NONCREDIT ESL STUDENT TRANSITION INTO
COMMUNITY COLLEGE CREDIT PROGRAMS:
BEYOND ACCESS TO SUCCESS

A dissertation proposal submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

By
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ABSTRACT

NONCREDIT ESL STUDENT TRANSITION INTO COMMUNITY COLLEGE CREDIT PROGRAMS: BEYOND ACCESS TO SUCCESS

By
Alice Mecom
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

The purpose of this study is to determine how noncredit ESL (NCESL) programs and policymakers can respond to the changing mission of California community colleges to promote transition for their students into credit general education (GE) or career and technical education (CTE) programs. Many immigrant ESL students in noncredit programs in community colleges desire to advance socio-economically, yet do not have the basic English skills and navigational capital required for success in college. Though colleges wish to promote these students into credit programs, there is little understanding of how many NCESL students actually do transition into credit, and the proportion is assumed to be small. This study examines how NCESL students transition into credit programs throughout the California community college system, what program features are most likely to promote matriculation, and how data is used to create and strengthen these student matriculation pathways.

This study is a mixed-method, exploratory design with a qualitative phase
followed by a quantitative phase. The first phase includes semi-structured interviews with five state-level leaders in NCESL education to explore the phenomenon of NCESL matriculation as related to program design and state-level and local policy. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed for codes and coding categories, which were developed into concepts and themes. In phase two, notable factors from previous literature and the phase one qualitative findings were translated into measurable variables and incorporated into an online survey, which was distributed to each NCESL program in the California community college system, producing a 45% response rate (N=28) that represented 85% of all NCESL enrollment in 2011-2012. These survey responses were converted into measurable variables for statistical analysis with matriculation rates retrieved from the Chancellor’s Office. The analysis revealed correlations and relationships and correlations between matriculation rates and several NCESL features or policy designs.

The most promising NCESL program features related to higher matriculation rates include full-time faculty, the same counselors for both credit and noncredit students, institutional commitment to NCESL, managed enrollment, and teaching the system of higher education in NCESL classrooms. This study showed that in some cases, state-level and institutional policies can impede NCESL programs from implementing these practices related to higher student transition into credit. These policies include restricted access to resources, such as full-time faculty and funding. In addition to policy barriers, this study showed that there are cultural barriers that can also impede NCESL student transition into credit. Findings suggest that these barriers can be addressed with data-driven communication, collaboration, and advocacy on the part of NCESL faculty with their credit and institutional counterparts. The findings and results also explore the role of assessments and program data in advancing NCESL matriculation rates, revealing that
the majority of assessment occurs on the course level to improve student learning. The data is inconclusive on how NCESL programs use assessments and data to increase rates of matriculation.

The study’s findings and results are encapsulated in a logic model, which provides a visual representation of the components and structure of a successful NCESL program. These include the necessary resources, the activities that need to occur outside of classroom teaching, and the necessary participation from a community of practice, including credit and noncredit faculty, staff, and administrators. The model also includes the variety of outcomes that NCESL students seek to achieve other than that of matriculating into credit. The study provides recommendations for state-level, institutional, and program-level policies and practices that can support the function of NCESL programs as a gateway for students into credit programs.
Chapter I

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine how California community colleges provide student success opportunities to their very large immigrant student populations in noncredit, or continuing and community education, English as a Second Language (NCESL) programs. Noncredit programs differ from credit programs in that they do not award college credit to their students; rather, they offer tuition-free education to community members in nine instructional areas, including ESL, Basic Skills, and Short-term Vocational training (CCCCO, 2006). ESL learners exist in both noncredit and credit programs, yet a great many more, particularly immigrant populations, enroll in noncredit education (CCCCO, 2011; Chisman & Creswell, 2007). In response to economic and workforce trends, community colleges nationwide are responding to the call to redesign, refocus, and re-engineer their instructional and support services to establish student pathways that directly lead to student completion of degrees and certificates (AACC, 2012). Because of the very large population of ESL immigrant learners in California community colleges, NCESL programs must become part of this movement of creating student success pathways and becoming accountable for student transition, or matriculation, into credit programs.

The journey for typical NCESL students contains multiple junctures, or momentum points, that they must successfully persist through in order to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the entrance expectations of college degree and certificate applicable curriculum (SSTF, 2011). Though there is no published state-wide data on the current matriculation rates of these students, studies show that the rate is quite
low (Becker, 2011; Chisman & Creswell, 2007). NCESL programs are charged with facilitating and supporting student progression through these momentum points, yet the programs themselves encounter multiple challenges due to absent, insufficient, or restrictive institutional and state noncredit policies (Becker, 2011; Blumenthal, 2002; CCCCCO, 2006; Center for Student Success, 2007; Chisman & Creswell, 2007; Grubb, 2003; Ignash, 1995; Ramsey, 1992; Selenyi, 2002; Zacharakis, 2011). Within this educational and political context, how will California advance its NCESL population towards college readiness and degree attainment? The California Community College Chancellor’s Office, via its Student Success Task Force, states that “given California’s changing demographic profile, the success of these historically underrepresented groups will determine the fortunes of our state” (p. 9). What role will California community colleges play in helping our immigrant population, which is projected to be the sole contributor to U.S. labor force growth in the next 20 years, meet the needs and expectations of our nation (ETS, 2007)?

This mixed methods study explores how the designs, practices, characteristics, and policies of NCESL programs in the California community college system impact student matriculation rates into credit programs. It identifies specific ways in which current policies for noncredit can be structured so that programs can not only promote matriculation, but also produce actionable data for measuring student success. The findings can inform program leaders and policymakers about how programs can best be administered to promote student matriculation. They can also be shared and applied to NCESL programs throughout the state.
Problem Statement

A Changing Role for Community Colleges

Since their inception, California community colleges have offered equal access to education for all people seeking opportunities to learn. The California Master Plan for Higher Education, including the community college system, has endured for over half a century (California Department of Education, 1960). However, critical national and state economic pressures have fallen hard on the state’s community college system, and despite the long-lived master plan, a “tectonic shift” is occurring in the community college mission, resulting in the narrowed focus of preparing students for living wage jobs (Dr. Mark Rocha, personal communication, September, 11, 2012). The nation and the state have recognized and acted on the urgency for establishing and sustaining an educated working population. America’s Perfect Storm, a report issued by Educational Testing Services (2007), describes three forces that are contributing to the decline of the nation’s economy: the population’s deficient skills in reading and math, the increasing demand for advanced degrees in the job market, and the increase in immigrant populations. Community colleges have been identified as key to converting our growing, under-skilled population into an educated workforce that can reclaim our economic stability (CCCO, 2012).

In reaction to this narrowed mission, new legislation and policies are being implemented to shift community college focus from student access to specifically student success. Unlike the more abstract and overarching definitions of the past, student success is now more narrowly defined in terms of degree and certificate completion and transfer to four-year institutions (CCCO, 2012). The American Association of Community
Colleges (2011) has identified its new goal of educating “an additional 5 million students with degrees, certificates, or other credentials by 2020” via its new 21st Century Initiative (p. v). In California, the Community College Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) created the Student Success Task Force in 2011 to outline new recommendations that refocus the community college mission and call for additional accountability mandates for both colleges and their students. The CCCCO issued these recommendations in response to the fact that “Californians holding an associate or bachelor’s degree are likely to earn $1 million more in their lifetime than a person who holds only a high school diploma” and to “help make important services more accessible to students, allowing for a greater chance of success” (CCCCO, 2011,”Student Success Task Force”, para 1). These recommendations are now referred to as SB 1456, the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012, which focuses “on the entering students' transition into college in order to provide a foundation for student achievement and successful completion of students' educational goals, with a priority toward serving students who enroll to earn degrees, career technical certificates, or transfer” (S. 1456, 2012).

Community college administrators, program leaders, faculty, staff, and students are now working under stricter federal, state, and institutional guidelines which direct them towards this new concrete definition of student success. A student’s community college experience is no longer one of academic self-exploration in terms of developing a new awareness, appreciation, discovery, or lifelong learning experience (CDE, 1960); rather, today’s educational experience must include attainment of a degree or certificate that qualifies the student for employment or transfer to a four year university. Community colleges have already begun redesigning programs and services in
anticipation of new accountability measures that define student success in terms of completion rates (Bahr, 2012).

**The Importance of Noncredit Programs for Immigrant ESL Learners**

The need to steer ESL learners toward certificates and degrees is driven by national demographic and workforce trends that exist well beyond the boundaries of our community college system. California is one of the six states in the nation with the highest concentration of immigrants, and because of this density, “issues related to the education of immigrants are especially relevant for community colleges in these regions of the United States” (Szelenyi & Chang, 2002, p. 58). Nearly 40% of K-12 students are second language learners, and the numbers in higher education will continue to increase (CCCRPG, 2007). ESL students are numerous in California community colleges, which, due to their open access policies, play an “essential role in educating America's newcomers” (Szelenyi & Chang, 2002, p. 55). In California, while most basic skills math and English learners enroll in community college credit programs, significantly more ESL students rely on noncredit programs for their educational and vocational success (CCCCO, 2011). Sezleyni and Chang (2002) point to a finding that in a nationwide sampling, non-native speakers who transferred into universities were 20% more likely to have started in community colleges.

Considering the projections outlined in America’s Perfect Storm (ETS, 2007), it is not surprising to see these large numbers of immigrants in California community colleges. This report cites the U.S. Census Bureau’s expectation that between 2000 and 2015, immigration will contribute to over 50% of the population growth in the United States (2007, p. 4). In addition, between 2000 and 2005, new immigrants comprised 86
% of employment growth in the U.S. and two-thirds of civilian labor growth (p.11). The United States relies on an ESL population to fuel the job market, which is projected to increase in demand for employees with higher education degrees and skills. In line with the refocused community college mission and the projections of the state, NCESL programs and their students need to be included in these reform measures. Otherwise, we exclude the very population on which we are heavily relying to contribute to our economic growth and stability. Yet immigrants who do not speak English fluently do not have the basic skills to enter and succeed in entry-level college courses, not to mention earn a degree or certificate. Therefore, they become a major portion of the already huge under-prepared student population that seeks access and success in community colleges every day.

Thus, the California community colleges system faces its own perfect storm in meeting new accountability expectations while also meeting the needs of its underprepared students. The Center for Student Success reports that between 70-80% of students who enter community colleges have only basic skills and are under-prepared for college level work (Center for Student Success, 2007). Of all full-time equivalent students (FTES) taking basic skills courses in both credit and noncredit programs, approximately 40% are ESL learners (CCCCO, 2011). NCESL students comprise a substantial subset of community college populations; for example, at Glendale Community College, the NCESL student body represents approximately 20% of the entire student body. In 2009-2010, of all FTES in noncredit basic skills programs statewide, 92% were ESL students. Yet only 13.8% of noncredit students received orientations on matriculation and only 8.6% received matriculation counseling (CCCCO,
2011). These statistics show that while the population of NCESL learners is large, current efforts to matriculate students into credit academic and job training programs is minimal.

In light of this data, how can noncredit programs adequately respond to the Student Success Act (2012) to develop “structured pathways to help students identify a program of study and get an educational roadmap to indicate appropriate courses and available support services”, p. 7)? How will institutional and state noncredit policies be created or revised in order to support NCESL programs in putting students on these “structured pathways” that lead directly to degree and certificate attainment?

Figure 1.1. ESL Students in Community Colleges

Note. Based on data retrieved from CCCCO supplement to ARCC report, October 2011. FTES = full-time equivalent students.
In light of this data, how can noncredit programs adequately respond to the Student Success Act (2012) to develop “structured pathways to help students identify a program of study and get an educational roadmap to indicate appropriate courses and available support services”, p. 7)? How will institutional and state noncredit policies be created or revised in order to support NCESL programs in putting students on these “structured pathways” that lead directly to degree and certificate attainment?

**Promoting Success for NCESL Students**

In the spirit of open access, California community colleges have encouraged and welcomed ESL learners in open-entry, open-exit, tuition-free noncredit or continuing education programs for over 100 years (CCCCO, 2006). These ESL programs have long fulfilled the Master Plan in terms of serving the educational needs of adults who live in the community. In recent decades, the California Community College System has been challenged with serving an increasing number of immigrants who fall into the category of ESL basic skills students (CSS/RPG, 2007). In fact, of all nine instructional areas in California’s noncredit community college adult education programs, ESL programs serve the greatest numbers of students (LAO, 2012). Creswell and Crandall (2007) identify ESL learners as the group of basic skills learners that need noncredit education the most, mainly because the majority of these students begin at much lower levels of proficiency compared to other basic skills students. In California, the growing immigrant ESL population relies heavily on noncredit community college offerings in order to advance socio-economically. Likewise, California, through its initiatives and proposed legislative changes, relies on noncredit community college programs to advance its population socio-economically as well (CCCSSTF, 2012; CSS, 2007).
In recent years, the CSS/RP Group (2007) cited the Board of Governors as identifying noncredit programs as the “primary gateway” into credit programs, and as such, they should be strengthened as a “viable curricular alternative” and their missions should be aligned with the institution’s academic and vocational mission (p. 49). Furthermore, noncredit programs need to be strengthened and leveraged for their capacity to matriculate students into credit programs (Becker, 2011; CCCCO, 2006, CCCCO, 2012). The CCCCO has backed the importance of noncredit programs as pathways to career and academic advancement by awarding enhanced funding apportionment to programs that contribute to these pathways. The enhanced programs are identified as career development and college preparation (CDCP) courses that lead to noncredit certificates, including noncredit elementary and secondary education, ESL, and vocational instruction (LAO, 2012). In fact, the Legislator’s Analyst Office is proposing that noncredit narrow its offerings so that it focuses solely on ESL, basic skills education and workforce readiness (LAO, 2012), taking away the focus from lifelong learning and other courses not directly related to job or college-level readiness.

Now that colleges are to focus their services on student success as defined by degree and certificate completion, NCESL programs can no longer rely on high student access rates as an accountability measure. The Student Success Task Force (2012) states:

The California Community Colleges take great pride in being the gateway to opportunity for Californians of all backgrounds, including traditionally under-represented economic, social, and racial/ethnic subgroups. Our system “looks like California” and we are committed to maintaining that quality. The goal of
equitable access—*and the commitment to help all students achieve success*—is a driving force behind the recommendations contained in this report (p. 9).

If noncredit programs expect continued funding and support, they must align their own missions to promote student progression through the momentum points that lead students into successful completion of degree and certificate credit programs (California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012).

**Matriculation as a Success Indicator**

Community colleges today cannot define student success without the inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative data to serve as evidence of success; all community college programs are required to incorporate stated program learning outcomes and conduct and report out on assessments that measure these outcomes (ACCJC, 2012). Noncredit programs are equally accountable for producing and reporting out on their program learning outcomes. Given the increased pressure for matriculation for all students, programs must also create tracking mechanisms in their data systems so that they can monitor matriculation progress and success rates as well as provide accountability data to the institution. Assessing and reporting student success in order to inform institutional planning is a significant accreditation requirement that has been in effect since 2004, and many colleges have been penalized for being deficient in their assessment processes (ACCJC, 2012). The urgency to assess programs, specifically NCESL programs, is heightened by the CCCCCO’s Student Success Task Force (2011) Recommendation 4.1, which asks colleges to “develop appropriate systems of assessment, metrics, goals, and reports addressing student success and student completion in all categories of community college noncredit and/or adult education, including Career.
Development and College Preparation (CDCP) and other noncredit programs and courses that are part of a noncredit student’s education plan” (p. 43).

A critical measure of NCESL program success is the rate of student matriculation into credit ESL programs. Tracking this requires collaboration between program leaders in both noncredit and credit ESL in assessment development and implementation procedures. This necessary collaboration is referenced in the SSTF (CCCO, 2011) in recommendation 8.1, which states, “colleges and programs (should) strive to break down programmatic silos and voluntarily collaborate in an effort to improve the success of students” (p. 67).

Matriculation from noncredit to credit is an example of a pivotal progress point for students on their academic pathway. The SSTF (CCCO, 2011) refers to these pivotal points as “momentum points” and stresses their importance as “intermediate measures.” “Each time a student progresses beyond a momentum point the likelihood of reaching his or her educational goal increases” (p. 8).

Unfortunately, little change has occurred since a study done over 15 years ago indicated that little national data existed on the numbers of ESL students who persisted into college-level coursework (Ignash, 1995). Most NCESL programs have been unable to effectively measure matriculation rates (ASCCC, 2009; Blumenthal, 2002; CCCCO, 2006; CSS/RPGroup, 2007, Ignash, 1995; Ramsey, 1992). In California, there is no systematic statewide data tracking system for NCESL students’ progress into Credit ESL; as a result, NCESL programs must design and implement their own homegrown tracking systems at each campus. Therefore, the tracking is done in silos with any information gleaned only available to that institution. Informal discussions with colleagues at a
variety of California community colleges suggest that there is a great need for NCESL matriculation data. While colleagues express frustration with the absence of statewide measures for noncredit matriculation, they also express hope that research will be conducted to determine how such tracking can best be done. Noncredit program leaders and state-level advocates indicate that the only way to find effective tracking mechanisms is to examine methods used at individual campuses, as this study intends to do.

**Purpose and Significance**

The purpose of this study is to determine how NCESL programs and policymakers can respond to the changing mission of California community colleges to promote matriculation for all students into academic or vocational degree and certificate completion. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to examine how NCESL matriculation occurs throughout programs in the California community college system, and how data is used to create and support strong student matriculation pathways into credit programs. This information can inform best practices for producing and measuring NCESL matriculation outcomes that can be shared, emulated, and reported on a statewide level. This study suggests ways that the California community college system can track its large and growing immigrant population as it progresses from the gateway noncredit programs into degree and certificate bearing credit programs.

As we have seen, NCESL programs are the primary providers for immigrant ESL learners in the California community college system (CCCCO, 2011). Immigrant populations are expected to account for over half of our population growth by 2015 (ETS, 2002). The Student Success Task Force reports that the underrepresented groups in California’s demography “will determine the fortunes of our state” (2012, p. 9).
Community colleges statewide are realigning their missions to meet the recommendations of this Task Force, now known as the legislated Student Success Act.

Noncredit programs play a significant role in “reclaiming America’s dream” (AACC, 2012); by responding to the Student Success Act, these programs have the unique opportunity to advance immigrant students through pivotal points of success that lead to college preparedness and entry into credit programs (CCCCO, 2012). If NCESL programs do not align themselves with the success-centered 21st century community college mission, what effect will this have on the livelihoods of the fastest growing population in this country? How can NCESL programs support efforts of educational policymakers to surmount the “perfect storm” that threatens our future economic stability (ETS, 2007)?

NCESL programs need to centralize their missions on preparing and matriculating their students into credit and job attainment programs. However, noncredit programs lack resources, support, and policies in order to do so (ASCCC, 2009; Blumenthal, 2002; CCCCCO, 2006; CSS/RPGroup, 2007; Grubb, 2003; Ignash, 1995; Szelenyi, 2002). In the age of data-driven decision making (DDDM), program leaders need to produce data that lead to actionable information which can inform and improve program and college planning (Marsh et al, 2006). Noncredit programs need data to inform and improve their services to students as well as to inform and improve institutional practices and policies that support noncredit program success. Yet, NCESL programs lack reliable matriculation tracking mechanisms that produce student success data. Without data, noncredit programs lack evidence on how well they support and advance student
matriculation, and lack essential information for creating institutional and state-level noncredit practices and policies.

California community colleges will need to design and implement NCESL matriculation programs that not only provide success for the students but are also efficient and cost-effective for the institutions. There are multiple ways in which noncredit and credit ESL programs can be designed to facilitate matriculation pathways; in most cases, these varying designs are a product of the institutional and state policies that shape them (Ignash, 1995). This study examines program practices and designs in order to identify those that best serve students by producing high levels of matriculation. The findings may help to restructure and improve noncredit policies in order to strengthen NCESL programs statewide. Ultimately, the findings of this study may inform California community college NCESL programs on how to best advance students towards higher socioeconomic attainment as educated members of the country’s workforce.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that guided this study are:

1. How do NCESL state-level advocates view the impact of state policy on NCESL student progression and matriculation in California community colleges?
2. What program designs and articulation agreements best support ESL noncredit to credit matriculation?
3. How do NCESL programs produce and use assessment data to inform and improve matriculation practices?
4. What methods of tracking NCESL progress and matriculation are most effective in demonstrating program accountability?

The term matriculation in this study refers to the point when a student completes NCESL coursework and transitions into a credit program that will lead to the student’s educational objective (CCCO, 2011). The term articulation refers to links between multiple programs and their combined efforts to streamline and facilitate matriculation through specialized programs designed to serve this purpose. Improvement cycles refer to the program’s systematic planning to improve student learning in response to the assessment of its student learning outcomes (ACCJC, 2012).

**Overview of Methodology**

I conducted a mixed methods study to reveal insights into NCESL education and matriculation in community colleges and to identify factors that may influence, change, or improve the practices of NCESL program leaders and policymakers (Peshkin, 1993). Noncredit education carries unique sets of complex characteristics that must be clarified and understood in order to result in change (Peshkin, 1993). My goal was to bring forth a deeper heuristic understanding of this social issue as viewed by the participants in my study, those who work in noncredit education (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

In the first phase of the study, I conducted semi-structured interviews with five state-level leaders to examine their experiences in representing NCESL programs to policymakers. My interviews sought to understand how these leaders’ perceived the impact of state-level noncredit policies on the success of the NCESL programs within the California community college system.
The second phase of the study consisted of an online survey of directors of NCESL programs in the California community college system. These surveys gathered information on the implementation of program design and policy, including that specific to NCESL matriculation pathways and assessments. A total of 62 surveys were sent out to the 62 colleges listed by the CCCCCO as having offered NCESL courses during the 2011-2012 academic year, and 31 responses were received. After screening out unusable submissions, a final total of 28 survey responses were used in the study.

The data gathered in the first phase qualitative interviews were coded and analyzed for common themes, some of which were then incorporated into the second phase quantitative surveys. The data from the surveys were cross-tabulated with matriculation rates and program features retrieved from the Chancellor’s Office Data Mart. In Chapter 4, I compared the SSPS results, the survey results, and the interview findings to identify trends of program practices and characteristics that suggested relationships with higher rates of student matriculation, or transition, into credit programs.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

This study is delimited in scope to cover only the views of NCESL leaders in NCESL programs in California community colleges for the survey portion of the methodology. It does not include data on credit ESL programs or K-12 adult education ESL programs. The semi-structured interview portion of the methodology is delimited to the views of state-level NCESL leaders, who are known as advocates of these programs. Overall, the study’s scope is delimited to focus specifically on the matriculation aspect of the programs.
The study’s limitations include several potential weaknesses due to the design of the research. The limited scope of the mixed methods study does not allow for generalizable findings for all NCESL student populations. The findings from the surveys reflect only those programs that have responded. Furthermore, due to the political context of community college noncredit programs in California, the data and findings are not separable from this context, and reflect only this particular time in California community college history. Because both the researcher and the participants are strong supporters of NCESL programs, all procedures and data are closely examined for instances of subjectivity and bias. Despite these limitations, this study should provide insights and clarifications as to how NCESL programs and policies may be effective in advancing students to higher academic achievement through the process of matriculation.

Organization of the Dissertation

This introductory chapter, including a statement of the problem, is followed by a literature review chapter, which describes research relating to NCESL student learning needs and NCESL program effectiveness. The third chapter will describe the methodology used to conduct the study, followed by a fourth chapter which presents the results and findings of the study. Finally, the dissertation will conclude with a final chapter to discuss the findings and provide conclusions and implications for practice and further research.
Chapter II

Review of the Literature

This literature review will include research on the importance of community colleges in educating basic skills students, specifically those who are immigrant English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. It will describe the unique characteristics and learning needs of this immigrant population, especially in terms of transitioning into successful credit students, as well as recommendations for best practices that programs can employ to address their learning needs. The review will then focus specifically on noncredit programs, which the majority of immigrant ESL community college students rely upon as their access point to higher education. This review will describe the particular challenges that ESL students experience in these noncredit programs, as well as the challenges that the programs themselves encounter within the context of state and local noncredit policies. In addition, the review will discuss ways in which some NCESL programs, despite these challenges, have designed features and incorporated practices that promote successful student matriculation into credit programs. Finally, the review will discuss the importance of noncredit program assessment and accountability in tracking ESL matriculation rates, and will conclude with an identification of gaps in the literature and description of a conceptual framework for the study.

Literature Review

ESL and Basic Skills Students in Community Colleges

The focus on basic skills students. There is ample literature on the role of community colleges as providers of college readiness for California’s large body of underprepared students who need basic skills instruction in order to succeed (CCCCO,
Basic skills students are defined as those who lack the foundational skills in reading, writing, math, and ESL needed for college-level work (CSS/RPG, 2007).

In 2007, the Chancellor’s Office of California Community Colleges (CCCCO) commissioned the Research and Planning Group of California Community Colleges to present a research report on nation-wide best practices to serve the growing, high-risk population of basic skills students. This report identified serving basic skills students as the “core function of community colleges throughout history” and as an institutional priority and responsibility (CSS/RPGroup, 2007, p. 12). The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (2004) describes basic skills and ESL instruction as the “foundations” for the work students will need to do at a community college; by not receiving basic skills instruction, the student “jeopardizes his/her ability to successfully pursue college-level work” (p.13).

Discovering ways to effectively educate and advance basic skills learners through higher education is an issue that remains at the forefront of community college agendas. Multiple reports have identified the importance of providing ESL and basic skills students with innovative and collaborative learning environments that include an array of specialized instructional and student services support (Bailey, 2009; Chisman & Creswell, 2007; CSS/RP Group, 2007; Seymour, 2009). Due to the large numbers of basic skills students entering community colleges and the complexity of serving them, a variety of grants and incentives have been offered both nationally and within California to spark faculty development, research, innovative instruction, student support services, and assessments for these students. In California, the Chancellor’s Office has offered a
number of grants through its Basic Skills Initiative to all 112 community colleges in five-year phases since 2006. These grants reflect efforts to improve faculty professional development and resources for basic skills education, in addition to producing data on basic skills student learning outcomes. As of this date, the current funding allocated to the Basic Skills Initiative education for the 2013-2018 period is close to $1 million annually (CCCBSI, 2013).

