify the student’s new goals.
- The instructional system easily incorporates the student’s new goals into the learning plan.
- The program structures are in place to review student goals and make modifications and revisions as goals change (Mumford, 1994, p. 11).

In summary, a good program according to Mumford (1994), 1) sets expectations for their students, 2) identifies students’ goals and 3) assists students to achieve their goals. The instructors review their students’ goals every so often modifying learning plans.

ESL Students’ Goals

Some ESL students take ESL classes for conversation purposes because they want to advance in their jobs; others want to pursue a career at the college or transfer to a four-year institution and pursue a bachelor’s degree. Kuo (1999) addresses this problem by stating, “The needs of these students diverge; therefore ESL programs need to provide both functional and academic English Language courses” (p. 71). “Institutional and organizational services must review their practices and continue to emphasize the importance of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in order to more efficiently and positively impact the lives of the Hispanic population they serve” (Jones, 2005, p. 13). Jones’ (2005) interviews showed that participants registered for ESL programs for different reasons and he addresses this topic by stating the following:

Each participant's decision to attend an ESL instructional program demonstrated her or his desire to learn English language and to improve her or his socioeconomic status in America. In all the interviews, reasons for ESL instruction were to assist them in developing their English reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Participants believe that ESL instructional programs will provide the English skills essential to communicate effectively in the home, the workplace, and the community (Jones, 2005, p. 207).

Mumford (1994) explains, "Programs processes must be flexible to accommodate students with changing program completion goals" (p. 11). It is important for colleges to assess their ESL students' academic goals to provide accurate services to help them succeed both in their academic studies as well as in their everyday life in an English speaking environment.

Every student who registers in college, as explained by Jones (2005) has a goal or a purpose in mind for taking classes. ESL students are no different than the rest of the student body. Kuo (1999) adds that, "By examining these courses offerings, institutions will be able to analyze, compare, and assess their ESL programs better. Ultimately, research on the ESL curriculum can help institutions to focus resources more accurately on student need" (p. 71). Institutions need to assess their courses and curriculum to make sure the needs of ESL students in their programs are met.

Positive and Negative Attrition

Retention is an important issue for community colleges. Mumford (1994) states that, "Attrition is a concern because it translates to both student and program failure" (p.5).

The only way to find out if a program is working for ESL students is to assess the students' goals; making sure the students complete their goals upon exiting the program. There are two types of attrition, positive and negative, as defined by Polinsky. Positive attrition, according to Polinsky (2003/2004) is defined as "When a student leaves the college without obtaining a degree but having met his/her objectives (p. 362). On the other hand, negative attrition is :

... the percent of students who leave the college without obtaining a degree or achieving their goals. The reasons for negative attrition tend to cluster into three broad categories: student characteristics, life circumstances, and the college experience or environment. Admittedly, the categories overlap; however, they prove useful in communicating and planning retention strategies (Polinsky, 2003/2004, p. 362).

According to Mumford (1994),

While student retention does not guarantee program completion for all students, student attrition guarantees non-completion for students. Ultimately, non-completion converts to loss of productivity, lower self esteem for students, less student impact and a reduction in student retention rates for programs.

When student retention is addressed, programs and students prosper (p. 5).

It is vital for community colleges to track their students' goals or objectives when they first register in their ESL programs. Polinsky (2003/2004) explains, "Externally, retention is often used to gauge an institution's performance. The government requires that institutions report persistence and graduation rates, and performance-based funding has already been adopted by several states" (p. 361). In the case of ESL students in

community colleges, they cannot be placed under one category for retention and funding purposes. Some students only want to take ESL classes to learn enough English to be understood or be able to communicate in their perspective jobs. At the other end of the spectrum, colleges also have ESL students who want to learn the language and continue with their education, finishing a certificate or an associate degree and possibly transferring to a four year institution. It is important for colleges to track the educational goals of ESL students for funding purposes.

Institutional Services for ESL Students

ESL students in community colleges are very special because of their diverse backgrounds, educational levels, and academic goals, but they have one thing in common- they all need specific services to meet their educational goals. Curry (2001) explains, "For students to identify and sustain their educational goals, they must clearly understand what those goals entail in terms of education, credentials, and other factors" (p. 19). ESL students need to how to articulate their goals and their attending institution needs to provide student services that support their students' goals. Tinto (1993) states that, "Though it is sometimes necessary for institutions to develop programs targeted to the needs of distinct groups of students, it is always the case that program action must be guided by the assessment of individual needs" (p.181). Community colleges need to know where their ESL student population comes from and what supporting services they need. According to Curry (2001), "Academic advising and psychological counseling can play a role in supporting immigrant/refugee students to persist in community colleges courses" (p. 1). Another important observation by Curry's study refers to part-time

faculty and how reliance on part-time faculty interfere with students goals. Curry (2001) points out that,

The community college's reliance on a part-time adjunct workforce has direct consequences in the classroom. It is difficult for a part-time instructor with little institutional support or preparation for teaching second language writers to successfully teach students with a wide range of educational levels and career/educational objectives (p. 21).

In other words, if ESL programs mainly have part-time faculty, they may not be providing the precise type of student services to their students.

ESL students are considered, according to the literature, at-risk students in community colleges, and at-risk students do require intervention student's services to keep them from dropping out. According to McElroy (2006), ESL students need the following services:

Infrastructure such as the library, language lab, and computer lab are usually provided by the school but ESL program developers should also arrange for services that are needed specifically for ESL students. Services provided to ESL students could include a reading lab, a small library of selected reading for extensive practice, and a writing lab to help the students with specific problems. ESL students should have an academic advisor to help with registration, programs, and personal situations (p. 24).

All of these student services contribute to ESL students' retention in community colleges. ESL students also need to know what student services exist on campus for them. The best

way to inform them is through a student orientation or having professors direct them to different student services. Jones (2005) explains,

The findings from participants' experiences with community colleges' campus services and organizations resulted in five participants with no experiences with campus services, two participants had experience with cultural and community outreach services that spoke their native language (Spanish), and just one participant experience instructional with campus services. Only three out of the eight participants had some kind of interaction with campus services and organizations prior to their non-continuation (p. 207).

As with the general student population, student services become a critical component to the success of ESL students regardless of their goals.

Institutional Factors that Contribute to High

Level of Persistence

There are some factors that contribute to a high level of persistence of ESL students in community colleges. McElroy (2006) explains, "Learners who use support services such as counseling, tutoring, transportation etc. persist longer than students who do not use those services" (p. 24). "ESL learners who take classes during the day persist longer than those students who take classes at night" (McElroy, 2006, p. 24). Persistence of ESL students, as previously stated, is also related to the student support services provided by the community colleges. Fitzgerald (1995) identifies the following persistence factors of ESL students:

1. Learners who use support services provided by their programs (such as counseling, transportation, and childcare) persist longer than those who do not use these services;
2. Learners who attend day classes only tend to persist longer than those who study at night; and
3. Learners who participate in computer-assisted learning labs or whose instruction includes independent study persist longer than those whose instruction is only in classroom based (p. 2).

Another essential factor according to McElroy (2006) in retaining is “Financial aid and academic support are two main factors that influence Hispanic community college student retention” (p. 24).

Jones (2005) data analysis unveiled what types of institutional services were perceived important for ESL students. He states,

“From participants perspectives of what services are needed so that ESL instruction will increase retention, suggestions emerged for institutional changes in: (1) faculty and classroom climate, and (2) preparatory and social resources for success. Each participant revealed that change (e.g., and increase in bilingual/linguistic instructors) is needed in the hiring practice of ESL faculty and in classroom instruction. Participants expressed their need for instructors and tutors who are bilingual to help explain in Spanish what is being learned in English (p. 207).

Summary

The literature review supports Watson's Geometric Model of Student Persistence and Achievement and identifies the social and institutional factors which affect ESL students. The literature also explained how these factors affect student persistence in ESL programs. ESL students are very diverse. They come from different countries and cultures. They have different levels of education and experiences and all come to the United States for different reasons. While some come to improve their economic status, others come because of political strife in their countries. All of these reasons impact their ability to be successful learning English.

All ESL students have one thing in common - they attend ESL programs to learn English and to have better opportunities for themselves and families. Institutions need to assess ESL students' goals to provide the necessary support services to help them succeed in their ESL programs. Polinsky (2003/2004) explains, "In order to determine whether its students are achieving their goals and to effectively assist them in these endeavors, a college must first understand the goals of its students" (p. 364). If ESL students are left unattended, institutions will have a hard time retaining them.

The acculturation and goal commitment of ESL students is essential for them to attain their academic goals in ESL programs. The ESL student needs to find an equilibrium in his/her life to balance school and personal responsibilities. Watson (2004) states, "We use the word equilibrium to define the status of a student when he or she is in a mode to persist in college" (p. 15). The social and institutional factors can better help us understand the barriers ESL students encounter and by understanding these factors pose workable solutions to retain in ESL programs.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study examined the retention barriers for foreign-born Hispanic ESL students that dropped out of the CSN ESL for-credit program and the need for services they perceived would help them succeed. Students interested in the CSN ESL for-credit program are required to complete a placement exam which assesses their grammar proficiency. The participants for this study were foreign-born Hispanics who were placed in ESL 110B, ESL 111B and ESL 120B (levels 1, 2, and 3) at either the Cheyenne or Charleston campuses during the 2005-2006 academic year and have since dropped out. Glesne (2006) explains, “since research situations are too vast to interview everyone or to observe everything, you will need to devise a selection strategy by which to choose people, events, and times” (p.34).

