The Tesol 6 Principles Of Exemplary Teaching Of English Learners: Perceived Effectiveness In The Community College Esl Classroom

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THE TESOL 6 PRINCIPLES OF EXEMPLARY TEACHING OF ENGLISH LEARNERS:
PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL CLASSROOM

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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Affiliated Faculty of
The College of Graduate and Professional Studies at the University of New England
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For the degree of Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

Community college English as a second language (ESL) programs provide targeted English language support to diverse student populations. Limited research exists pertaining to the instruction taking place within community college ESL programs. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore community college ESL faculty-perceived effectiveness in their use of the TESOL 6 principles for exemplary teaching of English learners. The study asked, What is the community college ESL faculty’s perspective of their effectiveness in their application of the TESOL 6 Principles? Participants in this study included full-time, adjunct, and retired professors from community colleges across Massachusetts. They were invited to participate in an open-ended online survey that asked them to think about their classroom teaching and instructional practice. Although 25 people completed the survey, only twenty participants met the requirements of teaching in a community college ESL program in Massachusetts. Analysis of the survey responses identified 24 codes regarding the current state of the profession and the instruction that takes place within these programs. The 24 codes showed that community college ESL faculty are incorporating the TESOL 6 Principles in their teaching. Further professional development for educators is encouraged within the ESL departments and across the campus to support ESL students through all stages of their college career. In addition, this study provides a foundation for continued research at the community college level and within the field as a whole.

KEYWORDS: TESOL 6 Principles, ESL, TESOL, Communicative Language Teaching
University of New England
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DEDICATION

My participation in this doctoral program and corresponding dissertation would not have been possible without the loving support of my husband, Taylor Marcotte. He has been a compassionate and encouraging individual in my life since the 3rd grade. He allowed me not only to survive but to thrive throughout this program. In addition, I would like to thank my mother, Cheryl Brown, who is a guiding light in all of my academic, professional, and social pursuits. My mother has sacrificed a lot in order to get me to this point in my professional and academic career; I would not be where I am today if it were not for her ongoing support, love, and guidance. I am blessed to have both my husband and mother as supportive pillars in my life. This dissertation would not have been possible without both of these amazing people, and for that, I dedicate the enclosed dissertation to both Taylor Marcotte and Cheryl Brown.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The number of English language learners (ELLs) is growing within the United States and around the world (British Council, 2013; Teranishi, Suarez-Orozco, & Suarez-Orozco 2011; TESOL, 2018). This growing population is diverse, encompassing international students, refugees, immigrants, and generation 1.5 or immigrant youth who have received some public school education in the United States (American Institutes for Research, 2018). Individual states see varying numbers of ELLs in their communities. In 2013, Massachusetts had 22% of its population speaking other languages at home (Ryan, 2013). With many ELLs speaking languages other than English as their primary language, quality English language instruction is needed to support these students as they pursue their educational and career goals (Becker & Coyle, 2011; Gambino, Acosta & Grieco, 2014; Janis, 2013).

ELLs pursue higher education in the U.S. to achieve their academic and career goals (Janis, 2013). When doing this, they are more likely to attend community colleges than four-year institutions due to access and affordability (American Institutes for Research, 2018; Hodara, 2015; Szélényi & Chang, 2002; Teranishi et al., 2011). In college, these students have to study both content and English, and this work is most likely to be completed at a community college (American Institutes for Research, 2018). Before completing content courses, depending on their language needs and goals, these students enroll in either vocational English as a second or other language (ESOL) or academic English as a second language (ESL) programs, which provide specific language instruction and support (American Institutes for Research, 2018; Blumenthal, 2002; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). These programs range in the credit that is offered to students; programs can offer no credit, institutional credit that does not apply toward graduation, or academic credit that does apply to graduation (Blumenthal, 2002; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004).
For more than 50 years, the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International Association has been a leading voice within the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) by providing professional development, research, advocacy, resources, and networking within the profession (TESOL, 2018). They provide different research and resources to help educators who teach ELLs across all contexts. Recently, the TESOL International Association developed the TESOL 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners (TESOL 6 Principles) to provide guidelines and a framework to support ESL instruction across all teaching contexts (TESOL, 2018). TESOL created the principles by pulling from years of academic, linguistic, and educational research along with best practices in the field. These principles can be used as a framework to review or evaluate teacher practice and program development regardless of the student population (TESOL, 2018). They can also be used as a tool for faculty to reflect on their perceived teaching effectiveness.

Short (2018) noted that the goal of these principles is to facilitate excellent English teaching on a global level by providing educators with the teaching practice and application tools that they need to support their students and their classrooms. These principles are necessary as they provide a foundation for teaching that is needed now more than ever, as the number of ELLs increases globally across all teaching contexts (Short, 2018). By providing a uniform set of principles to guide teaching, there is a better system for guiding teacher, language, and student development. Thus far, the TESOL 6 Principles have been used to explore K–12 public school teaching, vocational ESOL education, and English for academic purposes; however, there is still a need to examine these principles through the lens of community college ESL programs (Blok, Lockwood, & Frendo, 2020; Hellman, Harris, & Wilbur, 2019; TESOL, 2018). This study aims to gather and analyze perceived effectiveness of the TESOL 6 Principles from the perspective of
ESL professors to better understand community college ESL programs and classroom instruction.

**Statement of the Problem**

The number of ELLs is continuing to grow (British Council, 2013; Teranishi et al., 2011); this can be seen at the state and city level. A major contributor to this increase in ELLs is due to immigration, and people seeking better financial and occupational opportunities for themselves and their families (Becker & Coyle, 2011; Gambino, Acosta, & Grieco, 2014; Janis, 2013). Most of these immigrants do not speak English as their first language, and they are more likely to speak their first language when at home (Gambino, Acosta, & Grieco, 2014). Whereas some immigrants have learned some English prior to arriving in the US, this is not the case for all students. Regardless, there is a need for these individuals and their families to learn English through high-quality English instruction to allow them to reach their goals in the U.S. (Gambino, Acosta, & Grieco, 2014).

This need to learn English is present for both immigrant children and adults. At the public elementary and secondary level, one in ten students in the U.S. is an ELL (Horsford & Sampson, 2013). Of the total ELL students, 75% are citizens of the country; and collectively, these students speak over 400 languages (Bialik, Scheller, & Walker, 2018). The large number of ELLs is also present in higher education. A common place for adult ELLs to develop their English and receive instruction is through community colleges (American Institutes for Research, 2018; Hodara, 2015; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002; Tichenor, 1994). The students seek both cultural and linguistic support through these English programs (Janis, 2013). Community colleges offer a range of English instruction, vocational ESOL and academic ESL, to meet the specific needs and goals of
the learners (Blumenthal, 2002). With an increase in ELLs, there is an increase in students, both children and adults, who seek quality English courses that meet their language needs.

Adult learners, who make up a large population of students, come into the community college setting for ESL, so that they can advance their English and pursue a college education (Blumenthal, 2002; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). Adult learners, many of which are known as non-traditional students, face hurdles in their language acquisition (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015). These learners have families, work while attending school, and often have a lack of literature in their first language (David & Li, 2018). These factors continue to increase attrition rates among these students and a decrease in their overall participation in their coursework and classes (Hodara, 2015; Szélényi & Chang, 2002). Therefore, professors must be effective in the instruction provided to students to support student success, retention, and overall language development.

As the number of ELLs continues to increase, there is a need to better understand the teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom within each ESL teaching context. Are student needs being met? What does instruction look like? How is language learning assessed? These are a few of the fundamental questions that need to be answered to better understand the services offered to ELLs and their language outcomes from these experiences. In addition, there is a need to address these issues within higher education settings, like community colleges, as they do not have state or federal instructional standards. In order to do this, educator feedback and reflection is needed; however, the feedback needs to fall against a backdrop of larger guidelines within the field of TESOL.
Purpose of the Study

Learning conditions and classroom instruction within ESL classrooms need to be examined across all teaching contexts as the field of TESOL responds to the growing number of ESL students. The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological case study is to focus on one of these contexts—the community college. This study asks Massachusetts community college ESL faculty, full-time and adjuncts, to share their perceived effectiveness in their application of the TESOL 6 Principles to better understand the teaching and learning conditions in the community college ESL classroom.

These principles stem from a leading voice within the field of TESOL, the TESOL International Association, and draw from years of academic research within the field (TESOL, 2018). These TESOL 6 Principles were created to extend beyond any one teaching context to provide a framework for educators to use across all ESL teaching contexts, including community colleges (TESOL, 2018). The TESOL International Association (2018) created these principles as a benchmark for best practice within the field. The six principles ask faculty to (1) know their learners, (2) create conditions for language learning, (3) design high-quality lessons for language development, (4) adapt lesson delivery as needed, (5) monitor and access student language development, and (6) engage and collaborate within the community of practice. Together, these principles provide conditions for best teaching and learning practices that support all students across all contexts.

In this study, faculty were asked to share their perspectives of their effective use in their application of these TESOL 6 Principles through the collection of qualitative survey data. The faculty who participated in this study are from community college ESL programs in Massachusetts. Better understanding their perceived effectiveness helped to identify trends to
guide teaching practice, instructional design, and programmatic development within the community college ESL programs in Massachusetts and beyond. This research helps to pave the way for additional research in the application of the use of the TESOL 6 Principles and the further development of the field.

**Research Question**

The number of ELLs continues to increase, with Massachusetts having more than six million speakers of another language above the age of 5 (Ryan, 2013). Many of these students will pursue a college degree or certificate and English instruction at a community college. Community colleges are known for providing higher education opportunities to these diverse students, which include ELLs (Burns, 2005). In fact, ELLs are more likely to attend community colleges to pursue a degree as these institutions are less expensive than four year colleges and closer to home (American Institutes for Research, 2018; Hodara, 2015; Szelényi & Chang, 2002; Teranishi et al., 2011). Specifically, Massachusetts has 15 community colleges serving the needs of ELLs; these colleges offer vocational ESOL and academic ESL (Chisman & Crandall, 2007). As the demand for these services continues to increase, there is a need to examine and reflect on ESL classroom instruction to see how students are supported in their language development.

Therefore, this phenomenological study aimed to address the following question: What is the community college ESL faculty’s perspective of their effectiveness in their application of the TESOL 6 Principles? The findings reflect qualitative survey data from community college faculty serving ESL programs in Massachusetts. The overarching question for this study, along with the survey questions, draws on the TESOL 6 Principles.
Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was rooted in the TESOL instructional approach of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which is an approach to teaching that stems from a variety of disciplines, including linguistics, sociology, and education (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013; Richards, 2006; Savignon, 1991; Savignon, 2002). This approach originated in the 1970s; it came out of an era with more traditional approaches to ESL teaching rooted in deductive grammar, drills, accuracy, and memorization (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013; Richards, 2006; Savignon, 1991). This transition in language instruction reflected the larger shift to seeing language as social with a focus in communicative competence (CC) (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013; Richards, 2006).

CLT differed from more traditional models of teaching as it is a broad, collaborative, and learner-driven approach that focuses on the development of CC through a focus on fluency over accuracy (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013; Richards, 2006). More specifically, CC, through CLT, looks at the use of language in different places, with different people, and for different reasons regardless of language limitations (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013; Richards, 2006). The broad approach to teaching provides flexibility in design and instruction, which makes it an approach that can be applied and used in all teaching settings (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013; Richards, 2006).

CLT is considered to be a best practice within the field of TESOL and can be used as a scope to better understand teaching and learning within the field of TESOL (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). This best practice in teaching provided a unique opportunity for this study to examine the TESOL 6 Principles and the community college faculty-perceived effectiveness in their application of the principles for the purpose. The TESOL 6 Principles gives guidelines for
teaching all ESL learners that in many ways mirror the ideology of CLT. This provided a formative framework to view the TESOL 6 Principles, this study, its outcomes, and future application within the field of TESOL.

**Assumptions, Limitations & Scope**

This study made the assumption that community college ESL faculty may not have heard of or fully integrated the TESOL 6 Principles as they are relatively new to the academic literature. Due to the fact that the TESOL 6 Principles are based on existing academic research, it is assumed that faculty had previous experience with these ideas and instructional concepts through their teacher training programs. These assumptions presented opportunities to identify the potential need for more professional development in these areas. Lastly, it was assumed that participants in this study wanted to help with the study and respond honestly.

This study was limited by time, place, and participants. The amount of time for participants to engage with the online survey limits the study. Moreover, it was limited in that it focused on community college ESL educators in Massachusetts who have engaged with the MATSOL organization. This study was not inclusive of all U.S. states and territories. Also, it did not represent the perspectives from all faculty from ESL programs in higher education within Massachusetts. It was limited to the number of faculty from these programs who wished to engage with this study. It focused only on community college; it did not include private language schools or four-year colleges and universities. It also did not include the student perspective or that of the professional staff.

The scope of this study was narrow and focused on community college ESL programs in Massachusetts. It was oriented around community college ESL faculty perspectives on their own teaching through the lens of the TESOL 6 Principles. This group of ESL faculty members, both
full-time and adjunct, range in age, experience, and time served at their college. This community college system has a diverse student population both within the ESL programs and general student population. These ESL programs offer a variety of academic ESL courses and provide support to students both inside and outside of the classroom.

**Significance**

ELLs pursue English instruction so that they can advance their academic and career goals (Janis, 2013). This student population includes international students, refugee students, immigrant students, and generation 1.5 students who have received some public schooling in the U.S. (American Institutes for Research, 2018). To be successful, these students need high-quality instruction that is inclusive of their identities, experiences, and needs (Janis, 2013; Hodara, 2015; Szelényi & Chang, 2002). This is important as ELL adult students are far more likely to see higher attrition rates due to their nontraditional student status (David & Li, 2018; Szelényi & Chang, 2002). This study provided an avenue to see what was happening in one of these ELL contexts, community college ESL. To do this, it narrowed in on community college ESL programs within one state, Massachusetts, and asked faculty to share their perceived effectiveness in their teaching against the guidelines of the TESOL 6 Principles. Gathering this information is helpful in better understanding ESL instruction that is taking place in the classroom and potential areas for growth.

The TESOL 6 Principles pull from best teaching and learning practices and years of research from within the field; however, the resource itself is new (TESOL, 2018). It provides a platform for faculty to assess their perceived effectiveness in their use of the TESOL 6 Principles and therefore their perceived effectiveness in best classroom practice. The faculty feedback on their perceived effectiveness is presented against the backdrop of the conceptual framework,
communicative language teaching, which is a modern communicative approach and best practice in ESL teaching (Richards, 2006). Together, the TESOL 6 Principles and CLT provide a flexible toolbox of teaching and learning strategies that enable high-quality student-centered instruction.

Currently, no literature reviewing how these principles are used or applied in the community college ESL classroom was found. This study provides a valuable contribution to the literature by inviting faculty to examine their perspectives on their application of the TESOL 6 Principles. Through qualitative survey data, this study aimed to identify trends in classroom practice, outline potential need for professional development, and describe how the TESOL 6 Principles are applied within the community college setting. This study has the potential to inform future pedagogical and instructional improvement within the given ESL community college programs and beyond.

**Definition of Terms**

The following definitions provide background needed to best understand community college ESL programs, the TESOL 6 Principles, and foundational knowledge included in this study.

**Academic Credit:** College credit awarded for completing college courses that count toward graduation and/or degree requirements (Blumenthal, 2002; Hodara, 2015).

**Academic ESL (AESL):** An ESL program offering English instruction to students who are seeking a college degree or certificate (Blumenthal, 2002).