**ESL students as a unique set of basic skills students.** ESL students are a unique set of basic skills students who are included in the Basic Skills Initiative, for they represent approximately 40% of all basic skills learners in California’s community college system (CCCCO, 2011). It is more challenging and complex to understand and meet ESL learners’ needs compared with the needs of basic math, reading, and writing learners. Most educators and policymakers can relate to the needs of the latter groups, as the content students must acquire is very similar to that which is required in K-12 schools (Chisman & Crandall, 2007). However, ESL learners come to community colleges for a learning experience that is unfamiliar for most educators (Chisman & Creswell, 2007). Chisman and Creswell (2007) describe ESL programs as “complex, multi-dimensional instructional systems that differ significantly in their structure, methods, and goals” from other adult basic education programs (p. 3). ESL learners as basic skills students require additional specialized attention due to their diversity in cultural backgrounds, norms, learning styles, needs, and literacy levels (CSS/RP Group, 2007; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002). However, to date, ESL and other basic skills students in the California Community College System have generally been treated as one group when analyzed for the purposes of research, policy design, assessment, and funding.
The Chancellor’s Office Research and Planning group states that there is a “critical need” to educate ESL learners so that they can be successful in their academic and professional goals (CCCRPG, 2007, p.66). Studies show that the majority of ESL students in community colleges seek language learning in order to advance socio-economically, either through vocational training or academic preparation (Kim, 2011; Lambert, 2008; Rafzar & Simon, 2011; Ramsey & Robyn, 1992; Zacharakis, 2011). Thus, these students’ goals dovetail with national, state, and institutional goals of producing degree and certificate earners who will contribute to the job market and help stabilize the economy (ACCC, 2012; CCCSSTF, 2012). However, ESL learners vary in their completion rates and generally do not demonstrate high success rates in community colleges (CCCRP, 2007). Therefore, we see a disconnect between these students’ goals and their ability to meet them as community college students. This trend is typical of basic skills students, which explains the impetus behind California’s Basic Skills Initiative grants. Can the Chancellor’s Office succeed in developing a strong network of collaborating basic skills professionals who effectively share resources and practices that result in a higher level of basic skills student success, including that of ESL students?

This study, aimed to contribute to the efforts of the Chancellor’s Office to educate its very large and growing body of basic skills ESL students, investigates the various characteristics and practices of NCESL community college programs that seek to advance this unique population into credit, degree-bearing programs.

ESL Student Motivation and Persistence

National reports show that just one-third of ESL students in adult education programs progress beyond one level of proficiency within a year; in one evaluation,
fewer than a half remained in a noncredit community college program for more than two or three semesters (Chisman & Creswell, 2007). Most all NCESL students need to advance through multiple levels of proficiency for several years before they are college-ready, yet at many colleges, only 10 to 15% of NCESL students enroll in credit ESL, which is only the initial step of matriculation before pursuing and completing a higher education credit certificate or degree (Chisman & Creswell, 2007). These low rates may be explained by the fact that ESL students have a very long journey from the start of their language learning, through mainstream basic skills courses, and finally into a state of college-readiness. The length of this journey is exacerbated by the fact that most NCESL students begin at the lowest levels of instruction, and most of them are in situations where they must earn a living and raise families in the new cultural environment of a new country (Chisman & Creswell, 2007). A careful examination of ESL students’ motivation and persistence allows for a better understanding of how the community college system can support and advance these learners. Below, we describe studies that look at these students’ educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, goal orientations, and motivational factors which can have an impact on their learning success.

**ESL students’ educational and socioeconomic background.** ESL learners bring with them a wide variety of cultural and educational backgrounds that affect their progress and their ability to navigate community college systems. Chisman and Creswell (2007) conducted a reputational sampling study of five community college NCESL programs throughout the nation to identify best practices that advance and transition students. In interviews, program leaders described the broad continuum in students’ educational backgrounds and how their ESL students seemed to come from either one
extreme or the other. While many immigrant students come to the United States with very limited exposure to formal education, quite a few come with a high level of education in their home country; this latter group is usually more successful in their ESL progress than the former.

Becker’s (2011) study confirms this finding through her phenomenological research on NCESL student persistence at a California community college, using the conceptual framework of cultural capital and cultural habitus to explore student experiences when transitioning into credit programs. In her study, based on the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, cultural capital referred to the level of education from native countries that students brought with them as students in ESL programs. Cultural habitus referred to students’ perceptions and behaviors associated with their social conditioning that influenced how they navigated their educational pathways and performed academically. The author conducted 17 semi-structured interviews with students who had either matriculated, delayed matriculation, or never planned to matriculate into credit, degree-bearing programs. Becker (2011) found that students with high cultural capital were generally better able to leverage NCESL programs as opportunities for advancement, thereby sustaining motivation, whereas students with lower cultural capital were more likely to experience a sense of marginality or detachment in educational settings, thus experiencing demotivation. However, the study found that marginalized students could succeed if they possessed the quality of resiliency. Considering the variation in students’ backgrounds and cultural capital, Becker (2011) noted that for ESL students in noncredit programs, “equitable access …does not guarantee equal success” (Becker, 2011, p. 18). This study suggests that NCESL programs may produce more
successful students if they address students’ multiple learning needs and sensitivities rather than implementing a “one size fits all” model.

Similarly, Kanno and Varghese (2010) explored the influence of Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction theory in their qualitative study of adult ESL students preparing to enter a four-year university. Cultural reproduction refers to the unintentional privilege that schools give to students who are part of the dominant class, typically the middle class (Kanno & Varghese, 2010); as a result, students not of the dominant culture, such as ESL students, are at a disadvantage in maximizing the educational services of the institutions they attend. The authors discovered four themes in the ESL students’ responses that describe their challenges: linguistic constraints, structural constraints, financial barriers, and self-censorship. Self-censorship refers to a student’s sense of invalidation or “un-belonging” as a mainstream student. The study showed that ESL programs, meant to help students, can also question students’ sense of legitimacy and hinder their ability to perform as they transition into mainstream education. Kanno and Varghese’s (2010) and Becker’s (2011) studies justify the need for ESL programs to look beyond linguistic support when transitioning ESL students and to consider the social and cultural limitations and the structural barriers that impede matriculation.

**ESL student goal orientation.** Studies also explore how achievement goal theory and activity theories interact with student motivation and success in second language learning programs (Tercanlioglu, 2004; Kim, 2011). In a quantitative study, Tercanlioglu (2004) used Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) to evaluate how students learning a second language at a university teacher training program established certain goal orientations in a classroom and how these orientations related to performance. The
goal orientations were identified as follows: task-oriented, self-enhancing, self-defeating, and work-avoidance (goal of avoiding the work rather than accomplishing the task). The study found that students defined as task-oriented achieved higher test results, simply indicating that those students who were focused on completing tasks correctly were more likely to perform better than students whose motives related to self-esteem or work-avoidance. One finding of particular interest was that the male students were more likely to be work-avoidant, though there was no correlation between this orientation and language performance. This study called for more research on identifying and reducing factors that create self-defeating ego and work avoidance orientations in students in order to improve motivation and language learning performance. It also raises the question of how NCESL community college programs in California can promote and foster the student goal orientations that have been shown to relate to higher levels of learning success.

Another study that examined ESL student goal orientations using Activity Theory stressed that if learners experience tension related to their activity or purpose, they may experience demotivation or amotivation (Kim, 2011). Kim’s (2011) longitudinal, qualitative study of two Korean adult immigrants in an ESL program found that initially, when a student believed learning English would result in job attainment, he remained highly motivated in the ESL classroom. However, over a period of ten months, the student began to express his intense frustration at not finding a job, and so changed his focus. He no longer believed that language learning was the key to job attainment; his motivation to learn English waned because it was no longer associated with a specific goal. On the other hand, the second student, who was still hopeful, continued to hold a
firm belief that speaking English would result in finding a job; as a result, her motivation was sustained. This study supports the idea that a perceived lack of or loss of goal will likely result in a loss of motivation, thereby serving as an obstacle to student persistence and learning. Furthermore, it supports the practice of linking ESL learning with student goals as part of instruction. This framework is exemplified in contextualized learning models, such as Vocational ESL, which has been identified as a best practice in NCESL community college programs in numerous studies (Lambert, 2008; Ramsey & Robyn, 1992; Razfar & Simon, 2011; Seymour, 2009). Ramsey and Robyn (1992) identified the importance of Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) instruction to encourage student motivation by linking language learning to student roles as employees or potential employees and to invest in the economy by preparing this growing immigrant population for the workforce. These findings align with ESL students’ belief that learning English will result in “desired upward socio-economic mobility” (Zacharakis et al., 2011). The findings by Ramsey et al. (1992) and Zacharakis et al. (2011) that linking program offerings to career growth improves motivation correspond with Kim’s (2010) activity theory study, which points to the importance of linking ESL learning to an object or goal, such as employment in the United States. My study seeks to explore how NCESL programs in California community colleges utilize “goal-specific” designs, such as contextualized learning, to advance student matriculation.

Other studies also show that motivation is strongest for ESL students who have constructed their own goals for learning that relate not only to themselves as students and employees, as described above, but also as parents (Kegan, 2001; Menard-Warwick, 2004). For example, Mernard-Warwick’s (2004) qualitative study of adult ESL learners
at a family literacy program in an urban California school revealed the importance of linking language learning to students’ roles as mothers to promote motivation. In this study, two Latina women, who were dissuaded from attending school by husbands and fathers, exhibited low self-esteem and self-worth, inhibiting their motivation to learn English. These women felt that their roles as mothers and wives impeded their ability and opportunity to learn English because their cultural support systems did not value the need for them to speak English. Their primary functions were to invest their time and energy in keeping a house and raising their children. However, once the women realized that learning English was, in fact, an investment in their children’s well-being, their motivation and persistence in ESL classes increased. This study, like Kegan (2001), Kim (2011), Ramsey & Robyn (1992), and Zacharakis et al. (2011), echoes the potential of using ESL to support students’ fundamental goals beyond the classroom. Considering that Hispanic mothers comprise a significant portion of the growing immigrant ESL student population in California community colleges, Mernard-Warwick’s (2004) study has implications for program designs that promote success for this group. However, it takes some level of sophistication for these students to leverage outside goals to stay motivated, persistent, and successful in ESL acquisition (Becker, 2011; Mernard-Warwick, 2004; Kanno, 2010; Kim, 2011; O’Donnell, 2007; Ramsey & Robyn, 1992; Zacharakis, 2011).

Kegan’s (2001) study gives us further insight into internal underlying factors that impact students’ motivation and success by exploring an ESL student’s “way of knowing”. He states, “A person’s way of knowing shapes how she will understand her responsibilities, possibilities, and expectations for herself as a student, as an employee, or
as a parent” (2001, p. 5). His research links these different developmental levels, or “ways of knowing,” with different preferences and responses to ESL instruction. Similar to the “task-oriented” students in Tercanlioglu’s study (2004), the students that Kegan (2001) identified as at an “instrumental level” are primarily concerned with test performance, credit attainment, and the ability to perform learning tasks correctly. However, Kegan (2001) found that students at the highest developmental level of self-authorization “took greater responsibility for their learning both inside and outside the classroom” and were thus more motivated (p. 12). We can surmise that ESL students who have taken ownership of their learning by creating their own expectations of achievement may have stronger motivation and persistence. Kegan (2001) suggests pedagogical and programmatic designs that support and promote students to the advanced developmental level of self-authorization. Doing so may heighten students’ internal motivation which may result in higher rates of persistence and performance.

The studies outlined in this section provide insight into the unique reasons behind various levels of ESL student motivation and persistence. My study investigates how and to what extent NCESL programs in California community colleges implement pedagogy and services to respond to students’ motivational needs so that they persist and perform towards successful matriculation.

ESL Students’ Barriers to Success

Whether ESL students’ motivation is high or low, most all of them confront a myriad of barriers as they attempt to learn English. These barriers must also be considered as educators seek to address the special needs of ESL learners as basic skills
students. This section outlines literature that investigated external and internal barriers that impede not only motivation and persistence, but also success in English acquisition.

**External barriers.** External forces that impede ESL student success include unemployment, underpaid jobs, layoffs, inflexible work schedules, childcare and domestic issues, social services requirements, and ESL program limitations (Ramsey, 1992; Zacharakis et al., 2011). For example, California community college programs often expect NCESL students to attend classes on a “full-time” schedule, which the state defines as 12 hours a week, due to funding apportionment that is based on student seat time. Noncredit students who have jobs and/or children cannot always devote 12 or more hours of time per week to instruction. Even the average credit student does not spend 12 hours per week in a California community college classroom (CCCCO, 2013). Policy and program expectations of noncredit students may be unreasonable considering that these students do not receive financial aid and many must work.

In response to external obstacles, studies call for ESL programs to provide mentoring programs, counseling, tutoring, bilingual support, flexible scheduling, childcare, and instructional technology and resources in order to better support students (Lambert, 2008; Menard-Warwick, 2004; Razfar & Simon, 2011; Zacharakis, 2011). Recommendations such as these have existed for over 20 years, when Ramsey and Robyn (1992) conducted a two-year qualitative case study of 600 adult immigrant ESL students at post-secondary schools in both Los Angeles and Miami to examine program components that hindered or supported student success. The students in this study reported how student services such as those listed above, in combination with ESL instruction, were critical in order for them to commit and succeed in their ESL learning.
**Internal barriers.** In addition to external barriers, ESL students enter the classroom with internal barriers that relate to self-esteem, self-worth, and anxiety (Campbell et al., 1994; Kegan, 2011; Mernard-Warwick, 2004; Zacharakis et al., 2011). As we have seen, Latina mothers in Mernard-Warwick’s (2004) study had a low sense of self-worth as ESL students until they were able to align their ESL learning with their families’ expectations of them as wives and mothers dedicated to raising their children.

Zacharakis et al. (2011) further identified lack of discipline, fear, anxiety, and the inability to balance the demands of life as some of the psychological internal barriers that can impede ESL student success in adult education centers. Zacharakis et al. (2011) used focus groups to identify reasons why immigrants participated in adult education classes and those elements of programs that created success. The study found that persistence in ESL was most affected by students’ ability to balance positive and negative forces, the school’s level of support in promoting student self-efficacy, the establishment of realistic and attainable goals, and the opportunity for students to assess progress towards these goals. These elements promote student empowerment and positive self-perception, which, as supported by Kegan’s (2001) and Menard-Warwick’s (2004) studies, lead to increased motivation and persistence. Zacharakis et al. (2011) found that ESL students like “family-like centers where friendships were developed,” i.e., cohort-based programs, and noted that “the resulting relational networks strengthened student self-perception, perseverance, and retention” (p. 92). Thus, we see the importance of cohort models as an effective program design that can help minimize the multiple internal barriers that have been shown to interfere with ESL student success.
The unintended impact of ESL programs on student success. Several studies reveal ways in which ESL programs may unintentionally exacerbate the internal and external factors that impede student motivation and success as described in the previous sections (Kanno & Varghese, 2010; O’Donnell & Tobbell, 2007). These studies, though not specific to community college programs, are relevant in that they suggest that student learning is dependent on their environment and their sense of community, identity, and belonging. The studies found that students needed more than just language learning; they needed support from their programs in developing self-efficacy and self-identifying as students so that they could succeed with a minimal number of constraints.

O’Donnell and Tobbell’s (2007) qualitative study of adult student experiences in a peripheral higher education re-entry program revealed important concerns in students’ sense of belonging. Although the study was conducted at a university in the UK, it is relevant to this review because it explored student perceptions as basic skills students who were not yet eligible to participate in college-level education. Though the students reported an overall positive experience with the access program, in terms of belonging, some students felt that they were going in the “back door” and “maybe shouldn’t really be there” (p. 325). One adult re-entry student stated, “It is like you are not [the university’s] friend, you are [the university’s] acquaintance” (p. 318). Perhaps NCESL students in California community colleges share some of these perceptions as they participate in off-site ESL programs, some with the anticipation of transferring onto a central, “credit” campus.

Kanno and Varghese (2010) found similar themes in their study of ESL students’ experiences as they transitioned from a peripheral ESL program into a university
environment. Surveys from 10 ESL classes and interview data from 33 participants showed that due in part to structural constraints, students experienced self-doubt and questioned their sense of legitimacy, which hindered their ability to perform once they matriculated from ESL into mainstream classes (Kanno & Varghese, 2010). The students often spoke of experiencing intimidation and self-doubt, exacerbated by their language challenges. These studies show that students in off-site adult education programs, as is the case in many noncredit programs, often struggle with a sense of marginalization, both geographically and in terms of identity as students, which can impede their transitions into college-level programs (Kanno & Varghese, 2010; O’Donnell & Tobbell, 2007).

Similarly, off-site noncredit programs, referred to as truncated designs, were shown to be least effective in matriculating students into mainstream programs in a study by Ignash (1995), which will be described later in this review.

These studies reveal that noncredit programs may be engaging in exclusionary practices that interfere with their mission to matriculate and transition their students. Kanno and Varghese (2010) and O’Donnell and Tobbell (2007) reveal important factors for programs to consider when promoting noncredit student learning and preparedness for matriculation into credit programs. To address these negative student transitional experiences, programs must consider “a more comprehensive set of educational policies that address (students’) limited social, cultural, and linguistic capital and the structural barriers that block their access to four year institutions” (Kanno & Varghese, 2010, p. 324). What negative transitional student experiences do NCESL students face within the California community college system specific to matriculation, and how are some NCESL program designs and policies being implemented to address these?
Policy Constraints in Noncredit Programs

Given the barriers discussed above, noncredit programs must take steps to accommodate the instructional and student support needs of their ESL students. On one hand, noncredit programs provide many benefits to students, such as free tuition, multiple locations, open access, and most importantly, matriculation opportunities (CCCCO, 2006; Grubb et al., 2003). On the other hand, there is a “dark side” to noncredit that can hinder student progress; in California, this stems from the state’s reduced funding policies for noncredit education (Creswell & Crandall, 2007; Grubb, 2003). This section describes funding and status issues that can impede the effectiveness on NCESL programs in promoting student success.

A significant impediment to noncredit programs is the reduced funding that it receives from the state compared to credit programs, which the Academic Senate of California Community Colleges describes as “inequitable treatment of noncredit students and programs” (ASCCC, 2009, p.12). This inequitable funding results in “inferior services” which disadvantage noncredit programs and students in multiple ways (ASCCC, 2009, p.12). Colleges with large numbers of NCESL students often lack the support and educational services that are necessary to sufficiently meet student needs (Blumenthal, 2002; Szelenyi, 2002). Specifically, noncredit funding policies influence program and curricular design in ways that may impede matriculation rates (Ignash, 1995; Kanno, 2010).

The Research and Planning Group (2007) states that noncredit community college programs need to acquire funding in order to implement the best practices leading to high achievement for all basic skills students, regardless of whether they enroll in credit or
noncredit programs. Considering the complex needs of ESL basic skills students as described previously, noncredit programs face major challenges in serving these students with reduced funding and resources (ASCCC, 2009; Blumenthal, 2002; CCCCO, 2006; Grubb, 2003). Reduced funding for noncredit programs also results in insufficient numbers of full-time faculty, counselors, classrooms, and instructional technology equipment, as well as difficulty in tracking progress (Blumenthal, 2002; Grubb, 2003; Ignash, 1995; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002). Therefore, NCESL students and programs are typically not in an environment that the research has shown to be most effective for success.

Limited noncredit funding also results in a lack of noncredit program status institution-wide. One reason for this stems from the reduced numbers of noncredit full-time faculty members, resulting in limited advocacy for noncredit programs in community college governance and institutional planning committees (ASCCC, 2009). The number of full-time faculty members has been identified as the “best investment a college can make in its students’ success” and correlates with increased rates of student completion (ASCCC, 2009, p. 13). However, full-time faculty comprises only 5% of all faculty in noncredit programs (ASCCC, 2009, p. 14). The few full-time faculty members have large workloads, averaging 25 hours a week in classroom teaching (ASCCC, 2009). These large workloads make it difficult for faculty to participate in course preparation, evaluations of student work, and program assessments; thus, the lack of full-time faculty weakens the academic integrity of noncredit programs (ASCCC, 2009; Blumenthal, 2002; Grubb, 2003; Ignash, 1995). The fact that overall 95% of faculty in California community college noncredit programs are adjunct instructors, who are not available to
students outside of the classroom and cannot commit to full participation in program assessment and development, also contributes to the lower status of these programs. At some colleges, there is no dedicated noncredit full-time faculty at all; their programs are “run by adjuncts.” How have NCESL programs with limitations such as these been able to serve their students?

The literature calls for reformed noncredit policy and practices that will allow programs to better serve students, especially for those who seek matriculation (ASCCC, 2009; Becker, 2010; Blumenthal, 2002; Grubb, 2003; Ignash, 1995; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; O’Donnell & Tobbell, 2007; Ramsey & Robyn, 1992; Seymour, 2009; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002; Zacharakis et al., 2011). Understanding which elements of noncredit programs are most significantly linked to student success and matriculation will direct the appropriate reforms to be taken. My study hopes to identify what these specific program elements for success are and how they are practiced and sustained despite policy constraints. With this information, I hope to inform policy changes that may result in significant adjustments to noncredit program designs that have been empirically shown to increase ESL student matriculation.

**Elements of Successful ESL Programs**

Throughout the research described above, authors make recommendations for effective ESL program designs. Some of the themes that recur are the importance of cohorts, mentoring, student-teacher relationships, and curriculum that is relevant to students’ lives (Becker, 2011; Kegan, 2001; Labov, 1998; Menard-Warwick, 2004; Ramsey et al., 1992; Seymour, 2009; Zacharakis et al., 2011).
Delivering instruction in programs based on student cohorts has an impact on student bonding, motivation and persistence, as noted in several studies (Kegan, 2001; Labov, 1998; Menard-Warwick, 2004; Ramsey et al., 1992; Zacharikis et al., 2011). Kegan (2001) described cohorts as “dynamic transitional growth spaces that helped learners make good use of each other by providing both the challenge that encouraged learners to grow and the support they needed in order to meet those challenges” (p. 15). Cohorts, he states, help ESL students feel more confident when speaking English inside and outside of the classroom, which is necessary for language acquisition to occur. Zacharikis et al. (2011) found that cohorts empower students by helping them collaboratively negotiate a multitude of barriers such as those that we have described in this review. In addition to cohorts, studies discuss the importance of student-teacher relationships in motivating ESL students to succeed. Similar to the “family-like centers” of cohorts, Zacharakis et al. (2011) found that ESL student relationships with teachers who “inspire, encourage, and give hope” are critical for student success (p. 93). We see that positive, ongoing student-student as well as student-teacher relationships contribute to successful ESL learning. These themes of community and relationships linking to student success recur in other studies that emphasize the importance of a “community of practice,” which are described later in this review.

Another element of successful programs is relevant curriculum. For example, Mernard-Warwick’s (2004) study supports teaching English in the context of students’ life narratives so that “students can learn from each other and perhaps be inspired to implement small changes in their own lives based on their classmates’ examples” (p. 309). Similarly, Becker (2011) highlighted the need for “relevant and insightful” ESL
curriculum that incorporates topics related to self-identity, motivation, and goals (p. 23). Providing ESL curriculum that is contextualized within students’ vocational goals is also shown to promote student persistence and success (Kim, 2011; Lambert, 2008; Ramsey et al., 1992; Tercaglionu, 2004; Zacharakis et al., 2011).

Though these studies are useful in informing general adult education ESL program design, they are not focused specifically on NCESL student matriculation out of NCESL and into credit or workforce training programs. Research is needed to explore factors in NCESL community programs which relate to an increase in student matriculation into more advanced types of study once their ESL learning is completed. While there are multiple reports with recommendations for “best practices” that promote matriculation, there is a scarcity of studies that examine how NCESL programs should be designed and administered to advance students into degree and certificate bearing credit programs (Becker, 2011, Crandall & Creswell, 2007, Ignash, 1995).

**Impact of Community College ESL Curricular Designs on Matriculation**

If the core mission of noncredit is to serve as gateways for student matriculation into credit programs, it is important to understand in what ways a variety of curricular designs contribute to that end, as Ignash did in 1995. This study included document review and structured interviews of 31 state education policy personnel and 26 community college deans, researchers and directors of ESL credit and noncredit programs in six different states. Her findings reveal four different types of program designs: truncated design, academic design, comprehensive design, and credit design. These designs were evaluated in terms of their contribution to matriculation.
The truncated design, which offers beginning and intermediate ESL courses at noncredit, off-site locations, was found to be the least effective in “heating up” students towards matriculation (Ignash, 1995). This finding reflects those of Kanno and Varghese (2010) and O’Donnell and Tobbel (2007), who identified the unintended negative impacts of peripheral programs on matriculating students’ motivation and success. In contrast, the comprehensive design, which offers a wide range of both credit and NCESL, from pre-literacy to advanced levels, appeared to be the strongest for heating up NCESL students (Ignash, 1995). In this design, Credit ESL, in which most students are enrolled, is housed in an academic division, and the faculty teach in a variety of academic programs. Ignash’s (1995) finding that comprehensive designs result in higher matriculation rates is supported by the more current study by Razfar and Simon (2011). Razfar and Simon (2011) evaluated Latino student matriculation pathways from credit ESL into mainstream college-level courses at a California community college and found that the great majority who transitioned were concurrently enrolled in both ESL and a content course. These studies give some evidence that matriculation is supported when faculty in both ESL and other content areas are involved in educating ESL students.

The remaining two designs identified in Ignash’s (1995) study are the academic design and the credit design. In the academic design, only the very beginning level of ESL is offered as noncredit and all other ESL is offered as credit via academic divisions. Similar to the comprehensive design, the faculty in academic programs also teach in other disciplines, such as speech, English, or reading. In the last design, the credit design, all ESL courses are offered as credit courses, and special bridge programs are implemented to help ESL students transition into regular college classes. Regardless of program
design, Ignash (1995) found that community colleges are more instrumental than K-12 adult education systems in advancing ESL adult learners into higher education, and she called for improved policies to recognize and support these community college programs.