Four, in-depth interviews were conducted for this study. The criteria were set for qualifying participants based on 1) willingness of participants to participate in the study, 2) stated institutional reasons for dropping out of the for-credit program, 3) participants’ characteristics listed in appendices I and II, and 4) analysis of researcher’s notes about each participant. The process for selecting interview participants is described later in this chapter.

The research questions which guided this study are:

- 1) What are the characteristics of foreign-born Hispanic ESL students?

- 2) What perceived barriers do the foreign-born Hispanic ESL student experience in completing the CSN ESL for-credit program?
- 3) What services does the foreign-born Hispanic ESL student believe they would need to be successful in the CSN ESL for-credit program?

The researcher chose CSN Cheyenne Campus and the Charleston campus because they had the highest number of ESL Hispanic students registered in levels 1, 2 and 3 for the 2005-2006 academic year, according to the list provided by the Department for Institutional Research. In general, CSN has the highest number of minorities compared to the other two community colleges in the state of Nevada. Littlefield (2004) explains,

More than half of the entire minority students enrolled in any of Nevada's higher education institutions is attending the Community College of Southern Nevada, according to enrollment data from the state's university system. Minorities – Hispanics, Asians, Blacks, American Indians and Native Hawaiians represent about 40 percent of CCSN's known study body (p. 1).

This is important information because most of the students in the college's ESL programs were minorities.

Qualitative Research

“A study focusing on individual lived experience typically relies on an in-depth interview strategy...the primary strategy is to capture the deep meaning of experience in the participant's own words” (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p. 55). “Qualitative research, then, is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena. Its various genres are naturalistic, interpretive, and increasingly critical, and they draw on multiple methods

of inquiry” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 101). According to Glesne (2006), “Three data-gathering techniques dominate in qualitative inquiry: participant observation, interviewing, and document collection” (p. 36).

Population and Sample

The population for this study was determined by a list generated by CSN’s Department of Institutional Research of students who were enrolled in the ESL program and dropped out during the 205-2006 academic year. In particular, individuals selected were foreign-born Hispanics who were placed in ESL 110B, ESL 111B and ESL 120B (levels 1, 2, and 3) during the 2005-2006 academic year and have since dropped out. Purposive sampling was used to determine the sample and ultimately those who elected to participate in the depth interviews. That process is explained below. Macfie and Nufrio (2006) explain purposive sampling by stating,

Purposive sampling is a nonprobabilistic method used when the researcher selects subjects based on their best judgment as to whom or what should be included in the sample to facilitate the investigation. Generally, this means building a sample based on individuals considered to be the norm, or average, and is judged to be typically representative of the population (p. 492).

Criteria for selecting the sample in phases one and two were reviewed and approved by the researcher’s committee. IRB approval was obtained by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas before any data was collected (see Appendix I).

Study Participants

In this study, the researcher conducted phone interviews with foreign-born Hispanic ESL students that dropped out of the CSN ESL for-credit program during the 2005-2006 academic year. Of this group, four were selected to participate in the in-depth interviews because they identified institutional factors for dropping out of the program. The interviews were conducted in Spanish and were audiotaped and later transcribed to English with the help of another interpreter literate in Spanish and English. The participants recruited for this study: (a) had enrolled and dropped out of the CSN ESL for-credit program during the 2005-2006 academic year from the Cheyenne or Charleston Campuses; (b) had not re-enrolled in the program since they dropped; (c) participated in the standard telephone interview and showed willingness to participate in the in-depth interview if selected.

A standard telephone interview using a structured interview protocol (Appendix II) was used with the intention of identifying the participants' decision to withdraw from ESL CSN ESL for-credit program, and most importantly if their decision to drop was based on the services not provided by the college.

Study Design

The design of this study was divided into three phases with the purpose of studying, (1) the characteristics of foreign-born Hispanics ESL students who dropped out of CSN ESL for-credit program; (2) perceived barriers that foreign-born Hispanic ESL student experienced in completing the CSN for-credit program; (3) services the foreign-born

Hispanic ESL student believes they would have needed to be successful in the CSN ESL for-credit program.

Phase One

The researcher obtained a list of Hispanic students who were enrolled in the CSN ESL for-credit program and dropped out of ESL levels 1 (ESL 110b), 2 (ESL 111b), & 3 (ESL 120) during the 2005-2006 academic year from the Department of Institutional Research. The researcher called the participants and asked three qualifying questions. Upon their consent, the researcher then asked the selection questionnaire (see Appendix I).

Phase Two

A standard telephone interview using a structured interview protocol (see Appendix II) was conducted with those persons who were identified as foreign-born who have not re-enrolled in the program and who provided institutional reasons for dropping out of the ESL for-credit program. Marshall and Rossman (2006) explain that,

A degree of systematization in questioning may be necessary in, for example, a multisite case study or when many participants are interviewed, or at the analysis and interpretation state when the researcher is testing findings in more focused and structural questioning (p. 101).

This interview was used to gather characteristics of students who attended CSN ESL for-credit programs and reasons for not completing. Additionally, participants for in-depth interviews were selected from this pool.

Phase Three

Phase three of this study involved completing in-depth interviews (see Appendix III) with foreign-born Hispanics who dropped out of the CSN ESL for-credit program during the 2005-2006 academic year from the Cheyenne and Charleston Campuses. The purpose of the in-depth interview was to determine the institutional factors which were perceived barriers to successful completion of levels 1, 2 and/or 3 and the need for services they perceived would have helped them succeed. The criteria for qualifying participants for phase III was decided by the researcher based on 1) willingness upon individuals to participate in the study, 2) stated institutional reasons for dropping out of the for-credit program, and 3) participants' characteristics listed in appendices I and II, and 4) analysis of researcher's notes about each participant.

The in-depth interviews were conducted in Spanish and audio taped with the consent of the participant. The interviews were later transcribed to English with the help of a transcriber literate in Spanish and English.

Qualitative, in-depth interviews typically are much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories. The researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant's view but otherwise respects how the participant frames and structures the responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 101).

Each in-depth participant interviewee was mailed a copy of their interview including a copy of the audio interview in CD format. The participants' names and addresses were provided by the Department of Institutional Research and/or the researcher requested their addresses at the time of the interview.

Audio taping was important in this study because it helped the transcriber (a) rewind for clarity since the interviews were conducted in Spanish; (b) obtain precise quotes; (c) review patterns of answers from participants (Jones, 2005). Additionally, “tape recordings provide the most accurate method of collecting information from interviews” (Borg, 1981, p. 88).

Data Collection Procedures

Patton’s (1990) interview guide approach was used to support the procedure of collecting data for phrases one and two of this study. The interview guide, according to Patton includes

- topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance;
- in out-line form; interviewer decides sequence and wording of questions in the course of the interview (p. 288).

In phase three, the standardized open-ended interview approach was used. Patton (1990) explains that standardized open-ended interviews entails “the exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance. All interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order. Questions are worded in a completely open-ended format” (p. 289). He states that the purpose for interviewing “... is to find out what is in and on someone’s mind” (p.278) and to “... assess the perspective of the person being interviewed” (p. 278). He believes the strength of using the same wording of questions is related to the:

- increasing comparability of responses;
- data are complete for each person on the topics addressed in the interview.

- reduces interviewer effects and bias when several interviewees are used.
- facilitates organization and analysis of the data (p. 289).

Participants were interviewed one time for approximately twenty minutes. The questions in the in-depth interview were open-ended, giving the opportunity for participants to reflect on their experiences. Each interview was conducted by telephone in Spanish, and audiotape then transcribed to English. Each participant was mailed a copy of their interview along with the question guide, both in Spanish. There were no interviews returned for changes.

Data Analysis

The barriers for this study were identified by the researcher by working closely with the College of Southern Nevada ESL foreign-born Hispanic student population and their struggles to learn English. The researcher was able to comprehend better the characteristics and the retention barriers of ESL foreign-born students by interacting with them in Spanish. The researcher concluded the best way to identify these problems experienced by this group was by conducting audiotape interviews.

Since “data interpretation and analysis involve making sense out of what people have said, looking for patterns, putting together what is said in one place with what is said in another place, and integrating what different people have said” (Patton, 2002, p. 380). This is a process of finding some common ground between every interview and analysis of the data according to participants’ similarities and differences. The researcher took notes for better analysis of the data during and after the interview. “Note taking helps pace the interview by providing nonverbal cues about what’s important, providing

feedback to the interviewee about what kinds of things are especially “noteworthy”- literally” (Patton, 2002, p. 383). According to Patton (2002) there are some things to consider after the interview for clarification of data. He states, “if you find things that don’t quite make sense, as soon possible, you should check back with the interviewee for clarification” (p. 283). He also explains,

The immediate post interview review is a time to record details about the setting and your observations about the interview. Where did the interview occur? Under what conditions? How did the interviewee react to questions? How well do you think you did asking questions? How was the rapport?

Patton’s suggestions for interview clarification in data collection was implemented for data analysis in this study.