**Communicative Competency (CC):** A focus on students’ use of language for different purposes, with different people, and in different settings regardless of language limitations (Richards, 2006).
**Communicative Language Teaching (CLT):** This is a learner-centered approach to teaching that is rooted in communicative competency, collaborative teaching, and authentic real language use (Richards, 2006).

**English as a Second Language (ESL):** Someone who is learning English as an additional language in a location where English is the predominate language (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004)

**English Language Learner (ELL):** “A nonnative speaker of English whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English may limit his or her ability to (1) achieve in classrooms where English is the language of instruction and (2) access opportunities to fully participate in society” (American Institutes for Research, 2018, p. 3).

**Generation 1.5:** Youth who arrive in the United States as a child or teenager. “The term reflects the fact that youth maintain some aspects of their native culture, language, and identity while also acquiring English and adapting to a new culture” (American Institutes for Research, 2018, p. 3).

**Immigrants:** “People who come to the United States from another country for better economic, political, or social opportunities” (American Institutes for Research, 2018, p. 3).

**Institutional Credit:** College credit awarded for completing college courses that does not count toward graduation or degree requirements (Blumenthal, 2002; Hodara, 2015).

**International Students:** “Students from around the world who come to the United States to improve their English, obtain degrees, and/or take coursework in U.S. postsecondary institutions” (American Institutes for Research, 2018, p. 3).

**Nontraditional Students:** College students who are generally working and have families while taking college classes as part-time students (David & Li, 2018; Szelényi & Chang, 2002).
Teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL): The field of TESOL is oriented around supporting English language learners (TESOL, 2018).

TESOL International Association: This is a professional community within the field of TESOL providing professional development, advocacy, and networking (TESOL, 2018).

The TESOL 6 Principles in Exemplary Teaching of English Learners (TESOL 6 Principles): “The 6 Principles are research-based and set a foundation for teachers and learners to be successful in a variety of program types. The principles are applicable for classrooms focused on English as a second or new language or English as a foreign language” (TESOL, 2018, p. viii).

Vocational and Adult English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL): Generally, programs that support people who “have more fundamental and functional goals related to survival” (Blumenthal, 2002, p. 46).

Conclusion

The number of people learning and speaking English is increasing, and much of this is driven by immigration and the pursuit of better living conditions and opportunities (Becker & Coyle, 2011; Gambino et al., 2014; Janis, 2013). Adult ELL students come to community colleges to seek English language instruction (American Institutes for Research, 2018; Hodara, 2015; Janis, 2013; Szélényi & Chang, 2002). These students face various challenges as nontraditional students, which increase their attrition rates and decrease their participation in college (David & Li, 2018; Hodara, 2015; Szélényi & Chang, 2002). Therefore, to best support these students, there is a need to provide high-quality English instruction to all students.

This study sought to focus on these community college ESL programs and what is happening in the classroom. To do this, the researcher asked faculty to share their perceived
effectiveness in their application of the TESOL 6 Principles, a set of guidelines to support ESL teaching and learning (TESOL, 2018). The TESOL 6 Principles are viewed as a culmination of research within the field of TESOL and act as a model of best practice (TESOL, 2018). Together, the faculty-perceived effectiveness in their use of TESOL 6 Principles was viewed through the lens of CLT which is a general approach and best practice to teaching within the field (TESOL, 2018). This study supports the development of future professional development within the ESL community college context to support teachers, students, and programs.

Chapter 2 provides academic literature surrounding community college academic ESL programs, TESOL 6 Principles, and CLT. Chapter 3 provides further scaffolding regarding the methodology of this descriptive phenomenological study, which includes a survey composed of open-ended questions.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) involves teaching English as a second, foreign, or other language within the U.S. and around the world (TESOL, n.d). Within the U.S., the field of TESOL has been pivotal in supporting immigrants, refugees, international students, and migrants as they learn English to gain a better life by pursuing their academic and career goals (Becker & Coyle, 2011; Gambino et al., 2014; Janis, 2013). TESOL professionals support these diverse language learners through a variety of English as a Second Language (ESL) programs within the community, public elementary and secondary education, and higher education (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004: TESOL, 2018). The programs aim to provide structured linguistic and literacy instruction to meet the students at their current language level and provide a pathway forward. This instruction could involve survival English all the way through advanced academic ESL courses (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). These language learners come to the community college to receive targeted ESL instruction and supports as they aim to pursue their academic and career goals (Hodara, 2015; Janis, 2013; Szelényi & Chang, 2002; Tichenor, 1994; Teranishi et al., 2011).

Community colleges in the U.S. aim to meet the specific needs of each community they serve (Hodara, 2015; Hutcheson, 1999). This also involves meeting the changing needs of ESL students; this is not as easy as it sounds. With new waves of immigrants and changing linguistic needs, supporting ESL students has become more difficult. Generally, these programs at community colleges are either vocational ESOL offering no college credit or academic ESL offering instructional or academic credit (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). The offerings and their credit designations vary from institution to institution, and they can often be a point of contention within colleges, states, and across the country.
This literature review aims to examine community college ESL programs through the lens of the TESOL 6 Principles of exemplary teaching of English learners (TESOL 6 Principles). This is a new framework that is rooted in best teaching practices and was developed within the field of TESOL to assess and develop teaching and learning in the ESL classroom (TESOL, 2018). Academic literature will be synthesized to better portray community college ESL programs, the students they serve, the instruction that takes place in the classroom, and communicative language teaching (CLT) as a conceptual framework for study and literature analysis.

**Immigration and Language Use**

The U.S. has a long history of immigration. Immigration to the U.S. or other countries can often result from a need for new opportunities and an improved socioeconomic status (Becker & Coyle, 2011; Gambino et al., 2014; Janis, 2013). Whereas immigration has continued, it has changed with time. Previously, trends showed many immigrants coming from Europe, but now immigrants are primarily coming from Latin America and Asia (Ryan, 2013; Szélényi & Chang, 2002). In 2000, there were approximately 28.4 million foreign born people in the U.S. (Szélényi & Chang, 2002). As immigration continues, the U.S. population is predicted to expand by 48% between 2005 and 2050; this same prediction noted that 82% of this growth would come from immigration (Teranishi et al., 2011). Immigration, past and present, continues to influence society as immigrants share their own cultures, beliefs, and languages, thereby helping to shape the way of life and diversity in the U.S. today (Hodara, 2015; Szélényi & Chang, 2002).

Most immigrants do not speak English as their first language; some learn English prior to moving to a new country; however, this is not the case for many people (Gambino et al., 2014). These individuals choose to learn and use English for many different reasons but immigrating to
an English-speaking country can contribute to this decision. To improve their socioeconomic status and pursue goals, immigrants need to develop their English skills as learning English provides more opportunities and job mobility (Gambino et al., 2014). The U.S. Census Bureau has been collecting information regarding language use in the country since 1890 (Ryan, 2013). More recently, Ryan (2013) reported on data from the American Community Survey and found that there are hundreds of languages presently used in the U.S. These languages are broken down into four major language categories which include Spanish, Indo-European, Asian and Pacific Islander, and other (Gambino et al., 2014; Ryan, 2013). These immigrants come to the U.S. for a plethora of reasons, and they carry with them great linguistic diversity.

As individuals choose to learn English, they often still speak in their first language at home. The continuation of first language use is important for immigrants to share and maintain their culture. The American Community Survey noted that there are over 291.5 million speakers over the age of five in the U.S. who speak a language other than English at home (Ryan, 2013). Like their parents, children often speak other languages at home as well. In addition, the American Institutes for Research (2018) reported that one in five children in the U.S. live in a home where a language other than English is used. This use of a language other than English at home decreases with the length of time someone has spent in the U.S. If someone is in the U.S. for more than 30 years, they are more likely to speak English at home as opposed to their first language (Gambino et al., 2014). This switch from English being used outside of the home to use inside of the home is a transition that is impacted by many factors that include but are not limited to education, personal comfort, and differing language preferences between parents and children.

Data gathered on immigration and language use in the U.S. can be further broken down by state to show who is speaking English at home and how these speakers would classify their
English language ability. Ryan (2013) reported that Massachusetts has over 6,224,979 speakers over the age of 5; 22% of this population speak a language other than English when at home. This population can vary in terms of their English-speaking comfort and ability. Of this 22% of people speaking a language other than English at home, 59.6% spoke English very well, 20.3% spoke English well, 13.9% did not speak English well, and 6.2% did not speak English (Ryan, 2013). In general, those with a higher education are more likely to have a higher English-speaking ability (Gambino et al., 2014). Therefore, access to college and quality ESL instruction impacts an immigrant’s comfort and ability in their use of English in their daily lives. This can also impact the language use, preference, and comfort of those in their family. Further echoing these ideas, the Migrant Policy Institute (2018) reported that in 2016, there were about 1.124 million foreign-born people living within Massachusetts, which is 17% of the total population. They also reported that 29% of children within Massachusetts had one or more parents who were born in another country (Migrant Policy Institute, 2018). Supporting adult immigrants as they learn English can be a helpful way to support the language use of their children.

While adult English language learners (ELLs) are developing their English, their children receive English instruction in primary and secondary schools. School-age ELLs comprise a fair portion of the total student population where one in ten public school students is an ELL (Horsford & Sampson, 2013). The majority of these ELLs are living and attending school in urban rather than rural areas (Bialik et al., 2018; Horsford & Sampson, 2013). Bialik et al. (2018) noted that the majority, 67% of the ELL school-age student population, is found between kindergarten and fifth grade whereas high schools across the country have a total of 800,000 ELLs. With an increase in ELLs in primary and secondary schools across the country, especially in urban areas, there is a need to provide and ensure high-quality English instruction is available.
to meet the growing needs. However, disparities and inequities in education negatively impact the instruction, programs, funding, and opportunities offered to these students (Horsford & Sampson, 2013). Attention to high-quality instruction and education is needed in all public learning contexts, including community colleges, where these students and their families continue their English instruction and pursue degree and certificate programs.

**Community Colleges in the U.S. and Massachusetts**

Community colleges, previously known as junior colleges, were designed to serve the changing needs of the community, including those who have English as their second language (Tichenor, 1994). There are currently more than 1,200 community colleges, or two-year institutions, in the U.S. today (Hutcheson, 1999; Teranishi et al., 2011). These institutions provide useful skills, opportunities, and access to academic study through degree and certificate programs across a variety of subjects (Janis, 2013; Teranishi et al., 2011). They do this by providing college level studies that meet both business and university demands (Hodara, 2015; Hutcheson, 1999). The education offerings at these institutions address changes in the workforce and skilled labor to build the economy (Burns, 2005).

These institutions are regarded as being accessible, affordable, flexible, and close to home for students (Hodara, 2015; Szelényi & Chang, 2002; Tichenor, 1994; Teranishi et al., 2011). About 95% of all community colleges also offer an open admission policy, which increases access to higher education for many students as there are more opportunities for them to apply and start classes (Bragg & Durham, 2012). Due to these flexible benefits, it is reported that 70% of high school graduates attend a two-year institution of higher education (Bragg & Durham, 2012). Community colleges also provide access to higher education for minorities and diverse students including ELLs who are looking for college after high school and for those who
took a break in their education (Bragg & Durham, 2012; Burns, 2005). While community colleges provide access and opportunities to students, they constantly need to respond to the growing diversity reflected in their communities from immigration (Hodara, 2015; Szelényi & Chang, 2002).

The number of higher education institutions and community colleges vary by state; Massachusetts is a state with many public colleges and universities. Currently, in Massachusetts, there are 29 public institutions of higher learning, including nine state universities, five research universities, and 15 community colleges (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, 2019). Each of these colleges and universities is unique as they reflect the communities they serve. They have their own course objectives, course sequencing, and more. Together, all of these colleges and universities support 260,000 students each year, and between 2008 and 2009, they awarded over 33,000 degrees and certificates (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, 2019).

The 15 state-funded community colleges of Massachusetts provide a variety of programs, degrees, and certificates (Massachusetts Community Colleges, 2010). The community colleges were a result of a 1958 audit of state needs (Massachusetts Community Colleges, 2010). An Italian immigrant, Governor Foster Furcolo, helped support the establishment of the community colleges in the hope of providing better access to higher education (Burns, 2005). According to Massachusetts Community Colleges (2010), the first of 15 schools, Berkshire Community College, was established in 1960. More recently, the Massachusetts community colleges (2010) have served over 156,089 students across all 15 community colleges including 115,235 in courses offering academic credit used toward graduation and 40,854 in noncredit courses. Across the 29 public institutions of higher learning in the state, community college students account for 43% of all public higher education students in Massachusetts and 50% of all undergraduate
credits (Massachusetts Community Colleges, 2010). Therefore, community colleges and the programs they offer, including English language instruction, open doors for many individuals across the state to access higher education to pursue their academic goals.

**English as a Second Language Students in Community Colleges**

English as a second language (ESL) students are not a homogenous group; they are diverse in language, education, and culture (American Institutes for Research, 2018; Becker & Coyle, 2011; Blumenthal, 2002; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). These students come to the classroom with different lived experiences seeking to gain both cultural capital and language development in order to pursue their academic and career goals at the college and beyond (Janis, 2013). The population of ESL students in higher education is increasing primarily from immigrants and international students (American Institutes for Research, 2018). However, this population also includes Generation 1.5, recent immigrants, and refugees (American Institutes for Research, 2018).

These ESL students are more often than not considered to be nontraditional students, as they are not completing their college studies directly following the completion of high school. Because of this status, these students often face different challenges in successfully completing their coursework compared to their classmates (David & Li, 2018). For example, a nontraditional student might be working full-time, studying part-time, and caring for children. While native English–speaking individuals attending classes at the community college might be nontraditional and face similar challenges, they are not tasked with acquiring a new language at the same time.

Each ESL student brings with him or her unique needs, abilities, and goals that contrast with their native English–speaking peers, and it is the responsibility of the community college classroom to address these areas and provide high-quality instruction (DeKleine & Lawton,
2015). Much of this support and tailored instruction takes place in ESL classes within the community college. These ESL classes are tasked with meeting the diverse language needs for all learners, which include providing targeted reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, and pronunciation instruction (DeKleine & Lawton, 2015). However, content-based instruction (CBI) is often used to connect form and meaning (Arulselvi, 2016; Valeo, 2013). In using CBI, coursework is able to focus on meaningful content and skill integration through targeted classroom tasks (Santana-Williamson, 2013; Valeo, 2013). ESL faculty thereby bring content and language together to provide high-quality instruction to a diverse population of ESL students.

**International Students**

International students come to the U.S. under a student visa and enroll in U.S. colleges and universities; they are not immigrants and go home to their country upon the completion of their studies (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Teranishi et al., 2011). The American Institutes for Research (2018) reported that the number of international students has been increasing, doubling from 1999 to 2014 and multiplying five times from 2016 to 2017. In fact, from 2016 to 2017 the total number of international students in the U.S. reached 1.1 million (American Institutes for Research, 2018). According to DeKleine and Lawton (2015), the U.S. hosts more international students than any other country. While attending U.S. institutions under a student visa, international students are unable to receive financial assistance from the U.S. to complete their studies. Therefore, international students tend to have more formal academic exposure and come from more privileged backgrounds as these individuals and their families have to cover all costs associated with living and studying in the U.S. for an extended period of time (DeKleine & Lawton, 2015). In addition, international students are often well prepared for college life and
English instruction; however, this is not always the case for every student. While they are more likely to have a stronger academic understanding of their first language, they still face problems with English writing, accuracy, and vocabulary and require dedicated English instruction (DeKleine & Lawton, 2015). Therefore, they might attend an ESL program at community college, university, or private language school to develop their academic English. These students could include international students, immigrants, and generation 1.5 students.