In a recent study specific to NCESL programs in California community colleges, Becker (2011) found that noncredit matriculation requires support from the entire “community of practice,” including administrators, staff, and teachers from both credit and noncredit (p. 23). As described in the previous section, it is evident that ESL students respond well to positive, nurturing relationships with each other and with their teachers. Including both credit and noncredit administrators and staff as part of a communicative and collaborative network also appears to be essential, and is also evidenced by Ignash’s (1995) finding that comprehensive ESL program designs, which are founded on such networks, are most effective in advancing students towards matriculation. Becker (2011) also identified the need for ample communication to students via an integration of instructional and support services about what this network looks like, how students can access the support it offers, and how it connects to the educational system as a whole. Furthermore, she found that direct articulation agreements, such as bridge programs that provide incentives, which are also founded on collaboration and communication between credit and noncredit practitioners, can double the matriculation rates for students (Becker, 2010). Thus, we see how a community of practice is a consistent and long-standing theme in many of the recommendations for strong, matriculation-focused ESL programs.

The empirical studies by Ignash (1995), Becker (2011), and Rafzar and Simon (2011) reveal certain program practices that support matriculation, and similar practices
have also been identified as “effective” by multiple statewide and national reports (Chisman & Creswell, 2007; CSS/RPGroup, 2007; Seymour, 2009). These reported practices include the integration of ESL curriculum with college preparation, co-enrollment in noncredit and credit programs, vocational ESL (VESL) offerings, and specialized counseling systems. What other reported effective practices can also be empirically linked to strong student matriculation? Are there some additional practices that have gone unnoticed or unshared which can also be empirically shown to support matriculation?

**Gaps in the Literature**

This literature review uncovered a number of gaps in the literature and calls for additional research that support the need for the present study. Below we discuss the lack of empirical studies on NCESL matriculation in contrast to the extensive non-empirical literature on “best” or “effective” practices. We also discuss the need for examining how NCESL program assessment practices influence program effectiveness in producing strong matriculation rates.

**Building on previous studies.** Only two previous studies—Ignash (1995) and Becker (2011)—speak directly to the research questions of this study. We can build on the findings presented by Ignash (1995) and Becker (2011) respectively by looking at the effectiveness of various noncredit program designs in today’s context and by examining in more detail how programs implement communities of practices and bridge programs.

Ignash (1995) evaluated a variety of community college credit and NCESL programs to identify program designs and to evaluate how effectively they facilitate student matriculation. If this study were to occur at this time, nearly 15 years later, in a
different policy context, would we find the same results? The present study explores the types of NCESL community college programs in California and how they differ in their impact on matriculation.

Additionally, Becker (2011) identifies the importance of bridge programs between noncredit and credit ESL programs, as well as communities of practice and communication with students about educational systems in California community colleges. This study empirically explores whether such practices relate to higher rates of matriculation.

**Following up on “best practices” recommendations.** While empirical studies of NCESL matriculation are scarce, a number of reports issued by California and national educational agencies describe effective practices that support NCESL matriculation. While some of these effective practices echo the findings by Ignash (1995) and Becker (2011), the reports call for research to empirically examine these practices. For example, the Center for Student Success of the Research and Planning Group (2007) identifies a lack of evidence-based research regarding the transitioning of basic skills adult education students into credit-bearing college programs. Seymour (2009) identifies the need for research on innovative program strategies and effective curricular and articulation designs in adult education programs in California community colleges. Likewise, Blumenthal (2002) identifies the need for empirical studies to determine which kinds of community college programs best produce ESL learning and program outcomes. This study seeks to provide empirical findings that can further validate best practices throughout the state as well as to explore how these practices are being conducted within
the political parameters specific to NCESL programs in today’s California community college system.

Assessment. Data collection and assessment in adult education are uncommon; hence, there is a need to strengthen and use data in noncredit programs, particularly in those related to basic skills (Bailey, 2012). Marsh et al. (2006) have called for research on what kinds of data collection methods, analyses, and interpretations best contribute to improved educational outcomes in community colleges (Marsh et al., 2006). Specifically, research is needed on how NCESL programs in California community colleges produce and respond to data on matriculation rates of noncredit students into credit programs (CSSRP, 2009). There is little, if any, research on this subject. Creswell and Crandall (2007) point to the “paucity of fundamentally-needed research, especially longitudinal research” on NCESL student outcomes. Creswell and Crandall (2007) state that the lack of assessment measures is a “major structural problem in the adult ESL field” (p. 137), and that many programs are “flying blind” in trying to design what works best for their students (p. 137). In California, the Academic Senate (2004) reports a significant lack of information regarding assessment, placement, and effectiveness measurements for the state’s 400,000 noncredit students. Noncredit tracking is lax yet necessary in order to not only improve student success and matriculation, but also to inform policy changes that can support the effectiveness of noncredit programs (Bailey, 2012; Blumenthal, 2002; Center for Student Success, 2007; CSSRP, 2009; Ignash, 1995; Ramsey & Robyn, 1992; Seymour, 2009). Specifically, Seymour (2009), after reviewing recommendations from 40 sources, compiled numerous research questions, most all of which relate to NCESL data and program design. This study seeks to contribute to the
field by identifying how programs generate and respond to data on student matriculation rates in order to evaluate program effectiveness, inform practice and program design, and demonstrate accountability.

**Conceptual Framework**

This study was conducted within the theoretical framework of program theory of action and logic modeling. Theory of action is the understanding of how activities that are designed and enacted within a program lead to the expected program outcomes (Alkin, 2011). A logic model is a graphic representation of a program’s theory (Alkin, 2011). Depicting a program’s theory in a logic model allows us to see “the logic behind what a program intends to do” (Alkin, 2011, p. 78). The logic model helps us to see the cyclical aspects of seemingly linear programs, the interrelationships between the phases of the model and their linkages, and the way in which the model, or system, is equal to more than the sum of its parts (UW-EX, 2012).

The logic model includes an assessment segment that uses the evaluation of the outcomes to inform new and improved inputs. The evaluation piece allows programs to measure results so that they can correct and learn from mistakes and reward and sustain success. It also allows programs to demonstrate accountability.

This study’s research questions can be categorized according to the phases of a program logic model, as seen in Figure 2.1 below. For example, program design and policy reflect the program’s inputs. Instructional and student support are reflected in the program’s activities. ESL learning and matriculation are the program’s intended outputs, whereas eventual degree attainment and employment are the program’s (and the institution’s) intended outcomes. Measuring matriculation rates occurs in the evaluation
phase and informs the inputs. This study will use the logic model to identify which aspects of a NCESL program produce strong matriculation, and what kinds of assessment practices inform matriculation success.

Figure 2.1. Logic Model

Note. Logic Model based on Alkin (2011)

Summary

As we have seen, the literature discusses the unique learning needs of California’s growing ESL basic skills students and the challenges they face in persisting through and matriculating out of noncredit community college ESL programs. It describes some of these challenges, or barriers, as student-generated, program-generated, and policy-generated. The review describes both the importance of NCESL community college programs for immigrant ESL learners, as well as the specific political challenges and negative student experiences that these programs must overcome in order to meet their students’ needs. Despite the obstacles, the review also describes how programs have
been successful though the use of certain program designs and practices. The review concludes with gaps in the literature which show the need for more current, empirical studies specific to California’s community college NCESL programs in order to confirm best practices and reveal new ones for promoting student matriculation. Lastly, it describes the importance of assessing NCESL programs and the need to study how assessment is effectively used in these programs to improve matriculation. The next chapter outlines the methodology that was used in this study to address some of these gaps in the literature.
Chapter III

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore how NCESL programs facilitate student matriculation into credit programs in California community colleges. The areas to discover include how NCESL programs in California community colleges implement program design and policy to create and sustain student matriculation, as well as how these programs effectively produce data on matriculation rates. This research revealed patterns or commonalities among program designs and policies that promote matriculation. The findings from this study may be used to improve local and state noncredit policies and programs.

The research questions are as follows:

1. How do NCESL state-level advocates view the impact of state policy on NCESL student progression and matriculation in California community colleges?

2. What program designs and articulation agreements best support ESL noncredit to credit matriculation?

3. How do NCESL programs produce and use assessment data to inform and improve matriculation practices?

4. What methods of tracking NCESL progress and matriculation are most effective in demonstrating program accountability?

In this chapter, I will describe the research tradition and the setting of the study. I will then explain the selection of participants and data sources, as well as the instruments and procedures that were implemented. After a thorough description of the data
collection and analytical methods, there will be a discussion of my role as researcher and how my beliefs, assumptions, and biases relate to the study and its findings, followed by a chapter summary.

**Research Design and Tradition**

This was a mixed-methods study that aimed to reveal insights into NCESL education and to identify problems that may influence, change, or improve the practice of noncredit program leaders and policymakers (Peshkin, 1993). Noncredit education carries unique sets of complex characteristics that must be clarified and understood in order to result in change (Peshkin, 1993). Furthermore, the qualitative portion of this study should bring forth a deeper heuristic understanding of this social issue as viewed by the participants -- those who lead the noncredit education efforts in the California community college system (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The findings should provide NCESL programs with a better awareness of factors that affect successful student matriculation. In addition, this study may be able to open new areas of exploration for further research.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods in a two-phase exploratory design. The first qualitative phase of this study implemented semi-structured interviews with a small set of participants. The second phase was a quantitative design that implemented a survey to collect data from a large pool of respondents. The data gathered from the first two phases were evaluated against a list generated by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office of NCESL matriculation rates into credit programs per college. One rationale for the mixed methods approach is that it contributes to the triangulation of the study. It provides combined evidence which results
in a “three-dimensional” perspective (Gorard & Taylor, 2004). Mixed methods is also appropriate for developing a theory of action for NCESL programs in order to understand what program inputs and activities result in desirable outcomes. “Combined approaches can be particularly useful when background theory for an investigation is minimal, and …the main purpose(s) of the study is to generate theory” (Gorard & Taylor, 2004, p. 7). In some cases, it is possible to “confirm and explain, verify and generate theory, all at the same time (Gorard & Taylor, 2004, p. 7).

Mixed methods has been identified as a “key element in the improvement of social science, including educational research” (Gorard & Taylor, 2004). In the case of this study, I expect the findings to inform policy makers for NCESL community college programs; Gorard and Taylor (2004) state that mixed methods has a “greater impact” than single method research and is “very persuasive” to policymakers (p. 7). This impact is important because most literature on NCESL has been presented through a qualitative lens; this study will be unique in its implementation of a mixed methods approach, perhaps bringing new insight to NCESL education that only mixed methods can achieve.

**Research Setting and Context**

The overall setting for this study was the California community college system comprised of 72 districts and 112 colleges, the majority of which included NCESL programs (CCCCO, 2013). It is the largest higher education system in the nation, serving 2.4 million students (CCCCO, 2013). Colleges are located in all regions of the state, with the largest districts located in major urban areas, such as Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco.
The setting for the first, qualitative phase of the study was state-level organizations in California that produce literature, reports, and data on noncredit basic skills and/or NCESL programs in community colleges. These organizations also advocate for noncredit basic skills education in the community colleges and often influence state-level policies that directly impact these programs. These organizations include the Chancellor’s Office for California Community Colleges (CCCCO), the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, and the Association of Community and Continuing Education. The state-level participants for this portion of the study were selected from each of these organizations. The setting for the survey in the quantitative portion of the study was all noncredit ESL programs in the California community college system that existed during the 2011-2012 academic year (CCCCO, 2013).

**Research Sample and Data Sources**

This section outlines the study’s sampling strategies, the characteristics of the sample, ethical issues, and data sources.

**Sampling Strategies**

The participants in this study included state-level advocates for, as well as institution-level directors and leaders of, NCESL programs in California community colleges. I conducted semi-structured interviews and a survey, respectively, with these professionals to gather data. Because the study was aligned with the efforts of these colleagues, that of supporting and improving the quality of NCESL, there was little difficulty in securing their cooperation. In my 13 years of experience working in NCESL in California community colleges, I have participated in state-level events led by the
advocates I interviewed, and similarly, have developed contacts with division chairs of NCESL programs, who were included in the survey portion of the study.

For the first qualitative phase of the study, I employed purposeful sampling to identify state-level leaders and advocates for NCESL education in the California community college system. Specifically, I used reputational sampling to select five individual participants, who often present at conferences, plenaries, and workshops, serving as active liaisons between practitioners and policymakers. In some cases, they headed state level committees, task forces, and initiatives related to this field. I made contact with several during the process of developing plans for the study, and they expressed interest in the importance of the study. Using reputational sampling to identify state-level advocates was appropriate because these participants are widely respected as key liaisons between the colleges and the system and policy offices. They are the few professionals who have worked directly with policymakers; therefore, they were able to provide insights into the dynamics between policy and local practices.

The second quantitative phase of the study targeted the NCESL program heads for each of the 62 colleges with NCESL programs in 2011-2012, as reported by the CCCCO; these heads were generally division chairs or program directors. The sampling frame encompassed all individuals in these positions in NCESL programs in the California community college system that could be identified using the CCCCO list. These individuals oversaw the design and implementation of the programs’ features to maintain and support the programs’ viability. These individuals were identifiable through the colleges’ websites, professional directories, or personal contacts. These participants were
the most appropriate for the survey due to their day-to-day involvement and leadership in the programs.

The actual sample used in the study was volunteer-based and included all of the leaders who chose to submit responses to the survey. Participants from 31 of the 62 programs surveyed responded. After discarding three unusable submissions, the resulting response rate was 28 out of 62, or 45%. These 28 responses represented 15,8978 students, or 85%, of all NCESL enrollment in the California community college system in 2011-2012, as reported by the CCCCO. In some cases, I had already communicated with these professionals at conferences or via email communications regarding issues in our field. I needed to contact other faculty who had working relationships with these leaders to help me make or re-establish connections. In order to ensure a high response rate, I contacted these individuals in advance via e-mail, by phone, or in person at local conferences to inform them of the research study and the online survey that they would be receiving and to ask them to cooperate by responding to the survey.

**Sample Characteristics**

The sample characteristics in the two phases were an ethnically diverse female and male pool, most all of whom have a Master’s or doctorate degree with ten or more years of experience in the field. The sample of local program and state NCESL leaders all shared the characteristics of a professional commitment to advancing the field of NCESL education in California community colleges. Many have worked in the field and within these roles throughout their careers. In most cases, this group was passionate and dedicated, seasoned by the challenges of leading NCESL programs within noncredit policies over the course of many years.
Ethical Issues

The invitation e-mails and the consent form for interviewees made clear that all participation was voluntary and described potential ways that it could contribute to the "larger professional conversations" in the field of NCESL in California community colleges (Beck et al., 2001, p.53). I ensured that the participants understood the purpose and goals of the study and how the results would be used (Creswell, 2005), reminding them that they were free to quit the study or decline answering questions at any time without any consequences. I also disclosed that interviewees may feel uncomfortable when describing issues related to specific administrators, colleges, organizations, or policymakers. I constantly considered ethical issues that could compromise the participants' privacy. To protect confidentiality, the data was summarized so that no particular individual was identifiable. Not only did this technique make the study more "consumable," it protected the participants (Beck et al., 2001).

For the first phase qualitative portion of the study, the research invitation email served as my initial way of contacting potential participants, to describe the study and its purpose, and to provide my contact information in case of any questions. An informed consent form, which contained the standards that are required in CSUN’s IRB process, was also provided to outline the legalities and participant rights that accompany research studies. The consent form, which required the participants’ signatures, protected the interviewed participants while describing the procedures involved in their participation. To minimize the risk to the Phase 1 participants, I used pseudonyms for them as well as for any colleges or organizations they might have named or been affiliated with. In addition to these measures, I remained “open to co-constructing a set of ethical
guidelines” during the actual interview process in case new ethical considerations arose (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 155).

For the second phase quantitative portion of the study, the research invitation was emailed to introduce the online survey, to describe the study and its purpose, and to provide my contact information. These participants were also provided an informed consent form to outline the legalities and participant rights. The invitation explained that though the survey was anonymous in that the participants would not identify themselves or their positions, it would require that they identify their institutions. This identification was necessary in order to link survey responses with state-reported data during the statistical analysis. However, once that section of analysis was completed, the data that contained any identifying factors of the institutions was stored and secured separately from any other subsequent analyses and reporting findings. Furthermore, no names of individuals or institutions were or will be used in the dissertation or in any subsequent reports, presentations, or publications. The data from both phases of the study were kept stored in my personal laptop which is password protected. A password protected copy of the data was also stored in a portable hard drive in my office.

**Data Sources**

Data sources included transcriptions from the Phase 1 interviews and responses from the Phase 2 online surveys, as well as NCESL matriculation reports generated by the CCCCO. These reports included two parts. The first part listed the number of students in each of the 62 NCESL programs who participated in 30 or more hours of NCESL instruction during the 2011-2012 academic year. The second report listed the numbers of these students who entered into a credit course the following year, delineated
by Career and Technical Education (CTE), General Education (GE), and total combined. However, this second list was comprised of only 56 colleges. For six colleges, including some of the largest in the state, there was no method of tracking NCESL students once they entered into credit due to the fact that their NCESL student identification numbers were replaced with Social Security numbers. Matriculation rates were calculated for general education, career technical education, and total matriculation. Rates were calculated by dividing the number of NCESL students in 2011-2012 who enrolled in a credit course in CTE, GE, or CTE+GE in 2012-2013 by the number of NCESL students enrolled in 30 or more hours of NCESL instruction in 2011-2012. Rates were calculated for all 56 programs. This method produced conservative matriculation rates for NCESL students into credit in that they only reflect student transition within a two-semester time period and do not take into account any NCESL students who may take longer, more than two semesters, before transitioning into credit.

**Instruments and Procedures**

The first instrument was the semi-structured interview protocol used in Phase 1 of the study for the interviews conducted with five state-level NCESL leaders (see Appendix A). The interview protocol contained an introduction, a series of main questions, exploratory questions, follow-up questions, and a closing statement (Seidman, 2006). The interview questions drew from themes in the literature and focused on participants’ perceptions of the impact of noncredit policies and legislation on NCESL matriculation, such as funding allocations, the role of community colleges in ESL adult education, and data reporting. Questions also included such topics as NCESL curriculum, student services, program design, matriculation efforts, and assessments.
The protocol included questions that had the participants draw on personal observations and experiences and tell stories; these strategies allowed me to hear their inner voice vs. their public voice (Seidman, 2006).

In the second phase of the study, an online survey was used with the sampling frame of 56 NCESL program directors (see Appendix B). In order to maximize the response rate, the survey design primarily included closed-ended questions that were simple, unambiguous, and answerable without any added burden on the participant to seek out answers to questions they may not have known. The questions were numbered, grouped and labeled with headings according to topic, and a clear set of instructions were provided (Brown, 2003). The survey included questions on general program information as well as more specific items that the literature has revealed to be critical in NCESL program design. The validity of the survey was maximized by basing the questions on the literature review and linking them to the research questions (Brown, 2003). These questions encompassed factors such as program physical location, level of faculty collaboration, and implementation of momentum points, such as a sequential certificate program. Some of the Phase 2 survey topics were refined and re-organized as a result of any noteworthy factors and themes that arose from the Phase 1 interviews.

Validity was also maximized by presenting response options that were easy to understand and that were appropriate measures of the concept (Brown, 2003). The survey was pilot-tested with a number of individuals who work in NCESL programs, such as assistant chairs or full-time faculty who were not included in the final sample. Their familiarity with NCESL programs allowed them to provide valuable feedback on
the survey’s validity. The survey was revised and improved based on the pilot study feedback.

**Justification of Instruments**

The interview and survey questions related to the research questions, eliciting feedback on NCESL program design and assessment features specific to those that relate to matriculation and articulation agreements with credit programs. The interviews and surveys also elicited feedback on the impact of local and state policies on the effectiveness of matriculation pathways. The topics in the interview and survey were grounded in the literature as relevant for student success and matriculation; these topics included bridge programs, curriculum, cohorts, communities of practice, and allocation of resources.

The Phase 1 interview protocol was designed to gather qualitative data on how state-level leaders viewed the impact of state policy on NCESL education in the California community college system. It also explored how these leaders believed these programs could best demonstrate accountability for student success in today’s educational and political context. The interview protocols were appropriate because they were centered on a substantive topic that the participants interacted with through a series of events and actions over time (Schram, 2006). Based on their experiences, the interviewees were able to contribute ideas and assumptions about successful programs; some of these ideas were reflected in the literature and therefore included in the survey. However, new themes emerged during the interviews that were translated into additional measurable variables for inclusion on the Phase 2 survey, such as institutional commitment and managed enrollment. The survey provided data that described NCESL
programs in the California community college system and that allowed for the identification of correlations between certain variables and matriculation rates.

Data Collection

This section describes the data collection methods and procedures that were used to conduct the interviews and the survey, as well as to obtain the necessary data from the CCCCO.

Interviews

To understand the experiences of NCESL program state-level leaders, I conducted semi-structured one to two hour-long interviews. I contacted the participants directly through e-mail or linkedin.com. I clearly communicated my role as researcher prior to my data collection, not as a community college faculty member and division chair of a NCESL program. I explained the purpose of my study and how the rights of the organization and participants would be respected and honored. Participants were interviewed at their worksites or at an off-site location, perhaps during a professional state conference. If all possibilities of meeting in person are exhausted, the interviews will be conducted by Skype. I greeted the person and shared with them the consent form. Upon answering any of their questions and getting their signatures, I used the interview protocol to guide the interview process. I recorded the interview and took notes when appropriate. Participants took part in this interview with the understanding that they were not required to answer every question and that they could quit at any time. These interviews were completed by early to mid-fall of 2013.

The interview protocol was designed to facilitate a line of inquiry that related to the research questions, including main questions, follow-up questions, and probes (Rubin
& Rubin, 2005). I asked participants about their experiences as state-level leaders for NCESL programs, their experiences with program design and policies, and some of the challenges they faced in these professional roles. The use of open-ended questions allowed the participants to “voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher” (Creswell, 2005, p. 214). The questions asked for details as well as depth; for example, a detail question may have asked for a description of a successful program, whereas a depth question may have asked about important changes that could be made (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 131). The combination of detail and depth questions allowed for “evidence and example” as well as “layers of meaning…and understanding” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The questions probed for nuance, or “subtlety of meaning” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 133) by avoiding simple yes/no answers; instead, questions and probes were phrased to elicit experiences. Elaborations and continuation probes were encouraged to bring richness to the interview, which contributed to the complexity of the responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

One specialized strategy that was used in the interview was a card sort; participants were given a set of responses, each listed separately on a notecard (or on a mailed sheet for those interviewed via Skype). The card sort approach allowed participants to rank their responses by arranging their cards in an order from most to least applicable to the question being asked. The card sort strategy worked well for ranking a large number of possible responses. Furthermore, it allowed the interviewer to experience the participants’ thinking as they went through the process of prioritizing their answers.
All questions in the interview were designed to exclude any assumptions or leading so that the researcher’s perspective had minimal impact on the participants’ responses. To further minimize the effect of the researcher on the participants, I focused on listening and was flexible throughout the interviews so that the conversation flowed naturally (Bernard, 1994). Questions dealing with opinions and complex topics were reserved for the end of the interview when comfort level was at its highest. The interview was recorded and password-protected on my laptop. I transcribed the interviews myself verbatim.

Survey

The survey was presented in an online format using surveymonkey.com. When emailing the survey to the participants, I included an introductory email to each of the 62 noncredit programs, addressed to the division chair or whoever I could identify as the person responsible for the program. The email outlined the purpose of my study and attempted to interest each participant in its purpose and usefulness. It also informed participants that the survey was anonymous; the participants would not be asked to include their names or positions in their responses. Included in the email was the informed consent form that participants were asked to review; it explained that by proceeding with the survey, the participants agreed to the terms in the consent form.

The survey contained 25 close-ended questions that most NCESL program leaders should be able to answer without having to do additional research on their programs. Answer choices were simple and brief and allowed for approximations rather than exact data-based responses. The questions were both factual and opinion-based, the latter reserved for later in the series of questions. Topics included questions on program
features, designs, structures, and practices, including those relating specifically to matriculation and assessments. These questions were based on findings described in the literature review as well as on some of the issues raised in Phase 1 of the study.

In order to maximize the response rate, the survey included an introduction that described how participants’ responses would contribute to the field. As an added incentive, respondents were offered the opportunity to receive a final report on how their program’s data fit in with the complete sample of responses. Over the next few weeks, I sent reminder emails to those individuals who did not respond to the survey. For those who did not respond to the reminder emails, I made calls to the NCESL program to leave a message or speak with the individual to ask for their response. In some cases, I contacted colleagues who either worked with or knew someone who worked at these colleges so that they could ask the individual to respond to the survey on my behalf. I also enlisted the help of the Association of Community and Continuing Education, of which many NCESL leaders are members, by having them forward my survey invitation and survey to their membership listserv. Regardless of these efforts, it became apparent that some of these colleges did not have an individual assigned to directly oversee the NCESL program, and so it was impossible to attain a response.

**State-wide Data**

The state-wide data was attained by submitting a written request to the CCCCO specifying the enrollment and matriculation numbers necessary to conduct the study. The CCCCO emailed the data on two different Excel documents: one for the enrollments in NCESL, and the other for the students who matriculated into credit. I attained written permission from the CCCCO to use this data as part of this study.
Data Analysis

During and subsequent to data collection, I employed analytical techniques to examine, organize, and confirm my findings. These techniques included analytical memos, coding and thematic analysis, and statistical analysis. In addition, steps were taken to maximize validity.

During all phases of the study, I kept analytical memos that served as a “running record of insights, hunches, hypotheses, discussions about the implications of codes” (Strauss, 1987, p. 110). I wrote continual memos throughout data collection and analysis to reflect on what I was seeing in the data. Thoughts and notations helped create “final integrative statements and writings” (Strauss, 1987, p. 110). Memo writing was particularly useful as it facilitated the inductive process of putting together causal relationships and conditions that relate to a theory. Analytical memos were kept separately from data so that interpretations and expansions were not conflated as recorded hard data.