Protection of Human Subjects

This study incorporated strategies to protect human subjects, including privacy of personal data included in the list provided by the Department of Institutional Research at CSN and that information collected during the interview, as it complies with the policies established by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). A copy of the consent form was explained in detail to every interviewee in Spanish. Participants were assigned a number for coding purposes according to how they appeared on the list provided by institutional research. All participants were identified subsequently by the number which was assigned to them. The only document which allowed the participant to be identified was the list provided by the Department of Institutional Research. Addresses provided by the interviewees were written on this document for safe keeping. All data, including

transcribed records are kept in the office of the faculty advisor in a locked filing cabinet. The transcriber was also required to sign a confidentiality agreement before any transcribing was done.

Summary

The purpose for conducting a qualitative research on the barriers for retention of foreign-born Hispanics ESL students and the perceived need for services at CSN was to analyze the challenges faced by this student population and to pose workable solutions for keeping students in college and thereby helping them succeed. In turn, raising the educational level of the fastest growing population in the state of Nevada.

The results of this study will inform educators, administrators and support staff of the barriers to completing the ESL program and to advocate solutions that will help this population to succeed.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The chapter reports the results of phase I and phase III interviews. Phase I results report the overall characteristics of those who enrolled and dropped out of the CSN ESL for-credit program. Phase III reports the analysis of in-depth interviews of four Hispanic, foreign-born ESL students who dropped out for institutional reasons. This qualitative study examined the retention barriers for foreign-born Hispanic ESL students that dropped out of the CSN ESL for-credit program and the need for services they perceived would have helped them succeed. The participants interviewed for this study were foreign-born Hispanics who were taking in ESL 110B, ESL 111B and ESL 120B (levels 1, 2, and 3) during the 2005-2006 academic year and have since dropped out. The main focus of this study was on institutional and social factors that affected the retention rate of this population at the College of Southern Nevada. The following research questions which guided this study were:

- 1) What are the characteristics of foreign-born Hispanic ESL students?
- 2) What perceived barriers do the foreign-born Hispanic ESL students experience in completing the CSN ESL for-credit program?
- 3) What services did the foreign-born Hispanic ESL students believe they would need to be successful in the CSN ESL for-credit program?

The purpose of the in-depth interviews was to determine the institutional factors that the interviewees perceived were barriers to successfully completing ESL 110B, ESL 111B, and ESL 120 and to identify the perceived need for services that would have helped them succeed. The exploration of these factors provided a better understanding of why students decided to drop out of the ESL for-credit program at CSN.

Phase I Results

Characteristics of Hispanic Students Who Dropped Out

The characteristics of Hispanic students who dropped out from the College of Southern Nevada ESL for-credit program during the academic year 2005-2006 are listed in Table 1. Overall, there were 1,733 students enrolled in the CSN ESL for-credit program at the West Charleston and Cheyenne campuses during the 2005 – 2006 academic year for levels 110B, 111B, and 120. Of those students, 1,064 were Hispanic. In all, there were 118 students who dropped out of the program (~11%). Of those who dropped out during the year, 54 (46%) were males and 64 (54%) were females.

When comparing males to females by age group, the majority of males who dropped out from the CSN ESL for-credit program were between the ages of 26-33 (13%) and 34-41 (15%) years old as opposed to females who were between the ages of 18-25 (11%) and 26-33 (18%) years old. It is clear that the majority of the males who dropped from the program were older than the females who dropped. There was a higher male drop out rate from the Cheyenne campus (26%) as opposed to the West Charleston campus (20%). The reverse was true for females who dropped out of the program. The data indicated that a higher number of females who dropped were enrolled in the West Charleston campus

(27%) as opposed to those from the Cheyenne campus (26%). Both campuses experience about the same drop-out rate overall.

According to table 1, there were more males who dropped from ESL 111B (21%) followed by ESL 110B (14%). The same was true of females (23% and 22% respectively).

Table 1. Characteristics of Hispanic Students Who Withdrew from ESL Courses (ESL 110B, 111B, 120) in Academic Year 2005-2006 by Gender

N=118	Male n=54 (46%)	Female n=64 (54%)
ESL Level Dropped		
110B	17 (14%)	26 (22%)
111B	25 (21%)	27 (23%)
120	11 (9%)	12 (10%)
Campus Attended		
West Charleston	24 (20%)	32 (27%)
Cheyenne	31 (26%)	31 (36%)
Age		
18 – 25	11 (9%)	13 (11%)
26 – 33	15 (13%)	21 (18%)
34 – 41	18 (15%)	9 (8%)
42 – 49	7 (6%)	8 (7%)
50 – 57	2 (2%)	10 (8%)
58 – 65	1 (<1%)	3 (3%)

Note: These numbers reflect those on the list provided by CSN Dept. of Institutional Research.

The researcher attempted to contact each student on the list provided by the Department of Institutional Research (N=118); however, because the people are very transient, the researcher noted that 56 (47%) had either changed their phone numbers or were no longer living in the same residencies. Additionally, five students on the list did not provide a

contact number at the time they filled out their admissions application. In other words, the researcher was only able to contact 57 (46%) students by telephone. The major reasons provided by those contacted by telephone for dropping out of the program included variable work schedules, transportation problems, car accident, family emergencies, and having to leave the country for an emergency.

Phase III Results

Characteristics of Interviewees

There were many similarities between the interviewees who participated in the in-depth interviews. The researcher was able to conduct for in-depth interviews. All of the interviewees were mature individuals whose ages ranged from 27 to 36 years old. The median age was 32. Two of the participants were from Cuba, one from Mexico, and one from Argentina. Three of the interviewees were males and one was female. All of the interviewees came to the United States for different reasons: 1) political refuge, 2) freedom of speech and to accomplish professional goals, 3) personal reasons not shared with the researcher, and 4) to improve quality of life for the family. Spanish was the dominant language for all of the interviewees. The following terms are defined:

- Political Refugee - one who flees, usually to another country for refuge, especially from invasion, oppression, or persecution (Berube et al, 2001, p. 932).
- Bilingual – able to speak two languages with equal facility (Berube et al, 2001, p.109).
- Housewife - a married woman who manages the affairs of a household as her primary occupation (Berube et al, 2001, p. 536).

- Foreign-born – located away from one’s native country (Berube et al, 2001, p. 438).

Table 2. Characteristics of Interviewees

Participant Names	Gender		Age	Country of Birth	Years in U.S.	Level of Education	Campus
	M	F					
Nathalie		X	27	Argentina	7	Some University	CY
Carlos	X		31	Cuba	3	High School	WC
Jesus	X		36	Mexico	9	Unknown	WC
Eduardo	X		34	Cuba	2 1/2	Some University	WC

Note. Cheyenne Campus (CY) Charleston Campus (WC). Letter M stands for Male and F for Female.

Personal Profiles of Participants

Nathalie

Nathalie is a 27 year old, foreign-born Hispanic. She is from Argentina. She is married with two children. She is a housewife dependant upon her husband’s support. She has lived in the United States for seven years, and her dominant language is Spanish. In her country of origin, she attended a university, but she did not complete her degree. She immigrated to the United States for personal reasons that she did not want to explain.

Nathalie enrolled in the CSN ESL for-credit program to improve her socioeconomic status and to acculturate into the American society. She stated:

“Improve my quality of life, so that I could relate to other people, and that I could reside in this country.” [Nathalie]

All of the participants had a strong desire to learn English. Nathalie's answer related to the importance of learning English to improve her socioeconomic status in the United States and to have better job opportunities. She suggested her social life was influenced by the level of her English speaking skills. Nathalie suggested she wanted to learn English to be part of society. The fact is that to mainstream into society and have better opportunities in the United States an immigrant needs to be literate in English. Nathalie understood the importance of learning the language to take advantage of the socioeconomic opportunities in this country.

Nathalie did complete ESL 110B, and she liked the course because it focused more on speaking skills. Nathalie decided to drop ESL 111B because she did not understand the professor's course format, nor did she understand the instructor's method of teaching. She commented,

"I really did not understand the instructor. The class was not very, I don't know, it was very different from the first section, which was based more on speaking. This class was based more on videos ...or maybe it was his method of teaching." [Nathalie]

Nathalie's comments suggested that she did not understand the instructor's teaching methods, which were based more on videos. The instructor's teaching methods were not effective for her learning style. Nathalie was very confused on what she was learning in class. Furthermore, she did not understand why the teaching methods varied so much from her first instructor to the second one. She did not comprehend the course objectives, and she did not understand the instructor's way of conducting the classroom lectures.

Nathalie was able to compare both instructors' teaching methods to conclude that her ESL 111B instructor teaching methods were not effective for her to learn the language.

According to Nathalie, it was the instructor who did not meet her expectations for learning English and that was the main reason for not completing and leaving the course.

“I think the course was fine, but the class was not focused, that is what I think.” [Nathalie]

At the end, she stated that course curriculum was good, but the teaching method used by the instructor was not effective for her learning style.

Nathalie noted that learning English was a short-term goal and continuing with her education in a medical field was her long-term goal, neither of which was fulfilled at the time of her interview. She explained,

“Well, to be able to learn, and even more so to be able to speak, and to be able to relate with people, with the system, with the country and the language. That was my objective and maybe afterwards enroll in another course of study, something in relation to what I like. Something in relation with health, like surgical instrumentation.” [Nathalie]

Nathalie wanted to learn the language to communicate with people who could only speak English. She suggested that in the United States persons who were able to acculturate by learning to speak English, benefit economically and educationally. She felt in order to do this, she needed to learn English. Nathalie was aware that she was not accomplishing her goals as a student in the class and she decided to withdraw from the program.