**Immigrants**

Immigrants are often referred to as a homogenous group, though they are actually far more diverse (Hodara, 2015; Szélányi & Chang, 2002). Each immigrant comes to the U.S. seeking citizenship for their own unique reasons, and they bring many cultural backgrounds, abilities, aspirations, and language needs (Becker & Coyle, 2011; Hodara, 2015; Szélányi & Chang, 2002). These are individuals who are establishing a permanent residence in the U.S. as opposed to international students who eventually go back to their home country. Higher education and English instruction are very helpful tools for immigrants as they establish their life in the U.S. (Hodara, 2015; Szélányi & Chang, 2002). In fact, in 2004 one in four community college students was an immigrant in the U.S. (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). In total, between 2003 and 2004, there were approximately 6.5 million immigrants seeking to earn a community college degree (Teranishi et al., 2011). With this increase in immigrants looking to pursue a community college degree, these colleges need to provide targeted English instruction to enable student retention and success.

**Generation 1.5**

Generation 1.5 students are those who are generally educated in U.S. high schools, yet still need additional English support (Blumenthal, 2002; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). The U.S.
has a surprising number of generation 1.5 students. According to the American Institutes for Research (2018), second generation students comprise 20% of total U.S. college students and 24% of total community college students. These are students that have more experience in the U.S. as they have attended public primary and/or secondary school. They might also exhibit stronger speaking and listening skills, yet they tend to lack academic language and writing (DeKleine & Lawton, 2015). In addition, they also usually need assistance with pronunciation and grammar (Blumenthal, 2002). Therefore, targeted English instruction is necessary though it can differ from their international student peers.

**English Language Programs in Community Colleges**

In 1945, English language programs were primarily utilized for citizenship support, but in the 1960s explicit English language courses were developed (Van Meter, 1990). Since then, demand for these courses have continued, thereby shaping the course and program offerings. Today, these ESL programs focus on teaching the four skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—along with grammar and pronunciation (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). They often do this through CBI and incorporate language skills with content (Arulselvi, 2016; Valeo, 2013). To meet the diverse student needs and interests, colleges often provide a variety of English program offerings and provide systems to allow students to choose which program they would like to attend based on their goals.

At the community college, these programs are generally divided into vocational/adult English as a second or other language (ESOL) which does not offer credit, and academic ESL which offers institutional non-graduation credit or academic graduation credit (American Institutes of Research, 2018; Blumenthal, 2002; Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Hodara, 2015; Tichenor, 1994; Szélényi & Chang, 2002). These two pathways
provide high-quality English instruction to meet the specific academic and career interests of the student. ESOL and academic ESL programs are generally housed in different parts of the college campus. ESOL is often grouped with adult or workforce education while ESL courses could be housed in developmental departments, English departments, or their own department (Blumenthal, 2002). The housing of ESL within these departments can be a point of contention within a college as different college members might view ESL instruction differently (Shults, 2000).

**Vocational and Adult ESOL**

Vocational and Adult ESOL is noncredit, funded by the government, and generally aims to provide career readiness support (Chisman & Crandall, 2007). These ESOL programs often focus on citizenship, survival English, or English for a specific trade or vocation (Chisman & Crandall, 2007). Funds coming from the government or federal grants might dictate the type of ESOL instruction that is offered. These programs are primarily concentrated on social language through the mediums of speaking and listening (TESOL, 2018). Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are used to increase conversational fluency, which takes less time to acquire (Cummins, 2008). Therefore, these programs focus only on providing the direct English assistance that is needed to survive in the community and within a specific workplace context (Chisman, 2007). While some students might start in an ESOL programs, they might transfer to an academic ESL programs to pursue more advanced English support; these are generally students to hope to pursue a college degree or certificate (Becker, 2011).

**Academic ESL**

Academic ESL is serious academic work requiring linguistic development on the conceptual, discourse, sentence, and word level (MATSOL, 2014; Tichenor, 1994. The courses
demand high-level linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and academic work and development on the part of the student (TESOL, 2012). These courses focus on Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS), which has to do with academic, college-required fluency, which takes longer to achieve compared to BICS (Cummins, 2008). Therefore, coursework in ESL programs is much more rigorous compared to its ESOL counterpart. The knowledge acquired in these college academic ESL courses is equivalent to the coursework completed by students in any other college discipline (TESOL, 2012).

Academic ESL programs can offer institutional credit that cannot be used toward graduation and academic credit that is used toward graduation (Tichenor, 1994). This distinction depends on the college. A 1988 survey found that 79% of institutions of higher learning offered full or partial credit to students participating in ESL courses (Van Meter, 1990). Transitioning into the 2000s, there was a shift in credit offered to ESL students for completion of their ESL coursework. In 2000, it was found that 76% of institutions offered institutional credit, five percent offered degree credit, five percent offered no credit, and 14% offered a combination of credit offerings (Shultz, 2000). The changes in credit offerings attached to academic ESL classes often depend on the culture within the college and views about these programs. The TESOL International Association, a leading voice within the field of TESOL, believes that these ESL courses should provide degree-granting credit as they are rigorous academic programs (TESOL, 2000; TESOL, 2012). The type of credit allocated to these courses, or lack of credit, can impact students in many ways. When programs do not offer credit or offer nontransferable institutional credit, it can impact a student’s sense of language development, motivation for study, and even financial assistance to complete these rigorous language courses.
Issues Facing Community College ESL Programs

While providing instruction and support to diverse ESL learners, ESL programs and faculty face many issues that impede their ability to best serve these students. These issues stem from a variety of areas as expressed in a recent 2016 study. Cochran and Grujicic-Alatriste (2016) surveyed ESL programs within the New York CUNY system via email to better understand what was happening in the ESL programs. Results showed that respondents felt diminished support for ESL, and the scaling back of ESL programs across the state (Cochran & Grujicic-Alatriste, 2016). Responses also showed that many of these changes were due to leadership, politics, funding, and budgetary setbacks along with the changing linguistic demands of the students they serve (Cochran & Grujicic-Alatriste, 2016). Whereas some responders remained hopeful about the future, many wanted to see the field treated as it was in the past (Cochran & Grujicic-Alatriste, 2016). The results of this survey reflect the larger shifts within the field of TESOL and ESL programs in public higher education, specifically in community colleges. However, these roadblocks are much more complicated.

The Impact of Political Agendas

These programs are also impacted by federal and state political agendas. The Obama Administration’s American Graduate Incentive aimed to provide more access and completion in higher education (Bragg & Durham, 2012). While increasing access to education for all students including ESL students is important, this incentive also put additional pressures on colleges and universities to make sure that students graduate quickly. Bragg and Durham (2012) note how political agendas are focused on college completion and retention rates; many administrators and politicians want to increase these numbers by restricting access for students who might reduce such outcomes. Thus, it impacts the larger focus on diversity, equity, and open-enrollment access
(Bragg & Durham, 2012). Adhering to the larger legislative demands focused on access and completion can be quite difficult when they do not fully account for the diverse needs of the population and the true population being served at the community college level.

**Deprofessionalization of TESOL**

One of the biggest issues within the field of TESOL and specifically at the community college level is *deprofessionalization*. A previous TESOL International Association president, David Nunan, quoted by Scott (2003), noted that deprofessionalization was the biggest issue facing the profession. Breshears (2004) defined professionalism as teaching quality and professionalization as having to do with power and status; both are social constructs. Working conditions are impacted by both of these social forces. Therefore, if someone is a strong educator professionally but the profession has little power, neither the efforts of the educator nor the field will be fully recognized. The field of TESOL, specifically community college ESL programs, has seen these concerns, which impact instruction, credibility of programs, and job satisfaction.

Pennington and Riley (1991) shared the results from a Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire that asked 100 random TESOL members about their job satisfaction. The results from 42 respondents from the U.S. and abroad showed that may were dissatisfied, but this was not due to their interest in teaching or the students that they work with (Pennington & Riley, 1991). Pennington and Riley (1991) noted that the satisfaction was low due to a lack of recognition, security, working conditions, authority, policies, and practices. These results reflect a larger deprofessionalization of the field and the continuous cycle that systematically continues to deprofessionalize the educators and students within the world of TESOL.
Incorrectly Characterized as Remedial

Remedial courses, often called developmental courses, are those that are offered at the college level but are considered to be below college level work (Deil-Amen, 2011; Saxon & Boylan, 2001). Whereas there is an increase in the number of these courses (Shults, 2000), there is a lack of consistency in classifying them, which may fall under remediation or developmental work, and disagreement about what these programs should look like (Deil-Amen, 2011). Most remedial math and English coursework offer institutional credit, in which students can get financial aid but cannot use the credits toward their major or graduation (Deil-Amen, 2011; Shultz, 2000). Students are therefore using funds to do work that the colleges consider to be below college level while using their financial aid funds and taking a longer time to complete their degree work. This can often become a problem for ESL programs if they are mischaracterized as remedial work. Acquiring a second language and developing CALPS or academic use of that language is not remedial work, and the framing of academic ESL programs as remedial is detrimental to the students and the program as a whole.

The Rise of Adjunctification

*Adjunctification* is another issue that the TESOL, community college ESL programs, and higher education as a whole is facing. Adjuncts are part-time non-benefitted faculty who often teach at multiple colleges. They are contingent faculty who are sometimes paid a flat fee or paid hourly as opposed to their full-time peers (Haworth, 1998). Colleges have more and more adjuncts teaching within the college instead of hiring full-time faculty or reposting positions after faculty have retired (Porter-Szucs, 2017). The increase in adjunct faculty teaching and the decrease in full-time faculty impacts students and programs. Adjunct faculty are paid less and
receive no benefits for the same work completed by their full-time peers. Programs and students suffer from having overworked and underpaid adjuncts teaching courses.  

Offering Credit for ESL Courses  

ESL programs at the community college level have the ability to offer college credit. However, not all colleges grant this option to ESL programs. Both the TESOL International Association and MATSOL have created position statements to support the granting of academic credit to ESL programs in Massachusetts, across the country, and beyond.  

The TESOL Position Statement on Degree-Granting Credit for ESL Courses (2000) was created and approved and advocated that degree-granting credit be awarded for successful completion of ESL work in higher education, as it is college level work. This influenced the TESOL Position Statement on Academic and Degree-Granting Credit for ESOL Courses in Postsecondary Education (2012), which highlighted the increased need for the courses, the larger misconceptions surrounding ESL as being remedial, the academic rigor of these academic programs, and the specialized information that is encompassed by the field and corresponding programs. The 2012 Position Statement also highlighted how ESL programs in higher education require more extensive work, linguistic analysis, and cognitive ability than native English-speaking students earning credit for a second language in college. This position statement was instrumental in creating and defending many academic credit-bearing ESL programs.  

Then, in 2014, MATSOL passed the MATSOL Position Statement on Massachusetts Community College ESOL Programs (2014). This 2014 MATSOL position drew from the 2012 TESOL Position Statement; however, it also provided further support in favor of credit-bearing ESL courses in community colleges specifically. It again drew on the increased need for these programs and the larger linguistic and academic areas involved with these programs. The
MATSOL Position Statement (2014) specifically discussed providing equal access and opportunities to ESL students, the validation of TESOL professionals as experts in their disciplines, and the impact of noncredit courses on Adult Basic Education courses.

**MATSOL Community College Survey 2018–2019**

Every year, the MATSOL Community College special interest group (SIG) sends out a survey to an ESL program representative of each of the 15 community colleges across the state. The information provided 17 survey questions to better understand how programs across the state are doing in terms of their course offerings, departmental classifications, and more. These questions and the information collected also helps to keep track of how roadblocks in the profession are impacting the community college ESL programs in Massachusetts. The following information comes from five questions in the May 2018–2019 survey in which each of the 15 community colleges is represented (MATSOL Community College Survey, 2019).

Table 1

*MATSOL Community College Survey Results 2019*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions from the MATSOL Survey</th>
<th>Results &amp; Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In which division is your college’s ESL program/services located?</td>
<td>10/15 = 66.6% Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/15 = 13.3% Liberal Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/15 = 20% Campus Specific</td>
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<td>2. How many levels of credit ESL does your college consistently offer?</td>
<td>4/15 = 26.6% offer 2 levels consistently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7/15 = 46.6% offer 3 levels consistently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/15 = 26.6% offer 4 levels consistently</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response</td>
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</table>
| 5. What type of credits are awarded for ESL courses at your college?    | Some colleges reported offering a multiple of the options below:  
7/21 = 33.3% General Elective  
5/21 = 23.8% Humanities  
1/21 = 4% Liberal Arts  
3/21 = 14% Noncredit  
4/21 = 19% Unknown/Undisclosed  
1/21 = 4.76% Developmental |
| 10. How many faculty members taught ESL courses during the past year?    | Across all 15 campuses, there are 165 people teaching ESL in these programs.  
23/165 = 13.9% Full-time Faculty  
20/165 = 12% Faculty Teaching ESL & Other Courses (PT/FT status is unknown)  
122/165 = 73.9% Adjunct Faculty |
| 17. Do you feel optimistic about the future of your college’s ESL program? | Some common topics shared when answering this question:  
- Decreased enrollment  
- Pressure from administration  
- Forced to do more in less time  
- Still a need for ESL programs  
- Use of federal funds for these classes  
- Student enrolled part-time; taking fewer classes at once |
• Program cuts
• Varying levels of administrative support
• Not replacing full-time faculty who are retiring

The results from these five questions describe the current state of community college ESL programs in Massachusetts at this time. The first question in this survey asked participants to share the division where their ESL program was stored. The majority (66.6%) shared that their program is currently held within the humanities division on their campus. In addition, 13% said that their program is located within liberal arts whereas 20% gave a specific division classification particular to their specific campus. This variation across the state shows how community college ESL programs are treated differently depending on the social constructs present on that campus.

Every program across the state offers a different listing of course offerings governed by their own program specific objectives. A question on the survey asked participants to share how many levels of credit ESL they offer consistently. The responses showed that almost half, or 46.6%, offer three levels of ESL regularly. The data also showed that 26.6% of the campuses offered two levels regularly and 26.6% offered four levels regularly. The majority of colleges offered three or four levels of ESL regularly. Although enrollment numbers and program specifics differ, this data does speak to the need for multiple academic ESL courses for language development.

Whereas each program offers a different number of ESL course levels regularly, these course offerings across the state also provide varying options in terms of academic credit to
students who complete them. Some campuses provide different offerings depending the course or level. The majority, or 33.3%, provide general elective credit, 23.8% offer humanities credit, 4% offer liberal arts credit, 14% offer no credit, 19% are unknown or did not disclose, and 4.76% offer developmental credit to students who complete their ESL courses. With varying campus policies, politics, and administration, it is clear that ESL programs are not treated or characterized in the same way across the 15 community colleges.

This survey also asked about the individuals who are teaching within these programs as faculty. Across the 15 community college ESL programs within Massachusetts, each program has a different ratio of full-time faculty, faculty teaching ESL and other courses, and adjunct faculty. Across all of these campuses there was a reported 165 people teaching ESL in these programs in some capacity. This total of 165 is further broken down into 13.9% who are classified as full-time faculty, 12% who are faculty teaching ESL and other courses, and 73.9% who are teaching as adjunct or contingent faculty. Nearly three quarters of the ESL faculty across the state are adjunct, contingent, faculty with no benefits.