Coding and Thematic Data Analysis

I began early data analysis during Phase 1 of data collection, seeking to identify preliminary concepts from the review of the literature, such as programs engaged in communities of practice and impacts of state policy that were to become theoretical codes. These became the initial coding categories, supplemented by additional categories that arose during the interviews. I opted to hand code the interview data for a close, hands-on experience; this also allowed for a general exploration of the data (Creswell, 2005). Throughout the coding process, I examined the codes for relationships and continued organizing them into these categories, at times re-naming categories, create
new ones, and re-categorize certain codes. The codes for these categories were selected to “reflect the interests of the intended audience,” in this case, NCESL policymakers and program leaders (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 238). For example, a code might be “funding” or “collaboration.”

Next, all interview material with the same code categories were grouped together. These groups were then compared to look for linkages between them, perhaps as similarities or as contradictions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The result became finalized categories that are “grounded in the data” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 234). I also identified significant themes, which often explain “how or why things happen” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 234). Themes arose as interviewees explained how or why matriculation occurs. Finally, the data was organized in “ways that help…formulate themes, refine concepts, and link them together to create a clear description or explanation of a … topic”, in this case, NCESL matriculation (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 251). Using the literature and the conceptual framework, the interpretations were displayed in graphic representations to facilitate deeper analysis.

**Statistical Analysis**

In Phase 2, the survey data was first analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify the number of programs reporting out on certain variables, such as how many offer NCESL programs off-site or how many have dedicated full-time faculty. These frequencies were then organized to reveal general tendencies, spreads of scores, and comparisons (Creswell, 2005) throughout the sample. These results are presented in Appendix C.
Next, inferential statistics were used to calculate relationships between these independent variables from survey results with the dependent variable of matriculation rates reported by the Chancellor’s Office for each institution. Some variables were measured for correlations with matriculation rates, while others were measured with a t-test to identify relationships with these rates. The analysis took into account the proportion of NCESL matriculating students to the size of the overall program rather than solely the raw numbers of matriculating students.

This mixed method analysis allowed for a two-pronged approach. The qualitative interview data revealed organizational factors from the state-level leaders that they believed impact matriculation. These factors, along with additional organizational factors from the literature, were then incorporated into the survey as measurable variables. The responses from the survey were cross-tabulated with matriculation rates to look for correlations and relationships. The results should provide policymakers and program leaders with empirical evidence about which organizational factors are associated with higher rates of NCESL matriculation into credit.

This combination of a qualitative approach followed by a quantitative approach creates a study that “explore[s] a phenomenon, identif[ies] themes, design[s] an instrument, and subsequently test[s] it” (Creswell, 2005, p. 516). In this study, the phenomenon is noncredit matriculation, and themes surrounding this issue were developed through the Phase 1 exploratory interviews, from which the researcher could “identify measures actually grounded in the data … from the study participants” (Creswell, 2005, p. 516). In Phase 2, the survey instrument was created to operationalize these measures, such as level of faculty collaboration and program designs. The test
occurred by correlating the survey responses with the dependent measure of matriculation rates, revealing relationships between them and to “refine and extend the qualitative findings,” which may lead to detailed and generalizable results (Creswell, 2005, p. 516). Thus, this mixed methods study explored the phenomenon of NCESL matriculation from multiple, triangulated perspectives which included identifying themes in both phases of the study and implementing the survey instrument and the statistical analysis test in the final phase. In doing so, perceptions of which and how certain NCESL program and policy variables impact matriculation were empirically tested against the hard data of state-reported matriculation rates.

**Validity**

Multiple measures were taken to ensure the validity of the statistical analysis, the survey and the interview protocol. In the statistical analysis, the matriculation rates were measured conservatively, as described in the limitations section below. The survey was shown to advisors and colleagues in the field to establish face validity; the questions were reasonable, understandable, and the answer scales were logical (Brown, 2005). The content of the survey was also validated by the literature review on which the survey topics were based. The survey’s reliability was established by ensuring that the questions had responses that allowed participants to answer accurately and that the rating selections were reliable measures (Brown, 2005). A survey pilot test was conducted with a colleague with prolonged experience in the field who was able to identify any poorly-formed questions or any other problems that may compromise validity (Brown, 2003).

The validity, or trustworthiness, of the qualitative phase of the study was also maximized for credibility, rigor, and usefulness (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). As in the
case of the survey, credibility was garnered through piloting the interview with experienced colleagues in the field. During the actual interviews, I continually monitored and reflected on my own biases and on my role so as to exclude as much subjectivity as possible. Additionally, thick detailed description of the participants and setting were recorded so that the context was carefully documented. The thick description contributed to the usefulness of the study in terms of its transferability to other settings (Creswell, 1998). The rigor of the qualitative phase of the study was established in its triangulation with the survey data and SSPS results. Rigor was also established by conducting peer debriefings, or colleague checks, once the interviews were completed; these peers guided me in my interpretations by asking critical questions to keep me objective and realistic (Creswell, 2002).

In reviewing data, I employed tactics to avoid analytical biases by preventing pitfalls that occur with holistic fallacies, elite bias, and going native (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For example, to avoid elite bias, I reminded myself that opinions of those in power are not necessarily more important or correct than those with less power or influence. To avoid going native, I reminded myself that certain groups adopt collective views on issues, but these widespread opinions do not hold more value and should not sway my perspectives. Lastly, in order to confirm my findings, I used some strategies such as testing out “if-then” statements and eliminating spurious relationships (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Role of the Researcher

I approached this study as a researcher who was eager to identify best practices that promote student matriculation in NCESL programs. In addition to my role as
researcher, I came to this study in my roles as a NCESL division chair, as an ESL teacher of 20 years, and as a faculty member of a community college. These roles created bias that might have affected my research collection, analysis, and interpretations (Peshkin, 1988).

I had biases as a researcher that stem from my my positionality, specifically based on my experience, education, and beliefs in providing quality ESL education. Because I have been an instructor of ESL and a passionate advocate of ESL learning for 20 years, I likely made many assumptions about what students need pedagogically and what makes for an effective program. As a division chair, I sometimes felt competitive, envious, or frustrated when seeing a program that seemed to be more successful than my own program. On the other hand, at times I felt a sense of superiority or authority when feeling that my program was “better” than the one I was researching. I had to be careful not to project these attitudes or evoke them in others when conducting my research.

As a researcher with strong beliefs about NCESL programs, I may have also jumped to conclusions about causes and effects that related to my research questions. For example, I may have been swift to blame policy for “unfairness” or inadequacy. I may have been quick to assume that programs need stronger institutional and state support. Excitement and anticipation to discover a new finding, or even a new theory, may have affected how I analyzed and interpreted data; I might have focused too much on something that was not significant and not enough on something that was.

**Strategies to Minimize Bias**

An effective strategy to minimize these biases and assumptions was the use of a reflective journal so that I could trace my own thought processes, not only for this study,
but for future ones (Watt, 2007). It was important for me to limit my comments and impulse to shape the data collection; I had to be a true listener and avoid drawing conclusions until it was time to analyze and interpret the data. I also used colleague checks and debriefings to validate my conclusions. I had several colleagues in my community of practice review my data to see if they concurred with my analyses and interpretations (Carlson, 2010).

**Summary**

In summary, this was a mixed-methods sequential exploratory design that implemented a qualitative phase to explore the research questions, followed by a quantitative phase that built on the first phase data by testing and verifying it for interpretation (Angell & Townsend, 2011). The study implemented a qualitative interview in its first phase with several state-level leaders in NCESL education. This phase explored the phenomenon of NCESL matriculation and policy while producing data that could be coded for themes. Some notable factors were translated into measurable variables to incorporate into the survey of the second quantitative phase, which was an online survey that was distributed to each NCESL program in the California community college system. The survey responses were also translated into measurable variables and then cross-tabulated with matriculation rates retrieved from the Chancellor’s Office Data Mart. This step suggested which or if certain organizational features and policy designs were relevant to matriculation rates. Throughout the study, I took measures to enhance the validity of the study and monitor my biases to ensure the value of the research process and study findings and results.
Chapter IV

Results and Findings

Introduction

The findings and results that are described in this chapter come from three data sources. The qualitative source is semi-structured interviews with five state-level leaders, past and present, who have advocated for NCESL programs through policy discussions and state-level committee work. Though all five have worked in similar state-level capacities, they have diverse professional backgrounds and experience. Their roles, along with their pseudonyms, are outlined in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonyms</th>
<th>Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toni</td>
<td>NCESL faculty member, now mid-level administrator, state level advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>NCESL faculty member, state-level advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Top level administrator of a very large noncredit program; not a previous faculty member; state level advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>NCESL faculty member; activist; state level advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis</td>
<td>Credit ESL faculty member; now mid-level administrator; NCESL state level advocate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the interviews, two quantitative sources were used in the study. First, a survey instrument produced 28 valid responses from NCESL program leaders representing 28 NCESL programs, or 158,978 (85%), NCESL students throughout the California community college system. The basic demographics of these 28 responding
colleges are displayed in Table 4.2. Second, the Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) provided data from which matriculation rates, also referred to as student transition rates, were calculated (as described in Chapter III) for a cohort of students that enrolled in 56 NCESL programs in the California community college system in the 2011-2012 academic year and entered a credit course in 2012-2013. The statistical analysis generated empirical data on associations between NCESL program characteristics/practices and NCESL student transition rates.

Table 4.2

Demographics of 28 Community Colleges Responding to Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern California</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central California</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern California</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(14%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,000 or less</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,001 – 10,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,001-15,000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,001-20,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,001 or more</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(14%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Minority Groups</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;20% Asian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;20% Hispanic</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(46%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Asian and Hispanic populations are reported to reflect probable immigrant and ESL ethnic groups. Data in table based on Pacheco (2012).

The quantitative data sources have two key limitations, as detailed in Chapter III. First, though 62 California community colleges offered NCESL in 2011-2012, the CCCC CO was only able to provide matriculation rates for 56 of the programs, as explained in Chapter III. A second limitation is the fact that not all of the 62 NCESL programs responded to the survey; 28 valid responses were received, resulting in a 45% response
rate. Despite these limitations, the programs responding to the survey served 85% of the NCESL student population; furthermore, this study provides useful descriptives of how NCESL programs are delivered statewide and the only known statistical analysis of matriculation rates as they relate to program practices and policies.

This chapter begins with a statewide overview of NCESL enrollment in the 62 NCESL programs and the matriculation rates of students transitioning out of the 56 NCESL programs into credit, followed by a statewide ranking of NCESL program characteristics that qualitative and quantitative analyses have shown to be associated with higher matriculation rates. As evidenced by these results and findings, institutional commitment emerges as a key factor in promoting NCESL student matriculation. This chapter first explores how participants believe institutions demonstrate their commitment to improving NCESL matriculation rates by providing full-time faculty, funding, and student support services to their NCESL programs. Next, the chapter describes participants’ view of best practices that NCESL programs enact on a program level to strengthen NCESL student matriculation. This section is followed by a description of how, based on participant responses, NCESL programs produce and evaluate student learning assessment data in order to improve program practices that promote matriculation. Finally, the chapter closes with a discussion of the impact of state policy and accountability expectations on NCESL programs and matriculation.

Overview of NCESL Enrollment, Matriculation Rates, and Program Characteristics

NCESL Enrollment and Matriculation Rates

In Table 4.3, we see that the average enrollment for a NCESL program in California community colleges in the 2011-2012 academic year was 1,743.50 students,
ranging from just 10 students in the smallest program up to nearly 22,000 in the largest.

As described in Chapter III, the rate of matriculation for each college was calculated by dividing the number of students enrolled in a NCESL program for 30 or more hours by the number of those who entered into credit course the following year. The average total matriculation rate of NCESL students into credit programs was 17%, ranging from below 1% to nearly 90%. The average matriculation rate of these students into Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs was 5% (ranging from 0 – 30%), and of students into General Education (GE) programs was 12% (ranging from 0 – 64%). The distribution for these rates was skewed to the left for both enrollment and matriculation; that is, 41 of the 56 colleges fell below the average NCESL enrollment rate (1743.5 students) while 40 fell below the average matriculation rate. The median enrollment rate was 600 students, and the median total matriculation rate into credit was 9.5%.

Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollment</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21969</td>
<td>1743.50</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>3352.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matriculation Rate into CTE</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matriculation Rate into GE</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Matriculation Rate</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.7%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* CTE = Career and Technical Education credit programs. GE = General Education credit programs.
A correlational analysis showed a negative relationship between program size and matriculation rate, indicating that smaller programs matriculate a larger proportion of students, although the relationship did not rise to the level of statistical significance (see Table 4.4). This finding suggests that smaller programs matriculate their students at a higher rate. Not surprisingly, the statistical analysis also shows a statistically significant relationship between programs reporting satisfaction with student matriculation and higher levels of matriculation rates (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

*Correlations between NCESL Program Characteristics and NCESL Matriculation Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>CTE (n)</th>
<th>GE (n)</th>
<th>Total (n)</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Full-Time Faculty</td>
<td>.403(19)</td>
<td>.473</td>
<td>.460 (19)</td>
<td>.087*/.041**/.048**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Part-Time Faculty</td>
<td>-.154 (23)</td>
<td>-.122</td>
<td>-.136 (23)</td>
<td>.484/.579/.535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>-.204(56)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.213 (56)</td>
<td>.132/.140/.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Satisfaction with Matriculation Rates</td>
<td>.239(23)</td>
<td>.389(23)</td>
<td>.354 (23)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Reviews Matriculation Rates</td>
<td>-.114(21)</td>
<td>.033(21)</td>
<td>-.003(21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. CTE = Career and Technical Education credit programs. GE = General Education credit programs. 56 = Total number of NCESL programs reported by CA Chancellor’s Office. 19-23 = range of number of responses from total sample of 28. *p < .10  **p < .05*
When asked about their level of satisfaction with their programs’ NCESL matriculation rates, 55.6% of the respondents reported being somewhat to very satisfied, while 44.4% were not satisfied (see Table C.1).

**Characteristics Associated with Matriculation Rates**

The results from the two quantitative data sources converged in the identification of certain program characteristics associated with higher rates of NCESL student transitions into credit programs (see Tables 4.4 and 4.5).

Table 4.5

*Comparison of Mean Matriculation Rate Percentages of NCESL Programs with and without Certain Practices, Characteristics, and Policies.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean Matriculation Rates to Credit Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CTE (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Commitment to NCESL Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With</td>
<td>3.9% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without</td>
<td>2.4% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration between Credit and NCESL faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With</td>
<td>3.5% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without</td>
<td>2.8% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCESL Faculty teach both Credit and NCESL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5.6% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1.6% (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Mean Matriculation Rates to Credit Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>CTE (n)</th>
<th>GE (n)</th>
<th>Total (n)</th>
<th>Significance of t-statistic (p value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselors of both Credit and NCESL students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With</td>
<td>4% (11)</td>
<td>11% (11)</td>
<td>15% (11)</td>
<td>.045**/.022**/.019**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without</td>
<td>2.2% (13)</td>
<td>5.5% (13)</td>
<td>7.7% (13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed Enrollment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With</td>
<td>3.6% (12)</td>
<td>10.5% (12)</td>
<td>14% (12)</td>
<td>.059*/.064*/.047**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without</td>
<td>2.5% (12)</td>
<td>5.3% (12)</td>
<td>7.8% (12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Enrollment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With</td>
<td>1.9% (18)</td>
<td>4.5% (18)</td>
<td>6.5% (18)</td>
<td>.000***/.000***/.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without</td>
<td>6.3% (6)</td>
<td>18.2% (6)</td>
<td>24.6% (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Scheduling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With</td>
<td>1.8% (17)</td>
<td>5% (17)</td>
<td>6.8% (17)</td>
<td>.000***/.001***/.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without</td>
<td>6.2% (7)</td>
<td>15% (7)</td>
<td>21% (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent Enrollment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With</td>
<td>1.8% (10)</td>
<td>5.4% (10)</td>
<td>7.1% (10)</td>
<td>.141/.130/.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without</td>
<td>4% (14)</td>
<td>9.8% (14)</td>
<td>14% (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Higher Ed System in Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With</td>
<td>3.8% (15)</td>
<td>9.8% (15)</td>
<td>13.6% (15)</td>
<td>.160/.046**/.040**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without</td>
<td>1.8% (9)</td>
<td>4.8% (9)</td>
<td>6.6% (9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs Produce Own Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With</td>
<td>1.2% (10)</td>
<td>4.9% (10)</td>
<td>6.2% (10)</td>
<td>.066*/.093*/.074*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without</td>
<td>4.5% (13)</td>
<td>10% (13)</td>
<td>14.6% (13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Program Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.5% (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.098*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.8% (16)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Mean Matriculation Rates to Credit Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>CTE (n)</th>
<th>GE (n)</th>
<th>Total (n)</th>
<th>Significance of t-statistic (p value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Issues Certificates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With</td>
<td>2% (16)</td>
<td>5% (16)</td>
<td>7% (16)</td>
<td>.000***/ .001***/ .000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without</td>
<td>5.6% (7)</td>
<td>15% (7)</td>
<td>21% (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* CTE = Career and Technical Education credit programs. GE = General Education credit programs. Location (3 point scale: 1 and 2 = with, 3 = without), level of institutional commitment (4 point scale: 1 and 2 = with, 3 and 4 = without), and level of collaboration (5 point scale: 1, 2, and 3 = with; 4 and 5 = without) were collapsed into two groups for the purpose of comparison of means. Location and access to program data were only calculated for total transition rates.  
* *p < .10, **p < .05, ***p < .001

In a few cases, variables reflecting a range of values were re-classified into two groups for the purpose of comparisons of means between programs with and without certain characteristics. The variable of location had three possible values: on-site, same buildings; on-site, different buildings; or off-site. The two on-site variables were re-classified into one on-site value for comparison with the off-site value. The variable of level of collaboration was re-classified so that the values of adequate or above were grouped as one positive value, and weak or none were grouped as one negative value. The variable of level of institutional commitment was re-classified so that the values of somewhat to very committed were grouped as one positive value, and little to not committed were grouped as one negative value.

Statistical analysis showed that three characteristics measured in the survey had statistically significant positive correlations with matriculation rates in Career Technical Education (CTE), General Education (GE), or overall. First, as seen in Table 4.4, the number of full-time faculty showed a weak positive correlation of .403 with CTE.
matriculation and moderate positive correlations of .473 and .460 with GE and total matriculation rates respectively. Second, the level of NCESL program-reported satisfaction with its matriculation rates showed significant moderate correlations of .389 with transition into GE and of .354 with total matriculation rates.

In addition, Table 4.5 shows 24 significant relationships between program characteristics and matriculation rates by comparing means at campuses with and without these characteristics. First, campuses that used the same counselors to serve both credit ESL and NCESL students had an overall matriculation rate twice as high (15%) as those campuses where counselors serviced only non-credit students (7.7%). Second, NCESL programs that reported their colleges demonstrated an adequate or above level of institutional commitment to the success of their NCESL programs matriculated students at a 14% rate versus 9% for those campuses with a below adequate level of institutional commitment. Third, NCESL programs that practiced managed enrollment (discussed later in the chapter) had higher rates of matriculation (14%), nearly twice that of programs without managed enrollment (7.8%). Finally, NCESL programs that included the explicit teaching of the system of higher education in their classrooms matriculated students at 13.6%, twice that of those programs which did not implement this practice (6.6%).

Conversely, the analysis showed negative relationships that were highly statistically significant between CTE, GE, and total matriculation rates and the NCESL open enrollment model, flexible scheduling, and provision of NCESL certificates. The open enrollment model, flexible scheduling, and certificates will be defined later in this chapter. In addition, programs that have access to and/or produce their own data on
matriculation rates have a negative relationship of weak statistical significance with matriculation.

The second set of quantitative results is based on a compilation generated by Surveymonkey of the survey respondents’ ranking of program characteristics in the order that they perceived to best promote matriculation rates, and another ranking in the order that they perceived to impede matriculation rates (Tables 4.6 and 4.7).

Table 4.6

*Survey Ranking of NCESL Program Practices Most Likely to Promote NCESL Matriculation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics (in rank order)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent Student Enrollment Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Credit and NCESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Number of NCESL Full-time Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Collaboration between Credit and Noncredit Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized Curriculum, such as Vocational ESL and College Readiness ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Instructional and Student Services for both Credit and Noncredit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful Assessment Data for Program Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Counseling Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Ranking generated by Surveymonkey.com

The respondents were asked to rank these characteristics from highest (1 point) to lowest (7 points). Surveymonkey tallied these rankings into one combined list for each question, resulting in a group ranking of characteristics related to higher matriculation.
and a ranking of characteristics related to lower matriculation. In alignment with the statistical findings, the respondents ranked full-time faculty as the second most important program characteristic most likely to promote NCESL matriculation. Their first choice, concurrent student enrollment options between credit and NCESL, will be discussed later in this chapter. The survey responses also align with the negative correlation that the statistical analysis revealed with open enrollment. The respondents identified the positive attendance model, which is the model typically associated with open enrollment, and open enrollment itself as the top two characteristics that impede NCESL matriculation.

Table 4.7

Survey Ranking of NCESL Program Practices Most Likely to Impede NCESL Matriculation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>(in rank order)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Attendance Model</td>
<td>(Seat Time Required for Funding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Enrollment Model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Noncredit and Credit Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer Noncredit Full-time Faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Institutional Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Noncredit Counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Level of Funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Ranking generated by Surveymonkey.com

The qualitative findings from the interviewees also aligned somewhat with the quantitative evidence regarding which NCESL program characteristics promoted higher student matriculation rates. In their card sort responses, as described in Chapter III, they ranked eleven characteristics from most to least likely to promote higher NCESL
matriculation rates (see Table 4.8). For each interviewee, the choice that was ranked first was given a point value of one; the choice ranked last was given the point value of 10.

The point value for each characteristic was tallied from all five interviewees’ responses to create a final, compiled list of rankings.

Table 4.8

Interviewee Ranking of NCESL Program Practices Most Likely to Promote NCESL Matriculation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics (in rank order)</th>
<th>Total Point Value*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Commitment</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum (Relevant to Students’ Goals)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation Agreements (between NCESL and credit programs)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Faculty</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional support</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Schedules</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent Enrollment/Teaching (so that noncredit and credit students and/or teachers are combined)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Total point value = tally of each interviewee’s ranking from 1 – 10, where lower points indicate higher rank.

The interviewees did not rank full-time faculty as a top selection. Rather, their first choice was institutional commitment to the NCESL programs; this was evidenced, in
large part, through the institutional allocation of funding and full-time faculty, which interviewees ranked second and fifth among the top-ranked characteristics. The interviewees also ranked curriculum and articulation agreements as the third and fourth characteristics likely to promote matriculation. However, the survey respondents did not highlight these practices, and the statistical analysis showed no relationship between these two characteristics and higher levels of matriculation. Interestingly, the interviewees ranked concurrent enrollment and teaching as least important for matriculation, in contrast to both the survey respondents, who ranked concurrent enrollment as first, and the statistical results in Table 4.5, which showed a positive trend between teachers of both credit and noncredit students and matriculation rates.

Though the results from the three data sources do intersect, there are also disparities in the results and findings that will be discussed throughout the chapter. The statistical analyses also identified a range of other NCESL program characteristics as having both positive and negative relationships with matriculation rates, though they were not statistically significant (see Table 4.5). These other characteristics will also be discussed throughout the chapter.

**Institutional Commitment: Full-Time Faculty**

As mentioned in the previous section, both the statistical analysis and the survey respondents’ ranking of characteristics in Table 4.6 align to show the importance of full-time faculty for the purpose of matriculating NCESL students into credit programs. The qualitative sources identified institutional commitment as critical for NCESL student matriculation into credit programs. The interviewees made explicit that full-time faculty were key in advocating for and attaining institutional commitment. This section
describes this study’s findings on the presence of full-time faculty in NCESL programs state-wide, how their qualifications and teaching areas relate to NCESL matriculation rates, and how full-time faculty in NCESL promote NCESL matriculation through cross-divisional communication and advocacy for NCESL students.

**Overview of Full-Time Faculty in NCESL**

The responses from the surveys indicate that most faculty in NCESL are not full-time. The average number of full-time NCESL faculty members in 2011-2012 was 8, yet this figure results from one outlier program, which had 139 full-time faculty. The median response was 1; half of the surveyed programs had either 1 or no full-time faculty. 35% of the respondents indicated that their programs had no NCESL full-time faculty at all, showing how thinly most programs are staffed. In fact, 0 NCESL full-time faculty was the most modal response (see Table C.2).

The survey respondents were asked to identify the minimum qualifications and the teaching areas of the faculty who taught in their NCESL programs. In terms of minimum qualifications, the state requirement for NCESL teaching is a Bachelor’s Degree, unlike credit teaching, for which the state requires a Master’s. However, institutions have the authority to raise their local NCESL minimum qualification requirement to a Master’s as well. In the survey responses, approximately 32% of the NCESL programs required faculty to have a Master’s Degree; the remaining 68% of the programs required only a Bachelor’s (see Table C.3). The statistical analysis showed no relationship between faculty degree requirements and higher or lower levels of NCESL student matriculation rates. In terms of teaching areas, because the state requires the hiring of credit ESL full-time faculty but not the hiring of full-time NCESL faculty,
institutions often assign credit ESL faculty to teach in the areas of both credit and NCESL. The survey respondents reported that nearly 64% of their faculty teach NCESL only, whereas 36% taught both NCESL and/or credit ESL and English (see Table C.4). Though not statistically significant, the data show that those programs whose faculty teach both credit and NCESL transition students into credit at a rate five times higher (see Table 4.5).