Social Factors were aimed in understanding interviewee’s personal circumstances and how they may have contributed to their decision for dropping out of the ESL for-credit program. In the case of Nathalie, she did not have a job and she is a mother of two children. She did not provide economic support to dependents in another country. She did have access to transportation and daycare.

Jesus

Jesus is a 36 year old foreign-born Hispanic. He was born in Mexico, and his dominant language is Spanish. He was enrolled in ESL 120 at the West Charleston Campus when he decided to drop from the ESL for-credit program. According to the CSN Department of Institutional Research, Jesus did not declare he had completed high school in his country of origin. When students do not declared their high school information, in most cases it is because they do not have their high school diploma or GED (General Equivalence Diploma).

Jesus enrolled in the CSN ESL for-credit program to improve his English speaking skills to communicate better at work, to have better job opportunities, and to acculturate into the American culture. Jesus commented,

“More than anything to be able to speak it at work, to have better opportunities, all that, normally also in my daily life, at school with my children, you go to the market you need to use it there too, to use it in daily life.” [Jesus]

Jesus stated that English was the key to have better job opportunities in the United States. He referred to English as an imperative asset in his daily life. Jesus’ said that English is used to communicate with his children’s school teachers and administrators. He also indicated that when he goes to the market he needs to communicate with the market employees in English. Jesus expressed that everywhere he went English was important to communicate. For this reason, Jesus felt English was an asset to have.

Jesus did complete ESL 111B. He decided to drop the ESL 120 because the classroom was too crowded and there was no space to sit. He felt the classroom environment was not appropriate for learning. These were the reasons he stated for dropping the course:

“The first reason why I decided to leave was the discomfort it caused; the class room was too full you could say. It was too full, it was filled beyond capacity; there was no way to be comfortable in the classroom. You could be the last person to arrive and after you would give your seat to the ladies. You had to go to other classrooms interrupt the class to look for chairs from other classrooms that were not as full. There was no space to lean on to write or take notes, you lean on your legs, or an a wall, and on top having paid enough money to not even have a desk to sit on, that was one of the reasons that motivated me to not return to class.” [Jesus]

Jesus’ comments suggested that his main reason to drop ESL 120 was related to the discomfort he experienced in the classroom. The classroom had too many students, and when he arrived late to class there were no chairs available for him to sit down. If he wanted to sit in the classroom, he had to look for a chair in another classroom. This caused the class to be interrupted. He also stated that, he was a gentleman and he often would give up his chair to the females standing in class. Jesus indicated that ESL 120 was not cheap and not having a chair to sit in class discouraged him. Jesus expressed that coming to class late without worrying about chair availability was important for him.

He did, on the other hand, suggest that the ESL courses he took at CSN did meet his expectations for learning English.

“I think that they were good classes they were giving.” [Jesus]

He explained that he was satisfied with the course objectives and class content but felt it was the institution and the professor who were directly responsible for his dropping the course. First, the institution was directly responsible by not providing a room big enough to accommodate the number of students enrolled in the class. Second, the instructor was not proactive in requesting more desks or a bigger classroom.

Jesus explained his short and long term goal was to be literate in English. As stated previously, he wanted to learn the language to communicate at work and to have better job opportunities. He stated the following:

“Well to become more outgoing in English, I more or less speak it but I wanted to be able to speak it better for work purposes, and to be able to remain in this country you have to speak English very well, only that, my goal was to speak more fluent English.” [Jesus]

Jesus stated that his short term goal when he enrolled in the ESL for-credit program was to speak English to aid him when socializing with people who only spoke English.

Furthermore, he added that English was imperative to communicate at his job with other employees, have upward mobility within the organization and communicate to customers.

Jesus believed that the benefit of speaking English was to have better socioeconomic opportunities in the United States as other career opportunities at his job.

Jesus stated that before he enrolled at CSN, he attended a course offered by Nevada’s Adult Education Program, which is free and is offered through the public schools. He felt that CSN had a better reputation and thus a better ESL program to learn English. He stated the following:

“Because I knew it worked, that you would learn that it was nothing like public schools, when you go to a public school the rooms are really full... supposedly at the college they were more prepared and have a better way of teaching, so I felt that I was going to learn more there” [Jesus].

Jesus concluded that the CSN ESL for-credit program was better than the program offered by Nevada’s Adult Education program because CSN is a higher education institution. Furthermore, he felt that higher education institutions were better equipped to serve students because students pay for their education. On the other hand, Jesus understood why there were so many students in the Nevada Adult Education program and

assumed that he would not face the problem of too many students in the classroom at CSN.

Social Factors were aimed in understanding interviewee's personal circumstances and how they may have contributed to their decision for dropping out of the ESL for-credit program. Jesus had a full time job in a construction company. At the time of the interview, he was working between 40 to 45 hours a week. Jesus immigrated to the United States for employment purposes. In Mexico, he was not earning enough money to support his family. He had five dependents. He did provided about fifty percent of economic support for his parents in Mexico. He did have access to transportation and daycare when he attended the ESL for-credit program. Although, he earned about \$55,000 yearly his financial status was not stable. He explained tuition was too expensive for him.

Eduardo

Eduardo is a 34 year old, foreign-born Hispanic. He was born in Cuba. He decided to immigrate to the United States for a job contract and political reasons. He has lived in the United States for two and half years, and his dominant language is Spanish. The highest level of education that he completed in his country of origin was his sophomore year at a university. He works in a professional company of arts and dancing. He is a dancer. He works between five to fourteen hours a day, and his working hours were not flexible when he was attending CSN.

Eduardo enrolled in the CSN ESL for-credit program to improve his family's socioeconomic status and to acculturate into the American society. He communicated the importance to learn the language.

“So that I may learn English and be able to maneuver in this country and because I decided to live here in this country with my family.” [Eduardo]

Eduardo expressed that English is a necessity in order to communicate in this country, have better job opportunities, etc. Eduardo explained he had to learn English because it is the national language of this country. In other words, it is the most spoken language in the United States. He acknowledged English was the key to have success in the United States. Eduardo’s comments informed the researcher that he needed to learn English for better job opportunities.

Eduardo enrolled in the CSN ESL for-credit program with the goal of learning English well. He was enrolled in ESL 110B at the West Charleston Campus, when he decided to withdraw from the ESL program. He dropped the course and left the program because his professor asked him to drop for excessive absences. He had missed class approximately five times when the professor told him he could not miss classes anymore. As stated before, his job hours were not flexible, and his schedule interfered with school. In the following comment he expressed his frustration when he was told by the instructor to stop attending the course:

“Equally give me an opportunity, and opportunity to be able to, I do not know some kind of absence or something like that, because of work, have a little more flexibility in part of.” [Eduardo]

He commented that the instructor’s classroom policies were not well designed for working students. Eduardo felt that instructor did not sympathize with him and the trouble he was having attending class. On the other hand, Eduardo felt the curriculum did meet his expectations.

“I believe that the program was well designed; by I also think more classes were necessary, more of a sequence in the classes, more days.” [Eduardo]

Eduardo's comments implied that he liked the way the program was designed, but he wanted to attend more classes and days during the week. He felt two days and three hours a week was not enough to learn English.

Eduardo's short and long term goal was to be literate in English. He was not planning to finish a career at CSN. He stated the following:

“I did not accomplish any of the goals; I still need to learn a lot of English, the English I know I learned it on the streets, well and a bit at school, the times that I went I learn.” [Eduardo]

Eduardo stated his short and long term goal when he enrolled in the CSN ESL for-credit program was to be literate and speak English fluently. Eduardo articulated that he did not complete his main goal in the CSN ESL for-credit program, which was to learn English. He did suggest he was learning English in the ESL program while he was attending class, but he has learned more English in an informal setting.

Social Factors were aimed in understanding interviewee's personal circumstances and how they may have contributed to their decision for dropping out of the ESL for-credit program. Eduardo worked as a professional dancer, and sometimes he worked five to fourteen hours a day. He did not share his yearly income with the researcher. He had two dependents, and he did provide one hundred percent economic support to three family members in another country. He had access to transportation and daycare when he attended the ESL for-credit program.

Carlos

Carlos is a thirty-one year old foreign-born Hispanic. He is from Cuba. He has lived in the United States for 3 years, and his dominant language is Spanish. In his country of

origin, he completed high school. He came to the United States for freedom of expression and to accomplish his goals as an artist.

Carlos enrolled in the CSN ESL for-credit program for three reasons: 1) learn English, 2) to acculturate into the American society, 3) to gain socioeconomic status.

“Because I thought it was a good idea, it was a good opportunity to learn, to cultivate myself, to move forward in a country where the language is not the same, to make myself to accomplish the things that I want to accomplish as an artist and as a person, I have to learn English so that I can come up to the level of all the others that live in this country.” [Carlos]

Carlos suggested CSN was a good institution to start his education. He had the opportunity to learn English. In the United States, English is the main language spoken and in order to accomplish his professional goals he had to learn the language first. He acknowledged he was at a disadvantage if he did not learn the language. By learning the language, Carlos felt he could have the same opportunities as every citizen of this country.