Lastly, the MATSOL survey ended with a question asking the survey participant to share if they feel optimistic about their program and to provide some detail and explanation. Among the answers from the different community colleges some patterns or topics arose. These individuals expressed an overall sense of caution or unknown regarding the future of their programs. They expressed that they are facing decreased enrollment, additional pressure from administration, forced to do more with less time, an increase in students completing coursework as part-time students, program cuts, varying levels of overall administrative support, and the lack of full-time faculty replacements when faculty retire.
Instruction in Community College ESL Programs

Learning an additional language like English differs from the process of learning a first language which is referred to as a mother tongue, native language, or primary language (Derakhashan & Karimi, 2015). Krashen, Long, and Scarcella (1979) note that there is a critical period for language instruction during early childhood when the brain has more elasticity and flexibility that allows for the child to develop a higher language proficiency compared to those who learn later in life. Acquiring an additional language, especially as an adult, is difficult, as a first language and new language are not created equal (Derakhashan & Karimi, 2015). Often learners will rely on their first language to help them acquire a new language (Derakhashan & Karimi, 2015). It is easier if the two languages are similar; however, this is not the case for many students as their first language is not related or similar to English. In diverse ESL community college classes, students with different first languages are mixed together to learn English. Therefore, educators need to be mindful and intentional about the way they build and conduct their courses in order to support all learners in the classroom and their individualized needs and goals.

In addition to language development, community college students including ESL students are generally nontraditional adult learners (Becker & Coyle, 2011; Nuñez & Sparks, 2012). These learners seek a higher education for a variety of reasons (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). They are students who have taken a break from education after high school and are coming later in life to complete a degree or they are returning to college to change their careers. As nontraditional students, these individuals face many responsibilities that traditional students do not have, including raising children, working, and participating in coursework part-time (Nuñez
& Sparks, 2012). With different needs and life responsibilities, nontraditional adult ESL students need high-quality English instruction as they pursue their academic goals.

ESL students have diverse experiences with formal education and literacy in their first language. Some students have a lack of literacy in their first language or an interrupted education, which could be contributing factors to why these individuals moved to the U.S. (David & Li, 2018). This could also create additional barriers in learning as they establish and build English language foundations that might not be available in their first language. Many of these students coming from lower education backgrounds will generally participate less in their coursework and have higher rates of attrition (Szelényi & Chang, 2002). ESL programs offering English instruction must understand these factors as they create supportive classroom environments and meaningful high-quality lessons for their students.

Students participating in ESL coursework need counseling and advising (Hodara, 2015; Szelényi & Chang, 2002). They also need to connect their lived experiences with academic experiences in the classroom (Janis, 2013). Much of this requires professors to focus on supporting student cultural capital across the curriculum (Janis, 2013). To facilitate this, TESOL (2008) released standards for adult ESL instruction that includes planning, instruction, assessment, identity and context, language proficiency learning, and professionalism as important. Schwarzer (2009) shared many of the same ideas by saying support for adult ESL students should focus on holistic learning, authentic learning, curriculum negotiation, inquiry-based lessons, alternative assessments, and a community of learners. These students have needs, and programs must provide specialized individualized student-centered support. Many of these ideas about adult education are embedded into the TESOL 6 Principles, a new framework for best practices in ESL teaching.
The TESOL 6 Principles

As the number of ESL students continues to increase, there is a need to best support these students and their language development across all teaching contexts by focusing on high-quality language instruction. The TESOL International Association, a professional community, is known for research, advocacy, and professional development within the field (TESOL, 2018). They are known for promoting best practices in ESL teaching. Recently, the TESOL International Association created and published the TESOL 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners (TESOL 6 Principles), which is rooted in well-known research within the field pertaining to language acquisition, teaching, and learning (TESOL, 2018). TESOL noted that these principles are not revolutionary, but they stem from research and TESOL standards and values. The goal of these principles is to increase instruction and lesson quality across all ESL teaching and learning contexts (TESOL, 2018). It is intended to help educators when they make decisions regarding their ESL students and their curriculum (TESOL, 2018). These principles can be used by all educators across all teaching contexts to provide high-quality ESL instruction (TESOL, 2018).

The TESOL 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English include: (1) know your learners, (2) create conditions for language learning, (3) design high-quality lessons for language development, (4) adapt lesson delivery as needed, (5) monitor and assess student language development, and (6) engage and collaborate with a community of practice (Hellman et al. 2019; TESOL, 2018). They also include essential conditions that focus on neurophysical capacity, motivation, facilitative emotional conditions, useable input and feedback, and deliberate practice (Hellman et al. 2019; TESOL, 2018). Together, these principles and conditions can help support professors as they create rigorous and educational ESL instruction.
The first and second principles encourage educators to know their students and create a safe environment for community and language development (Blok et al., 2020; Hellman et al. 2019; TESOL, 2018). These principles encourage educators to learn about the backgrounds of students, include student culture in the classroom, and create a classroom space were students are safe to share and learn (Blok et al., 2020; Gupta, 2019; Hellman et al. 2019; TESOL, 2018). This environment would also provide space for students to share their experiences with others and use prior knowledge in the classroom (Blok et al., 2020; Gupta, 2019; Schwarzer, 2009; Hellman et al., 2019). These two elements set the stage for high-quality teaching and learning by creating a safe space where students are actively engaged in learning.

The third and fourth principles ask educators to think critically about the lessons they are creating and how they adapt these lessons to meet the needs and abilities of their students (Blok et al., 2020; Gupta, 2019; Schwarzer, 2009; Hellman et al., 2019; TESOL, 2018). This requires educators to think critically about their lessons, lesson creation, and the teaching approaches that govern them (Blok et al., 2020; Hellman et al. 2019; TESOL 2018). With many different approaches, educators could draw eclectically from best practices within the field (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). As ESL classes are diverse and student language needs differ, educators need to constantly adjust their plans to meet the needs of students (Schwarzer, 2009). This is especially true when working with adult learners who are learning English to pursue their academic and career goals at the community college (Schwarzer, 2009). Educators must thoughtfully create lessons that draw on student need and provide them with the scaffolds to improve their English language.

Lastly, the fifth and sixth principles require educators to assess both the development of their students and their own personal development as educators (Blok et al., 2020; Hellman et al.,
There is a heavy emphasis on reflection within these two principles. Educators need to have the skills and experience to assess their students in meaningful ways that allow learners to best demonstrate their abilities (Schwarzer, 2009). Assignments and assessments must be created intentionally to best support those in the classroom (Blok et al., 2020; Hellman et al. 2019; Schwarzer, 2009; TESOL, 2018). The assessment of learning expands beyond students. TESOL professionals must also think, assess, and reflect upon their own professional development and practice (Blok et al., 2020; Gupta, 2019; Hellman et al. 2019; Schwarzer, 2009; TESOL 2018). Educators must be willing to reflect on their teaching, and they must find new opportunities to grow within the field to better support their students (Blok et al., 2020; Hellman et al. 2019; TESOL 2018). Together, this reflection and assessment enables students to reach their linguistic goals while providing educators with their own steps for development.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual underpinning this study and the TESOL 6 Principles is communicative language teaching (CLT) which is considered to be a best practice within language teaching and the field of TESOL (Littlewood, 2011; TESOL, 2018). CLT as a teaching approach was created in the 1970s as language teaching shifted from a focus on pure grammatical competence to a more inclusive view of communicative competence (CC) (Hymes, 1974; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013; Richards, 2006; Savignon, 1991; Savignon; 2002). This shift in language instruction saw language as social and used to perform different functions as opposed to memorizing grammar rules while still lacking the ability to use them fluently (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). CLT also provided educators with flexibility in their teaching so as to best
support student language development and communicative competency, which is a stark contrast to more rigid approaches of the past.

**CLT and the Sociocultural Theory of Learning**

CLT in many ways connects to and is shaped by the sociocultural theory of learning. CLT is a method that provides flexibility in the learning environment, which gives educators the ability to draw in key elements of this sociocultural theory (Farsia, 2017; Yang, 2016). Vygotsky is credited for establishing the sociocultural theory of learning which is rooted in the idea that learning is not biological but instead is rooted in the social and cultural context (Shabani, Khatib & Ebadi, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978; Yang, 2016). Learning cannot be separated from this context, in which an emphasis is placed on collaboration and peer facilitation (Shabani et al., 2010). There are multiple elements of the sociocultural theory that impact CLT and language learning.

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a key feature in this theory of learning. ZPD focuses on the distance between where a student is currently with their learning and their potential. (Shabani et al., 2010). To achieve this potential, educators need to provide facilitation and assistance to students. They need to find optimal tasks to help facilitate the most amount of learning while also maintaining a supportive teaching environment that promotes good learning (Shabani et al., 2010; Wass & Golding, 2014). The social support from a peer or instructor and the surrounding context as a whole help to facilitate student language development.

Learning is social and cannot be done alone (Shabani et al., 2010; Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). This is true when educators support students within their ZPD. In order to do this, Wood et al. (1976) first mentioned the phrase scaffolding, which was a metaphor to demonstrate how educators strategically support students in the classroom and in their overall learning. This strategic support enables students to learn the most possible at that given time. Over time, as
learners are able to handle more on their own, the educator will reduce the amount of scaffolding provided in that area (Shabani et al., 2010; Wass & Golding, 2014).

The classroom learning environment also shapes that ability for students to learn as the sociocultural theory is rooted in the role of context in learning (Shabani et al., 2010). Emotional factors in the learning environment impact and influence learners in their language development (Krashen, 1982; Gulzar, Gulnaz & Ijaz, 2014; Lin, 2008). With regards to this impact, Krashen established the affective filter hypothesis which looked at how these emotional factors can increase learning or create barriers (Gulzar, Gulnaz & Ijaz, 2014; Krashen, 1982; Lin, 2008). As emotional factors increase, there is a potential net decrease in the amount of learning that takes place (Krashen, 1982). Therefore, educators need to look at how their classroom, lessons, scaffolding, and larger context can impact emotional factors that students face that may impede or ignite their learning.

ZPD, scaffolding, and affective filters are key elements in the sociocultural theory of learning that play a role in language learning and the CLT classroom. These elements impact the discourse used within the classroom. As learning and thinking is shaped by culture, the discourse used in the classroom by the teacher can also impact learning success and failure (Yang, 2016). Educators play a role in crafting the classroom discourse and even text selection, which impact student learning (Yang, 2016). In addition to this, these sociocultural factors impact how a teacher creates CLT lessons. As CLT provides flexibility for educators to create student-centered classrooms that draw on a host of teaching tools and techniques, educators are able to draw on the sociocultural theory and the focus on facilitating learning through a social lens (Farsia, 2017). Educators are able to pair students for meaningful collaboration, provide scaffolding, monitor
student motivation and difficulty, match learning with the individual ZPD of each student, and balance the focus of fluency and accuracy (Farsia, 2017).

**CLT in Practice**

CLT is not a prescribed set of teaching methods like many other methods within the field; instead it is more of a flexible umbrella approach to teaching language that draws from other methods and teaching strategies (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson; 2013). Educators are able to pull from a toolbox of materials and strategies to best tailor teaching to the needs of students. The onset of CLT changed the focus in language teaching, classroom activities, and the role of those within the classroom (Richards, 2006; Savignon, 1991; Savignon; 2002). It also provided an approach to teaching that could be used in all contexts from general teaching to specialized language teaching (Richards, 2006). With variability within and between ESL classes, CLT enabled teaching that was just as flexible and adaptable.

The focus of CLT is to support CC in student language learning (Hymes, 1974; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013; Richards, 2006). CC requires that someone is able to communicate for different purposes, with different audiences, in different settings, and with different texts regardless of their language limitations (Hymes, 1974; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013; Richards, 2006). A student would need to be able to adapt their communication depending on the different variables in that situation. They would need to explore and practice communicating within these different areas to develop their competency. This is a fundamental shift from more traditional and mechanical views of language teaching which are rooted in language drills and memorization (Richards, 2006). CLT and the focus on CC placed a heavier focus on fluency over accuracy as being a primary goal in ESL instruction (Richards, 2006).
While CLT places a heavy focus on CC in English instruction, it is not absent of grammar instruction (Savignon, 1991). Instead of focusing solely on grammar or teaching grammar in addition to CC, CLT sees grammatical competency as part of the CC umbrella. Therefore, CC and grammar cannot be separated from one another (Savignon, 1991). More specifically, CLT can be viewed through four different components of CC, which include grammatical, discourse, sociocultural, and strategic competence (Savignon, 2002). Each of these different areas interact with and impact each other; they cannot be developed on their own but must be explored together (Savignon, 2002). For example, grammatical competence looks at sentence level grammar, discourse competence looks at how words and texts are connected to create a whole, sociocultural competence looks at the social rules of language, and strategic competency looks at coping skills for dealing with unknown or imperfect rules (Savignon, 2002). These four areas come together to support CC, which is then the focus of using CLT as a teaching approach (Savignon, 1999; Savignon, 2002). Therefore, CLT draws on many aspects of language development while also enabling flexibility for faculty to meet the specific needs of their students.

In the CLT classroom, the students are not passive in their language learning (Savignon, 1991). They are not just completing drills or memorizing quietly (Richards, 2006). CLT focuses on the learners in the classroom by providing them with meaningful ways to communicate with each other (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013; Savignon, 1991). The learner is the center of the CLT classroom. Meanwhile, professors provide true communication activities that allow students to experience an information gap, make choices, and provide feedback, in the same way they would need to use language outside of the classroom (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). In this way, students focus on fluency by negotiating meaning and using communication strategies,
which best prepares them to use language authentically rather than memorize rules that they cannot apply (Richards, 2006). CLT enables this authentic language learning by providing a flexible and eclectic model for language teaching and learning which is mirrored in the TESOL 6 Principles.

**Limitations**

This literature review examined a variety of academic literature surrounding ELLs, English programs, and effective teaching of ELLs. While this literature review draws on a number of different studies and research, it was limited by the number or recent academic studies pertaining to the current number of ELLs in the country, community college ESL programs in the U.S. today, and the TESOL 6 Principles in use (TESOL, 2018). First, the larger data surrounding ELLs and immigrants in the country is generally rooted in the U.S. Census, which is dependent on specific years for collection. Second, the number of current articles about community college ESL programs is small and often outdated; this seems to be a gap in the literature. There is a need to better understand the students, their needs and abilities, the programs that they participate in, and the instruction they receive. Lastly, the TESOL 6 Principles are relatively new, and therefore there is a lack of academic literature analyzing its use within any teaching context. While the TESOL 6 Principles draw from previous research and scholarly works, there is little that specifically discusses the TESOL 6 Principles in the academic literature. This study addresses the lack of current academic literature surrounding community college ESL program and the lack of academic literature surrounding the application of the TESOL 6 Principles.

The TESOL 6 Principles and CLT are quite similar, as the principles draw from TESOL academic literature and best practice which is inclusive of CLT (TESOL, 2018). The TESOL 6
Principles ask faculty, regardless of their teaching context, to look at what they are doing in the classroom and how they are supporting students (TESOL, 2018). The TESOL 6 Principles is not a prescriptive list of ways to teach, but instead sees learning and teaching as fluid and flexible, much like CLT. In many ways, the TESOL 6 Principles can be used to support professor reflection and programmatic evaluation (TESOL, 2018). However, to look at perceived effectiveness in the application and use of these principles, there needs to be a framework. CLT provides a flexible umbrella instructional framework to view both the TESOL 6 Principles and the perceived effectiveness in the use of these principles.