It may be noteworthy that the survey respondents selected student concurrent enrollment in both noncredit and credit ESL as the top program characteristic they believed to be most associated with higher matriculation rates (Table 4.6). This survey choice was meant to describe classrooms where NCESL and credit ESL students attended concurrently, which was highlighted in the literature as an effective practice for to promote NCESL matriculation (Ignash, 1995; Razfar & Simon, 2011). However, the statistical analysis showed a negative relationship, though not statistically significant, between concurrent enrollment and matriculation rates (Table 4.5). This negative relationship may be reflected in the interviewee responses who selected concurrent enrollment as least most effective for matriculation (Table 4.8). It is possible that the survey respondents selected concurrent enrollment options as an effective practice with the assumption that the faculty members teaching the combined courses taught both credit ESL and NCESL. If the survey respondents selected concurrent enrollment as their first choice due to their focus on faculty teaching areas, this result may buttress the statistical analysis, which identified a statistically significant relationship between full-time faculty teaching both credit and NCESL with higher matriculation rates. However, the interviewee respondents included the use of teachers for both credit and noncredit
students in their choice of the least important characteristic for matriculation. In sum, statistical results, the survey results, and the qualitative findings diverge greatly on concurrent enrollment options; this may be explained by the lack of clarification on whether these options refer to credit and noncredit students being in the same classrooms, or whether they refer to credit and noncredit students being taught by the same teachers.

In the qualitative interviews, Toni, a previous NCESL faculty member and current administrator, held a different perspective regarding the importance of minimum qualifications and the combined teaching areas for the purposes of successful NCESL student matriculation into credit programs. She explained that community college faculty, specifically those who share the credit-required minimal qualification of a Master’s degree, make a “difference in a college learning environment in terms of how teachers think about their [NCESL] students and progress,” especially towards credit programs. As for the shared teaching areas of credit and NCESL, she believes that NCESL faculty expertise is missing when NCESL programs are run and/or taught by credit ESL faculty. Toni explained that faculty who “wear two hats” have “broader responsibilities” that make it “harder for them to be a noncredit expert and stay on top of noncredit issues.” The fact that they have great discipline knowledge in ESL does not allow them to address NCESL program challenges, which are “everything but the discipline.” She explained that full-time NCESL faculty, unlike credit ESL faculty, possess the necessary expertise unique to NCESL student learning that is required in order to best meet student needs.

Regardless of faculty minimum qualifications and teaching areas, all five interviewees indicated that the presence of NCESL full-time faculty strongly impacts
successful NCESL student transitions into credit, in alignment with both the significant statistical results and the survey results.

**Full-Time Faculty as Communicators and Advocates**

The interviewees described how full-time faculty are able to serve and represent NCESL programs and their students in ways that part-time, or adjunct faculty, cannot. Adjunct faculty are not able to contribute to matriculation work outside of the classroom as they are compensated for classroom teaching only. Toni stated that she sees “a stronger connection with full-time faculty on matriculation than … on classroom quality. . . . Anytime you have faculty resources outside of the classroom, to be thinking about what’s good for students and how we can make pathways, is going to help matriculation.” She explained that full-time NCESL faculty are able to think beyond course content and delivery to matters of “pathways and curriculum,” “resourcing the program,” and “advocacy for the students and [the] resources for the students.” Full-time faculty are able to serve as representatives and advocates for NCESL through their time and effort outside of classroom teaching. Primarily, full-time faculty serve as the “voice” for NCESL through communication with credit programs and with the institution as a whole. “Voice” occurs as an emic code in four of the interviews, suggesting its importance for NCESL advocates. Without enough full-time faculty, the NCESL programs have very little, if any, opportunities to collaborate with credit faculty and participate in institutional decision-making processes. Thus, NCESL programs without full-time faculty lack “visibility.”

Additionally, all four of the NCESL interviewees described the institutional over-reliance on administrators to oversee NCESL programs, which are often subsumed under
the administrator’s much larger area of responsibility. These administrators are “too spread out” and “have to put their efforts in a lot of places,” according to Tony. She recalled being in meetings where administrators responsible for noncredit programs asked questions that indicated that they “don’t know anything about noncredit.” She asked, “How are you going to advocate for [NCESL] if you don’t know it?” Likewise, Rose complained that a lot of programs are run by a “harried administrator who’s writing the curriculum [and] who doesn’t know anything about what’s going on in the classroom.” She explained that if an administrator is running a NCESL program, he or she should have a faculty member working alongside them. Charles, a non-faculty, NCESL administrator himself, echoes these sentiments, describing the “inherent challenge” that NCESL programs face without a “significant infrastructure of full-time faculty,” particularly when dealing with curricular and assessment matters.

This section describes the two key ways that full-time faculty in NCESL use communication to strengthen NCESL student matriculation. First, full-time faculty members in community college NCESL programs are able to communicate and build relationships with the faculty in the credit programs into which they hope to transition their students. Secondly, full-time faculty members are able to represent NCESL programs in institutional processes and decision-making that result in necessary resource allocations that support student matriculation. In other words, full-time faculty in NCESL are better able to garner institutional commitment to its NCESL program’s success.

**Faculty communication and collaboration with credit programs.** In the survey portion of the study, NCESL program leaders rated collaboration between NCESL
and credit faculty as the third most likely program feature to promote matriculation, after concurrent enrollment and increased number of full-time faculty (see Table 4.6). They ranked the lack of collaboration as the third factor (out of seven choices) that most likely impedes NCESL student transitions (see Table 4.7). However, when asked to indicate the level of collaboration between NCESL and credit faculty at their institution, the great majority of NCESL programs, over 60%, described their level of collaboration as either weak or non-existent (see Table C.5). By contrast, nearly 40% of the programs rated their level of collaboration as above adequate, with nearly 11% rated as somewhat strong, and nearly 11% as very strong.

Indeed, the statistical data show that the NCESL programs that indicated an adequate or above level of collaboration with credit faculty are also associated with higher NCESL student matriculation rates (see Table 4.5). Although not statistically significant, these results suggest that collaboration between NCESL and credit faculty may help promote NCESL student transitions into credit programs.

Similarly, all five interviewees described the importance of NCESL faculty collaboration with credit programs in order to facilitate and strengthen noncredit student pathways into credit. They talked about the opportunities that arise during positive communications, both for the NCESL and Credit ESL programs, and for the NCESL students. Gloria stated that a strong noncredit to credit linkage results in noncredit students being “better informed about the trajectory” into credit, and allows credit faculty to understand the “different routes …and ways that [noncredit students] get into their [credit] classrooms.” Even Louis, the Credit ESL interviewee, stated that “more opportunity opens up to [NCESL

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students] when there’s good communication” between credit and noncredit faculty because the students have a “further vision of what they’re aiming for” and are not “limited to just what’s going on in noncredit.” Charles provided an example of how he and his NCESL faculty “pioneers” were able to initiate organized ongoing conversations with credit faculty to discuss “what we do well [and] what they do well,” resulting in a discovery process of how the two programs could best serve transitioning NCESL students. Initially, these conversations were “difficult,” and credit faculty had “lots of questions, more questions than answers,” he said. After putting credit faculty concerns “on the table” and focusing on the college’s obligation to serve students, faculty began “deliberately working together” to examine curriculum and to identify and leverage “natural bridges and connection points” where students can transition from noncredit into credit.

Gloria noted how these types of faculty collaborations can also directly benefit credit programs by pointing out that noncredit, as the “biggest feeder to credit, far bigger than a local high school,” can expand the size of credit by transitioning NCESL students into their departments. She described the scenario of “incumbent workers, the working poor” attending noncredit business classes after work, realizing that “oh my God, everybody looks like me,” and deciding to further advance themselves by entering into credit. Were credit faculty to realize these growth possibilities, she said, they could be encouraged to “break down those barriers [with noncredit] in curriculum rather than fight over it.” She explained that if credit programs are able to see how noncredit programs can contribute to the “long term impact on the health” of their credit departments, there would be an increase in noncredit to credit student transitions.”
Clearly, strong collaboration between noncredit and credit programs are highlighted across the board as a faculty-led best practice in promoting NCESL student transition into credit. As an added plus, Rose described how these collaborations are useful for garnering support from credit faculty, who in her experience, have come to be some of noncredit’s biggest advocates. She stated, “The credit colleagues … want to help the noncredit programs. They want to get this right. They see the value. They just don’t understand us and they want to communicate more.” To sum up the importance of strong relationships with credit, Toni advised faculty to “become a really, really good friend of the credit ESL chair.” Collaborations, even friendships, between noncredit and credit faculty appear to be key in transitioning noncredit students into a credit pathway.

**Faculty communication and advocacy with the institution.** As mentioned previously, the qualitative findings revealed that the existence of full-time faculty is critical for advocating for and attaining institutional support for NCESL. The manner in which institutions support their NCESL programs can be referred to as the level of the institutional commitment to NCESL, which is demonstrated through inclusion in college-wide resource and budget decision-making. The survey respondents were asked to rate their institution’s level of commitment to continuing, expanding, and/or supporting their NCESL programs. The responses were split: approximately 50% of respondents stated that their institutions were somewhat or very committed; the other 50% rated their institutional commitment as little or none (see Table C.6). The respondents did not rate the lack of institutional commitment as a top impediment to NCESL matriculation, ranking it as their 5th of 7 choices (see Table 4.7). However, the statistical data show the programs that rated the level of their institution’s commitment to NCESL as adequate or
above had a moderately significant positive relationship with higher NCESL student matriculation rates (see Table 4.5). These results suggest that institutions that are committed to the success of their NCESL programs may increase the rate of NCESL student transitions into credit programs. This statistical result is supported by the interviewee card sort data; four of the five interviewees ranked institutional commitment as the first most necessary factor for strong NCESL matriculation rates (see Table 4.8).

The interviewees explained how they viewed the role of the full-time faculty in garnering institutional commitment for NCESL and its students. Unlike part-time faculty, full-time faculty have the ability to be aware of and connected to the institution overall, explained Louis, a former faculty member and current administrator in credit ESL. Gloria stated that only full-time faculty have the power to “negotiate the academic hierarchy,” as they are eligible and able to advocate for their NCESL programs and their students through participation in governance and campus committees where local policy decisions are made.

In these roles, full-time NCESL faculty are able to advocate for the resources and support that their students need in relation to institutional budget, resource, and hiring allocation decisions. Without them, full-time faculty members from other disciplines make impactful policy choices without considering the needs of the NCESL programs and students. Toni gave an example of how communication and advocacy that occur through committee work can help noncredit. “We still might get aced out in budget competitions and we still might be thrown under the bus, but if we have stronger relationship ties and [the college programs] like us personally, at least they’ll feel bad about it,” she laughed. “And that’s a start you know.” Rose explained how her
participation on the campus-wide hiring allocations committee allowed her to work with the credit side; together, they agreed to “fight” for each other to get a full-time hire, and through this advocacy, both programs were successful.

**Barriers to Faculty and Institutional Communication and Collaboration**

The NCESL interviewees described certain obstacles in communication and relationship-building with other credit programs and the institution as a whole, which in turn prevent NCESL student matriculation opportunities. Historical, often negative, relationships between credit and noncredit faculty act as a hurdle for communication, according to Gloria and Toni, but Toni believes that these negative relationships can be replaced with positive ones. Positive relationships lead to even more conversations, and, as Gloria stated, the “breaking down of faculty barriers.”

This section covers the types of barriers that NCESL faculty face in effectively communicating with their campus constituencies about their program and students’ needs for matriculation into credit. These barriers include credit programs’ lack of awareness and understanding of NCESL, credit faculty’s resistance in working with NCESL, and the need for NCESL data to provide supporting evidence for effective communication. With the removal of these communication barriers, colleges can create conditions which should allow for stronger rates of NCESL student matriculation into credit programs, as evidence in the previous section has shown.

**Lack of Awareness and Understanding of NCESL**

Many of the challenges with transitioning NCESL students into credit programs relate to a lack of awareness and understanding on the part of the credit programs at the colleges, and even state-level policymakers, of how NCESL programs function. The
interviewees described the non-traditional aspects of NCESL programs that make them different, and in some cases unfamiliar, to credit programs and to the institution.

Four interviewees, except for Rose, emphasized that NCESL programs are “nontraditional.” Louis, from Credit ESL, described NCESL as a “funny place” compared to other community college programs. Charles explained that “an ideal [NCESL] program does not necessarily have the same attributes as what you’d think of as a traditional college program for credit. There are unique differences.” These differences lie mostly with the students, who in many cases are more workforce goal-oriented than academically-oriented. All interviewees described the effectiveness of NCESL programs in serving working adults who wish to learn English. Charles explained, “If someone’s goal is not to earn a Bachelor’s degree or a Master’s degree and instead get to master English such that they can transition into the workforce, then [a NCESL program] is a very efficient and effective way to improve someone’s English speaking ability.”

Toni and Gloria stressed the non-traditional open-entry, open-exit feature of NCESL programs. Unlike credit programs, this allows students to start and leave the program at any time during the semester, making NCESL more accessible to working adult learners. Toni described the special needs of the NCESL learners and how a nontraditional, noncredit program best suits these needs:

I think that many immigrants have lives and goals that don’t align as readily with a credit paradigm. . . . They can’t start right at the beginning of the semester, don’t need units, they come and go, but they’re learning while they’re here. They’re working so they’re going to leave 30 minutes early every single day to
get to their job or to pick up the kid from school. They want to help their kid with school. They don’t need a degree. They have a doctorate from China already. All of these things have to do with their goals and their life circumstances that don’t fit into the 16 or 18 week semester for credit. They are low income; they don’t have residency status, so they can’t afford credit. They need English fast, and noncredit can provide more of an immersion environment.

In line with Toni’s comments, Gloria described the NCESL model as “user-friendly” for working students. She explained that NCESL is “geared towards the students’ ability to progress” and accommodates students who can’t attend daily due to work restrictions “without them getting punished.”

Toni and Charles both remarked on the large student populations that benefit from this nontraditional model. Toni stated that “the people who fit a noncredit paradigm better [than credit] live all throughout the state.” Likewise, Charles explained that “probably the largest number of Californians … most likely to access education…are in the market for NCESL or adult education. There’s a significant number of adults in the state who would benefit very directly from just a little bit more ESL.”

Another way in which NCESL programs are non-traditional is the notion that there is no one model of a NCESL program that could be systematically applied throughout the state and that would result in equal levels of success. Four of the five interviewees brought up the impracticality, or even impossibility, of a one-size-fits-all program. Louis stated that there was no way to replicate one NCESL model that could be applied state-wide. Charles explained, “To mandate one system, I don’t know if that’s necessary.” Rather, he believes NCESL programs should vary in design and practices
according to the specific needs of their regions and students, likening them to emergency fire services that operate on different models in different communities. Charles recommended that legislators should “allow for best practices to take place and invest accordingly even if it didn’t mean a one size fits all system.”

Multi-model NCESL programs provide better services statewide, Charles and Gloria explained. Charles emphasized how programs can strengthen each other by learning from the variety and having the systems “work together and talk to one another.” Gloria explained that a multi-model approach is the only possible way for NCESL programs to respond to local need, and any state-level attempts to standardize one model across the system “has damaged noncredit.” These opinions supporting multi-model NCESL programs echo Becker’s (2011) findings that multiple models are best at meeting NCESL students’ learning needs.

As a result of the uniqueness of NCESL, all five interviewees explained that noncredit programs are misunderstood by the credit programs. Toni described this lack of understanding as “ignorance in the purest definition of the word.” She explained the ignorance as “not an ill-will at all, but… they just haven’t seen us. It’s just not being seen.” Likewise, Gloria stated that “credit faculty don’t understand,” and in Rose’s state level experience, she found that there’s “so much misunderstanding” between noncredit and credit programs. She exclaimed, “A lot of schools … don’t know who or what their noncredit program is. They don’t know what it is and what it does!” Louis, from a credit faculty perspective, shared Rose’s position, though omitted referring to credit in his statement: “Not everybody understands how [noncredit] works; districts like mine don’t even have noncredit.”
Credit Programs' Attitudes toward NCESL Programs

Another recurring theme, likely related to ignorance, is that of credit programs’ resistance towards NCESL programs in the community colleges. Part of the resistance is explained by Louis and Charles, who discussed the question of whether or not noncredit should be a part of a higher education environment. Charles explained the resistance as credit’s reaction to the nontraditional model and the risk of “mission creep” from the community college’s traditional mission of facilitating transfer to a university. Faculty who resist NCESL likely feel that it is “more appropriately part of adult education,” not seeing it as a “piece” of higher education, according to Louis. While not conceding that NCESL is indeed a part of higher education, he stated he “would never argue that it’s a key part of the pathway into higher education.” (A discussion of whether or not NCESL programs belong in a higher education setting will occur in the next section on NCESL program location.)

Two of the faculty interviewees, Toni and Gloria, referred to credit’s resistance to noncredit from a different perspective. Both referred to “elitism” and a “pecking order” in the state’s overall higher education system when explaining the credit view of NCESL programs. Gloria stated, “The same thing carries all the way down: UCB, CSFU, beats CCs, beats noncredit.” Similarly, Toni stated, “The pecking order favors credit. There’s a state pecking order that’s UC, CSU, CC, and then noncredit.” Thus, it appears that NCESL programs are at the bottom rung of not only higher education overall, but also within the community colleges. With this status, it is not surprising that there is little incentive or interest for credit programs to learn about and accept NCESL programs as a valuable part of the institution. The extent of credit faculty resistance is exemplified in
Rose’s account of her joining her college’s Academic Senate as the first ever noncredit faculty member several decades ago. The Senate was so resistant to her being there as a noncredit representative that they agreed to her participation only if she sat behind a screen during the meetings. She described the experience as if the college were “lowering its standards” by hiring and including a noncredit faculty member in its governance processes. Since that time, however, resistance at her college has lessened, and the college now has ten to 12 noncredit full-time faculty hires.

In addition to historical elitism, Toni and Charles feel that the resistance to noncredit programs may also come from insecurity, anxiety, and a sense of risk from the credit side. Toni described the insecurity that colleges may have when serving noncredit students, specifically those not ready for college, in a college environment. This sentiment follows Louis’ comments above where he discussed credit faculty’s doubts that NCESL is a real part of higher education. These doubts result in assumptions credit faculty may have about NCESL. Rose pointed to the credit stance that “you’re not as academic if you work in noncredit.” Toni explained that there is an “assumption” that noncredit can’t be as “vigorou...
campus-level awareness, appreciation, and support to NCESL programs. A lack of data results in lack of successful communication. Toni explained that credit programs’ assumptions “mostly arise from a lack of data and not having looked into [NCESL].” Rose referred to program assessment data as a “tool for being understood.” She encouraged NCESL programs to collect meaningful data and to share it with faculty and administrators when engaging in cross-divisional and institutional communication. Doing so effectively can have positive results in terms of achieving a higher level of local support for NCESL so that adequate policy and resources can be attained to better serve students, specifically in transitioning them into credit. Showing the credit faculty in the Academic Senate “our [NCESL’s] very serious data” on student learning outcomes resulted in a policy decision to decrease the load of the few full-time NCESL faculty members, Rose explained. With a reduced load, the faculty were better able to conduct work outside of the classroom that supported NCESL transitions into credit. Another example she offered was the time when the college president asked her to present NCESL persistence and promotion data to the Board of Trustees because it was “pretty darn good stuff.” As a result, the Board became better informed and supportive of the NCESL program’s importance as well as its needs.

For whatever reasons, whether doubts about NCESL’s belonging to higher education, unfamiliarity with the nontraditional model, elitism, or fear of competition, participants felt there is a marked resistance to NCESL programs among credit faculty. However, the sentiment of the interviewees was that credit resistance to noncredit can be mitigated with the appropriate tools, such as NCESL program data that can be used to inform institutional decision-making.
NCESL Program Location in a Community College Environment

As mentioned in the section above, community college faculty may resist collaborations with NCESL because they question whether NCESL belongs in an environment of higher education. One way to evaluate whether or not the community college system is the best venue for matriculating NCESL students into credit is to analyze the locations of the NCESL programs. In the survey portion of the study, NCESL program leaders were asked to indicate where their NCESL programs were offered. Of the 24 programs who responded to the question about program location, 14 (50%) were held on the credit campus(es) and in the same building(s) as the credit students, 2 (7%) were held on the credit campus(es) but in separate building(s) as the credit students, and 8 (29%) were not held at the credit campus, but rather at off-site locations (see Table C.8). Though not statistically significant, the cross-tabulations between NCESL program location and student transition rates into credit suggested that those programs that offer NCESL on credit campuses are more likely to matriculate students into credit (see Table 4.5).

Nevertheless, some faculty still debate over whether or not NCESL programs belong in a community college environment vs. K-12 adult education. All five of the interviewees discussed the state-wide deliberations over whether NCESL programs should be housed in K-12 adult schools or in community colleges. Charles, Rose, and Toni each described the ongoing collaborations between K-12 NCESL programs and community college NCESL programs as “good” because the talks help the two systems work together to best provide NCESL services. Toni specifically stated that these collaborations were good for increasing the transition of NCESL students from the K-12
adult schools into community colleges. She explained that “there is a ceiling to what [the NCESL students] might be able to learn at their local adult center,” and described the community college as a place to “help bridge [the NCESL students] from the existing adult schools …to make a physical place on campus … for people to get over the physical hurdle” of accessing a college campus.

Louis and Toni provided additional reasons for housing NCESL programs at community colleges. Louis believes that this structure “works much better because the students have a clearer transition into higher education.” He described community college NCESL programs as the only alternative and as the “best entry pathway” for immigrants and ESL language-learners into higher education. She explained that NCESL community college faculty are able to make transitions into college “a lot more of a visible goal” and believe that their role is to help them transition into college, job, or civic participation.

Even though NCESL programs are offered through the California community college system, the classes are not always held on the main, or credit campus(es). When NCESL is offered off-site, it is more difficult for students to transition into the credit programs held at another location, and therefore, these students need “extra help to bridge [to credit],” Toni said. She also explained that NCESL programs “spread out at community sites” make it a lot “tougher” for NCESL and credit faculty to collaborate, which as we have seen is important for successful transitions.

While the interviewees supported offering NCESL on the credit campuses for the purpose of transitioning students into credit, Toni and Gloria explained that there are “good reasons” to offer NCESL at off-site locations, primarily because these sites are
stationed where large numbers of ESL learners live. Gloria described immigrants as “place-bound,” and so placing programs in their neighborhoods is the only way the students will gain access to ESL instruction. Because they are place-bound, they will likely not travel to the community college to learn ESL, and therefore are less likely to transition into credit. To provide place-bound students the opportunity to transition into credit, Gloria and Toni both stated that the colleges should create pathways from the credit campuses to the off-site campuses, and from the off-sites back to the credit campuses, such as through the establishment of bus routes.

**Institutional Commitment: Funding and Student Support Services**

Up to this point, we have discussed the importance of full-time faculty in securing institutional support for NCESL. The interviewees also identified institutional funding allocations to NCESL programs and provision of student services to NCESL students as the best ways that institutions can support NCESL program efforts to successfully matriculate students into credit.

**Allocation of Funds**

Institutions can demonstrate commitment to their NCESL programs by giving them access to state funding dedicated specifically for noncredit programs. There are two specialized types of state funding for community college noncredit programs referenced by the interviewees. The first is the Career Development College Preparation (CDCP) funds that are meant to support those noncredit programs, such as ESL, that directly relate to job and academic readiness. The second is the noncredit matriculation funds that were cut in recent years, but are expected to return in the form of noncredit Student Success Support Program (SSSP) funds. Rose, Toni, and Gloria, the noncredit faculty
interviewees, described the problem of institutions absorbing those funds for general use rather than specifically dedicating them to the NCESL programs. For those programs that do not have local control, such as Toni’s, the CDCP funds do not make a difference because they go to the general fund, she explained. Gloria summed up the issue by stating that programs need to “be sure” that the “dollars that are meant to go to noncredit … get to noncredit.” “There has to be a way that the funding stream comes down, but then it has an inside pipeline to noncredit,” she explained.

These interviewees described how important it is for the NCESL programs to have local control over these funds so that they can implement and support the elements of their programs that they know lead to higher rates of student transition into credit. For example, Charles, whose program does have local control over CDCP funds, was able to hire a dedicated noncredit research analyst so that his program could produce NCESL data for communication and program improvement purposes. He was also able to hire a dedicated full-time noncredit counselor with these specialized funds. The interviewees described the importance of these funds going directly to the NCESL programs so that, as Toni said, they can “fund what it’s intended to fund, and that those decisions aren’t being made by other people on the campus.” Without the dedication of the CDCP and the Noncredit SSSP funds to the NCESL programs, the students do not receive the critical support services they need in order to transition to credit. Rose highlighted that these types of changes have to occur on the local, or institutional, level. “You can’t expect the state to do this for us, because it’s local control,” which requires that NCESL programs do “a lot of hard work” with their colleges to gain local control of these funds.
Delivery of Student Services

No quantitative analysis was conducted to evaluate the frequency of NCESL programs’ levels of local control of dedicated NCESL funding, nor to evaluate the impact of local control on matriculation rates. However, the quantitative analysis does include a statewide overview of the types of student support services that exist in NCESL programs, as well as a description of how these various practices impact matriculation rates. The results and findings point to the significance of SSSP funds and the services they provide to credit-bound NCESL students. Some of the services identified in survey included NCESL counseling, teaching NCESL students about the higher educational system, and increasing student awareness of credit programs.

The survey respondents were asked if their NCESL programs had counselors, and if so, whether they counseled NCESL students only, or both NCESL and credit students. The results show that nearly 40% of the programs had counselors that served only NCESL students, while nearly the same percentage had counselors that served both student groups (see Table C.8). Though the respondents did not rate counseling as a top need for matriculation services (see Tables 4.6 and 4.7), the statistical analysis showed that programs with counselors serving both NCESL and credit students have a positive relationship of moderate statistical significance with higher NCESL student transition rates into credit (see Table 4.5).