Carlos was enrolled in ESL 110B at the Charleston Campus when he decided to withdraw from the program. The main reason why he withdrew from the course was because he did not understand what the professor was teaching in class. He felt the college needed to assign a professor who was able to communicate in Spanish with him. He explained that he was new to this country; furthermore, he was not able to communicate in English with his professor. He stated the following:

“Well my reason, I left the program because I think that if a person does not know the language they at least need an explanation. The instructors that I had in a classroom where there were various characters of many different people like from Ethiopia, Brazil, China and Japan and at the moment everything is in English, imagine, I cannot know the contents of, do you understand me?” [Carlos]

In his classroom, his classmates were from different countries and some of them spoke different languages. Furthermore, they were all trying to learn English with no explanation in their native language about the content of the class. Carlos felt he needed a blended approach where both languages could be used to help facilitate understanding.

Carlos felt the class curriculum was not inclusive for learning. He also explained that Ingles Sin Barreras (English learning CD program) is a program where instructors teach the lessons in English/Spanish, and this teaching method helps the learner to understand the lesson in their native language.

“Perhaps for the ones that live here or the one that does not work or that lives with a family member, that they can, you know, assist them monetarily or someone that can watch over you. I think that it can be done, but the person that arrives here and needs to confront life and needs to work and to have to do both things at once, I don’t think so, no.” [Carlos]

Carlos’ suggested that the curriculum/program/courses were designed for the dependent student who does not have to worry about utilities bills or living expenses. Furthermore, he implied an English literate relative was always good to further explain in Spanish what was not understood in class, but he did not have bilingual relatives living with him.

Furthermore, he stated that he had just arrived in the United States, and he was independent. He had a hard time combining school and his job schedule.

Carlos’ short term goal was to learn English, and his long term goal was to study a career in design or photography. He explained the problem was these careers were in English, and he admitted that English was his main barrier for completing his academic goals. He wanted to complete all English levels in the ESL sequence. He explained that,

“My main goal was to learn English, me being Cuban, like a Latino, if I learn English I am going to become a more important person that what I am right now, you understand me. I would like to complete a professional career. I would like to study design. I would like to study, photographic art. I would like

to study many things, and they are all in English. If I do not study English I will be stuck, I will be limited to do the things, my aspiration I will not be able to reach, I do not know English and that is the fundamental base.” [Carlos]

Carlos’ short term goal when he enrolled in the ESL for-credit program was to learn English and felt that as a Cuban, he would be respected by society for his accomplishments. During the short time in the United States, he understood that Cubans and Latinos, in general, who do not speak English are looked down upon by American society. Carlos stated that his long term goal was to study for a career, but learning the language was the first step since all degrees taught at CSN were in English. Furthermore, he expressed that not being literate in English limited his long term goals.

Social Factors were aimed in understanding interviewee’s personal circumstances and how they may have contributed to their decision for dropping out of the ESL for-credit program. Carlos worked forty hours a week, in a private dancing company. He did not share his yearly income with the researcher. He did not have any dependents in the United States. He did affirm that he financially supported his mother in Cuba but it was contingent on his financial stability. He did not have transportation; he traveled to school by bus or with a friend.

Institutional Factors

The purpose of in-depth interviews was to determine the institutional and social factors, which were perceived barriers to successful completion of levels 1, 2 and/or 3, and the need for services the participants perceived would have helped them succeed. One of the main focuses of this study was on institutional factors and examining the retention barriers which were very critical for ESL students to succeed in community

colleges. According to Watson (2004), “The third set of factors, institutional, refers to the practices, strategies, and culture of the college or university that, in either an intended or unintended way, impact student persistence and achievement” (p. 13). He explains the factors involved, “examples include faculty teaching ability, academic support programming, financial support, student services, recruitment and admissions, academic services, and curriculum and instruction” (Watson, 2004, p. 13).

Instructors Qualifications

Interviewees’ decisions for leaving the ESL for-credit program varied. The main reasons for leaving the ESL program were: 1) not understanding the instructor’s teaching style, 2) not understanding the professor’s English accent, 3) class schedule and offerings were not flexible, 4) instructor’s classroom rules needed to be more flexible with students who had variable working schedules, and 5) classroom was overcrowding.

One of the main causes for the interviewees leaving the program was related to the lack of communication with the instructor. All of the interviewees did not communicate their reasons for leaving the program with the course instructor. The instructor and the interviewee did not speak the same language, and it was difficult for both parties to communicate with one another. Carlos suggested the CSN ESL for-credit program needed bilingual instructors to better serve the students. Carlos and Eduardo indicated the importance of flexible absence policies especially for students who had variable working schedules, as they did. Nathalie felt the instructor’s methods and approaches to teaching were not effective for her. On the other hand, Jesus felt that the environment was not conducive to learning because the classroom did not accommodate the class size. He felt this was inexcusable because tuition was too expensive and he was not receiving any type

of aid to pay for his classes. As stated previously, the lack of communication between interviewees and instructors was consistently provided for each of the interviewees as one of the reasons for leaving the ESL for-credit program.

Interviewees Curriculum Expectations

The results indicated CSN ESL for-credit program did not meet the expectations of Nathalie and Carlos. Nathalie did not understand the instructor's teaching style, but she did like how the program was designed to learn English. On the other hand, Carlos did not like the design of the program because he was expecting a more student centered program. In other words, Carlos was expecting a program more focused on the individual needs of the students. In his case, he was a political refugee from Cuba with different expectations from the program to help him improve his quality of life in the United States. Jesus and Eduardo suggested in their comments, that they like how the program was designed to learn English. Eduardo was expecting the program to offer more hours and days a week.

Interviewees Academic Goals

Part of the interview process was to find out what academic goals, including short term and long term goals, the interviewees had when they started the CSN ESL for-credit program and what goals they had achieved at the time of the interview. While all of the interviewees established goals for learning English, none had achieved them. All of the interviewees had withdrawn from the program for many reasons. Some related to institutional factors. In terms of long term goals, Nathalie and Carlos planned on pursuing a career once they had learned English. On the other hand, Jesus and Eduardo's interests were in pursuing better job opportunities to better provide for their families. Interviewees

suggested English was important to acculturate into American society and to socialize with English speakers.

Perceptions of the CSN For-Credit Program

The interviewees had different perceptions in regard to why they chose to enroll at CSN ESL for-credit program. The reasons for choosing CSN were related to their misconceptions about the program. Interviewees explained they chose CSN for-credit program for the following reasons: a) ESL for-credit program was explained at CSN, b) the program curriculum was well designed to learn English, c) the program was well designed for immigrants, and d) the program was recommended.

Nathalie explained that when she went enroll at CSN, and an employee from the college gave her information about the ESL for-credit program. Nathalie explained she did not choose the ESL program for a specific reason. She was not aware how efficient the ESL for-credit program was to learn English.

Jesus expressed that he was confident the CSN ESL for-credit program was better than the courses offered by the state of Nevada Adult Education program. Jesus explained he dropped from the Nevada Adult Education Program because he was not satisfied with the curriculum and the number of students allowed in the classroom. He believed that CSN would have more resources for classes because : 1) CSN was a higher education institution with stipulated classroom capacity policies, 2) there were fees associated with tuition, and 3) CSN had larger facilities. As previously stated, he withdrew from CSN because there were too many students enrolled in ESL 120 and not enough desks to sit in the classroom.

Carlos' misconception was he thought that CSN ESL for-credit program was a suitable program which met the needs of immigrants who came from other countries. He indicated, as a political refugee from Cuba, the United States government was supporting him by paying for his first class at CSN. However, it is the state of Nevada that allocates funds for community colleges to pay for students' first class if they meet the following criteria: a) residents of the state for at least one year, b) never have taken classes for credit at CSN previously, c) reported in their yearly income taxes they earned less than \$60,000 earned. He explained CSN ESL for-credit program was a good opportunity for him to learn English. Eduardo commented he chose CSN because many of his friends were attending or had attended the ESL for-credit program. He suggested that the program has had good reviews by other people who took ESL classes at CSN. Eduardo felt confident that CSN had a good ESL program and this was his intrinsic motivation to enroll in the institution.

The interviewees' expectations were not met when they chose CSN to learn English. The factors stated by the interviewees for choosing CSN were the ones that contributed in dropping from the program and ultimately the college.

Campus Services Utilized

The common factor between all interviewees was that they did not utilize campus support services; furthermore, they did not have knowledge of the availability of services provided by CSN. When they were enrolled in ESL classes at CSN, nobody explained to them the support services offered by the institution. The lack of information was a contributing factor why interviewees decided to leave the CSN for-credit program as well as the language barrier which prohibited their ability to navigate the system to resolve

their problems. When asked about what services would have been beneficial for them, their lack of knowledge was reflected in their answers.

“No, they were unknown to me.” [Nathalie]

“No, none of those, nothing of the sort.” [Jesus]

“No, nothing. No, he did not explain this to me, and even through by not knowing English, how and what am I going to ask. Maybe, it was mentioned, but since I do not understand I did not know, do you understand?” [Carlos]

“No, none of those.” [Eduardo]

Interviewees did not request any support service because they were unfamiliar to them. Carlos indicated that if the instructor had mentioned any of the campus support services in class, he would not have understood because the information was provided in English. Interviewees' comments suggested that there was a lack of information from the college to the students about services available to them as students. Jones (2005) concluded that, “from my experiences with the schedule of some of the community colleges I visited ... the evening schedule (after 6 pm) for ESL programs lowers adult students' access for support services because they are usually closed for the day ...” (p. 135). The researcher believes that these students experienced the same problem.