Conclusion

The U.S. is seeing an increase in the number of ELLs, both children and adults, who come to the country speaking a language other than English as their first language (British Council, 2013; Gambino et al., 2014). These individuals seek to learn English to access more opportunities and job mobility (Gambino et al., 2014). ELL children engage in English development through their elementary and public schooling (Bialik et al., 2018), and they make up 10% of the overall public-school population (Horsford & Sampson, 2013). Meanwhile, many adult learners seek higher education as a means to provide more academic ESL and vocational ESOL opportunities to develop their English (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). They are more likely to attend community college to pursue these goals (Teranishi et al., 2011). Community college ESL programs exist in many forms and offer different instruction and content to students who participate in these programs (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). As these programs continue to provide targeted English instruction, there is a growing need to better understand the teaching that takes place in the community college ESL classroom and areas for continued professional development.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This descriptive phenomenological study aimed to examine how a purposeful, homogeneous sample experiences and reacts to a specific, central phenomenon. The central phenomenon explored in this study was the perceived effective use of the TESOL 6 Principles; this was further examined through the conceptual framework of communicative language teaching (CLT). Both were examined through the lens of community college English as a second language (ESL) programs in Massachusetts (Bloomburg & Volpe, 2016). The study sought to address the question, What is the community college ESL faculty’s perspective of their effectiveness in their application of the TESOL 6 Principles for exemplary teaching of English learners?

To address this question, ESL faculty from Massachusetts community college ESL programs were invited to participate in a confidential online survey that consisted of open-ended questions. The Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Other Languages (MATSOL), a leading TESOL organization within Massachusetts, contacted community college ESL professors to facilitate this study. During the online survey, participants were asked 20 open-ended questions pertaining to their perceived effective use of the TESOL 6 Principles in their community college classroom teaching. REDCap, an IRB approved and secure survey program, was used to gather and store the survey data. The questions in the survey were created by the researcher for the purpose of this study. The researcher conducted a preliminary exploration of the data and conducted line-by-line lean coding and theme identification through hand analysis (Creswell, 2015).

The setting for this study was online. It was shared through the MATSOL listserv, which includes faculty members from across the 15 community colleges in Massachusetts. These
community college programs offer multiple levels of credit-bearing academic ESL courses that focus on reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, and pronunciation. Students are nontraditional and range in age, religion, culture, nationality, and academic preparation. The student population within the ESL program includes international, immigrant, generation 1.5, and refugee students who are participating in ESL courses and aim to complete an academic degree or certificate program at the community college. Classes are taught by full-time and adjunct faculty, and additional tutors and supplemental support staff provide out-of-class assistance to students. A department chair runs the program and courses are governed by level and course-specific objectives and learning outcomes.

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (2019) has reported that there are 15 community colleges in the state. This study focused on examining how ESL faculty within these ESL programs feel about their effective application of the TESOL 6 Principles. To protect the identity of the individual institutions and participants of this study, the researcher did not directly email participants to participate in the study. Instead, the MATSOL organization shared this study through their email list. In addition, the survey did not ask participants to name their community college. It is important to note that the researcher is currently employed by one of the Massachusetts community colleges, is actively involved in the TESOL profession, and is a current board member for MATSOL.

Participants

The participants in this study are comprised of ESL faculty working within community college ESL programs in Massachusetts. This study did not include all educators from within these programs; instead, it did include those who have previously engaged with the MATSOL organization and willingly volunteered to participate in the study. Participants may be professors
who are members of the organization, have previously attended a conference, and/or are on the MATSOL community college listserv. This listserv contained approximately 200 participants. The faculty are either full-time or adjunct educators at the community colleges. Some are also recently retired faculty. Faculty range in age, teaching experience, and years worked at their community college. The individual ESL program course offerings are dictated by department-created objectives and learning outcomes, and they are not uniform across all of the colleges. Faculty are governed by one of two contracts which dictate their workload, seniority, and evaluation; these contracts are used by all of the community colleges within the state. Additional ESL tutors and supplemental support staff help to contribute to the department and the students; however, they were not included in this study as they do not provide direct instructional support in the classroom.

This study documented how a sample of ESL faculty within the Massachusetts community colleges describe their effective use of the central phenomena the TESOL 6 Principles. Participants were contacted directly by the Massachusetts Association for Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL). They were invited by MATSOL to participate in a voluntary survey with 14 open-ended questions using REDCap. Participant names and identifying characteristics were not included in the study to ensure humane treatment of participants and their privacy (Creswell, 2015).

**Data Collection**

This qualitative study was framed as a descriptive phenomenological study. It aimed to gather qualitative data through an online survey to describe how a specific set of participants from Massachusetts community college ESL programs perceive the central phenomenon, their effective use of the TESOL 6 Principles.
Data collection involved MATSOL contacting community college educators through their contact list, who are employed at community colleges, to participate in the study. They were invited to complete a voluntary online survey with open-ended questions pertaining to the TESOL 6 Principles (Appendix A). Participants had two weeks to complete the survey. Before the survey deadline, MATSOL contacted their email list to re-invite participants to complete the study. Approximately 200 people received an email inviting them to participate in the study.

**Analysis**

The study focused on the collection of qualitative data through an online survey with open-ended questions which focused on the central phenomenon, the TESOL 6 Principles. Participants had two weeks to complete the survey. Once the survey results were collected in REDCap, the survey data was analyzed. The researcher completed a preliminary exploration of the survey data. The researcher analyzed the qualitative survey data using line-by-line lean coding to identify themes within the text segments analyzed. The themes were then broken down further to show connectivity among themes; the codes and themes were identified using hand analysis of the data (Creswell, 2015).

**Participant Rights**

This researcher intended to seek confidentiality; however, the researcher could not promise complete confidentiality as the dissertation chair, committee, and IRB had the right to review the data collected for this study. The researcher did not publish any private or individually identifiable information in the study. Survey data was collected using the IRB approved secure REDCap software. Data from this study was securely saved and encrypted on the researcher’s computer. All coded documents were saved and encrypted electronically, and all paper copies were securely shredded once the data has been published.
Participants were contacted by MATSOL using the email that they previously shared with the organization. They were invited to participate in the online survey. Participants were not obligated to participate in the study and if they chose to participate, they had the opportunity to leave the study at any time with no penalty. This survey did not require participants to disclose any personal identifiable information.

By removing identifiable information and masking the name of the community colleges, the study aimed to reduce any unintended risks or harm to the participants and the colleges. Possible unintended outcomes could include a fear of retaliation due to participant disclosure of their classroom practice and potential program evaluation regarding the overarching outcomes of the data by the site location or other governing bodies. The data collected was encrypted and securely stored on the researcher’s computer.

Potential Limitations

This descriptive phenomenological study was limited in that it only reviewed ESL faculty-perceived effective use of the TESOL 6 Principles. It did not include professional staff and their thoughts about how faculty implement the TESOL 6 Principles, nor did it ask students to share their perspectives. This study was also limited as it examined only community college ESL educators in Massachusetts who have engaged previously with the MATSOL organization in some way. Outcomes from this study provide recommendations for further studies at other community colleges and with a more varied participant population. It also identified areas for potential professional development. This study was not without bias. The researcher in this study is currently employed by an ESL community college program within the state of Massachusetts and is active within the field of TESOL. In addition, the researcher is also a board member for MATSOL.
Conclusion

Chapter 3 explored the methodology of a descriptive phenomenological study. This study gathered qualitative survey data using open-ended questions. The data was from community college ESL faculty, full-time and adjuncts, in Massachusetts. MATSOL, a TESOL organization in Massachusetts, contacted their community college members directly and provided a link to the study survey. They were given two weeks to complete the study. Identifiable information was removed to protect participant privacy. The survey data collected was then analyzed to examine the community college ESL faculty perspectives on their effective application of the TESOL 6 Principles. This study was limited in that the researcher gathered data from community college faculty, and not professional staff or students.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This study specifically looked at community college ESL programs in Massachusetts through the lens of the TESOL 6 Principles. MATSOL, a TESOL organization in Massachusetts, shared the qualitative online survey with their community college members through their community college listserv. Each of the survey questions stemmed from the TESOL 6 Principles. The goal of the survey was to better understand how community college ESL educators view their effectiveness in their application of the TESOL 6 Principles. Chapter 4 will review the responses from survey participants which helped to paint a better picture of the ESL classroom instruction within Massachusetts community colleges.

Analysis of Method

Participants completed a qualitative online survey using REDCap that posed 14 open-ended questions pertaining to the research question, What is the community college ESL faculty’s perspective of their effectiveness in their application of the TESOL 6 Principles for exemplary teaching of English learners? Each question asked the participant to reflect on their effective use of the TESOL 6 Principles in their community college ESL classroom and ultimately their teaching in an academic ESL program. Participants had two weeks to complete the survey. A follow-up email was sent to the listserv to remind interested educators to participate.

Throughout the two weeks that the survey was open, the researcher completed a preliminary review of the data. Upon the closing of the survey, the researcher did line-by-line lead coding to determine prevalent themes. To do this, the researcher derived themes from common ideas and patterns that emerged from the responses to each question. These themes were then grouped into overarching codes or categories to be analyzed within the larger
framework of the story. This process led to the identification of 24 codes, each helping to answer the overarching research question for this study which looked at faculty perceived effectiveness in their application of the TESOL 6 Principles in their instruction.

**Participants**

MATSOL shared the survey through their community college listserv, which had approximately 200 members. This listserv consisted of current, retired, part-time, and full-time community college ESL faculty. Some of these participants are also leaders within their ESL departments. All faculty members on the listserv are affiliated with MATSOL and are current members of the association. This listserv included current and retired community college ESL educators. There is the possibility that the listserv may include people who are interested in learning more about community college teaching but are currently teaching in other ESL contexts. Therefore, the responses from each participant needed to be reviewed so that only the related, community college faculty responses, were included in this study.

**Research Questions**

The survey for this study asked a series of open-ended questions that aimed to better understand faculty members’ perceived effectiveness in the use of the TESOL 6 Principles at the community college level. Prior to these questions, participants were asked about their demographic information, specifically their teaching role and length of time teaching, and the benefits and challenges that their ESL programs had faced during their career. The survey transitioned into questions leading to a full exploration of the TESOL 6 Principles. Each of the TESOL 6 Principles had two questions on the survey. Table 2 shows the list of survey questions, including two demographic questions, one context question, and 11 TESOL 6 Principles Questions.
Table 2

List of Survey Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Online Survey Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic Questions</strong></td>
<td>1. Describe your position in the ESL department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. How long have you worked in your current department?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approximately how long have you been teaching ESL?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context Question</strong></td>
<td>3. What are some benefits and challenges that you or your ESL programs have faced during your career?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TESOL 6 Principles Questions</strong></td>
<td>4. Describe how you learn about your students and use this information to enhance classroom learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. How effective are you at taking what you learn about your students and using it to help them learn?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Describe how you create conditions for language learning that reduce student anxiety, develop trust, demonstrate expectations, and support student motivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. How effective are you in creating conditions from language learning that reduce student anxiety, develop trust, demonstrate expectations, and support student motivation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Describe how you design high-quality, engaging lessons for language development that engage learner use of authentic language, support critical thinking, and provide differentiated support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. How effective are you in designing high-quality, engaging lessons for language development that engage learner use of authentic language, supporting critical thinking, and providing differentiated support?

10. Describe how you adapt lesson delivery and check student comprehension according to learner feedback.

11. How effective are you in adapting lesson delivery and checking student comprehension according to learner feedback?

12. Please discuss how you monitor student language development and provide effective assessments and feedback.

13. How would you rate your effectiveness in monitoring student language development and providing effective assessments and feedback?

14. Describe how you engage with the profession and collaborate with others within the profession. Do you believe this is effective?

**Demographic Questions**

The first question on the survey was open-ended and asked participants to describe their current position in their ESL department. Each participant shared varying levels of information regarding their roles. Some participants shared the location where they currently taught or had previously taught; however, this information was not included in this study to protect the identity of the participants. The participant information was organized into themes and codes.

The survey was shared with approximately 200 people through the MATSOL community college listserv. A total of 25 participants, or 12.5% of the listserv population, voluntarily
completed the online qualitative survey for this study. However, five of the 25 participants, or 20% of participants in this study, were disqualified based on their teaching context. This phenomenological study was focused on hearing the perspectives from community college ESL professors. These five participants were disqualified because they were either working as a non-teaching staff member at the community college or teaching ESL in a K–12 setting. While these are valued perspectives, they did not meet the requirements for this study.

There was a total of 20 qualified participants, which equates to 80% of the total surveys completed in this study. Therefore, out of the 200 people on the listserv, only 10% participated. Of the 20 qualified participants, each person noted their varying teaching roles within the community college. Participants were self-identified adjunct professors, professors with no notation of full-time or part-time status, full-time professors, department leaders (i.e., department chair or program coordinators), teachers of ESOL, teachers of ESL students, and retired educators. Some participants noted multiple positions and therefore their information is represented in a few different categories. Table 3 shows the participant demographic information from this study.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Demographic Question 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe your position in the ESL department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ineligible Participants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 people out of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligible Participants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 people out of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-identified Adjuncts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results from demographic question one found multiple patterns regarding the positions that these individuals hold in their community college ESL program. Much of the answer variability is due to the fact that this was an open-ended question. Participants did not have standard measures to use when classifying their current position. In addition, they might have used multiple parameters to describe their current position. For example, someone could have noted that they are an adjunct while also self-identifying as an ESL teacher at the community college. Takeaways from this data show that the majority of the people who completed this survey, 18 individuals noted that they self-identified as teaching ESL. In addition, 10 participants or 50% of the total participants self-identified as an adjunct professor. The high number of adjunct professors who participated in this study aligns with the increase in adjunct professors teaching ESL community college courses as identified in the 2019 MATSOL Community College Survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-identified Instructor or Teacher with No Full-Time or Part-Time Annotation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-identified Full-Time Professors (Retired &amp; Present)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-identified Coordinator, Chair or Program Manager</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-identified Teaching ESOL</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-identified Teaching ESL</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-identified Retired Educators</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to having varied positions within their ESL departments, each participant had varying levels of experience teaching in their department and within the field of TESOL. Through an open-ended question, participants were asked how long they had been working in their current department and approximately how long they had been teaching ESL overall. Below, Table 3 shows the participant years of experience within their department and within the field.

Table 4

*Participant Years of Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Time Teaching in Department</th>
<th>Length of Time Teaching Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ranged from 1–33 years</td>
<td>Ranged from 5–39 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 12.58 Years</td>
<td>Average 21.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0–5 Years</th>
<th>6–10 Years</th>
<th>11–15 Years</th>
<th>16–20 Years</th>
<th>21–25 Years</th>
<th>26–30 Years</th>
<th>31–35 Years</th>
<th>36–40 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–5 Years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0–5 Years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10 Years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6–10 Years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–15 Years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11–15 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–20 Years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16–20 Years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–25 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21–25 Years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–30 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26–30 Years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31–35 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31–35 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36–40 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36–40 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results from demographic question two shows the varied years of experience teaching within their community college ESL program and within the field. In analyzing this data, it should be noted that not everyone provided an explicit number for either the years in their department nor the years within the field. For example, participants might have mentioned only the length of time that they have been in their department with no notation about the length of time they have been in the field nor if their entire experience within the field was in that one department.