The survey respondents also reported on whether or not their teachers explicitly taught students about the higher educational system in the NCESL classrooms and whether or not their program offered workshops, orientations, tours, and speakers to create NCESL student awareness of credit offerings. The survey results show that 75%
of the respondents taught the higher educational system in the classroom, and just over 60% provided activities to create NCESL student awareness of credit programs (see Tables C.12 and C.8). The statistical analysis showed a positive relationship of moderate statistical significance between teaching the higher educational system and higher rates of NCESL matriculation into GE programs and overall (see Table 4.5). However, there is no relationship between creating credit program awareness and matriculation rates.

The qualitative interviews did not provide any data on the importance of counselors serving both credit and NCESL students, of teaching students about the higher educational system, or creating student awareness of credit through specialized activities such as those described above. However, all five interviewees identified student support services (SSSP) as a best practice for promoting NCESL student transition into credit. They discussed the importance of these services for NCESL students in particular, the ways in which these services promote NCESL students’ transitions into credit, and how noncredit programs have attempted to fill these needs without support services funding in recent years.

The five interviewees discussed the significance of SSSP funding for services necessary for transitioning NCESL students into credit. Rose referred to SSSP services as “key” and “huge” in matriculating students; Charles remarked on the “wonders” that “reasonable levels of funding for student success” would do in giving his program the ability to help its students transition. “What is it that a noncredit [student] doesn’t need that a credit student does?” asked Gloria rhetorically, pointing to the irony of the restoration of credit SSSP funds vs. the non-restoration of noncredit SSSP. Rose
reframed this sentiment as she referred to a report she had written with a state-level team which showed that noncredit students may need even “more intensive support services” than credit students. “What needs more intervention,” Toni said, referring to the gap that student services fill, is “between where the students are learning English and how they get into a community college.” She referred to the physical, psychological, and knowledge gaps that students don’t know how to “cross” in order to enroll in a college, particularly for those NCESL students who are at an off-site. These challenges and the need to address them were also discussed in the literature review, where Kanno and Varghese (2010) and Becker (2011) explained the need to consider the social, cultural, and structural barriers to matriculation, most of which occur outside of the language classroom.

SSSP services help noncredit student transition to credit because they provide teams of assessment technicians, student services technicians, and counselors that are focused specifically on NCESL student educational counseling and planning. Charles explained how these teams provide “deliberate support systems” that help noncredit students “learn how to ‘do college’, or how to transition.” Rose explained that noncredit students need these “systematic answers to the questions to help the students understand pathways;” otherwise, they end up asking “ten different people.” She described the importance of visual representations of pathways into credit and hands-on assistance with financial aid and applications. She described the need for NCESL students to have “real contacts on the credit side” and the ability to “identify some faces” so that they have “some contact, some way to feel like they belong.” Toni described the importance of having noncredit student services located “right where the classes are” and for ensuring
“that the people serving the students really know the students.” Toni and Rose both believe that transitioning noncredit students is more than just teaching a good class. They may be ready academically, Rose explained, but transitioning is a “big step” that must be supported with student services specific to noncredit.

Without these services, NCESL programs have had, in Louis’ words, though a sentiment shared by all, to rely on “the sheer dedication on the part of [individual faculty members], primarily adjunct faculty, to provide the necessary student services to transition into credit. Toni described how the adjunct faculty in their NCESL program assist students with their educational planning by taking them to the lab during class time to enter their plans into the computer database. In essence, the faculty members teach the students how to transition into credit by having them create informal educational plans. This activity reflects Becker’s (2011) recommendation that NCESL programs explicitly teach the higher educational system to its students. Charles also described how the faculty in his program have continued offering student services despite the absent SSSP funding. Though his faculty “do a great job,” they are not able to serve the students need adequately. He stated, “Clearly, [the absence of SSSP funds] has impacted the volume of orientations we’ve had, [and] the volume of students that we can admit and give full support to.” Rose described another challenge of relying on adjunct faculty to fill the SSSP gap; she explained that adjunct faculty teach at multiple colleges, each with their own unique processes for transitioning noncredit students into credit. Because of this wide disparity, the adjuncts cannot be expected to have expertise on each college’s specific procedures for entering credit programs, and so faculty can only do so much to fill the student services gap.
NCESL Program Best Practices

Two to three interviewees, rather than general consensus, reported on additional best practices that they believed promoted NCESL student matriculation into credit. These practices, unlike those described above, are not implemented by the state or the institution; rather, they are within local program control and are led by the NCESL programs themselves. They include managed enrollment, articulation agreements, staff development, student engagement outside of the classroom, specialized curriculum, and assessment practices. The latter will be discussed in its own section; the findings and results on the other practices listed here will be discussed in this section.

Managed Enrollment

To better cope with student enrollment and attendance, some NCESL programs implement enrollment management in addition to or in place of open-entry/open-exit (OEOE) for certain courses. OEOE is a common NCESL program design because it suits the positive attendance funding model of NCESL programs. The positive attendance model refers to the apportionment that noncredit programs receive based on the number of hours students attend noncredit classes throughout the semester. The apportionment rate for noncredit programs is approximately 65% of the rate for which credit programs are funded. As previously noted, most NCESL programs in the state are OEOE, meaning students can enter and exit at any time they desire. Unlike OEOE, managed enrollment requires groups of students to enter and exit together at the start and end of the program.

According to the survey results, over half of the programs responding implemented managed enrollment in addition to or in place of open enrollment (see Table
C9). The survey respondents identified OEOE as a top impediment to successful NCESL student matriculation, ranking it the second of seven practices most likely to impede NCESL student transition into credit (see Table 4.7). Their response is supported by the statistical analysis, which revealed a highly significant negative relationship between the OEOE design and matriculation rates (see Table 4.6). In other words, NCESL programs which allow students to enter and exit at any time during the semester, without holding them accountable for inconsistent attendance, tend to matriculate at lower rates. Furthermore, the statistical analysis showed a positive relationship of moderate statistical significance between managed enrollment and higher matriculation rates into CTE and GE programs combined (see Table 4.5). These results suggest that the managed enrollment design allows NCESL programs to matriculate students into credit at higher rates. An additional finding in the statistical analysis, though not mentioned by the interviewees, was the highly significant negative relationship between matriculation rates and flexible class scheduling, such as evening or weekend offerings (see Table 4.5). Perhaps this result indicates a trend in programs allowing too much flexibility in attendance as an overall impediment to matriculation.

The qualitative findings support these quantitative results; several of the interviewees described their preference for managed enrollment over OEOE. They believe that OEOE makes it difficult to hold students accountable for their attendance and progress, which makes them less likely to matriculate into credit programs. Rose and Toni stated that it is important to use managed enrollment to enforce a higher level of student accountability in order to promote student progression into credit. They stated that their programs opted to implement enrollment management rather than OEOE for
certain courses, such as Rose’s program’s intensive academic ESL track. Toni’s program also enforces local attendance and repeatability policies. For example, students can be dropped from class due to lack of attendance, and students cannot repeat the same class a third time without intervention with a counselor. Toni described these local policies as a way to provide “an incentive [to students] to take the class seriously,” facilitating student persistence and success towards credit readiness.

Moreover, Toni and Rose explained that the OEOE model does not promote student accountability and poses challenges to serving students. They both explained the problems of having a NCESL program that is solely OEOE. Rose explained that the OEOE model is “very hard to teach in … and very hard to learn in.” Though she sees a place for OEOE in some areas of NCESL programs, allowing students to come in and out any time they want to can actually be a disservice to them. She explained, “You can’t do that in any other area of your life. You can’t get a job,… send your child to school, … or participate in the community that way.” Toni concurred, and has also chosen to use managed enrollment in favor of OEOE in order to make the students “rise to a certain level of accountability. They can’t come and go as they feel like it.” Rose and Toni seemed to feel that enforcing students to commit to attending classes regularly increases the likelihood that they progress and complete the sequence of levels.

Gloria presented another way in which OEOE, funded by the positive attendance model, deters NCESL student progression through NCESL towards transition into credit. She explained that the positive attendance model takes the program’s focus off of student pathways. Because the funding is based on seat time, the instructors are “not caring whether it’s the same student or not. All they’re trying to do is keep those seats hot.”
She explained that the instructor is “less concerned about keeping a particular student and more concerned from their boss’ pressure of keeping somebody in that seat.” By contrast, she argued that focusing on keeping the same student in the class or program, as credit programs do through the census model, “improves their chances of moving up the pathway,” allowing the instructor to “watch student movement.” In other words, if NCESL teachers have a consistent set of students from start to finish, as the credit faculty do, they are able to focus on completing and transitioning those students, without worrying about filling seats with newcomers on a continual basis. However, until the state changes its funding approach for NCESL, the programs will continue with these struggles. A discussion on the positive attendance funding model occurs later in this chapter under the section on state-level policy.

**Articulation Agreements**

Articulation agreements refer to special agreements or arrangements between NCESL and credit programs to provide NCESL students increased access or incentives as they transition into credit. In the survey responses, just over 60% of the programs offered articulation agreements, the great majority of which were between NCESL and Credit ESL (see Table C.10). In the statistical analysis, there was no relationship between articulation agreements and student matriculation rates into credit. However, articulation appeared to be of great value to some of the interviewees; overall, the interviewee card sort responses ranked articulation agreements as the third top practice to promote matriculation (see Table 4.8).

Three of the interviewees, Toni, Charles, and Rose, specifically described the importance of articulation agreements to increase NCESL student transitions into credit,
which Charles would like to see as “seamless.” Rose emphasized, “articulate, articulate, articulate,” while stressing the importance of students having “real contacts on the credit side… so they feel like they belong.” Toni provided an example of an articulation agreement at her college, where the credit program saves seats for entering noncredit students so that they are guaranteed a place in the classes, which often become waitlisted or closed in times of high demand. She hoped that her campus would allow NCESL students to have priority registration for credit classes, but so far her college has not agreed to do so. Meanwhile, she described other articulation efforts, such as having NCESL students shadow the Credit ESL students (attend classes with credit students for the purposes of observing). She believes that shadowing has been shown to be an encouraging and motivational experience for NCESL students considering transitioning into credit themselves. Rose added another articulation example of providing incentives to NCESL students to transition into credit by offering them free textbooks during their first credit term.

**Other Program Practices**

In the qualitative portion of the study, interviewees identified additional program practices as important for NCESL matriculation. These practices include staff development, student engagement, and curriculum design. The survey respondents identified the frequency that their programs offered staff development to their full-time and part-time faculty members. Approximately 60% of the programs reported that they offered staff development to both full-time and part-time staff two or more times a year. Nearly 20% reported that they never offered staff development to part-time faculty, while the majority, over 60% offered them staff development twice a year (see Table C.11).
The statistical analysis showed no relationship between frequency of staff development and NCESL student matriculation rates into credit.

However, two faculty leaders, again Toni and Rose, spoke to the importance of professional development for the faculty, not only because it results in more effective faculty, but it also empowers them and increases their buy-in to the programs’ efforts. They believed that this buy-in and expertise is essential in order to accomplish critical programmatic tasks related to student success and transitions into credit. Based on the frequency of staff development in NCESL programs statewide, along with the qualitative data, it appears that staff development is considered an important practice.

The interviewees also discussed the importance of engaging students by building a community of students, especially through a cohort structure, which is discussed in the literature as a best practice for student success (Kegan, 2001; Labov, 1998; Menard-Warwick, 2004; Ramsey et al., 1992; Zacharikis et al., 2011). The survey data showed that only four (14%) NCESL programs included student cohorts and community building as one of their program practices (see Table C.8). The cross-tabulation of NCESL student transition rates with cohort structures and community revealed no relationship. The qualitative results echoed these results; the interviewees ranked student cohorts at the bottom of the list of important program practices necessary for NCESL student matriculation (see Table 4.8). However, Toni and Charles did speak to the importance of engaging students outside of the classroom to address the psychological and social gaps that are unique to ESL learners. Toni described holiday events the students participate in with credit students, and Charles referred to the student fairs and jobs fairs that his program provides. He stated that this a “deliberate design of activities that supplement
what students get in class, to get them involved with their peers, to get them to know other people, … and I think that’s part of the success that we see.”

The interviews discussed curriculum as an important feature in successful NCESL programs. The literature review described the importance of relevant NCESL curriculum, such as Vocational ESL (VESL) and academic preparation, to promote student goal attainment. In the survey responses, 12, or 43%, indicated that they offered VESL, and 12, or 43%, indicated that they offered a college readiness ESL track as one of their program practices (see Table C.12). The statistical analysis revealed no relationship between student matriculation rates and either college readiness ESL or VESL tracks. The survey respondents did not rank curriculum as a highly important factor in promoting matriculation; they ranked it fourth of seven choices (see Table 4.6). The interviewees ranked curriculum slightly higher, in the top third of important factors. Two of the interviewees, Charles and Rose, referred to the importance of offering students the specialized option of an academic success program, or intensive ESL program, to prepare students for credit. Charles stated that he has seen more students take advantage of these options. Rose also described this track as “very popular”; approximately 60% of her NCESL program is comprised of this intensive ESL option.

NCESL Program Assessment Practices

Throughout the discussions on program-level best practices, the interviewees described student learning assessment methods that their programs used to improve matriculation rates. This section gives particular attention to how NCESL programs access, gather, and use data to address student needs, and whether or not these practices
impact matriculation rates. Generally, the results and findings show that NCESL programs do not use data in ways that allow them to improve matriculation rates.

The survey respondents were asked if their institutions provided them with useful and accurate data on matriculation rates, and whether their programs generated their own data. The results showed that 12, or nearly 36%, of NCESL programs received data from their institutions, while 13, or 40%, generated data themselves (see Table C.13). These two choices were not mutually exclusive. Next, survey respondents were asked how frequently their programs reviewed and discussed data on matriculation rates, and how frequently they used this data to inform program changes. The responses did not show any marked trend; however, the majority indicated that they performed these two tasks twice a year or more, at 39% and 24% respectively. The minority never performed either task, at 14% and 32% respectively (see Table C.14). The survey respondents and the interviewees did not rate useful assessment data as an item of high importance for increasing student transition rates into credit; both sets ranked this item second to last in terms of importance. Interestingly, the statistical analyses indicated a negative relationship of weak statistical significance between access to matriculation rate data, whether provided by the institution or by the program itself, with higher matriculation rates. This analysis suggests that program access to data may not necessarily contribute to higher rates of NCESL student transitions into credit; rather, data may be more useful as a tool for communication with credit faculty and with the institution as a whole, as described earlier in the chapter.

To determine the different ways that programs assess their NCESL students, survey respondents were asked to select from a list of assessment methods that they have
used, resulting in a ranking of the most common assessments (see Table C.15). The most common types of assessments were measuring retention rates within a course, the number of noncredit certificates awarded, and course pass rates.

The interviewees, Charles, Toni, and Rose, described the importance of assessing student learning, but did not directly relate assessments to improved matriculation rates. They described how NCESL programs can use assessment data specific to student performance and behavior in order to create innovations and enact changes to improve student retention and progression, giving students a better foundation and impetus for transitioning into credit. For example, Toni described how her program used data to identify effective reading activities that improved student performance on test scores. Rose described how her program used data on student retention rates to re-design shorter terms, which resulted in fewer student drop-outs. Charles’ program has an ongoing faculty and staff committee, which meets regularly to discuss ways to support student equity and student success; he explained how important NCESL student learning data is during this “time of accountability,” referring to the recent national and state-level demands for data driven decision-making.

Rose and Toni, two of the NCESL faculty respondents, delved deeper into more detailed ways of assessing student learning in meaningful ways; both explained the importance of using multiple measures to assess NCESL students. In addition to typical pre and post-tests, they described the usefulness of student portfolios, aligned scoring rubrics, and issuing student progress reports, the latter of which Rose stated was well-liked by students. Charles, Rose, and Toni all emphasized the importance of issuing grades, or progress indicators, to noncredit students. Grades are “good for the students,”
and are also a useful measurement for the programs themselves, Toni explained. While the quantitative evidence provided no evidence for the usefulness of data for matriculation purposes, these interviewees agreed that evaluating student learning data allows programs to make informed decisions on how to best advance students through the ESL levels, improving the likelihood of their completion and transition into credit. However, none of the sources indicated that evaluating matriculation data was an important practice to inform ways to increase NCESL transitions into credit.

**State Level Commitment: Policies that Impact NCESL Matriculation**

In the above sections, we discussed the importance of faculty, institutional, and program-level commitment to NCESL program success. This section describes how state-level commitment can impact NCESL program success, specifically through its design and implementation of policy. There are mixed views about how state-level policies influence NCESL programs’ ability to transition their students into credit programs. Nearly 29% of the survey respondents reported that NCESL state-level policies had no impact on matriculation. Another 43% stated that the policies somewhat or mostly positively impacted matriculation (see Table C.16). With the incorporation of quantitative data, this section describes how the interviewees view the impact of state-level policies on NCESL student transitions into credit, and how policy makers might better understand the needs of NCESL in order to commit to the success of the programs. The major topics that emerged in terms of state-level commitment are noncredit funding and the ways in which the state measures NCESL program success and accountability.
Positive Attendance (PA) Model

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the survey respondents rated the PA model as the most significant impediment to NCESL student transition into credit (see Table 4.7). Similarly, all five interviewees, though they differed in opinion on what the funding formulas should be, commented that the lower level of NCESL program funding generated by the PA model impedes student matriculation into credit programs, provides little incentive for community colleges to offer NCESL programs, and reflects faulty reasoning. They maintain that these conditions create unintentional consequences that ultimately hurt NCESL program and student success.

All five interviewees concurred that it would take additional funding, beyond the CDCP apportionment rate, which rewards programs for seat-time, in order to provide the necessary resources for NCESL student matriculation into credit. Four of the five interviewees believe NCESL should be funded as credit programs are funded, at a higher rate and under the census model. The census model provides funding based on the number of credit students in credit classes on the census date, typically at the end of the third week of the academic semester. Charles stated that with census-based funding, “we would see higher [noncredit] matriculation rates.” He elaborated, “To really do things well, to support matriculation activities, to really invest in wide- scale assessment, orientation, counseling, and educational planning, you need resources. . . . And I don’t believe that on its own the [reduced funding of the] positive attendance model does that.” Likewise, Gloria explained how the reduced noncredit funding negatively impact NCESL classrooms; the colleges expect the class sizes to be larger, and they typically opt to staff the program with almost all or all adjunct faculty. These strategies are ways the colleges
can justify offering programs that bring in less state funding compared to the credit programs.

In addition to impeding matriculation rates, interviewees felt that the lower level of funding dissuades community colleges from offering NCESL instruction. The lower rates imply that the value of NCESL education is less important to colleges, and many may make the decision to forego offering NCESL based on financial, rather than pedagogical, reasons. Both Gloria and Louis described how equitable funding would remedy this situation. Gloria explained, “The reason for equity funding is not only to provide equitable services, but it’s to give [community college] districts a reason to [consider offering NCESL] from a “purely benefit to the community [perspective] rather than [from] the fiduciary analysis.” Considering the effort it takes to start a new program and the lower funding NCESL receives, Louis remarked, “Districts like mine don’t even have noncredit, and … why would we start [it]?” With equal funding, the decision to offer it would be a “nonissue,” and would be based on “pedagogical reasons” rather than not doing it “because it doesn’t make any sense financially.” In essence, the lower funding model makes it so that some colleges cannot afford to offer noncredit, regardless of the needs of their community’s population. In these cases, there is no opportunity for ESL learners to use NCESL as a bridge into credit programs.

**State Measurements of NCESL Program Accountability**

A second topic that emerged regarding state-level policy is the way in which the state collects and records NCESL success data. Though its accountability practices do not necessarily impede student matriculation into credit, they may inadequately capture
or misrepresent NCESL student matriculation rates. Most of the data on this issue comes from the qualitative interviews.

Four of the interviewees (except for Louis from credit ESL) discussed the widespread, persistent challenges of measuring NCESL matriculation rates. These challenges include the difficulty of measuring NCESL students with a completion model, including noncredit certificates; issues with missing, inconsistent, or inaccurate data; and the requirement of state residency in order for NCESL students to pay in-state tuition once in a credit program.

**Pathways into credit as evidence of NCESL program success.** All five interviewees stated the best way to show accountability to legislators is to demonstrate NCESL student transition into academic or workforce training, or into job placement. In terms of job placement, Charles explained that legislators would like to see “wage data”, evidence that “someone’s income earning ability is better or higher because they were exposed to or went through ESL. Louis described this as “work value”; he explained, “If improvement in your English because of ESL programs translates into better jobs, I’m sure that would get them (legislators) excited.” In terms of academic success, the interviewees described the value of counting the number of students entering credit programs and earning degrees.

In addition to measuring transitions into the pathways, four of the interviewees (except Louis) also referred to the importance of demonstrating student progression through ESL levels within the NCESL program. Level progression is documented through the use of progress indicators, or grades. These grades typically included Pass, Sufficient Progress, and No Pass. Giving grades not only provides progression data, it is
also mentioned as a practice that students need and like. Toni explained that legislators would be “pleased” to see level progress, which is why statewide collection of grades is a “big thing.” By showing legislators that their English is improving, “people can more easily make logical connections into how this would impact their lives, like getting a job.”

**Problems with the completion model.** Four of the interviewees described the challenge and/or illogic to simply measuring student transitions into credit as the primary assessment for NCESL program accountability. This type of measurement is referred to as a completion model, where programs demonstrate success by counting the number of students who complete a program. In the case of NCESL, the state has defined eight levels below college readiness (CITE?). Therefore, the completion model would measure how many students progressed through as many as eight levels before entering college.

This expectation is illogical for several reasons, according to the interviewees. They acknowledged and understood the state’s desire to measure NCESL student transition into credit or job pathways, but Toni explained that data measures also need to “reflect various avenues of success” for NCESL students. Rose, Gloria, and Toni explained that for one, NCESL students have a great variety of goals that do not always include credit aspirations. In many cases their goals are met well before they reach credit English readiness. In addition, it takes a great length of time for a student to progress through all eight levels. Toni explained:

> You’ve got a population that you’re measuring in the denominator, the one on the bottom. There is this big group of people who are eight levels below transfer [level], and then you’re measuring what percent of them have gone from the top
level. There’s a lot of time and they could be moving anywhere in that time that it takes for them to get their competency up. There’s also a bunch of different goals in here. And the biggest goal if you’re moving from literacy is reached at about level three, level four, and that is [my] English is good enough … [to] get a job, and you see the dropping out at that intermediate/high intermediate level, which is a good thing - they need it.

But it’s enormous energy that it takes if you’ve got a job and a family and kids and then you’re trying to continue your education and in an immersion program that meets four nights a week. So those are factors that need to be considered with compassion and understanding.

Rose shared similar concerns. She stated, “The problem is that the legislature … want(s) to see this neat thing. You go through one to seven levels of instruction and then you go over into the credit, right? They want to see this real linear line. But there’s a lot of things that get in the way of that.” Rose also explained that this issue is not necessarily specific to noncredit students; even credit students have multiple goals that do not always include transfer into a four-year institution. Gloria described this linear expectation as “dysfunctional,” explaining that the ESL student “moves in and out as they get a level that lets them do something better in their lives. Very very few go from ESL 1 to ESL 8.” She provided examples of a dishwasher who might take NCESL in order to speak enough English to become a busboy and earn tips, or a construction worker who might take NCESL in order to escape the rut of always carrying the heaviest weight because he cannot communicate. This example demonstrates how NCESL, as Louis stated, “plays a role in workforce development.” It also demonstrates the
immeasurability of this type of success; Toni commented, “It would be great if we could connect [NCESL] to getting a job, but I think [not having a Social Security number] is the biggest [obstacle].

**Noncredit certificates.** In an effort to find other ways to measure NCESL student success, the state implemented noncredit certificates of competency that programs could award to students as they progress through the program. Approximately 70% of the survey respondents reported that their programs offered NCESL certificates (see Table C.13), and as seen in Table C.15 in the above section on assessment practices, it is the second most common method of measuring student success. The frequency of awarding certificates is likely due to the fact that it is required in order for NCESL program to receive the enhanced CDCP funding. Toni described certificate attainment as a “measure that’s mattering more and more now,” but Toni, Rose, and Gloria explained that not all NCESL students have goals that include earning certificates. Interestingly, the statistical analysis shows a highly statistically significant negative relationship between those programs that offer certificates and matriculation (see Table 4.5).

**Inaccurate or missing data.** Whether measuring student pathways via certificate attainment rates or transition rates into credit programs and job placement, a critical challenge for measuring NCESL student success is missing or inaccurate data. As noted above, nearly two-thirds of the NCESL survey respondents indicated that they did not have accurate or useful data on their student matriculation rates (see Table C.13). Charles explained that part of this problem is due to the fact that “the investment in data and folks whose job it is to provide the analytical review is lean statewide.” Both he and Toni referred to the data as “absent” and “inconsistent.” For example, Toni described
how, during a task force meeting at the Chancellor’s Office, “the light bulb went on that these [noncredit] certificates weren’t being collected statewide.” Rose explained that in her state-level work, she realized that there were “so many errors” in the noncredit success data. She said, “Nobody’s looking at it. I don’t even know who’s entering the data, and nobody’s checking the data.” Regardless of these issues, Toni, Rose, and Charles are positive that these efforts to produce meaningful NCESL data have started statewide.

While the state has begun exploring ways to measure NCESL student success, the interviewees called for serious discussions on how to accurately and meaningfully do so. Rose emphasized that policymakers “don’t want to hear us tell our stories,” and that “legislators vote on data,” which she referred to as the “language of policymakers.” To find the right way to provide meaningful NCESL data, she urged, “We’ve got to keep talking…and look at it a little more seriously.” Charles concurred, rather than adopting policies that go “in the extreme in the opposite direction” … it might be more helpful to … really discuss these important things and really work our way through them and do them in a way that makes sense. Involving more parties. Maybe taking a year or two and looking at them throughout the state.”

Toni explained that matriculation rates into credit is not the only way to demonstrate the effectiveness of NCESL programs. She explained that not all students need credit classes in order to “contribute significantly to California’s economy.” “It would be nice if legislators understood how much our state economy needs immigrants and that noncredit programs offer a really great faster track to economic growth, and really just as fast or faster track into college credit.” However, it is very difficult to
measure job attainment or advancement without having access to student Social Security numbers. In most cases, Social Security numbers are also necessary in order to attend credit classes; since NCESL students do not usually have Social Security numbers, tracking them into credit can be nearly impossible. This leads to another issue that impacts not only the ability to track matriculation rates, but the ability for students to matriculate at all.