Beneficial Campus Support Services

Part of the interview process was to investigate what additional services interviewees believed they needed to be successful in the ESL for-credit program. The researcher wanted to get an in-depth understanding of which campus support services were most important to them. While it was obvious from all interviewees that they lacked knowledge of services, Nathalie, Jesus, and Carlos believed some of these campus

support services would have made a difference in their decision for their continuation in the ESL for-credit program. These were their statements:

“Well, in reality I am unaware of the services that are offered, I can not say which ones would have been beneficial to me. I think counseling would have helped, but I could not say much more because I am unfamiliar with these programs.” [Nathalie]

“Maybe, how do you call it, financial aid? Truly, I did feel that the price was too high, that was the thing, that I did feel that they were too high, the prices.” [Jesus]

“I think that, look, if you are giving the class in English you are told by the teacher, this is what he told us, that he was in the office and if someone had any doubts or something for us to go see him there, do you understand me. If you can't, sometimes I would say, professor, he could say No, No, No, English, English, English, imagine me having just arrived from Cuba, how are you going to communicate with a person if yes, he cannot speak two words of Spanish.” [Carlos]

“I do not know the services.” [Eduardo]

Nathalie suggested that she did not have any knowledge about the college services, and she was not able to understand how valuable they were to her. She explained advising could have helped her to continue in the ESL for-credit program. She was not able to mention other campus support services because she was unaware of other services. Jesus mentioned financial aid was important for him. Jesus' comment indicated he did not have extra money for tuition and textbooks because he had to support his family. He suggested his financial situation was not stable and CSN tuition was too expensive. On the other hand, Carlos explained that a service he wanted was to have someone explain the class lecture in Spanish. He indicated he was a new arrival in the United States, and he did not speak a word in English. Carlos commented he tried to communicate with the instructor in Spanish, but he was discouraged to speak Spanish in

class. Eduardo acknowledged that he did not know about the campus support services offered to students at CSN. Furthermore, he was not aware what additional services would have been beneficial to him. He suggested with his comment that there is a lack of information from the college to the students.

Access to Instructors

As it was explained in the literature review, the instructors have the power to retain students in the classroom. Within the institution, the instructors have the most contact with the student. Holt (2006) explained the responsibility of the instructor a bit further by stating, "However, although everyone plays a part, the responsibility of retaining students ultimately rests with the faculty" (p. 2). Watson (2004) explains practices, strategies, instruction, and curriculum do impact student persistence and achievement.

All of the interviewees stated that they did not have access to their instructors. Interviewees reflected that their instructors were not available to them after class. They suggested they were not aware instructors had office hours for students to schedule appointments and ask questions. As Carlos stated previously, if the information was provided in English, he was not able to understand it. Jesus' statement was the following:

In the second semester no, in the first semester the teacher did, he gave us his e-mail, so I would e-mail him from home on the computer and he would respond me back. [Jesus]

Jesus commented his ESL 111B professor was available to students by e-mail for questions and answers. Jesus indicated he did take advantage of this method of communicating and felt it was effective for him.

Summary

Chapter four discussed the demographics of interviewees, their individual profiles, short and long term goals, and social factors and institutional factors which may have contributed to interviewees dropping out.

The results of this study show that most of the interviewees started their formal education in their native language and countries of origin. The interviewees moved to the United States to improve their quality of life and they realized learning the language was an important asset to accomplish their goals. The results show interviewees desired to learn English was related to improving their socioeconomic status and acculturation into American society. They related the benefits of learning the language would help them obtain better job opportunities; improve socioeconomic status, which would allow them to help their families in the United States and in their countries of origin; acculturate to the United States; communicate better at work; and allow them to pursue other academic endeavors. Interviewees' decisions for leaving the ESL for-credit program varied, but most attributed their departure to the lack of services by the instructor, the college and language barriers.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This qualitative study examined the retention barriers for foreign-born Hispanic English as Second Language (ESL) students that dropped out of the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) ESL for-credit program and the need for services they perceived would have helped them succeed. The participants for this study were foreign-born Hispanics who were taking ESL 110B, ESL 111B and ESL 120B (levels 1, 2, and 3) during the 2005-2006 academic year and have since dropped out. The main focus of this study was on institutional and social factors that affected the retention rate of this population at CSN.

The main reason to conduct qualitative research on the barriers for retention of foreign-born Hispanic ESL students and the perceived need for services at CSN was to determine the challenges faced by this student population. The number of ESL students is growing and is projected to keep growing exponentially. The Community College system provides the opportunity for these individuals to receive a quality education and to integrate them into the American society. The researcher focused on institutional and social factors in order to be able to pose workable solutions to minimize attrition of Hispanic students wanting to learn English at CSN. Minimizing attrition would help this population acculturate to the United States and allow them to achieve their goals for better social economic stability and ultimately, raising the educational level of the fastest

growing population in the state of Nevada. The results of this study can inform educators, administrators, and support staff of the barriers to completing the ESL for-credit program and to advocate solutions that will help this population succeed.

The data for this study was collected during the fall of 2007 and was designed in three phases. The researcher wanted to learn the characteristics of ESL students in the ESL for-credit program and the barriers they faced by conducting in-depth interviewees to capture their experiences.

Chapter five is written include: a) a summary of findings interconnected to the characteristics of foreign-born ESL Hispanic students, b) a summary of findings interconnected to their self determination to learning English to accomplish their goals c) a summary of findings institutional factors perceived as barriers to successfully completing ESL 110B, ESL 111B, and ESL 120, and d) a summary of findings interconnected in-depth interviewees social factors aimed at understanding their personal circumstances and how they may had contributed to their decision for dropping. The exploration of these factors provided a better understanding of why students decided to drop out of the ESL for-credit program at CSN.

Characteristics of ESL Students

The characteristics of CSN ESL foreign-born ESL students in the academic year 2005-2006 were: 1) they were mature individuals who had personal responsibilities, 2) many had variable work schedules that interfered with school, 3) they came from different countries, a large percentage from Mexico, 4) there were more females in the program than males, 5) the females were younger than the male population, 6) there was a very small number of older students in the range of 57-64 years old, 7) most dropped

out of ESL levels 110B and 111B, 8) the majority of males attended the Cheyenne Campus, 9) females attended both campuses almost equally in numbers, 10) females started to learn English at early age compared to males, 11) there were higher numbers of females in the age range from 50-56 attending the program than males in the same age group, and 12) there was a considerable number of study participants who had changed their telephone numbers and residences.

Most of the study participants were patient and cooperative with the researcher when they were contacted by telephone. The researcher greatly appreciated their participation because without their contributions this study would not have been possible.

The Importance of English for Interviewees

The goal of all of the interviewees was to learn the English language. Two of them wanted to study for a professional career after reaching this goal. English was viewed as the most important asset to have to accomplish their goals when they started the ESL for-credit program.

Learning English was important for the interviewees for many reasons. The major reason was because they saw learning English as a way to improve their socioeconomic status for themselves and their family. Jesus commented that if he was literate in English, he was going to be able to apply for higher level management jobs.

The second reason was to continue their education and finally, all of the interviewees felt that English was important in helping them acculturate into the American Society and to socialize with English only speakers.

For the interviewees, English was a challenge they knew they had to overcome when they arrived to the United States. They had to balance their work schedules and personal

responsibilities with school. The three male interviewees were employed when they were attending the ESL for-credit program, and it was a challenge for them to balance their work schedule with school. For example, Carlos did have transportation issues; he was dependent on public transportation or a friend for a ride to school. Nathalie was a housewife that had to balance her daily life responsibilities with school.

Interviewees had struggles and hardships they needed to overcome to continue in the ESL for-credit program. Carlos mentioned during the interview that he was a new arrival and a political refugee and that he had to work to support himself and his mother in Cuba. He was having a hard time balancing his daily life responsibilities and school. Jesus did mention that tuition was expensive at CSN. He also had a family to support and he did not have extra money for school. Interviewees' struggles and hardships were factors that influenced their decisions to drop from the ESL for-credit program.

Institutional Factors

The findings related to the institutional factors from the in-depth interviews gave the researcher a better perspective in comprehending the reasons why interviewees decided to drop from the CSN ESL for-credit program. All the interviewees registered in the ESL for-credit program to learn English. They planned to complete as many levels as they could to learn the language and gain the benefits mentioned previously.

The lack of knowledge of interviewees about the support services was a major factor which affected their non-continuation in the ESL for-credit program. First, they did not know what services CSN had available to them and because of this lack of knowledge, they did not utilize any of those services which may have prevented them from dropping out of the program. One of the interviewees said that even if he had known about the

services provided by CSN. The fact that they were in English would have made it impossible to comprehend as his English skills were minimal. The language barrier was a big factor for his non-continuation.

The additional support services important for successfully completing the ESL for-credit program for two of the interviewees were financial aid and academic advising. The other two interviewees did not have any familiarity with any of the support services that could have helped them. Nathalie had attended a University in her country of origin and she was aware that academic advising was important for career guidance. Jesus commented that financial aid was important to him because CSN's tuition was too expensive.