The data collected in this question was analyzed to find that the years in their department varied from one to 33 years while their years in the field ranged from five to 39 years. As these are wide ranges, the participant answers for both parts of this question were gathered and averaged. On average, study participants had about 12.58 years teaching within their departments and an average of 21.55 years teaching within the field. This data and the corresponding averages show that participants have spent less time within their departments than they have within the field as a whole. Fifty percent of the participants also disclosed in demographic question one that they self-identified as adjunct professors. These are individuals who are receiving fewer to no benefits for their time teaching as an adjunct professor as opposed to their full-time peers (Haworth, 1998; Porter-Szucs, 2017). With fewer full-time positions offered within community college ESL programs it becomes harder for these adjunct faculty members to stay teaching within one department for an extended period of time (Porter-Szucs, 2017). Therefore, the increase of adjunct professors teaching in these programs is impacting the overall average of how long someone is teaching within a given community college ESL program within the state.
In sum, the participants in this study each provided a different level of perspective, based on their years of experience in the field of ESL as well as their time at their present position and the position they hold at their community college. This study gathered demographic information through two open-ended survey questions to better understand participants and their community college ESL teaching experience, length of time in their current department, and length of teaching within the field. These questions help to frame answers provided for the questions pertaining to their teaching context and the TESOL 6 Principles.

**Context Question**

In the survey, participants were asked one question to better understand the current state of community college ESL programs in Massachusetts. The nature of this question aimed to elicit contextual information about community college ESL programs in Massachusetts without revealing identifiable information. The question asked the participant to think about the benefits and challenges that their ESL program(s) have faced throughout their career. The responses were established and organized into themes. The themes were then organized into codes. Three codes were established from this question. These codes address a lack of necessary resources and respect for community college ESL programs, disparities between in-take and enrolling students, and the overwhelming sense of community between students and faculty. This data can be seen below in Table 5.
Table 5

**Benefits and Challenges in ESL Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of funding and resources</td>
<td>1. Lack of necessary resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of full-time faculty, pay, and benefits</td>
<td>2. Lack of full-time faculty and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of respect and graduate credit allocation</td>
<td>3. Lack of respect and graduate credit allocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement testing</td>
<td>4. Disparities in in-take and enrolling students in classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment and overcrowding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivated and hardworking students</td>
<td>5. Dedicated community of students and faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive faculty and contacts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant responses to the context question found that faculty teaching within these Massachusetts community college ESL programs generally enjoyed their positions and held their students in high regard. Participants continued to mention that their students were motivated and hardworking. In addition, they noted that they had supportive fellow faculty and community contacts. However, they also noted that their ESL programs are struggling from a lack of necessary funds, full-time benefitted faculty, respect, and a lack of graduate credit offerings for their courses. Whereas faculty are passionate about their positions, these contextual issues frame the way their programs run, their roles within these programs, and overall job satisfaction.
Cochran and Grujicic-Alatriste (2016) noted similar faculty responses from their 2016 system-wide New York CUNY survey. These contextual issues that ESL programs face therefore have a deeper impact on faculty teaching within these programs. The MATSOL community college survey (2018) also asked participants to share if they were hopeful about the future of their programs; participant results in that survey also addressed these additional challenges and concerns as found in this study.

As this survey was open-ended, participants shared their thoughts at length regarding the benefits and challenges their programs face. Participant Four provided a detailed response to this question that encapsulates all of the seven themes and four codes identified. They note the benefits and challenges that they have faced within the field, which mirror the overarching codes that were created through the data analysis. Participant Four outlines the following seven benefits and five challenges below in table 6.

Table 6

*Participant Four Response to Benefits and Challenges in ESL Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7 Benefits</th>
<th>5 Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Good relationship and support with the college placement testing director to refer potential ESL students to ESL placement testing</td>
<td>1. Issues with college advisement center who puts ESL students in the wrong courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Vested and competent ESL Coordinators who give time and help to support ESL students and the program</td>
<td>2. We have intermediate and advanced ESL courses. However, to meet students' needs we need a beginner level. The college has not/will not support adding another level of ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vested and competent ESL faculty</td>
<td>3. Recently, there's an issue with the institution's ABE area not understanding the differences between Adult Basic Educational ESOL and the Academic ESL program. A task force was convened to clarify and make recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In recent years supportive divisional deans</td>
<td>4. Post ESL support is questionable in regard to tutoring and advisement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. An International Club for ESL students supported by ESL faculty and staff where students can connect with each other and with the college community.</td>
<td>5. As a growing number of ESL students transition to 100 level college courses, they are not always supported in their courses likely due to a lack of understanding of language acquisition issues. Funds are usually tight to support initiatives for ESL.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The theming, coding, and participant narrative feedback highlighted larger benefits and challenges that their community college ESL programs are facing. Whereas participants were quick to share positive feedback about the students and their community of practice, they did note multiple issues including a lack of funding and full-time positions that are impacting themselves and/or their programs. These are significant as they frame the answers participants shared in terms of their classroom practice and instruction. While participants shared a
dedication to using best practices in their teaching despite these issues, it is unclear how teaching will be impacted if these surrounding issues continue or worsen with time.

**TESOL 6 Principles Questions**

The survey included 11 open-ended survey questions that were aimed to better understand the teaching and learning that takes place in the community college ESL classroom. In addition, these questions elicited information from participants to better understand their effectiveness and perceived effectiveness in the different components of ESL teaching according to the TESOL 6 Principles. Each principle had one to two corresponding questions; the first question asked participants to describe their application of the principle, and the second question asked them to reflect on their effective use of the principle.

The data collected from all 11 questions were organized into themes, then organized again to create overarching codes. These codes get to the deeper meaning and connection among all of the participant responses in the survey. A total of 19 codes were identified through this process. Each question has a table below that notes the question, identified themes, and the overarching code or codes. This information is grouped by principle within the overarching TESOL 6 Principles.

**Principle 1: Know Your Learners**

The first principle in the TESOL 6 Principles asks educators to know their learners. Participants were asked two questions regarding this principle. The first question asked them to describe how they achieve this principle and get to know their students. The second question asked them to reflect on their effectiveness pertaining to this principle.

The first question for Principle 1 asked participants to describe how they learn about their students and use this information to enhance classroom learning. From the responses to this
question, five themes were identified, which established the creation of three codes. The three codes identified from the resources include professors’ use of preexisting student information, gathering of data about students from students, and the creation of a classroom that incorporates ongoing activities to better learn about students in the class. Table 7 outlines the information gathered from the TESOL 6 Principles question 1 on the survey.

Table 7

**TESOL 6 Principles Question 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gather information from student placement testing</td>
<td>6. <strong>Use preexisting student information to learn about students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct an in-class needs analysis</td>
<td>7. <strong>Gather data about student needs to learn about students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather information through first day and introduction activities</td>
<td>8. <strong>Create a classroom that incorporates ongoing activities to better learn about students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing classroom observations and activities that allow students to share</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a classroom focus on community building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants provided multiple examples about how they get to know their students; they often noted ways that they conduct this work within their classrooms throughout the semester.
The responses to this question provide insight to how these faculty members actively gather information about their students and integrate it into the learning environment. These practices align with CLT and the overarching elements of the sociocultural theory of learning.

Specifically, the gathering of this information about students enables a faculty member to better scaffold their instruction (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976) while also focusing on lowering the affective filter of the classroom (Krashen, 1982). Therefore, faculty instructional practices as disclosed in this question show that participants are addressing this principle in their teaching.

Two survey participants provided responses that clearly exemplify the codes identified in this question. Participant Five discussed learning about the students by stating, “in-house placement testing gives information about each student's educational background and level of English proficiency. Each student is tested individually, face-to-face.” In addition to using preexisting information about students, Participant Twelve stated, “I collect personal information about their native countries and languages, academic and career goals, and interests during our first meeting. I use the information to tailor activities and topics to them and create a safe learning community by encouraging them to share this information with each other.” Both participants gather information about their students and use this to create a supportive classroom for their learners aligning with CLT and the sociocultural theory of learning.

After asking participants how they learn about their students, the next question asked participants to share how effective they are in taking what they learn about their students and using it to help students learn. Participants’ information was organized into four themes that created two codes. The codes focused on how faculty aim to create lessons tailored to students and gather student feedback. Table 8 explores the results from TESOL 6 Principles question 2.
Table 8

TESOL 6 Principles Question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TESOL 6 Principles Question 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How effective are you at taking what you learn about your students and using it to help them learn?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create lessons that motivate students</td>
<td>9. Aim to create lessons tailored to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look for ways to integrate student interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt lessons in the moment to meet student needs</td>
<td>10. Gather and listen to student feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elicit and listen to student feedback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each participant shared a variety of information regarding effectiveness in learning about their students; however, there was an overarching sense of effectiveness in gathering and using the information that they obtained about students. Participant Eight said, “I'm effective at designing activities and implementing ideas that reflect student lives.” Participant Nine also felt effective, saying, “Very effective. I can revise a lesson on the fly if it doesn't meet the needs or skills of students.” Participant Fourteen echoed these thoughts by stating, “I believe this is one of my best assets as a teacher. When I'm given freedom to tailor the classes to my students' needs and not constrained by an exterior curriculum, I'm able to do this quite well.” All three participants note that they are effective in learning about their students and using this to create lessons rooted in student feedback.
Together these two questions pertaining to Principle 1 in the TESOL 6 Principles highlights how community college educators learn about their students and use this information to inform teaching and learning. The information shared also provided insight into how these educators perceive their effectiveness in learning about their students. The five codes established through these two questions shows that faculty are using preexisting information and gathering additional information through ongoing and multiple means. Participants feel that they are effective in doing this because they create lessons tailored to their students and elicit feedback from their students.

**Principle 2: Create Conditions for Language Learning**

The second principle in the TESOL 6 Principles asks educators to create conditions for language learning. Participants were asked two open-ended questions. The first question asked participants to describe how they create conditions for language learning. The second question asked participants to reflect on their effectiveness in creating these conditions.

The first survey question for this principle specifically asked participants to describe how they create conditions for language learning that reduce student anxiety, develop trust, demonstrate expectations, and support student motivation. Through analysis of this data, five themes were identified that then created two codes. The first code identified for this question found that faculty provide students with individualized support, instruction, and feedback. The other code noted that faculty provide explicit expectations, instruction, and supports to students. Together, these codes show how participants create conditions for language learning to support students. Table 9 includes information from the TESOL 6 Principles Question 3.
Table 9

TESOL 6 Principles Question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on classroom communication and developing good rapport</td>
<td>11. Provide students with individualized support, instruction, and feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide one-on-one support and differentiated instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide feedback to students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide explicit expectations and instructions</td>
<td>12. Provide explicit expectations, instruction, and supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embrace and elicit student questions and mistakes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to question three on this survey showed how faculty are dedicated to developing a supportive classroom environment in which students have less stress and are motivated to learn. This principle for creating a supportive environment for learning where emotional needs are met aligns with the idea of how the affective filter can shape a learning environment (Krashen, 1982). Participants shared how they provide individualized instruction to students throughout the course whether at the beginning of the semester, when giving feedback, teaching a new content, or in other areas. Synthesis of the data showed that participants expressed how creating conditions for language learning was an ongoing process and how they embed this into their classroom practice.
In regard to creating conditions for student language learning, three participants spoke about what they do to achieve this. Throughout the responses to this question, there was a sense that participants were constantly thinking about how to address these issues of anxiety, stress, and trust. Participant One stated, “I develop great rapport with my students. I tell them that questions are great. Also, I tell them that mistakes are part of the learning process.” Participant Eight spoke about personally developing rapport with students, saying, “I talk about my own language learning experiences and allow students to share with their classmates and others about their feelings, motivations, successes, and failures. I try to use humor!” In addition to providing students with support, Participant Three spoke about providing explicit information to students, and said, “I try to provide models and scaffolding, not to overcorrect, let them know exactly what they will be tested on, drop their lowest grade, etc.” Each of these participants creates conditions for language learning in similar yet unique ways and is actively looking for ways to continue addressing these issues for the betterment of the students.

The second question for this principle asked participants to share how effective they are in creating conditions for language learning that reduce student anxiety, develop trust, demonstrate expectations, and support student motivation. This question received a wide variety of narrative feedback as it did not give parameters to identify how effective someone was in using this principle. However, participants did demonstrate what they thought was effective compliance with the principle. This is noted in the theming and coding. Theming of the participant information for this question found three themes that created one code. In order to create conditions for language learning, participants in this study noted that they make the creation of a safe and supportive environment a priority in their teaching. Table 10 includes information from the TESOL 6 Principles Question 4.
Table 10

TESOL 6 Principles Question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide positive feedback</td>
<td>13. Creating a safe, supportive environment is a priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed, friendly environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support students so they can reach expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant Nineteen shared feelings of effectiveness by stating, “we try to create a non-threatening and welcoming environment. I always try to focus on what students do well.” Participant Five talks more about students, saying that using “discussions about students’ journeys in adapting to a new culture and a new system of education helps students to feel recognized for their experiences. It is important to value the education each student brings to his/her pursuit of educational and professional goals.” Participant Ten also felt effective in creating these learning conditions, saying “Highly effective, as shown from student evaluations and connections after semester is over (meaning students coming to me for help in other classes or to continue our bond).” All three participants noted that they felt effective in achieving this goal and demonstrated different ways in which they demonstrate this.

Together, these two questions pertained to Principle 2 of the TESOL 6 Principles, which looks at creating conditions for language learning. Both questions identified multiple themes and a total of three codes. Coding of the responses to these two questions found that community
college educators are providing individualized support and instruction to students, and they are providing explicit instructions and expectations to students. When participants were asked how effective they are in creating these conditions for teaching and learning they noted that creating a safe and supportive environment is a priority for them and their teaching.

**Principle 3: Design High-Quality Language Lessons**

The third principle of the TESOL 6 Principles asks educators to design high-quality language lessons. For this survey, participants were asked two questions pertaining to this principle. The first question asked participants to describe how they design high-quality lessons. The second question asked them to think about how effective they are in doing so.

The first question for this principle asked participants to describe how they design high-quality lessons for language development that engage learner use of authentic materials, support critical thinking, and provide differentiated support. Examination of participant responses resulted in the identification of four main themes and two codes. The codes identified focused on how faculty integrate additional materials and supports in their lessons while also using a variety of teaching approaches in their curriculum. Table 11 shows the results from the TESOL 6 Principles Question 5.
This principle is focused on creating high-quality lessons for students. Synthesis of participant resources highlighted that these faculty members are focused on gathering additional materials that support their language learners. The focus on selecting materials that best meet the needs of students draws from a CLT and sociocultural idea scaffolding student development (Wood et al., 1976). These faculty members enhance learning by providing selected individual tools in order to support students’ overall language development. This targeted curation of materials is also accompanied by the use of various teaching approaches in classroom instruction. The eclectic use of teaching approaches aligns with the principles of CLT, which focus on using a variety of approaches and strategies to support student development (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Analysis of participant survey results showed that participants not
only view the creation of high-quality lessons as integral to learning, they highlight a variety of ways they do this in their instructional practice.

Two survey participants shared their thoughts about creating engaging lessons that highlight the multiple themes and codes identified from this question. Participant Four noted, I design my lessons by first getting a clear understanding of the student group dynamics and learning needs. I will choose themes for teaching and learning based on my understanding of topics that are currently interesting to students and that I can get excited about teaching as well. Students are always encouraged to demonstrate competency through use of English in usually a formal and informal way. It's through informal discussions and journals that authentic language is utilized and critical thinking is demonstrated as ideas and questions are addressed. Of course, critical thinking prompts are also provided.

