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**THE MOST IMPORTANT VOICES IN THE ROOM:
UNDERSTANDING THE ACADEMIC NEEDS OF US-EDUCATED
LATINO ENGLISH LEARNERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Lisa Davenport

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THE MOST IMPORTANT VOICES IN THE ROOM:
UNDERSTANDING THE ACADEMIC NEEDS OF US-EDUCATED
LATINO ENGLISH LEARNERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership

by
Lisa Louise Davenport

May 2024

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ABSTRACT

US-educated English learners (US-ELs) immigrated to the United States as children and enrolled in school where they began learning English. Ultimately, they graduate from high school, and the majority of those wishing to continue in higher education begin in community college. These students face tremendous barriers and have lower rates of access to and completion of higher education than English monolingual students.

The study examines the transitions of US-ELs from high school to community college in the years since the implementation of California Assembly Bills 705 and 1705 and the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher uses three theoretical frameworks – LatCrit, Intersectionality, and Community Cultural Wealth – to analyze the institutional structures, provide a holistic view of the students' lived experiences, and inform the data analysis and recommendations.

The study provides recommendations from the student participants on best practices to support US-ELs in community college, and recommendations for policy changes at the state level. The researcher introduces the Cultural Wealth Framework for educational leaders to guide the development of programs and structures within schools to support US-ELs in community college. The framework shifts the deficit mindset that permeates educational institutions by developing programs that protect the cultural capital that US-ELs bring to education and building trust and linguistic security in students. Most importantly, the study elevates the voices of US-educated English learners and provides insight into an important and highly motivated population of multilingual students.

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“The most important voices in the room are the ones that we’re not hearing from. The ones that no one is talking about.”

These words were spoken in a doctoral-level leadership course in 2021 by James Grabow, an Ed.D. candidate, and I wrote them down immediately. *The ones that no one is talking about.* English learners. More specifically, US-educated English learners. These students arrived in the U.S. as children speaking another language, usually Spanish, and attended public school in the U.S. K-12 system as English learners. Some of these students are reclassified as English proficient and are mainstreamed into regular classes. Others arrive in middle or high school and need more time to fully develop their academic English skills. Once they graduate from a U.S. high school, those wishing to pursue higher education will likely begin at a community college (Núñez et al., 2016).

Community colleges are open-access institutions that offer diverse communities, including those impacted by race, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, an opportunity to access and complete higher education. The California Master Plan drives the mission of California’s community colleges.

The California Community Colleges have as their primary mission to provide academic and vocational instruction for older and younger students through the first two years of undergraduate education (lower division). In addition to this primary mission, the Community Colleges are

authorized to provide remedial instruction, English as a Second Language courses, adult noncredit instruction, community service courses, and workforce training services (UCOP, n.d.).

Two significant events have disproportionately impacted English learners since 2019. First is California Assembly Bill 705, which eliminated testing and remediation for community college math and English and directly enrolled high school graduates in transfer-level courses. While more students are accessing and completing transfer-level math and English, the data also shows that more students than ever are failing, and equity gaps are widening. Students who fail to complete required courses tend to leave higher education altogether. Transfer-level math and English are now gatekeepers to higher education. While many schools offer corequisite support classes to help students, including English learners, the odds are not in their favor. California is on course to deny an entire generation of students, primarily marginalized students of color, access to higher education. Second is the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent distance learning, which disproportionately impacted students of color, including English learners.

This study describes the educational paths of English learners who graduated from high school in the U.S. and then seeks to listen to and understand their transitions to community college in the years following the California Assembly Bill 705 and the pandemic.

These students are the ones no one is hearing from. It is time to listen.

Problem Statement

English learners are the fastest-growing student population in the U.S. Data shows that US-Educated English learners (US-ELs) have significantly lower rates of access to and completion in higher education (Kanno, 2021). However, research into their post-secondary education academic needs is markedly limited, and qualitative studies on their experiences are scarce (Kanno, 2021; Kanno & Harklau, 2012; Núñez et al., 2016).

According to Kanno (2021), 50% of English learners in the 10th grade did not enroll in any post-secondary education. Only 11.7% of 10th-grade English learners completed a four-year bachelor's degree compared to 45% of English monolingual students (Kanno, 2021; Kanno & Cromley, 2013). Of the 35% of US-Educated English learners attending vocational or community college, only 6.4% obtained a certificate or associate's degree within eight years of high school graduation (Kanno & Cromley, 2013).

Between 2019 and 2020, two significant events impacted students in California: Assembly Bill 705 and the COVID-19 pandemic. California Assembly Bill 705 (AB 705) was passed in 2018 and implemented by the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) in the fall of 2019. AB 705 removed barriers to transfer-level math and English classes by eliminating testing on enrollment for students with a US high school diploma and restricting access to remedial courses for US high school graduates. AB 705 aimed to increase two-year degree and transfer rates by removing barriers and providing direct access to transfer-level classes. In this regard, AB 705 has been successful as

more students are accessing and completing transfer-level English than ever before. However, the data also show significantly more students not passing transfer-level English and widening equity gaps between white students and students of color.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the learning of all students, but research shows higher learning loss for English learners, with educational setbacks being most damaging for middle schoolers (Lazarin, 2022). Learning losses for K-12 English learners could persist for years, a concerning fact as these students graduate from U.S. high schools aspiring to enter the community college system (Sugarman & Lazarin, 2020).