**Residency.** Both Toni and Rose stated that residency requirements are the one thing about NCESL student matriculation that “we can’t change.” Toni explained that a considerable proportion of NCESL students are not residents. Though they live in California and contribute to the economy, they cannot transition into credit as state residents because they would need to pay much higher international student tuition rates. Rose explains that it can take time for documented, or legal, immigrant students to become residents, so those that complete NCESL may not be able to enter credit programs the semester immediately following. She explained, “They might not show the first semester after they complete. They might not even show the second semester. When they figure [their residency] all out, then they’ll show up the third semester.” It is also important to consider that some NCESL students are not documented, and are therefore not eligible to take credit classes at all. Toni provided an example of a cohort bridge program that was designed to promote student transitions into credit. It required NCESL students to take a NCESL course and a noncredit business course. In the second semester, the cohort was required to take one credit ESL course or business course and one higher level of NCESL. However, the students who were not eligible for credit were forced to drop out of the program. Toni referred to this situation as the “biggest block for
noncredit transitions.” These situations illustrate why the traditional completion tracking model is not appropriate for NCESL students and that there may be a need for state legislative action to remove barriers that are outside institutional control.

Several interviewees believe that the state is interested in supporting NCESL. Charles, for example, is “encouraged” by the fact that he has seen a “willingness” of state-level lawmakers to “take more time and listen” to NCESL advocates when “developing more long-lasting [NCESL] policy in the future.” This is a positive observation considering that many of the findings and results from this study showed that barriers to NCESL matriculation into credit stem from the state level.

Summary

The findings and results from this study shed light on the impact of NCESL program characteristics, designs, and practices on student matriculation rates into credit programs. The most promising NCESL program features that relate to higher matriculation rates include full-time faculty, the same counselors for both credit and noncredit students, institutional commitment to NCESL, managed enrollment, and teaching the system of higher education in NCESL classrooms. However, this study showed that in some cases, state-level and institutional policies prevent NCESL programs from implementing certain designs and practices related to student transition into credit. These policies can result in restricted access to resources, such as full-time faculty and adequate funding, as well as program-level control of funding. In addition to policy barriers, this study showed that there are also cultural barriers that exist within the institution and between the noncredit and credit programs. Yet, this study’s results and findings suggest that these barriers can be addressed with data-driven communication,
collaboration, and advocacy on the part of NCESL programs with credit and institutional counterparts, and with managed enrollment practices requiring higher levels of student accountability for their attendance and persistence.

The findings and results from this study also explore the role of assessments and program data in advancing NCESL matriculation rates. The majority of assessment occurs on the course level, which allows for improved student learning. Yet, there is very little information gleaned on how NCESL programs may use assessment and data to increase rates of matriculation. Rather, the findings showed that program-level data beyond the classroom is most useful as a tool for NCESL communication and advocacy with the institution.

The next chapter provides a discussion which links the findings and results of this study with those of prior research, and then presents this study’s findings and results within the conceptual framework of the logic model.
Chapter V

Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of the study and responds to the research questions as informed by the findings and results. Following is a discussion of how the findings and results relate to prior research, how they can be applied within the conceptual framework of a logic model, and how they can inform state-level, institutional, and local policies that impact the practices of NCESL programs. The chapter concludes with a description of the limitations and contributions of the study, as well as implications for policy and practice, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

The problem that this study addresses centers on how California community colleges can effectively matriculate, or transition, NCESL students into credit programs, in response to the state’s narrowed mission of producing students with certificates and degrees. Because the immigrant population is projected to be a significant portion of future employment growth, particularly in California, and because the state seeks to fuel its economy through the employment of a certificated and degree-earning workforce, the California community college system must find a way to educate adult immigrant students. NCESL programs must provide these students with the specialized instructional and support services they need in order to attain college-ready English skills and successfully transition into certificate and degree-bearing credit programs. However, with a conservative statewide matriculation rate average of 17% as shown in Chancellor’s
Office data in this study, NCESL programs do not matriculate the majority of their students into credit.

The purpose of this study was to examine how NCESL student matriculation into credit programs occurs throughout the California community college system, and to examine which NCESL program practices and designs best promote high levels of student transitions into credit. The study also evaluated how both state-level and institutional policy and practices can support or impede NCESL programs in transitioning their students into credit programs. In addition, the study also explored how NCESL programs use data to demonstrate accountability for preparing and transitioning students into California community credit programs.

This exploratory mixed methods study included a combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses. First, five state-level NCESL leaders were interviewed on their perceptions of state-level, institutional, and program policies, designs, and assessment practices related to student transition rates into credit programs. Next, program leaders from 28 NCESL community college programs were surveyed on their individual program’s practices and designs, as well as on their perceptions of policy impacting student transition rates. Last, these survey responses were cross-tabulated with Chancellor’s Office data on each program’s NCESL student transition rate into either General Education (GE) or Career and Technical Education (CTE) credit programs. In doing so, it was possible to identify relationships between self-reported program designs and practices and higher or lower rates of NCESL student matriculation into credit.

The study addressed four research questions:
1) How do NCESL state-level advocates view the impact of state policy on NCESL student progression and matriculation in California community colleges?

The NCESL state-level advocates generally felt that California policy-makers support NCESL programs and, in order to better inform policy decisions, seek to understand the programs’ specialized needs by listening to state-level NCESL advocates. However, they believed that policies resulting in a lower level of funding and a dearth of full-time faculty members were significant impediments to NCESL matriculation. Specifically, the advocates called for restored noncredit Student Services Support Program (SSSP) funding and an increase in apportionment equal to credit programs. Furthermore, they described the impracticality, or even impossibility, of meeting the state’s accountability expectations, which focus on a linear, completion model for NCESL students. They called for policy-makers to have a better understanding of NCESL student goals, which include workforce readiness and do not always include transition into credit, and therefore cannot be measured by matriculation rates alone. They explained the need for the state to replace missing or inaccurate data on NCESL student success. Finally, they wished for policy-makers to realize significant barriers that NCESL students face when transitioning to credit, such as citizenship or residency requirements that prevent matriculation. Regardless of these state-level policy issues, the interviewees believed that the majority of problematic policy impact on NCESL matriculation occurs on the institutional level.

2) What program designs and articulation agreements best support ESL noncredit to credit matriculation? The mixed method analyses suggested that the best program designs and practices to support NCESL matriculation, for the most part, depend on
institutional commitment and decision-making beyond program-level control. This assumption is based on the results and findings from the survey responses, the statistical analysis, and the rankings from the interviewees, which converge on the need for institutional commitment to NCESL, full-time faculty, adequate funding, and counselors who counsel both credit ESL and NCESL students. Other practices driven by the institution that may relate to higher matriculation rates are the use of the same faculty to teach both credit and NCESL students, collaboration between credit and noncredit faculty, and the decision to house NCESL programs at the on-site credit campus location.

However, one result that presents more questions, as mentioned before, is the perception of survey respondents that concurrent student enrollment in credit and NCESL is the first necessary practice for NCESL matriculation. This finding was not supported by the other sources, yet if we interpret the finding as a different way of describing the need for the same faculty to teach both credit and NCESL students, it aligns with the trend revealed in the statistical analysis (Table 4.5).

These practices and designs are all created by the institution; local programs do not have the capacity to implement these designs on their own. The only practices within program control that have moderate statistically significant relationships with higher matriculation rates are the implementation of managed enrollment and the practice of teaching NCESL students the system of higher education within the curriculum.

The qualitative findings support most of the quantitative results described above, and explore them in more detail. The interviewees defined a key part of institutional commitment as the institutional decision to give NCESL programs local control over funds allocated for NCESL programs. For communication and collaboration, they
defined key components of using data to support communication and the creation of articulation agreements as a result of collaboration. Though the interviewees supported the need for on-site locations, they also described the importance of off-site NCESL program locations with an inroad back to the credit campus. Whereas both the quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed the importance of counseling, the interviewees went into greater depth about the importance of a wide range of student support services. Finally, the qualitative findings include other practices that promote matriculation that were not identified through the quantitative results. These include staff development, NCESL student engagement, curriculum, and assessment.

3.) How do NCESL programs produce and use assessment data to inform and improve matriculation practices? Less than half of NCESL programs surveyed have access to data on how well their students matriculate into credit. Programs that have access to this data and review and discuss it show no correlation with higher levels of matriculation; rather, there appears to be a negative relationship of weak statistical significance between these programs and matriculation rates. Besides matriculation data, NCESL programs surveyed produce data on student learning, retention, and persistence through a variety of measures, such as retention and pass rates and NCESL certificate attainment. However, the study did not explore whether these individual program assessment techniques related to matriculation rates. The study did not reveal any relationship between assessments and matriculation rates, but interviewees suggested the importance of assessment data to support effective communication and advocacy for NCESL programs.
4. What methods of tracking NCESL progress and matriculation are most effective in demonstrating program accountability? All of the interviewees described that the most effective way for NCESL programs to demonstrate accountability to the state was through student wage or job attainment data or through student transition into credit programs. However, there was little information on how to acquire such data. As for demonstrating student transitions into credit programs, the interviewees felt that this goal only applies to some students; for those that do aspire to transition, many have to wait for residency status in order to afford credit tuition rates or qualify for financial aid. Therefore, evaluating NCESL program effectiveness on a linear, completion model may not be an accurate or useful measurement of how well NCESL programs promote student success.

Discussion

This section explores how the findings and results from this study both align with, but also in some cases diverge from, those within the literature review. It then presents key findings and results within the conceptual framework of the logic model, allowing for a revised model specific to NCESL programs desiring to produce successful student outcomes. The discussion concludes with an exploration of the importance of state-level, institutional, program, and student commitment to NCESL transitions into credit programs. It also discusses the role of data in supporting NCESL transition rates.

Results and Findings as Related to the Literature Review

In many cases, the findings and results in this study supported those from the literature review. For higher NCESL matriculation rates, the literature described the importance of faculty from credit programs teaching NCESL on a community college
credit campus (Ignash, 1995; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; O’Donnell & Tobbell, 2007; Seymour, 2009). Similarly, the non-significant quantitative results in the present study suggested that NCESL students taught by faculty who teach both NCESL and credit courses may be more likely to transition into credit programs. However, the question remains whether NCESL student matriculate at higher rates because their teachers teach both credit and noncredit or because they are enrolled in a credit class as noncredit students, referred to as concurrent enrollment. While the survey respondents identified concurrent enrollment as their top choice for promoting matriculation, on the contrary, the non-significant statistical results suggested that concurrent enrollment was associated with a smaller proportion of students transitioning into credit. Meanwhile, the interviewees believed that concurrent enrollment options, including the use of the same teachers for credit and noncredit students, were not important for matriculation.

This study also supported the recommendation in the literature to house NCESL programs alongside credit programs at community college locations in order to promote matriculation (Ignash, 1995; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; O’Donnell & Tobbel, 2007). The non-significant quantitative results indicated that students who attended NCESL courses at the same location as credit students may be more likely to enter credit programs themselves. However, the qualitative findings revealed the importance of off-site NCESL programs in immigrant communities to promote student access. Furthermore, the findings indicated the need to provide bus routes or campus shuttles that allow NCESL students to access both noncredit and credit programs if the goal is for them to matriculate.
The literature review described the importance of supporting NCESL student matriculation in ways beyond language-learning due to ESL students’ special needs in navigating cultural, psychological, and physical barriers to transition into college credit programs (Becker, 2011; Kanno & Varghese, 2010; O’Donnell & Tobbé, 2007). This study showed that these non-linguistic support activities occur outside of the classroom and are offered by student support services and full-time faculty that engage with both credit and NCESL students. The results showed that transition into credit is likely higher for students who attend NCESL programs with full-time faculty, who can devote time to them outside of class, as well as for students who are counseled alongside credit students. The qualitative findings also described the importance of student support services which address NCESL students’ needs beyond language learning in order to increase transition rates. One specific way that the literature suggests to help remove non-linguistic matriculation barriers for NCESL students is to explicitly teach them about the educational system and how to navigate it (Becker, 2011). This finding is supported by the significant quantitative results of the present study, which show that teaching the educational system in the classroom may lead to more NCESL students choosing to enter credit.

The literature found that NCESL matriculation requires support from a “community of practice,” including administrators, staff, and teachers from both credit and noncredit (Becker, 2011; Ignash, 1995). In the case of NCESL programs in the community college setting, successful matriculation appears to depend on the network of administrators, counselors, and faculty from credit and noncredit who work in collaboration to support NCESL transition into credit. The quantitative and qualitative
data in the present study support this importance of a community of practice with the statistical results showing a significant positive relationship between counselors serving both credit and NCESL students and higher matriculation rates. Though not significant, the results also suggested that faculty who teach both credit and NCESL and who collaborate with each other promote higher rates of matriculation. Similarly, institutional commitment to NCESL programs, which could be regarded as the commitment of a community of practice, has a significant, positive relationship with NCESL student transition rates. In line with these results, the qualitative findings indicated that interviewees valued institutional commitment as the topmost need to advance NCESL matriculation rates.

The literature pointed to the reduced funding of NCESL programs as compared to credit programs, describing the negative impact this can have on matriculation rates (ASCCC, 2009; Blumenthal, 2002; Ignash, 1995; Kanno, 2010; RPGroup, 2007; Szelenyi, 2002). The survey responses from the present study indicated that the positive attendance model, which is associated with reduced funding for seat time, was the topmost impediment to NCESL matriculation. However, reduced funding itself was ranked as the least significant impediment to matriculation. It is not clear if the impediment is related to the number of dollars the NCESL program receives versus the manner in which the attendance model impacts student commitment to persisting and eventually transitioning into credit, as described earlier. However, the qualitative findings showed that the level of funding, after the first choice of institutional commitment, was the second most critical component for successful NCESL matriculation. All five
interviewees described the need for increased funding equal to that of credit in order to increase student transition into credit.

There are also some ways in which this study’s results and findings diverge from the literature. Becker (2011) described the importance of articulation agreements, or bridge programs, which are special arrangements between credit ESL and NCESL programs that provide incentives for NCESL student to transition into credit programs. The present study showed no correlation between articulation agreements and matriculation rates; however, the interviewees did identify articulation agreements as valuable for better matriculation rates. Numerous studies described the importance of cohort structures to support NCESL student motivation and persistence (Kegan, 2001; Labov, 1998; Menard-Warwick, 2004; Ramsey et al., 1992; Zacharikis et al., 2011). However, the present study showed no correlation between cohort structures and higher rates of matriculation. Lastly, the literature stated that providing ESL curriculum within the context of students’ vocational goals promotes student persistence and success (Kim, 2011; Lambert, 2008; Ramsey et al., 1992; Tercaglionu, 2004; Zacharakis et al., 2011). Neither the quantitative nor the qualitative findings from the present study identified vocational (VESL) programs as critical for higher NCESL matriculation rates, although almost half of colleges surveyed had such programs.

The absence of relationships between higher levels of NCESL matriculation with articulation agreements, cohort structures, and VESL could be due to the limited number of survey responses. Considering the emphasis that the interviewees placed on articulation agreements, one might expect to see some correlation in the quantitative results. However, because there were so many types of articulation agreements, and
because the definition of these was not made explicit, perhaps the design of this study did
not allow for examining them in enough detail. As for cohort structures, it may be
possible that student progress and retention are improved with these; however, cohort
structures may not impact actual student transition rates into credit. Because cohorts are
composed of students with different goals and residency status, perhaps it is unreasonable
to expect that cohort groups would transition into credit as a whole. The result that was
most surprising in relation to the literature was the lack of relationship indicated between
VESL and matriculation rates. It could be assumed that VESL students would transition
into the CTE credit programs; however, perhaps VESL students are more focused on
immediate job attainment or advancement versus entry into credit programs.

**Revisiting the Conceptual Framework**

The results and findings from this study are further analyzed and presented using
the conceptual framework of the logic model, which is described in the second chapter.
The logic model allows us to display the different components of a NCESL program,
including the program’s inputs, activities, participants, outputs, outcomes, and
assessments. With the model, we are able to understand how the different components
work together to lead to the desired outcome of the program, which has traditionally
been, in the case of NCESL, the matriculation of students into credit programs. The logic
model also takes into account the assumptions behind how the model is supposed to
work, and the environmental factors that impact its function. The graphic representation
of the NCESL program logic model theory of action as currently is presented in Figure
5.1.
Based on the findings of this study, this NCESL logic model is typical of those found in community college NCESL programs and represents the shared views of policymakers and institutions. The model is based on assumptions that this study has revealed to be faulty. These assumptions include:

1. NCESL adjunct faculty prepare NCESL students during classroom time for transition into credit. On the contrary, this study revealed that higher levels of NCESL transition into credit likely results from the engagement of full-time NCESL and credit faculty, which occurs outside of the classroom.

2. NCESL programs can or should be able to operate on reduced funding and without SSSP services. However, NCESL programs need appropriate levels of
funding to implement practices, such as counseling, that this study has shown to relate with higher matriculation rates. NCESL program and student needs are no less than those of credit programs and students.

3. Students want to and/or are able to go into credit immediately after completing the NCESL sequence. However, this study revealed that there are multiple student-driven outcomes in addition to transition into credit. These include job attainment or advancement, citizenship, or civic preparation, including parenting and life skills. Students may reach these goals prior to completion of the NCESL sequence, and so may drop out mid-sequence and not continue to credit programs.

4. Students will go from NCESL into credit in a linear manner immediately after completion of NCESL. However, this study showed that many students may not be eligible to enter into credit immediately after NCESL if they have not established residency or become eligible for financial aid. Until then, they may not be able to afford credit tuition rates, preventing their transition into credit. It may take several years before they are able to transition into credit. The same is true for those students who, after acquiring enough English language skills, opt to leave NCESL due to their immediate need for employment in order to support a family. They may choose to put off transitioning into credit after their job and civic preparation goals are met.

5. Program effectiveness can be measured by NCESL to credit matriculation rates. However, this study suggests that linear matriculation rates from NCESL to credit ESL do not adequately measure program success. As described above, NCESL
programs assist students in achieving goals in many other areas in addition to transition into credit.

6. Matriculation rates provide data that will inform the necessary program inputs and activities to improve matriculation rates. However, the study has shown that less than half of NCESL programs surveyed have access to matriculation rate data. The study did not produce any findings or results on how NCESL programs are able to use matriculation rates as a way to inform improved program practices.

The restructured logic model in Figure 5.2 incorporates the statistically significant results of this study that have been shown to relate to higher matriculation rates, along with those supported by other quantitative and qualitative findings. In this model, we see that the great majority of the necessary components, as described below, are only available through institutional commitment and institutional decision-making. In other words, the NCESL program itself cannot produce the necessary inputs, conduct the necessary activities, and engage the necessary participants that it needs in order to increase transition rates. The program is most effective transitioning students to credit when working with the institution and its credit counterparts.

**Inputs, Activities, and Participants.** As the study revealed through its statistically significant results, the essential inputs for NCESL matriculation include full-time faculty, ideally from both credit ESL and NCESL. Furthermore, based on indications in the survey and statistical results, along with qualitative findings, the inputs should also include commitment on the part of the institution to provide full-time faculty, on-site facilities, adequate funding, and SSSP services offered by counselors who serve both NCESL and credit students. The study showed that the essential activities for the
model, as supported by the positive trends in the results and qualitative findings, should include teaching, counseling, collaboration between credit and NCESL faculty, and advocacy with the institution for NCESL resources and support.

As for participation, the study showed that these activities can best be accomplished by full-time faculty who teach both credit ESL and NCESL and counselors who counsel both credit and NCESL students. Without these participants, the essential activities outside of the classroom cannot take place. Both the results and findings
indicated that full-time faculty are the fuel that supports the engine of the model – the inputs, the activities, the participation, and ultimately the outcomes of the model. They are needed to secure the necessary inputs by advocating for the program’s needs for funding and full-time faculty, to perform the collaborative activities outside the classroom, and to serve as the essential participants in promoting NCESL matriculation. Furthermore, faculty and counselor participation should not be limited to the noncredit side; it should occur from both sides, noncredit and credit.

An additional thing to note is the difficulty experienced in locating NCESL program leaders to respond to the survey portion of this study. In many cases, it became apparent that indeed there were programs that did not have any direct leaders who could speak on behalf of the program. Perhaps this lack of representation is a symptom of the lack of institutional commitment towards assigning faculty and staff to lead NCESL programs state-wide.

The study also indicated how students should participate in the model; significant results and qualitative findings showed that NCESL programs that require students to attend regularly through managed enrollment are more likely to succeed in transitioning students to credit. On the contrary, open enrollment programs that do not require consistent student participation are less likely to matriculate students.

Though this revised logic model contains the essential components necessary for NCESL student transition into credit, unlike the model of current practice shown in Figure 5.1, it can only operate under certain assumptions. First, this model assumes that the institution will demonstrate commitment to NCESL student transition to credit by providing the necessary inputs of program funding and full-time faculty. Second, it
assumes that credit faculty are willing to collaborate with NCESL faculty for the sake of transitioning and welcoming NCESL students into credit. For these assumptions to be realized, the institution and its credit faculty have to fully accept NCESL programs as part of their higher education environment. Yet, this study reveals critical matriculation barriers, such as lack of full-time faculty, lack of NCESL program control over state funding, off-site NCESL program locations, and an institutional resistance toward and lack of awareness of NCESL. As a result, NCESL programs face significant challenges in the implementation of an effective logic model. Finally, the circular model de-emphasizes the linear expectation of NCESL pathways; as described earlier in the study, some NCESL students meet their language learning goals before completing the sequence. In some cases, they may return to the program at a later time as their job, academic, or civic goals demand higher proficiency.

**Outputs and Outcomes.** The existing NCESL program logic model represented in Figure 5.1, with its typical set of curricular inputs, classroom activities, and adjunct faculty participants, is designed to produce the singular outcome of transitioning students into credit upon completion of a NCESL sequence. However, the revised model includes the multitude of student-driven outcomes that include, but are not limited to, immediate transition into credit.

The outcomes represent the goals of the students, not necessarily the goals of the institution or the community college system. Student goals include transitioning into credit general education (GE) or career and technical education (CTE) programs, attaining employment, advancing in employment, becoming citizens, raising families in an English-speaking environment, and generally becoming a contributing member of
society in the U.S. With these multiple student-driven goals, it may be unreasonable to expect high matriculation rates from NCESL to credit, since many students aspire to goals other than transitioning into credit. Yet, the community college system’s focus on measuring NCESL program success is narrowed to matriculation rates; student achievement of other goals is rarely considered, likely because they are the most difficult to measure.

**Evaluation and Assessment.** As we have seen, a considerable amount of NCESL program assessment occurs to measure the short-term outputs of learning ESL. As described in Chapter IV, NCESL programs most frequently evaluate student pass rates, retention rates, and certificate attainment. These methods of assessment are appropriate for evaluating the short-term learning output, and in some cases, the data from these assessments help programs improve student learning in the classroom. However, as for successfully measuring the various outcomes, there is the problematic assumption that NCESL programs are able to assess these various outcomes, such as job attainment and civic preparation. As mentioned before, matriculation rates cannot be a one-size-fits-all measurement to capture the many ways that NCESL programs can be effective. NCESL programs produce multiple outcomes other than matriculation; therefore, it is necessary to use multiple measures. However, none of the data from this study revealed how NCESL are able to adequately measure these multiple outcomes. The findings showed that in fact, the NCESL programs did not know how to gather such data, and furthermore, how they would use it to improve the outcomes. This realization raises concern due to the fact that community college programs are required to evaluate and demonstrate their effectiveness for institutional and accreditation mandates. With
only the one measure of immediate transition rates into credit, NCESL are unable to evaluate or demonstrate their effectiveness in producing the wide range of outcomes that it produces for its students.

**Commitment to Meeting NCESL Needs and the Power of Data**

This section elaborates on the overarching theme of commitment as a critical aspect of successful NCESL student transition into credit. It describes the importance of a shared understanding among institutional participants of what NCESL programs need in order to matriculate students, and describes the unexpected use of data as a tool for communicating and building this understanding.

**The Importance of Institutional, Faculty, and Student Commitment to NCESL Matriculation.** A critical theme that arose from this study is the level of commitment that is necessary on the part of the institution as a whole, or, as described in the literature, on the part of a community of practice, which includes counselors and full-time faculty from both credit and NCESL under the support of the institution. Institutional commitment and a dedicated campus community are necessary in order for NCESL programs to produce the outcome of matriculating students into credit. Institutional commitment allows for sufficient resources to the program, including allocation of funding and full-time faculty. Commitment from the community of practice is necessary in order to ensure participation from both credit and noncredit faculty and counselors to adequately support students in successful transition to credit. The community of practice acts as a collaborative network that works together to support the various matriculation needs specific to NCESL student populations.
In order to cultivate a strong, active, collaborative network committed to NCESL students, there need to be ample opportunities for communication between NCESL faculty and credit faculty. In order for communication to occur, NCESL programs need full-time faculty to address the political, cultural, and physical barriers that may exist between noncredit and credit programs. Furthermore, NCESL faculty need access to program data that they can use to build institutional awareness and understanding about the function of NCESL programs. Without full-time faculty as communicators and advocates, NCESL programs remain without a voice and are isolated from credit programs and the institution as a whole.

In order for institutional commitment and collaboration to occur, community colleges need to accept NCESL programs as belonging to the community college environment. NCESL programs represent one side of the matriculation bridge; credit programs represent the other. If NCESL and credit are disconnected in terms of resource allocation, instruction, student services, location, communication, and collaboration, can we expect high rates of NCESL student transition into credit community college programs? How can the state and institutions expect students to matriculate into credit if the NCESL program itself, and its NCESL students, are not viewed as an integral, valued part of the community college system?