In addition to creating these lessons, Participant Eleven noted incorporating other teaching approaches, saying, “I seek out task-based objectives that provide students with authentic means for communication. Sometimes this was as simple as a slight modification to an existing textbook assignment.” All participants seemed interested in providing high-quality lessons; however, this is something that had great variability. Each participant shared different ways of demonstrating this; however, this could be somewhat subjective.

The second question pertaining to Principle 3 of the TESOL 6 Principles asked participants to share how effective they are in designing high-quality lessons for language development that engage learner use of authentic materials, support critical thinking, and provide differentiated support. Through analysis of participant narrative responses, three themes and one code were identified. The major take-away from the responses to this question are that
community college faculty design and revise lessons to meet the specific needs of their students. Table 12 discusses the answers from the TESOL 6 Principles question 6.

Table 12

**TESOL 6 Principles Question 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design lessons based on need</td>
<td>16. Design and revise lessons to meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>student needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise lessons to meet student need</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate all learning domains</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of effectiveness in creating these high-quality and engaging lessons, Participant Three noted, “I try to tailor my lessons to the abilities of my students.” Participant Eighteen also felt effective in doing this, saying, “very effective, but it takes a lot of hours to use UDL and differentiated instruction.” Both participants noted that they are effective, but this is an ongoing process to tailor lessons for students. Discourse reviewed in these participant answers showed that overall, participants were humble in their notation of effectiveness. There seemed to be a notion of constantly looking to be better and develop in this area to meet student need and engagement.

These two open-ended questions pertaining to the third principle in the TESOL 6 Principles highlight faculty creation of high-quality lessons. Participants were asked to describe what they do to create high-quality lessons while also providing insight as to how effective they think they are in terms of doing this. In total, three codes were established to better understand
faculty in regard to this principle. The codes found that community college faculty integrate authentic materials, use a variety of teaching approaches, and design and revise lessons based on student needs.

**Principle 4: Adapt Lesson Delivery as Needed**

The fourth principle in the TESOL 6 Principles is to adapt lesson delivery as needed. To address this question, participants answered two open-ended survey questions. The first question asked participants to describe how they adapt lesson delivery; the second question asked them to share how effective they are in adapting lesson delivery.

The first question for Principle Four asked participants to describe how they adapt lesson delivery and check student comprehension according to learner feedback. Participants provided narrative feedback to this question that resulted in the establishment of five themes and two codes specific to this question. The two codes identify that survey participants address this principle by gathering ongoing student feedback in a variety of ways and use this feedback to scaffold lessons for student understanding. Table 13 shows the themes and codes pertaining to TESOL 6 Principles question 7.
TESOL 6 Principles Question 7

**Table 13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TESOL 6 Principles Question 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe how you adapt lesson delivery and check student comprehension according to learner feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Themes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather student feedback from meetings, evaluations, and classroom conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do ongoing comprehension checks and assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the room; look at student faces and body language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow down, repeat and reteach content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide more resources and ongoing feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This principle asks faculty members to adapt their teaching plans when teaching to best meet the individualized needs of the students. In addition, it asks educators to check student understanding while teaching. Essentially, this principle asks faculty to understand where students are in their learning as in ZPD, in which faculty measure the distance between where a student is in their learning and where they are going (Shabani et al., 2010; Wass & Golding, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978). While meeting individual student needs and language development, faculty are also scaffolding student learning (Wood et al., 1976). The participants in this study expressed that they are meeting this principle in their classroom practice. Survey results showed that faculty are constantly engaging in this through multiple means.
Participant Seven adapts lesson delivery “By speaking. Asking. Encouraging questions. Homework. In class checks. Observation. Student evaluations.” When specifically adapting lessons and lesson delivery, Participant Eleven talked about meeting students where they are, saying that “Lessons may be abridged or extended based on student comfort level. The method for task completion may also be altered to best meet classroom needs.” Participant Fourteen continued these ideas by stating, “If the lesson is something that I perceive that the learner really needs to understand, I will measure their learning by their assessments. If the grades are low, I will revisit the lesson from a different angle.” Each of these responses aligns with the identified themes and codes from this survey question, and participants showed multiple areas where they reflect and adapt to learning in the moment to best support instruction in the classroom.

The second question for this principle asked participants to share how effective they are in adapting lesson delivery and checking student comprehension according to learner feedback. Theming of results for this question led to the establishment of two main themes and one code. The code for this question shows that participants are able to adapt lesson delivery by monitoring student progress and expressions while also providing scaffolds and support to students. Table 14 shows the results from the TESOL 6 Principles question 8.
Table 14  
**TESOL 6 Principles Question 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TESOL 6 Principles Question 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How effective are you at adapting lesson delivery and checking student comprehension according to learner feedback?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Themes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor student progress, expressions, and body language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt lessons to student needs and provide scaffolding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants shared their thoughts of effectiveness in adapting lessons for students. Three participants shared responses that clearly connect to the themes and code from this question. Participant One said, “Very effective. When students don't get something or have difficulty with something, I do not move forward until students get it.” Participant Eleven continued these ideas by stating, “I am a fast learner and adapt a lesson as soon as it fails to meet objectives. College students have a choice about their enrollment, and as such, the classes need to remain engaging.” Participant Six talked specifically about adapting lessons for adults, saying, “Students are successful. Because they are adults, I try to create an environment where they assess their own learning and determine where they need more support and practice.”

Principle 4 in the TESOL 6 Principles looks at adapting lesson delivery to support student learning. To address this, participants shared their responses to two open-ended questions. The first question asked participants to describe how they adapt lesson delivery while the second question asked participants to share how effective they think they are. Theming and coding of
these questions led to the establishment of three codes for this principle. The codes show that community college faculty are adapting lesson delivery by gathering ongoing student feedback in a variety of ways, using feedback to scaffold lessons, and monitoring student progress and expressions to provide specific scaffolding to students.

**Principle 5: Monitor and Assess Language Development**

The fifth principle of the TESOL 6 Principles focuses on monitoring and assessing language development in students. To address this principle, participants were asked two open-ended questions in the survey. The first question asked participants to describe how they monitor and assess language development. The second question asked participants to reflect on how effective they are in monitoring and assessing language development.

The first question addressing the fifth principle in the TESOL 6 Principles asked participants to discuss how they monitor student language development and provide effective assessments and feedback. When reviewing participant responses to this question, four themes were identified. These themes resulted in the creation of two codes, which showed that participants provide a variety of formal and informal assessment to monitor student learning while also gathering student feedback and giving students feedback. Table 15 shows the results from TESOL 6 Principles Question 9.
Table 15

TESOL 6 Principles Question 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide formal, formative assessments to</td>
<td>20. Provide a variety of formal and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assess student learning</td>
<td>informal assessments to monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide informal assessments to access</td>
<td>student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather student feedback</td>
<td>21. Gather feedback and provide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use rubrics to provide feedback to students</td>
<td>feedback to students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey results showed that participants in this survey were indeed providing a variety of formal and informal assessment while also engaging in two-way feedback with students. This aligns with CLT, as the professor is using a variety of assessment tools to specifically support students (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). The majority of participants shared a list of assessment examples that they use with their students. This evidence of variation speaks to how these faculty members were not adhering to one model but instead remained flexible and eclectic to support student CC. Also, the engagement and constant use of feedback was noted in the majority of the responses. These faculty members used this to scaffold student learning (Wood et al., 1976) while listening to student concerns to lower their affective filter (Krashen, 1982).

Responses to this question were long as participants shared a wealth of examples showing multiple ways in which they monitor student language development and provide
feedback and assessments. Participants were asked to share how they monitor student language development. Two participants provided detailed narrative responses. Participant Four noted that,

Language skills in any class is progressive and each course has a set outcome. If students are moving on a positive trajectory to build skills/language growth and meet outcomes, then I know they are developing English language skills. I assess their development through Q&A, quizzes, tests, written responses, journaling, discussion, participation, and their ability to engage with peers or others in the college community. I provide feedback formally in writing notes on homework and tests, through assessment grades and informally with in-class discussion and personal conversations before or after classes. I offer to help students with work for my classes and assist with advice on other courses.

Participant Five continued these ideas by discussing what an engaged class looks like, saying,

When a class is engaged and responsive to learning the content of the course, an interactive classroom is the result. In this ideal situation, students are practicing language development while gaining deeper understanding of how to effectively progress toward their educational and professional goals. Ongoing assessment by the professor supports these goals.

Both of these responses highlight how these participants are able to monitor language development in their courses.

The second question for this principle asked participants to rate how effective they think they are in monitoring student language development and providing effective assessments and feedback. Participants shared narrative feedback that resulted in the establishment of two themes and one code. The code highlighted that participants provide and gather assessments from
students while also modeling outcomes. Table 16 shows the information collected from the TESOL 6 Principles Question 10.

Table 16

**TESOL 6 Principles Question 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide ongoing assessments (informal and formal)</td>
<td>22. Provide and gather assessments and model outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide scaffolding and modeling for students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked how effective they are in monitoring student language development, participants shared that they provide assessments and models for students. Participant Five addressed this by saying, “Assessment of student progress is ongoing throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, each student is given a recommendation as to the next courses to undertake.” In addition, Participant Eight talked about modeling outcomes, saying, “I’m effective at modeling exemplary tasks, either by other students or by exemplars. Modeling outcomes for students has been effective in my teaching and learning.”

Principle 5 of the TESOL 6 Principles focuses on monitoring student language development. To address this, this study provided two survey questions. The first asked participants to describe how they monitor student language development and the second question asked them to rate their effectiveness in doing this. Answers in both questions resulted in the identification of multiple themes and three specific codes. The codes from these two questions
show that community college ESL faculty monitor student language development by providing a variety of formal and informal assessments, gather and give feedback, and model outcomes to assist students in meeting the assessment requirements.

**Principle 6: Engage and Collaborate Within a Community of Practice**

The sixth and final principle in the TESOL 6 Principles asks educators to engage and collaborate within a community of practice. To address this principle, participants in this study were asked one question regarding their engagement and collaboration within the profession. Participants were asked to describe how they engage with the profession and collaborate with others within the profession while also sharing if they believe they are effective in doing so. Through analysis of responses, two themes were identified resulting in two codes. The codes show that participants engage and collaborate within the profession by engaging with other TESOL professionals in various arenas while also finding additional materials to inform their practice. Table 17 shows the results from the TESOL 6 Principles Question 11.
Table 17

**TESOL 6 Principles Question 11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate and discuss teaching and learning with colleagues</td>
<td>23. Engage with other TESOL professionals in various arenas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in professional organizations and go to professional conferences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find additional resources and reading to inform practice</td>
<td>24. Find additional materials to inform practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This final principle in the TESOL 6 Principles addresses the idea of ongoing professional development and engagement within the profession. Ongoing development and exploration of teaching strategies is important when engaging with CLT as it allows for faculty to gather resources to provide the most tailored instruction for students. The synthesis of the survey data found that the participants in this survey found professional development and community very important to their instructional work. They listed a variety of conferences and organizations that they are or were part of. Multiple participants also highlighted the professional development that they do at home in researching and finding tools to use with their students. However, a major pattern that emerged in the data was that participants in this survey wanted more professional development and community. As 50% of the survey participants are adjunct professors, these individuals might have fewer opportunities to engage in professional development when they are
not provided with institutional funding, are teaching at multiple colleges, and are not on campus as often as their full-time counter parts.

Two participants in particular highlighted how what their professional development and engagement in the profession looks like. Two participants have answers that clearly connect to all of the identified themes and codes for this question. Participant Eleven said,

I seek out opportunities to help people when they are facing challenges with their classes.

Instructors who are open to suggestions may find this helpful. I also ask questions or compliment other instructors when I would like to know how they do something.

In addition to this, Participant Eight said,

I am a member of an organization of teachers of students of other languages. I also participate in professional learning communities with teachers, and I am a teacher leader and mentor. Yes, collaboration is critical to be effective teachers and leaders. We need to feed off each other for ideas, help each other in times of need, look to each other as mentors and friends, and share our experiences so we don't feel isolated.

In sum, this question highlights that community college ESL faculty are engaging and collaborating within the profession through a variety of professional and independent modalities. These examples, along with others, show that educators want to connect with each other. They are constantly looking for professional development to better support students and develop their teaching practice. However, as challenges increase within community college else programs, it is unclear what the long-term effects will have on ESL programs and faculty teaching.

Summary

Chapter 4 reviewed the methodology in this study. It reviewed the research question, participant population and processes for sharing and gathering data through the online qualitative
This chapter then examined the collected survey data; there were a total of 14 questions asked in the online qualitative survey. Analysis of each question and corresponding responses yielded the identification of multiple themes per question. These themes draw out the deeper meaning and trends shown between all survey participants. The themes were then coded. A total of 24 codes were identified in the review of the data. Each of these codes connect in many ways to better understand how community college ESL faculty are using the TESOL 6 Principles.

The following chapter, Chapter 5, will provide deeper interpretation of the survey data through the lens of the TESOL 6 Principles and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This analysis will include recommendations for further studies. In addition, it will outline implications surrounding the recommended further research.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study aimed to better understand the teaching and learning that takes place within ESL community college programs in Massachusetts as framed by the TESOL 6 Principles. With a total of 15 community colleges spread out across the state, this study was focused on better understanding the classroom instructional practices taking place in these institutions to better outline possible areas of improvement within teaching practice and programmatic development. Participants opted into this online qualitative survey in which they were asked to reflect on their current ESL programs and their effectiveness in their teaching within these different programs. The survey questions aligned with the TESOL 6 Principles, which outlines best practices within the field. The data collected in this survey provided a snapshot of what is happening within community college ESL classrooms in Massachusetts. This study provides a glimpse into the instructional practices of educators, areas for continued professional developmental, and continued research within the field regarding the application of best practices.

**Interpretation of Findings**

There were 20 participants who completed the survey for this study. The results from this study included the identification of 24 codes derived from participant responses. These codes are compiled below in Table 18. Each of these codes speaks to participant reflections on their classroom practice and ESL instruction within community college ESL programs. These findings are framed by best practices within the field which include the TESOL 6 Principle and CLT.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>24 Codes Synthesized from the Survey Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Lack of necessary resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Lack of full-time faculty and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Lack of respect and graduate credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Disparities between in-take and student enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Dedicated community of students and faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Use preexisting student information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Gather data about student need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Collect ongoing information from students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Aim to create lessons tailored to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Gather and listen to student feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Provide individualized support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Provide explicit instruction and supports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before classroom instruction was examined, results and codes from this study drew attention to the current state of community college ESL programs on a macro level. Multiple participants identified that their community college ESL programs did not have the necessary resources that they needed to support their students. Not only is there a lack of physical or fiscal resources, but there is a lack of full-time faculty (Blumenthal, 2002; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). Many of the participants who completed this study were adjuncts themselves sharing their nonpermanent teaching status. Participants also highlighted that there is a lack of full-time faculty, job security, pay, and benefits. In addition to lacking the physical resources needed to best support students and provide high-quality teaching and learning, participants noted other challenges as well. According to multiple participants, ESL programs face a lack of respect and academic credit allocation (Blumenthal, 2002; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). These ESL community college programs are not seen as college classes on the campus and therefore are not always given the academic credit they deserve for the rigorous coursework that students complete. With a lack of resources and a struggle to maintain and grow programs, community college ESL programs are facing an uphill battle. However, regardless of the issues that ESL community college professors face they are still focused on providing high-quality English instruction to their students.