The findings of this study also indicates that there was a lack of communication between the instructor and the students in the program. The interviewees stated that they did not communicate their personal concerns to the instructor about the reasons why they wanted to drop the course. Carlos commented he wanted to communicate with the course instructor in Spanish, his dominant language, but he was discouraged to do so. Carlos commented that the instructor did not know Spanish and was unable to speak English well enough to communicate his concerns with the instructor. Nathalie was not pleased with the professor's teaching style, but she did not speak to the instructor about her concerns. She also acknowledged she was excluded in class participation because the same students were regularly picked by the instructor. Jesus was aware of the instructor's office hours, but he was more receptive to communicate in an e-mail format. Jesus commented he used this method of communication when he was taking ESL 111B. He informed the researcher e-mailing the instructor was more convenient for him, but this

option for communication was not provided by the ESL 120 instructor. Eduardo did not communicate with the instructor his problems in attending class, but his instructor did communicate to him he was not allow to miss anymore classes. There was no communication between both of the parties to find a common resolution to prevent him from dropping the course. Overall, the reasons for dropping out of the program as they relate to institutional barriers can be summed up by the list below. This list can help begin the discussion for ways of reducing attrition by Hispanic students in the ESL for-credit program at CSN:

- Lack of bilingual instructors and staff
- Lack of bilingual classroom teaching methods
- Lack of information about support services in interviewees dominant language
- Professor's teaching styles (knowledge of best practices)
- Lack of knowledge of available services to students in the program
- Lack of communication with course instructors before, during and after class
- Lack of access to instructors
- Participation equity in the classroom
- Classroom capacity/assignment
- Lack of advising to ESL population
- Lack of financial aid

Social Factors

Social factors are important considerations when planning retention activities with Latinos. While some might be out of the college's control for improving the student's experiences with the program, an understanding of some of the issues might affect how

classes are scheduled and how policies are instituted for this population. Some of the social factors which may have contributed the decision to drop from the ESL for-credit program are identified by the researcher from the interviews. In general, factors such as financial responsibilities and conflicting work schedules seemed to be common amongst most of the interviewees.

Three interviewees were working full time; two were dancers and the other was a construction manager, the other worked at home as a housewife, Those that worked outside of the home stated that they worked a minimum of forty hours a week. Varying work schedules was certainly a factor for dropping out of the program for two of the interviewees. While one interviewee was willing to struggle through the class even though he had missed quite a few class sessions, he dropped out because the instructor asked him.

Most of the interviewees stated that there were family members, both in and out of the country, who depended on them financially. The interviewee who worked in the home obviously was dependent on her husband's income for economic support. Pressure to support family was certainly the priority for most of the interviewees. When the interviewee had to make the choice of working or continue their schooling, there was no other logical choice but to meet the demands of the job.

Conclusions

The researcher was able to examine the retention barriers of foreign-born Hispanic ESL students that dropped out of CSN ESL for-credit program by conducting four in-depth interviews. Their experiences in the ESL for-credit program did provide a better

perspective for the researcher to comprehend the barriers they encountered while they were in the program. The lives of foreign born Hispanics are complex, in which multiple factors impact their success in the programs in which they enroll. The findings for this study only focused on social and institutional factors for those attending CSN. It is important to note that the outcomes cannot be generalized to all Hispanics in the program because the sample was too small. This study does, however, describe the difficulties that Hispanics have in learning the language. More importantly, it emphasizes that foreign-born Hispanics do recognize that learning the language is critical for success and full integration into the American culture.

All of the interviewees needed a significant person from the institution to listen to the problems they were facing when they decided to drop from their courses. They needed guidance in navigating the system. Two of the interviewees were new in the country and not only were they acculturating into American society, they were also trying to navigate the system of higher education without pertinent information. They were new students at CSN who were not given information about the support services provided by the college or provided any support to secure their success. It is important to create and provide literature for ESL students in their native languages about the support services available to them as well as staff contact information. An ESL student orientation for new students in their native language would help to provide the guidance these students need before attending their ESL classes.

It is essential for ESL foreign-born students to get to know the faculty and support staff that can help them when they face a problem that can affect their continuation. Jones (2005) stated, “bilingual and culturally sensitive faculty can help with students’

apprehension regarding instruction, program, organizational services and campus services, in order to bridge the educational gap in these students' background" (p. 256). McElroy (2006) adds that it is important for ESL students to have an academic advisor that can help them with their academic and personal problems. Curry (2001) and Tinto (1993) state that institutions need to develop specific programs for a target population of students, which might include services related to their personal needs.

ESL students in community colleges are different than the regular college students because of their diverse backgrounds, educational levels, and academic goals. It is important for institutions and the ESL programs to find out the students' goals for attending such programs. All of the interviewees wanted to accomplish different educational goals at CSN, but the staff at the college and the ESL programs did not do any assessments, other than placement, to find out what the students wanted to accomplish when they registered in the ESL program. The approach to teach English to ESL students should be different depending on their academic goals.

All of the interviewees wanted to learn the language to improve their socioeconomic status. Learning the language was viewed as an economic asset to find better jobs or communicate at work. Jones (2005) explains, "learned-centered ESL programs can build on learner's experiences and provide goal-setting activities. The ESL for-credit program faculty needs to have a different approach to students who are learning the language to incorporate into the workforce. Some of them want to learn survival English to communicate at work, in their communities, or to find a comfort level of belonging into society.

Recommendations

The recommendations for this study are based on the findings from the four in-depth interviewees, the literature review and the best practices of other institutions. The findings for this study only focused on social and institutional factors for those attending CSN that affected interviewees' non-continuation in the ESL for-credit program.

First, it is recommended that CSN consider developing an orientation to better prepare students for the courses within the program. At the very least, it is recommended that an information brochure about the program, the expectations of the students, support services available, as well as other student services be created in the native languages of the students. One of the common factors was that none of the interviewees had any knowledge about the availability of CSN support services for them. Jones (2005) mentions the importance of an orientation for ESL students. He stated an orientation can help students understand the program, establish goals, familiarize them with student services, and build a relationship with program staff. Fitzgerald (1995) and McElroy (2006) show that persistence factors of ESL students are related to the utilization of support services. They explained ESL students who use support services persisted longer compared to those who did not use them.

Nathalie specifically stated academic advising was an important factor for continuation in the ESL for-credit program. CSN ESL for-credit should have an academic advisor dedicated to this population, who can guide students when they have questions or have a problem. It is the researcher's experience that ESL students do not often look for help because they do not know who can help them with their problems. Most times, ESL foreign-born Hispanic students look for assistance with someone who can speak their

language. Curry (2001) and McElroy (2006) support this idea by stating that academic advising with psychological services can help immigrants/refugees to persist with their education in community colleges. Carlos and Eduardo were political refugees from Cuba who could have benefited from psychological services.

CSN has to consider the needs of ESL students when hiring instructors. Carlos mentioned he needed someone to explain to him, in his native language, what he was learning in class. He was enrolled in level one when he decided to withdraw from the ESL for-credit program. He specifically stated that he was not expecting an ESL program where the only instruction was provided in English. According to Jones (2005), hiring practices of ESL faculty, tutors, and classroom instruction should depend on to the students' needs. "Participants expressed their need for instructors and tutors who are bilingual to help explain in Spanish what is being learned in English" (Jones, 2005, p. 207).

The college should also carefully assign classrooms according to the estimated class size. Dropping out for one participant was attributed to the size of the class relative to the room. Part of providing a good learning experience for ESL students in the CSN ESL for-credit program is to provide a room which will accommodate all students comfortably. Students should not be standing or sitting on the floor. This is a relatively simple condition to prevent.

CSN ESL for-credit program should begin assessing student goals either as an independent activity or as part of the orientation process. Several of the interviewees were interested in learning English in order to pursue careers. Tinto (1993) and Polinsky (2002/2003) explained that institutions need to develop target programs by assessing

students' needs. Community colleges with larger ESL programs have separated ESL students who want to pursue a career with intensive ESL programs as compared to students who only want to learn the language for functional purposes. The literature review reiterates that a well designed ESL program is one that emphasizes success for students and provides services according to the students needs.

Recommendations for Further Research

The focus of this qualitative research study was the following: a) to find out the characteristics of ESL foreign-born Hispanic students at CSN, b) what perceived barriers ESL foreign-born interviewees experienced in completing the ESL for-credit program, c) what services they believed would have helped complete the CSN ESL for-credit program.

It is recommended that a study to investigate which cognitive factors outlined in Watson's Geometrical Model of Student Persistence and Achievement most impact Hispanic ESL students. Additionally, similar as well as larger studies should be conducted with other higher education institutions in the state of Nevada to find out barriers which impact the successful completion of ESL foreign-born Hispanics in the state. Doing so, will help standardize programs within the state and possibly create a system which meets the needs of both those students only interested in learning the language for functional reasons as well as those students who want to learn the language in order to pursue a career. Finally, research around the effects of budgets on programs could be important in understanding sustainability of such programs. The state of Nevada

cannot afford to cut these kinds of programs simply because the Hispanic population in the state has grown rapidly.