**Shared Understanding Among the Community of Practice.** The interviewees in this study reflected a variety of administrative, faculty, noncredit, and credit perspectives; this diverse group exemplifies the composition of a community of practice needed to advance NCESL matriculation. However, these different representatives did not always see the same challenges that NCESL programs encounter in matriculating
students. For example, during the interviews, only the credit and noncredit faculty members were aware of the importance of faculty time outside of the classroom for conducting the essential matriculation work of advocating and collaborating throughout the institution. Charles, the only non-faculty member, never mentioned this importance; his discussion of faculty contribution centered solely on instructional, classroom work. Similarly, only the noncredit faculty members relayed the negative impact that open enrollment and the corresponding lack of student accountability had on matriculation rates. Neither Louis, the credit faculty participant, nor Charles seemed to be aware of these issues. Louis, the only credit participant, was the only interviewee who did not bring up the notion that credit faculty and the institutions were ignorant of or resistant to NCESL programs, thereby resulting in a communication barrier that impeded NCESL transitions into credit. These issues were only discussed by the noncredit interviewees. Perhaps these differing views and levels of understanding of NCESL matriculation represent the need for more communication among those necessary participants, which, as this study has found, is the first step in developing a collaborative community.

In addition to the need for institutions and credit faculty to commit to supporting NCESL matriculation, the NCESL students themselves should also be accountable for their commitment to learning in the program. As the results and findings show in this study, students who attend NCESL courses in managed enrollment programs, which require regular attendance, vs. open entry programs, which do not, are more likely to matriculate into credit.

**Data as a Communication Tool.** Another important theme that arose was NCESL programs’ assessment challenges as a result of their non-traditional model.
Though the NCESL programs in this study do use assessments to evaluate and improve ESL learning, there seems to be little information on how NCESL programs can use data to improve student achievement of outcomes related to credit transitions, job attainment, or other types of civic participation. The study indicated that at this point, data gleaned from assessments may have more impact on the effectiveness of NCESL faculty collaboration and advocacy, which call for data-supported communication with the institution and its credit counterparts. In other words, data may be more useful as a tool to empower NCESL advocates and communicators in relaying program needs and gaining institutional support. This particular use of data was an unexpected finding in this study. According to the logic model, the expected use of assessment data is to inform improved program inputs and activities in order to raise matriculation rates. However, the only usage of data for these purposes in the study was related to instructional activities focused on the short-term output of learning ESL.

Limitations and Contributions to the Field

As described in Chapters I and III, this study is limited in that it is based on the self-reported survey responses of 45% of NCESL programs that existed in California community colleges in 2011-2012. The matriculation rates used in the statistical analysis are limited because they reflect only one year (2011-2012) in which NCESL students entered a credit class, thus not taking into account students who may have entered credit after more than two semesters or years. Furthermore, the study does not include a statistical analysis of six of the largest community colleges in the state, due to their reporting practices of discontinuing NCESL student identification numbers upon entry into credit. The findings and results are presented in the political and educational context.
that existed during that time and, in the qualitative phase of the study, with one particular small sample of interviewees who had strong opinions on the topic of NCESL matriculation. Due to this limited scope, the results and findings are not generalizable to all NCESL adult programs, including all of those within the California community college system. Regardless of these limitations, the survey responses come from colleges that serve 85% of the state’s NCESL students. The findings of this study should help advance the understanding of the issues of educating immigrant ESL learners in the California community college system. Furthermore, the mixed method design should appeal to policymakers who may use this research to inform some of their decision-making (Gorard & Taylor, 2004).

The study contributes to the field by providing a revised logic model whose application to NCESL programs may help better facilitate student transition into credit programs. It also reveals the over-simplification of a one-size-fits-all assessment component, which may not adequately measure the various ways in which NCESL programs are successful in supporting students’ multiple goals other than credit transition. When creating policy to promote NCESL student transition into credit degree and certificate programs, policy-makers may be able to better understand the necessary components of the NCESL logic model and the complexities of accounting for its multitude of outcomes, as supported by this mixed methods study. In addition, community colleges and their NCESL programs can evaluate their designs, characteristics, and local policies in light of these findings in order to make adjustments that may improve transition rates into credit.
Implications for Policy and Practice

The results and findings from this study give insight into how state-level, institutional, and program-level policies should be designed to support higher NCESL student matriculation rates into credit. Based on this study, it appears that most policy changes should occur on the state and institutional levels; local programs have little control over policy and practices that relate to higher rates of matriculation.

State Policy

State-level, noncredit policies related to full-time faculty, student support services, and assessment are areas that could be improved to improve matriculation rates:

- Expand Full-Time NCESL Faculty and Decrease Teaching Load. This study produced the significant relationship between the presence of full-time faculty and higher rates of NCESL matriculation. One way that the state could address this need is to allow NCESL full-time hires to count towards the state-imposed full-time obligation number (FON). The current policy precludes the hiring of NCESL faculty from fulfilling this mandate. When colleges do hire NCESL full-time faculty, these faculty are required by Title V to teach an average of 25 hours a week, rather than the typical credit load of 15 hours. As a result, noncredit faculty devote most of their time to classroom work, though this study shows that higher levels of matriculation tend to result from work that occurs outside of the classroom. Policy on NCESL faculty load should consider allowing faculty work time outside of teaching.

- Provide Noncredit Funding for the Student Success Support Program. The work outside of the classroom also entails the work of student support services staff,
including that of counselors for both credit and noncredit students. SSSP services are essential in supporting NCESL student transitions into credit, and the funding should be reinstated.

- Evaluate the Function of Noncredit Certificates of Competency. Recently, the Chancellor’s Office has required NCESL programs to issue their students certificates of competency in order for them to qualify for the enhanced rate of Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP) funding. These certificates serve as a way for the state and for the programs themselves to measure NCESL student achievement. However, this study shows that certificate attainment does not appear to promote student transition into credit; rather, it shows an opposite effect. Perhaps students earn certificates in order to verify skill levels to employers; perhaps the local program designs of the certificates do not emphasize student advancement towards credit transitions. State-level policy could consider certificates as a measure for NCESL student goal achievement other than that of matriculating into credit.

- Replace or Supplement the Completion Model Assessment. Given the findings and results that suggest that matriculation is just one of many possible indicators of NCESL student success, that matriculation into credit may not be possible for NCESL students immediately upon departure from the NCESL program, and that the rates of matriculation are not shown to be strong, the state and local institutions should engage in more focused discussions about other means of evaluating NCESL program and student success. Considering the importance of data-driven decision-making, educators and legislators may need to initiate a
cultural or paradigm shift in order to identify and produce multiple metrics for student success. For example, perhaps colleges could measure student matriculation from NCESL to credit within a six semester time period, much like credit completion and transfer rates are measured. Furthermore, they could collect data from local employers on the hiring or promotion of NCESL students, or from colleges on the number of credit units that former NCESL students have earned. Innovative and non-traditional means of measuring NCESL student success will require strategic collaboration of legislators, faculty and administrators (both credit and noncredit), the institutions, local employers, and local agencies, such as job centers, which are involved in providing community members access to educational opportunities in preparation for entry-level jobs and job advancement.

**Institutional Policy**

This study informs ways that institutions can implement policies and practices that better support their NCESL programs in producing higher rates of student matriculation into credit programs.

- Institutions should allow NCESL programs to have access to state funding designated specifically to noncredit programs rather than absorbing these monies into the campus general fund. If noncredit programs have access to funds, such as CDCP and SSSP, then they are able to attain the necessary inputs, such as counselors and full-time faculty, which this study has shown relate to higher rates of students transition.
• Institutions should consider assigning full-time faculty and counselors to serve both noncredit and credit students rather than separating them between the two bodies of students. The institution should support collaboration between the noncredit and credit faculty and counselors in order to establish a strong network that facilitates the bridging of students between the programs. One way that institutions can promote credit acceptance of and collaboration with noncredit faculty is to require both groups to have the same minimal qualifications of a Master’s degree. This requirement would alleviate some of the cultural barriers between the groups that this study has suggested may impede noncredit student matriculation into credit.

• Institutions should make space on the credit campuses for NCESL instruction and matriculation efforts, as this study suggests that on-site location relates to higher rates of NCESL matriculation. For off-site NCESL locations, institutions should create bus routes or shuttles that allow students easy access to credit campuses.

Program Policy

This study suggests only one policy change within program-level control that may contribute to higher NCESL transition rates, and that is the importance of managed enrollment. Managed enrollment increases the level of student commitment to their success in ways that unmanaged enrollment, or open enrollment, does not. Unlike all state and institutional policies described above, the implementation of managed enrollment is the one policy that can be changed at the program level. In addition to this policy, NCESL programs should include the teaching of the higher education system in their instructional component.
Recommendations for Future Research

This study raised new questions about how to effectively assess NCESL programs for the purpose of demonstrating program accountability, as well as about ways that community colleges can foster collaborative working relationships between NCESL and credit faculty, despite cultural barriers, in order to increase NCESL student transitions. Future research could explore the questions of why matriculation rates vary among colleges, or how much matriculation takes place within a time frame greater than one academic year. In terms of NCESL program accountability, future research could explore how NCESL programs use matriculation rate data to inform program inputs and activities that lead to improved rates of matriculation into credit. Furthermore, future research could explore additional metrics, other than enrollment counts and matriculation rates into credit, which could serve as useful performance measures for both NCESL program accountability and continuous improvement of student goal attainment, such as employment or civic preparation. These measures could include evaluating NCESL student success rates with language skill attainment, with salary data from the salarysurfer website at the Chancellor’s Office (http://salarysurfer.cccco.edu/), and with results of governmental benchmark testing typically associated with federal adult education grants. This research could be done through a quantitative case study of a NCESL program that has succeeded in utilizing non-traditional student success measures for these purposes.

Additional research could also explore how campuses are able to foster an effective community of practice comprised of both credit and noncredit faculty and staff, and how their activities and participation affect rates of NCESL transition into credit.
This research could be done through a qualitative study that employs focus groups of members of communities of practice.

Finally, more narrowly-focused mixed methods research could be done on just one or several of the many program designs and characteristics that have been described in this study. For example, the field could benefit from research on how matriculation rates may be impacted by the variety of articulation agreements, NCESL certificate designs, or concurrent enrollment options that exist throughout the community colleges.

Concluding Statement

This study has shown that commitment is key to supporting NCESL matriculation into credit programs, specifically, commitment on the part of the state, the institution, credit and noncredit faculty and staff, and the students themselves. The existing paradigm regards NCESL matriculation as a bridge - one side anchored by a credit counterpart and the other by a noncredit counterpart. In order for students to transition across this bridge, they need support from both ends. Yet, one might question whether or not transition from noncredit to credit should be a linear journey that ends when leaving the noncredit side and continues upon passing onto the credit side. Could not the voyage of a noncredit student be alongside that of a credit student? Rather than isolate the noncredit experience from the credit experience, could not the experience be joined under the guidance of joined faculty and staff? This study suggests that were it so, higher rates of NCESL transition could be a natural result.

However, if the cultural barriers between credit and noncredit programs are indeed too strong in a community college setting, perhaps NCESL programs could consider forging off-campus partnerships that result in other bridges that students hope to
cross, such as those that lead to living wage jobs and fulfilling civic participation in the U.S. Surely there are entities such as job centers, employers, and volunteer agencies, to name a few, that are willing and waiting to create such bridges with NCESL programs for their students. Thus, NCESL programs can stand behind their mission to provide both access and success to immigrant students by providing multiple pathways leading to students’ personal, civic, educational, and vocational aspirations.
References


http://www.hcmstrategists.com/contextforsuccess/papers/BAILEY_PAPER.pdf


Appendix A:

Interview Protocol for State-Level Advocates for Noncredit ESL Community College Programs

Note: The following abbreviations are used in this interview – CC for Community College, ESL for English as a Second Language, NC for Noncredit

1. What is it like to be in a state-level position working with noncredit ESL programs in CA CCs?
   a. How did you come to find yourself in this role?
   b. How do you define your role in this capacity?

2. How do you see the importance of noncredit ESL programs in the CA CC system in the current policy climate?

3. What recent significant changes have you seen in NC ESL CA CC education?
   a. What do you believe to be the biggest influences on these recent changes?

4. Some say that noncredit ESL programs should not receive the same emphasis as credit programs, ESL and other, in CA community colleges.
   a. Why do you think some feel this way?
   b. How would you respond?

5. Can you identify a model NC ESL program in the CA CC system?
   a. Why do you consider this program exemplary?
   b. Can you give an example of one of the program’s practices or designs?
   c. What can other NC ESL Ca CC programs learn from this model?

6. In your opinion, what two or three aspects of NC ESL programs contribute most to their overall success?
   a. Is there anything particular about program structure, such as concurrent enrollment/teaching practices (credit combined with noncredit, etc), that you believe contributes to their success?

7. How would you describe the current situation with student matriculation from noncredit ESL to credit programs?
   a. What do you think accounts for the current matriculation rates?
8. What elements of NC ESL CA CC programs do you believe most promote student matriculation into credit programs? (Card sort ranking – see p. 53)

Curriculum, counseling services, instructional support, assessments, institutional commitment, flexible scheduling, cohorts, full-time faculty, articulation agreements, concurrent enrollment/teaching practices (i.e., credit combined with noncredit), adequate funding, or other?

9. What challenges do NC ESL CA CC programs face in promoting matriculation?

   a. Can you tell me a story about a program you’ve seen face such a challenge?

   b. What do you believe were the cause of these difficulties?

      i. Were these difficulties a direct or indirect result of particular policies?

      ii. If so, can you give examples?

   c. Was the program able to overcome the difficulties?

      If yes, how?

      If no, why not?

10. I’d like to mention a few state and federal policies and see what you think is their impact on student matriculation from NC ESL CC programs.

    a. Positive attendance model

    b. Noncredit Career Development and College Preparation apportionment model

    c. Few or no full-time noncredit faculty

    d. Full-time noncredit faculty teaching load

    e. Can you think of any examples of how any of these policies above impacted a specific program you are familiar with?

11. Can you think of any other policies that may directly or indirectly impact NC ESL matriculation?

    a. In what way do they impact matriculation?

    b. Can you give an example?
12. How do you see the current state of assessment practices in NC ESL programs? Do you know of any programs that are exemplary in their assessment practices?
   a. If no, why not?
   b. Why do you consider their assessments exemplary?
   c. What do they do? How are they able to do so?
   d. What can other NC ESL Ca CC programs learn from these assessment models?

13. What challenges have you seen NC ESL Ca CC programs face specifically in implementing effective assessment cycles?
   a. How did the programs address the challenges? (Example).

14. How do you perceive the impact of state and federal policies on NC ESL Ca CC programs’ assessment capacity and on data collection, specifically?

15. What do you think legislators need to understand about NC ESL Ca CC education in order for them to make effective policy?
   a. What kind of assessment data do you think legislators like to see when it comes to NC ESL CC programs?

16. Summing up, If you could change anything about state policy for NC ESL CC education, what would it be?

17. Summing up, what advice would you give a NC ESL program leader, such as a division chair, about improving and sustaining student matriculation in today’s educational and political context?

18. Is there anything you’d like to add or to ask me about?

Thank you for your time.
Appendix B:

Survey Protocol for California Community College Noncredit ESL Program

Introduction:

This online survey is designed to gather feedback on the practices and policies that shape noncredit ESL (NC ESL) programs in California community colleges. It is being administered to all NC ESL programs in the California community college system as part of a doctoral research study. The findings from the study should help to improve programs and policies to support success for NC ESL students in today’s educational and political climate. A central way of collecting data for this study is through interviews of noncredit ESL program leaders like yourself, whose primary professional responsibility is to design, implement, and oversee noncredit ESL programs that educate our immigrant populations.

The survey is confidential. You will not identify yourself or your position. However, you will be asked to identify your institution so that the survey response data can be linked with state-level data from the Chancellor’s Office solely for the purpose of statistical analysis. Once that step in the analysis is completed, all data identifying institutions will be securely stored separately from other data and findings. No names of individuals or institutions will be used in the dissertation or any subsequent reports, presentations, and publications.

Important: Before proceeding to the link for the online survey, please review the two attached documents: 1) the informed consent information, and 2) the bill of rights.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration; your participation will make a valuable contribution to the much-needed research on the field of noncredit ESL. Once the surveys are completed, you will be provided a report summarizing the findings of the study.

1. Please indicate the name of your community college (for statistical purposes only; no names of institutions to be used in research reports):

2. How many hours of seat time are expected of a NC ESL student per week if he/she were to attend full-time?

   15+
   11-14
7-10
3-6
n/a
Other (please specify)

3. In 2011-2012, what best describes the location of your NC ESL program?

At a campus and in buildings that also house credit instruction
At a campus that houses credit instruction but in a separate building dedicated to noncredit
At an off-site campus dedicated to noncredit (non-walking distance)
Other (please describe):

4. In 2011-2012, the faculty in the NC ESL program taught:

Noncredit ESL only
Both Credit and Noncredit ESL
Other combinations, such as English/ESL, etc (please describe):

5. In 2011-2012, please indicate approximately how many faculty teach in the NC ESL program??

Full-time Faculty _____
Part-time Faculty _____

6. In 2011-2012, please indicate the minimum qualification for NCESL faculty teaching in your program.

Bachelor’s Degree
Bachelor’s Degree plus TESOL certification
Master’s Degree
Other
7. In 2011-2012, please rate how frequently your program provides ongoing professional development to both NC ESL full-time and part-time faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full-time Faculty</th>
<th>Part-time Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two or more times a year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. In 2011-2012, please indicate if your program contained any of the characteristics listed below (Check all that apply):

   a. Counselors that serve only noncredit students
   b. Counselors that serve both credit and noncredit ESL students
   c. Managed enrollment (implementing enrollment deadlines/restricting absences)
   d. Open-enrollment (open-entry/exit – no absence restrictions)
   e. Flexible scheduling (weekend classes, late evening classes, etc)
   f. Vocational ESL
   g. NC ESL instruction for academic preparation
   h. Concurrent enrollment options (credit and noncredit)
   i. Student Cohorts/Student community building

9. In 2011-2012, what steps did your program or institution take to promote NC ESL student matriculation into credit programs? (Check all that apply)

   a. Explicitly teaching students in the classroom about the higher educational system
   b. Creating credit program awareness through workshops, orientations, tours, speakers, etc.
   c. Noncredit to credit articulation or bridge programs
   d. Concurrent enrollment options (noncredit and credit)
   e. Other (please describe): ___________
10. In 2011-2012, please indicate if you had any articulation agreements that were designed to promote matriculation. Check all that apply:

a. Between NC ESL and Credit ESL
b. Between NC ESL and NC Workforce Training
c. Between NC ESL and Credit Career & Technical (CTE) Programs
d. Between NC ESL and community agencies and employers
e. None
f. Other (please describe): ________________

11. Does your institution provide your program with accurate and useful data regarding numbers or percentages of NC ESL students matriculating into credit programs?

12. How satisfied are you with the current NC ESL student matriculation rate?

Very Satisfied
Satisfied
Somewhat satisfied
Unsatisfied
Don’t Know

13. Does your program generate its own data on matriculation?

Yes
No

14. How often does your program faculty/staff review and discuss student matriculation data?

Twice a year or more
Once a year
Less than once a year

Never

15. How often does your program use matriculation findings to inform program changes?

Twice a year or more

Once a year

Less than once a year

Never

16. In 2011-2012, did your program offer students intermediary indicators of success (aka “momentum points”), such as awarding NC ESL certificates?

Yes

No

Other (please describe): _____

17. If yes, did your program recognize student achievement of reaching these momentum points (such as a certificate ceremony)?

Yes

No

Other (please describe): __________________

18. Does your program collect data on any of the following that measure NC ESL student progress before program completion and/or matriculation? Check all that apply:

a. No assessments
b. Number of certificates awarded
c. Retention rates within a course
d. Course pass rates
e. Persistence rates throughout a course sequence
f. Performance on credit placement tests

g. Performance in first credit course

h. Job attainment

i. Satisfaction surveys

j. Other (please describe): ___

19. In your opinion, what elements of a NC ESL program are most likely to improve student matriculation into credit programs? Please rank the following from (1 – most important to 8 – least important)

a. More collaboration between credit and noncredit faculty

b. Combined instructional and student services for both credit and noncredit students

c. Greater number of full-time NC ESL faculty

d. More counseling services

e. Specialized curriculum, such as Vocational ESL or College Readiness ESL

f. Concurrent student enrollment options (credit and noncredit)

g. Useful assessment data for program improvement

h. Other (please describe):

20. In your opinion, how do noncredit state educational policies affect your program’s ability to matriculate students into credit programs?

   Mostly positive effect

   Somewhat positive effect

   No effect

   Somewhat negative effect

   Mostly negative effect

   Don’t know

21. In your opinion, what aspects of noncredit policy may impede matriculation? Please rank the items below from 1 – greatest impediment to 8 – smallest impediment)

a. Positive attendance model (seat time required for funding)

b. Open-enrollment model (students come and go as they can)

c. Absence of noncredit and credit collaboration
d. Absence of institutional support
e. Reduced level of funding
f. Fewer noncredit full-time faculty
g. Less noncredit counseling
h. Other (please describe): ____

22. In 2011-2012, please rate your program’s culture of collaboration and communication amongst its faculty members.

Very strong
Somewhat strong
Adequate
Weak
None

23. In 2011-2012, please rate the culture of collaboration and communication between NC ESL faculty and credit faculty from other departments/divisions.

Very strong
Somewhat strong
Adequate
Weak
None
24. In your opinion, how committed was your institution to continuing, expanding, and/or supporting your NC ESL program in 2011-2012?

   Very committed
   Somewhat committed
   A little committed
   Not committed

25. Please provide comments on your responses above or any suggestions you have for improving NC ESL matriculation in CA community colleges:
Appendix C: Survey Results – Responses and Views of NCESL Program Leaders on NCESL Program Characteristics

Table 1

*NCESL Program Satisfaction with Matriculation Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% (N)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>11.1% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>7.4% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Satisfied</td>
<td>37% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Satisfied</td>
<td>40.7% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>3.7% (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

*Number of Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty in NCESL Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time Faculty</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time Faculty</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

*Minimum Qualifications of NCESL Faculty as Required by District*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% (N)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>7.1% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree with TESOL Certification</td>
<td>53.6% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>32.1% (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*Disciplines Taught by Faculty in NCESL Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCESL Only</td>
<td>64.3% (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCESL and Credit ESL/Other</td>
<td>35.7% (10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

*Collaboration and Communication Between NCESL and Credit Faculty*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Strong</td>
<td>10.7% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Strong</td>
<td>10.7% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>17.9% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>35.7% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>25% (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

*Institutional Commitment to NCESL Program*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Committed</td>
<td>28.6% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Committed</td>
<td>21.4% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Little Committed</td>
<td>32.1% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Committed</td>
<td>17.9% (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

*Location of NCESL Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>% (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Off-site of main campus</td>
<td>28.6% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On site, separate buildings</td>
<td>7.1% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On site, same buildings</td>
<td>50% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14.2% (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8

*Non-Instructional Student Support Activities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselors that serve only NCESL students</td>
<td>39.3% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselors that serve both credit and NCESL students</td>
<td>42.9% (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating credit program awareness through workshops, orientations, tours, speakers, etc.</td>
<td>60.7% (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncredit to credit articulation agreements or bridge programs</td>
<td>25% (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Cohorts/Community Building</td>
<td>14.3% (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Responses from multiple questions grouped into one table; percentages do not equal 100%
Table 9

NCESL Program Enrollment Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Practice</th>
<th>% (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managed Enrollment</td>
<td>53.6% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Enrollment</td>
<td>78.6% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Scheduling</td>
<td>75% (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent Enrollment</td>
<td>39.3% (11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Programs may have more than one practice; thus, percentage total is over 100%

Table 10

NCESL Program Articulation Agreements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articulation Agreement</th>
<th>% (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With Credit ESL Programs</td>
<td>39.3% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Noncredit CTE Programs</td>
<td>10.7% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Credit CTE Programs</td>
<td>7.1% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Outside Agencies</td>
<td>3.6% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>39.3% (11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 11

NCESL Program Frequency of Staff Development for Part-Time Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Twice a year</th>
<th>Once a year</th>
<th>Less than once a year</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time Faculty</td>
<td>60.7% (17)</td>
<td>7.1% (2)</td>
<td>10.7% (3)</td>
<td>17.9% (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12

NCESL Program Curriculum Offerings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational ESL</td>
<td>42.9% (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Readiness</td>
<td>42.9% (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching students about higher educational system in classrooms</td>
<td>67.9% (19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13

Data Sources on NCESL Student Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offers intermediate indicators of success, such as certificates</td>
<td>71.4% (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution provides accurate/useful data on matriculation rates</td>
<td>35.7% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program generates own data on matriculation rates</td>
<td>39.3% (11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Programs may have more than one practice; thus, percentage total is over 100%*
Table 14

*NCESL Program Use of Matriculation Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use matriculation rates to inform changes</th>
<th>Twice a year</th>
<th>Once a year</th>
<th>Less than once a year</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review and discuss matriculation rates</td>
<td>39.3% (11)</td>
<td>17.9% (5)</td>
<td>17.9% (5)</td>
<td>14.3% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use matriculation rates to inform changes</td>
<td>21.4% (6)</td>
<td>21.4% (6)</td>
<td>17.9% (5)</td>
<td>32.1% (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15

*NCESL Program Methods of Assessment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>% (N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention Rates within A Course</td>
<td>64.3% (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Certificates Awarded</td>
<td>57.1% (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Pass Rates</td>
<td>53.6% (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence Rates throughout a Course Sequence</td>
<td>46.6% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Satisfaction Surveys</td>
<td>35.7% (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance on Credit Placement Tests</td>
<td>28.6% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance in First Credit Course</td>
<td>14.3% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Assessments</td>
<td>14.3% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Attainment</td>
<td>10.7% (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16

*Impact of State Policies on NCESL Matriculation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mostly positive effect</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat positive effect</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No effect</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat negative effect</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17

*Average Weekly Expected Seat Time of NCESL Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seat Time</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 or more hours</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-14 hours</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 10 hours</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 6 hours</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>