The participant responses to this study show that faculty are dedicated to their students and apply best practices in the field as determined by the TESOL 6 Principles. The questions in this survey stemmed from the TESOL 6 Principles, which are considered to be the best practice in teaching ESL students across all teaching contexts. The TESOL 6 Principles pull from various teaching approaches, but are primarily aligned with communicative language teaching, which in itself is eclectic and flexible for educator application (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013;
Richards, 2006; Savigno, 1991; Savignon, 2002). Educators who participated in this study were asked how they met the TESOL 6 Principles in practice and how effective they felt they were in doing so. Educators in this study provided explicit examples of their teaching that align to the TESOL 6 Principles. Overall, the participant responses showed that community college ESL professors perceived themselves to be effective in these practices. However, multiple participants drew attention to the need for ongoing professional development as educators are constantly adapting instruction to meet to evolving challenges and student needs.

The results from this survey provide a glimpse into what some community college ESL educators are doing in their classroom, their instructional practices, and the overarching programmatic challenges they are facing in their department and the field. As programs face struggles to keep credit for their course and fight for more full-time positions, current faculty are working hard in the classroom to provide supportive and rigorous coursework to support student language development (Becker & Coyle, 2011; Blumenthal, 2002; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). This is important information for departments and the field to have as they aim to maintain and build their programs for the betterment of their students and communities while they continue to look for ways to provide better instruction to students.

This study highlights 20 professors and their perceived effectiveness in their application of the TESOL 6 Principles. In doing so, it opens the door to what classroom teaching practices are taking place in community college ESL classrooms. It sheds light on the multifaceted nature of teaching a culturally and linguistically diverse student population. Also, it shows that ESL professors are providing quality college-level instruction to students while demonstrating best practices. Lastly, it shows that ESL educators have teaching practices to contribute to community college educators as a whole. Eventually, ESL students will leave their ESL courses. However,
these students still need educators in other disciplines that understand their language development. Drawing on best practices from the field of TESOL can be beneficial to other academic disciplines at the community college in order to support a growing number of ESL students as they pursue their academic goals.

**Implications**

This study examined the classroom instruction taking place within community college ESL programs and how faculty perceive their effectiveness in using best teaching practices. In this case, the focus was on the TESOL 6 Principles. The results from this study have implications for practice, theory, policy, and future research within community college ESL instruction and programmatic support.

First, this study has implications for practice within the field of TESOL and community college ESL programs. The analysis of the participant survey responses found 24 codes related to faculty use and perceived effectiveness regarding the TESOL 6 Principles. Throughout the data, participants shared how they use and address the TESOL 6 Principles in their classroom practice and course instruction. The focus on students, quality instruction, assessments, materials, and more was clear as participants shared their thoughts and perceived effectiveness. However, this study found that there are areas that are impacting the teaching practice within community college ESL programs. These areas actually have very little to do with best practices in the field, dedication to the field, or expertise in teaching. Rather, this study found that community college ESL educators are experiencing a lack of resources, funding, respect, and full-time personnel to support students and programs. These are also met with increased responsibilities, a lack of time for desired professional development, and a lack of time for desired ESL professionals in these programs to come together. As more and more of the workforce teaching ESL are adjunct
professors and funding decreases for these programs, it is hard to improve foundational programmatic practices. This study calls into question the foundational college and statewide supports for these programs in order to give professors the tools they need to fully incorporate best practices into their classrooms.

Second, this study and its findings impact theory development within the field. This study asked educators to reflect on their teaching and learning practices within their community college ESL programs. This was done by looking through the lens of the TESOL 6 Principles which are considered to be best teaching practices from the TESOL International Association. The TESOL 6 Principles are rooted in well-known theories in education and linguistics including CLT. However, the branding and identification of the TESOL 6 Principles are still relatively new. There are few studies that specifically look at the TESOL 6 Principles in theory and practice. This study specifically impacts theory as it uses the TESOL 6 Principles to better understand what is happening in classrooms now within one teaching context—community college ESL programs. This study allowed for theory and practice to come together, which is essential as the focus on best practices, the TESOL 6 Principles, continues to grow.

Third, the results from this study have policy implications which frame the future of the profession. It is important to note that community college ESL programs each has its own curriculum, student intake, assessments, and objectives. This allows for each program to provide a unique and targeted experience for their learners. However, it also stratifies the profession. More unity and cohesion within the profession would enable these programs to better support their students, faculty, and programs. Two threads from the results show that faculty want to best support students, and they are also worried about faculty and programmatic support. Through this survey, participants were asked to share the benefits and challenges that they face. More
specifically, the results from this question found that community college educators in Massachusetts are facing a lack of resources and full-time faculty, disparities in student in-take and enrolling students, and a lack of respect. Having policy reform to bring educators together, increase collaborative practices between community colleges, and align objectives would be beneficial to community college ESL educators across the state as they implement best practices in ESL teaching and learning.

Lastly, this study has implications for future research. This study is only beginning in terms of these discussions. Therefore, there are multiple areas for future research. For example, future research could include a larger population. This study could be sponsored by a larger organization like the TESOL International Association. A larger population would enable a larger pool of data and a more extensive sharing of teaching experiences regarding the focus questions. There would need to be a larger study in terms of examining this from the higher education perspective as well as from K–12 and private language schools. Looking at all of these teaching contexts specifically, future studies would be able to examine perceived effectiveness in the use of the TESOL 6 Principles while also gathering data pertaining to the state of the TESOL profession.

Overall, this study specifically focused on the community college ESL context. However, the question focusing on perceived effectiveness in instruction is applicable to all contexts and fields. This study was a step in terms of identifying and starting these conversations. From the results and the identification of multiple implications, there are multiple areas for future action and research following this study.
Recommendations for Action

Based on the survey results from this study, there are three major recommendations for action. The first is to gather the perspectives of others. This study is limited based on the perspectives of the participants in this survey who were all community college ESL professors. It was also limited in the method of data collection. Other ESL faculty and stakeholder perspectives should also be included to provide a more well-rounded data pool. This would be inclusive of more grade levels, more participants, and more states. During this process, faculty could complete a survey similar to the one in this study, with the addition of an optional follow-up interview.

The second recommendation for action is to build and showcase findings in a larger higher education arena to build awareness, respect, and programmatic development within ESL programs across Massachusetts. This should help to inform a panel at a professional conference, and a larger study. The findings in this study showed that community college educators have many years of experience within the field, a dedication to using best practices in their classroom instruction, and ongoing struggles to maintain their programs and positions. More studies need to bring faculty perspectives, experiences, and classroom practices to the forefront to help bring positive change and resources to their programs.

The third and final recommendation for action is to use this research as a platform to support all educators in their use of best practices within TESOL, like the TESOL 6 Principles. More spaces for sharing, collaboration, and professional development are needed to continue faculty reflection and development within these areas. This study saw individual responses from faculty in terms of their perceived effectiveness, but it did not present an avenue for faculty to discuss their classroom instructional practice as a group. There is room for continued exploration
in terms of faculty professional development and instructional design. Together, these three recommendations for action aim to support ESL programs and the best practices that are present within these ESL classrooms. However, to do this, further study is necessary.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

The results from this online qualitative survey provide the foundation for continued research and discussion within the field of TESOL, focusing on classroom instruction within community college ESL programs. There are many avenues for further study that could use the results from this study as a foundation. There is still much to be explored in terms of community college ESL programs, classroom instructional practices, the TESOL 6 Principles, and the future of the profession. When exploring these additional research opportunities, an intentional emphasis should also be placed on including more voices in the data collection. This study looked only at the perspectives from professors while support staff and students hold unique perspectives that would positively add to the research. There is still much to be known in terms of experiences and teaching effectiveness within the spaces while also critically examining the contextual forces that impact the entire learning community. Therefore, additional studies should gather data from focus groups, interviews, and classroom observations. This would allow for more voices in the data while also providing a space for a deeper sharing of experiences. With this in mind, there are four specific areas where further study is needed.

**National Study through TESOL International**

This study looked specifically at community college ESL programs in Massachusetts. However, these community college programs can be found across the country. With endorsement from the TESOL International Association, a larger, national study is recommended in terms of understanding classroom teaching and learning practices. With the endorsement from TESOL,
there would be more avenues to include a plethora of voices and experiences regarding these topics.

**Statewide MATSOL-Sponsored Study**

This current study was limited by time and population. The participants were pulled from a listserv of community college ESL educators through MATSOL. While this association was supportive of the study, having a specific MATSOL-endorsed study would allow for more experiences and narratives to be included in the data pool. This would also be a good space for additional teaching contexts to be included in the data collection. This would also provide a space for comparison of instructional practices between schools and colleges within the state.

**The TESOL 6 Principles**

The questions in this study were rooted in the TESOL 6 Principles. These principles stem from the TESOL International Association and outline best practices within the field. Whereas these practices may not be new, the framework of the TESOL 6 Principles is new. Therefore, additional research is needed to better understand what the TESOL 6 Principles look like in actual ESL classrooms. This study looked specifically at community college ESL programs; however, this is only one context within the broader field. Additional studies are recommended to see how teaching and learning practice adheres to and is framed by the TESOL 6 Principles.

**Adjunctification Within Higher Education and ESL Programs**

Lastly, a common thread throughout the information collected in the surveys in this study showed that a lack of full-time employees is a problem within community college ESL programs. Without full-time employees, there is an increase in the number of adjuncts or part-time faculty teaching ESL students within these programs. Further research is needed to better understand the adjunctification in higher education but specifically in community college ESL
programs. As the climate of higher education continues to shift, ongoing research is needed to better understand the state of teaching and the future of the profession.

**Conclusion**

This study looked specifically at community college ESL programs in Massachusetts. The purpose was to better understand the teaching and learning that is taking place within these programs. To look at these areas, this study used the TESOL 6 Principles as a sounding board in terms of reviewing best practice. In the study, participants were asked to share how they met the TESOL 6 Principles and how effective they believe they are in meeting these principles. To analyze the information shared in the surveys, the data was organized by themes and then organized into codes. The codes were then analyzed using the conceptual framework of communicative language teaching. Through examination of the data, it was found that community college ESL faculty are indeed consciously or subconsciously adhering to the TESOL 6 Principles in their classroom practice. This information helps to shed light on a department within community colleges that is focused on supporting students and can be used as an example for other departments to follow suit. However, this study was limited in that it only included a small population of community college faculty. There are many more stakeholders, students and staff, who have valuable perspectives to share. Further studies are required to provide a deeper understanding of the classroom instruction practices in community college ESL programs and the surrounding TESOL 6 Principles. However, this study provided the space to start these conversations, ignite faculty reflection on their instructional practices, and outline possible studies for the future.
References


doi/abs/10.2304/rcie.2013.8.2.149


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Appendix A: MATSOL Approval Letter

October 7, 2019

To whom it may concern,

The Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL) supports the proposed dissertation research project by Stephanie N. Marcotte through the University of New England (UNE).

MATSOL will provide Stephanie N. Marcotte with the means to contact our members via MATSOL’s Community College ESL Special Interest Group and E-list (with approximately 100 contacts), through which she can inform members about her research, send them surveys, and contact them for optional interviews.

Sincerely,

Helen Solorzano
Executive Director
hsolorzano@matsol.org
Appendix B: Introduction Letter to Participants

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN ANONYMOUS SURVEY RESEARCH

**Project Title:** THE TESOL 6 PRINCIPLES OF EXEMPLARY TEACHING OF ENGLISH LEARNERS: PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL CLASSROOM

**Principal Investigator(s):** Stephanie N. Marcotte

**Introduction:**

- Please read this form. The purpose of this form is to give you information about this research study.
- You are encouraged to ask any questions that you may have about this study, now, during, or after the project is complete.
- Your participation is voluntary.

**Why is this research study being done?**

This research is being conducted to better understanding community college ESL classroom teaching and teacher perceived effectiveness in their teaching of ESL students.

**Who will be in this study?**

The invitation to participate in this study will be sent through the MATSOL, community college listserv.
What will I be asked to do?

As a participant, you will be asked a series of open-ended questions pertaining to your teaching and classroom practice within the community college ESL setting.

What are the possible risks of taking part in this study?

There are minimal risks involved in this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

The benefits include assisting in better understanding classroom practice within community college ESL programs.

What will it cost me?

There is no cost to participate in this research study.

How will my privacy be protected?

This is an anonymous survey. Any identifying information will be removed. **PLEASE NOTE:**

*THE UNE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD MAY REVIEW THE RESEARCH RECORDS.*

How will my data be kept confidential?

Anonymous survey data will be collected and stored using RedCap, an IRB approved resource. Any additional data will be stored on the researchers' personal computer and will be password protected.
PLEAS NOTE: IF YOU HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THIS SURVEY IS ANONYMOUS,
PLEASE DO INCLUDE ANY INFORMATION THAT CAN IDENTIFY YOU.

What are my rights as a research participant?

- Your participation is voluntary. Your decision to participate will have no impact on your current or future relations with the university.
- Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with Stephanie Marcotte.
- You may skip or refuse to answer any question for any reason.
- If you choose not to participate there is no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.
- You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw from the research there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.
- You will be informed of any significant findings developed during the course of the research that may affect your willingness to participate in the research.
- If you sustain an injury while participating in this study, your participation may be ended.

What other options do I have?

- You may choose not to participate. Whom may I contact with questions?

- The researchers conducting this study is Stephanie Marcotte. For more information regarding this study, please contact Stephanie Marcotte at sbrown41@une.edu
• If you choose to participate in this research study and believe you may have suffered a research related injury, please contact Dr. Ella Benson at ebenson2@une.edu

• If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may call Mary Bachman DeSilva, Sc.D., Chair of the UNE Institutional Review Board at (207) 221-4567 or irb@une.edu.

**Will I receive a copy of this consent form?**

• You print and keep a copy of this consent form.

I understand the above description of the research and the risks and benefits associated with my participation as a research subject. I understand that by proceeding with this survey I agree to take part in this research and do so voluntarily.
Appendix C: Open-Ended Survey Questions

The following survey questions are framed by “The TESOL Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners and Recommended Classroom Practice” (TESOL International Association, 2018).

1. Describe your position in the ESL department.

2. How long have you worked in your current department? Approximately, how long have you been teaching ESL?

3. What are some benefits and challenges that you or your ESL programs have faced during your career?

4. Describe how you learn about your students and use this information to enhance classroom learning.

5. How effective are you at taking what you learn about your students and using it to help them learn?

6. Describe how you create conditions for language learning that reduce student anxiety, develop trust, demonstrate expectations, and support student motivation.

7. How effective are you in creating conditions from language learning that reduce student anxiety, develop trust, demonstrate expectations, and support student motivation?

8. Describe how you design high-quality lessons for language development that engage learner use of authentic language, support critical thinking, and provide differentiated support.

9. How effective are you in designing high-quality lessons for language development that engage learner use of authentic language, supporting critical thinking, and providing differentiated support?
10. Describe how you adapt lesson delivery and check student comprehension according to learner feedback.

11. How effective are you in adapting lesson delivery and checking student comprehension according to learner feedback?

12. Please discuss how you monitor student language development and provide effective assessments and feedback.

13. How would you rate your effectiveness in monitoring student language development and providing effective assessments and feedback?

14. Describe how you engage with the profession and collaborate with others within the profession. Do you believe this is effective?