Community colleges cannot continue to ignore the needs of the ESL population for many reasons: 1) many community colleges receive state funding based on the FTE (full time equivalent) generated by this population. ESL students in the for-credit programs are part of the FTE count; 2) ESL students provide revenue to the community colleges and their attrition can impact institutional services and staffing; 3) when ESL students attrition, they impact the negative attrition statistics; 4) some ESL students want to study a career after they learn the language; 5) community colleges' graduation numbers are impacted by the attrition of ESL students; and 6) a less educated workforce contributes less taxes to the state which can have an impact on the many services provided by the state. Additionally, a more educated workforce is less dependent on social services provided by the state.

APPENDIX I

IRB Approval Form and Selection Questionnaire



Social/Behavioral IRB – Expedited Review Approval Notice



NOTICE TO ALL RESEARCHERS:

Please be aware that a protocol violation (e.g., failure to submit a modification for any change) of an IRB approved protocol may result in mandatory remedial education, additional audits, re-consenting subjects, researcher probation suspension of any research protocol at issue, suspension of additional existing research protocols, invalidation of all research conducted under the research protocol at issue, and further appropriate consequences as determined by the IRB and the Institutional Officer.

DATE: October 11, 2007
TO: Dr. Cecilia Maldonado, Educational Leadership
FROM: Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
RE: Notification of IRB Action by Dr. J. Michael Stitt, Chair *JMS/CE*
Protocol Title: **Attrition of ESL Foreign-Born Hispanics Students at CSN**
Protocol #: 0709-2445

This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed by the UNLV Social/Behavioral Institutional Review Board (IRB) as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45 CFR 46. The protocol has been reviewed and approved.

The protocol is approved for a period of one year from the date of IRB approval. The expiration date of this protocol is October 7, 2008. Work on the project may begin as soon as you receive written notification from the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS).

PLEASE NOTE:

Attached to this approval notice is the **official Informed Consent/Assent (IC/IA) Form** for this study. The IC/IA contains an official approval stamp. Only copies of this official IC/IA form may be used when obtaining consent. Please keep the original for your records.

Should there be *any* change to the protocol, it will be necessary to submit a **Modification Form** through OPRS. No changes may be made to the existing protocol until modifications have been approved by the IRB.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond October 7, 2008, it would be necessary to submit a **Continuing Review Request Form** 60 days before the expiration date.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at OPRS@humanSubjects@unlv.edu or call 895-2794.

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
4505 Maryland Parkway • Box 451047 • Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1047

Selection Questionnaire

Phone Call Introduction

My name is Luis Ortega. I am a master's student candidate at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and I am conducting a study on foreign-born Hispanics, who enrolled at the College of Southern Nevada (formally CCSN) in the English as Second Language (ESL) for-credit program and the need for services they perceive would help them succeed. You were chosen to participate in this study because you were enrolled during the 2005-2006 academic year and dropped out. With your consent, the researcher would like to interview you regarding your experience as a student in this program. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. This study may include minimal risks. You may become uncomfortable when answering some questions. Would you be willing to participate?

YES ___ NO ___

Mi nombre es Luis Ortega. Yo estoy estudiando una maestría en la University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV), y estoy haciendo un estudio referente a los estudiantes Hispánicos nacidos en el extranjero, que se escribieron en el Programa de crédito de Inglés como Segundo Idioma (ESL) en el College of Southern Nevada (originalmente llamado CCSN) y averiguar los servicios necesarios que los estudiantes percibían eran importantes para tener éxito en el programa. Usted fue escogido para participar en el estudio porque estuvo inscrito en el programa durante el año académico 2005-2006 y posteriormente decidió salirse. Su participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Usted puede rehusarse a participar en este estudio o en cualquier parte de este estudio. Este estudio incluye solamente riesgos mínimos. A lo mejor se va a sentir incomodo contestando algunas preguntas. ¿Le gustaría participar?

SI ___ NO ___

1. Please tell me what country and state were you born?
¿Me puede decir en que país y estado usted nació?

-
2. Have you re-enrolled in the ESL for-credit program since you dropped out of the program?
¿Se ha reescrito en el programa de crédito de ESL desde que usted se salio?

Yes ___ No ___

3. Why did you drop out of the ESL for-credit program?
¿Me puede usted explicar porque decidió salirse del programa de crédito de ESL?

NOTE: The researcher is looking for foreign-born participants who have not re-enrolled in the program and who provide institutional reasons for dropping out of the ESL For-credit program. If all three criteria have been met, then the researcher will continue to ask the questions in Appendix II and will ask for permission to be audio-taped.

APPENDIX II

Standard Telephone Interview Questions

For this part of the interview, I would like your permission to be audio taped so that I may review it for accuracy. Following this interview, the tape will be destroyed. Do I have your permission? YES _____ NO _____

For this part of the interview I would like to ask you a few personal questions regarding your experience while you were enrolled in the ESL for-credit program during the 2005-2006 year.

Para esta parte de la entrevista, me puede dar permiso para ser audio grabado para poder revisar la veracidad de la información. Después de la entrevista, toda la información grabada será borrada. ¿Tengo su permiso? SI _____ NO _____

Para esta parte de la entrevista me gustaría preguntarle algunas preguntas personales referente a su experiencia cuando usted fue estudiante en el programa de crédito de ESL durante el año académico 2005-2006.

Background Questions:

1. What is your age?
¿Cual es su edad?
2. What was your highest level of education completed in your country of origin?
¿Cual fue su nivel de educación más alto cursado en su país de origen?
3. How long have you lived in the United States? Years _____ Months _____
¿Por cuantos años a vivido usted in los Estados Unidos?
4. Why did you decided to immigrate to the United States?
¿Porque usted decidió emigrar a los Estados Unidos?

Program Related Questions:

5. Why did you enroll in the ESL for-credit program at CSN?
¿Porque usted decidió escribirse en el programa de crédito de ESL en CSN?

6. What could CSN have done to prevent you from dropping out of the ESL for-credit program?
¿Qué pudo haber hecho CSN para prevenir su salida del programa de crédito de ESL?

If you were selected to be interviewed to further detail your experiences in the ESL for-credit program, would you like to be a participant? YES _____ NO _____
Si usted fuese seleccionado(a) para ser entrevistado referente a sus experiencias en el programa de crédito de ESL, le gustaría participar? Si ___ No ___

Thank you for your time and participation in this research project.
Gracias por su tiempo y participación en el proyecto de este estudio.

APPENDIX III

In-Depth Interview Questions

Goals

1. What were your short and long term goals when you started the ESL for-credit program?
 - a. Did you achieve any of your goals? Why or why not?

Institutional Factors:

2. How many ESL levels you did you complete? How many levels had you planned to complete?
3. Why did you attend (purpose) the ESL for-credit program?
 - a. Do you feel the curriculum/program/courses met your expectations and/or needs?
4. Why did you choose to enroll at the College of Southern Nevada (CSN)?
5. What support services were provided to you by CSN? (i.e., advising, tutoring services, financial aid planning etc.)
 - a. Of the services you mentioned, which were the most beneficial? The least?
6. Which additional support services would have been beneficial for your successful completion of the ESL for-credit program? Why?
7. Did you have access to your professors/instructors in your courses?

The next of questions are aimed at understanding your personal circumstances and how they may have contributed to your decisions for dropping out of the ESL for-credit program.

Social Factors

1. What is your employment status?
2. What type of work do you do?
3. Do you work more than one job? If so, are they full-time, part-time, etc?
 - a. Approximately, how many hours do you work a week?
4. What is your family household income?
5. How many dependents do you have?
 - a. Do you support family members in another country?
6. Do you have access to childcare and transportation?

APPENDIX IV

In-Depth Interview Questions in Spanish

Metas:

1. ¿Cuáles fueron sus metas académicas a corto y largo plazo cuando comenzó en el programa de crédito de Inglés como Segunda Lengua (ESL)?
 - a. ¿termino algunas de esas metas que se trazó? ¿Porque o porque no?

Factores Institucionales:

2. ¿Cuántos niveles de ESL completo? ¿Cuántos niveles había planeado completar?
3. ¿Porque escogió el programa de crédito de ESL del Colegio?
 - a. ¿Usted siente que el currículo/programa/cursos llenaron sus expectativas y/o necesidades?
4. ¿Porque usted descogió enrolarse en el College of Southern Nevada (anteriormente llamado CCSN)?
5. ¿Cuáles servicios fueron proveídos a usted por el College of Southern Nevada? (consejería, servicios de tutoría, ayuda financiera, etc.)
 - a. ¿De los servicios que menciono, cuales fueron lo más beneficiosos? ¿Los menos beneficiosos?
6. Cuales servicios adicionales de apoyo hubiesen sido beneficiosos para completar el programa de crédito de ESL? ¿Porque?

7. Tuvo usted acceso a sus profesores/instructores en sus cursos.

Las siguientes preguntas están diseñadas para entender sus circunstancias personales, y como ellas pudieron contribuir para que usted se saliera del programa de crédito de ESL.

Factores Sociales

1. ¿Cuál es su estatus en su empleo (medio tiempo, tiempo completo)?
2. ¿Que tipo de trabajo usted hace?
3. ¿Tiene usted más de un trabajo?
 - a. ¿Aproximadamente cuantas horas trabaja? ¿Por qué?
4. ¿Cuanto dinero gana al año?
5. ¿Cuántos dependientes usted tiene?
 - a. ¿Apoya usted económicamente a miembros familiares en otro país?
6. ¿Tiene usted acceso a guardería y transportación?

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