This study focuses on the experiences of US-educated English learners as they transition to community college in the years following AB 705 and the pandemic. There is markedly limited qualitative research on US-educated English learners that includes their voices, experiences, and perspectives, and none that explores their experiences in the years since the implementation of AB 705 and the COVID-19 pandemic. US-educated English learners are exceptionally resilient, although more research is needed to understand what makes them so and what they need to access, persist, and succeed in higher education (Núñez et al., 2016). Hayward et al. (2022) described the need for more research on this population of students. "There is limited knowledge regarding the academic trajectories, college experiences, and outcomes of ELs at CCs. Now more than ever, it is essential that California fills the gap of

knowledge regarding the academic and occupational outcomes of ELs” (Hayward et al., 2022, p. 45).

We have a choice to understand and elevate English learners or keep them marginalized. We must listen to these students and address their academic needs to prevent the loss of a generation of emergent bilinguals in higher education.

Purpose Statement

This study explores the transitions of US-educated English learners from high school to a southern California Hispanic-serving Community College. The study aims to understand these students’ academic, social, and emotional needs in the years since the implementation of California Assembly Bill 705, which significantly changed the matriculation process and course offerings in California Community Colleges and the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on this student population. To fully explore and understand this diverse group of students, the research will be situated within three frameworks: Critical Race Theory/LatCrit, Intersectionality, and Community Cultural Wealth. The study will use a broad but focused lens to understand this unique student population's diverse experiences and needs.

Research Questions

This study aims to understand US-educated English learners' academic experiences and engagement in community college. The following research questions will guide the study:

1. How are US-educated English learners experiencing academic English across the curricula in community college?
2. What programs and supports do US-educated English learners need to prepare them for and/or support them in transfer-level English?
3. How are US-educated English learners connecting with these programs and supports, and how do they affect student outcomes and behaviors?

Significance of the Study

There are 1.128 million English learners in California public schools, 34 percent in secondary grades seven through twelve (California Department of Education, 2022). There is a lack of scholarship on these students and even less on their transition from high school to higher education (Hayward, 2022). Studies have shown the barriers and challenges faced by US-ELs, including deficit perceptions, linguistic insecurity, lack of understanding of and support with the college application process, financial challenges, and immigration status of themselves and their families (Brenneman, 2020; Bunch & Endris, 2012; Kanno, 2021; Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Núñez et al., 2016). Additionally, recent studies show that the COVID-19 pandemic had a more significant impact on Latino

students and families. The conversion to online learning resulted in language loss for many English learners (Kanno, 2021; Lazarin, 2022; Pier et al., 2021).

Legislative changes in California through Assembly Bill 705 have impacted US-ELs' matriculation to community college, course offerings, and support options (CCCCO, n.d.; Hayward et al., 2022; Shaw et al., 2018). Unfortunately, consideration of their needs was an afterthought as the legislation was being written, and four years after AB 705's implementation, some community colleges have not incorporated academic support for students, including English learners, even as transfer-level English completion rates decline for students of color (Shaw et al., 2018).

If the educational needs of US-educated English learners are not identified and addressed, they will most likely experience widening disparities in their post-secondary educational outcomes. Accessing and completing two- or four-year degrees or certificate programs will fall out of reach and result in the continued marginalization of students of color and widening socio-economic and equity gaps. Most importantly, it means the educational loss of a generation of students with significant linguistic, social, and resistant capital to offer to their families, communities, and employers.

Theoretical Frameworks

US-educated English learners are a highly diverse group of students. Their immigration experiences, K-12 educations, and linguistic skills are individual and unique. In addition, each student has distinct academic, social,

and navigational needs. To respectfully examine and explain their stories, three separate yet related theoretical frameworks will be used for this research: Critical Race Theory/LatCrit, Intersectionality, and Community Cultural Wealth.

LatCrit, a branch of Critical Race Theory, is essential in educational research. It challenges deficit-informed research and examines how race and racism impact educational structures and practices for Latino students (Guajardo et al., 2020; D. Solorzano et al., 2000; D. G. Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2005). Intersectionality is recognized as a framework that combines well with other theories to highlight diverse student identities, provide a holistic representation of students, and inform the research (Acevedo-Gil, 2019). Community Cultural Wealth recognizes the multiple forms of capital that often go unrecognized to describe the assets Students of Color bring to the classroom (Yosso, 2005).

Assumptions

As an ESL professional at a community college, the researcher worked with several assumptions. One assumption was that as a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI), the faculty and staff are dedicated to serving Hispanic students. However, they may not have the understanding, training, and lived experiences to thoroughly understand English learners' needs. Educators have good intentions when they create courses and programs, but they may only meet the needs of some students. HSI designation comes from student enrollment, not ethnic representation among faculty or Hispanic-student programming success.

Another assumption was that student participants were as honest and forthcoming in their interviews as they could be in the moment. Additionally, student participants most likely lacked awareness or understanding of California legislation and had limited to no experience in higher education. Therefore, the researcher sought not to inform them but to ask questions and listen deeply.

Finally, because community colleges do not label enrolling students as current or former English learners, it is difficult to track and measure their progress once they graduate high school. Because of this missing data, we do not know if students have academic challenges because they are second-language learners in transfer-level English without support or preparation or if there are other reasons, such as work constraints, illness, or family challenges. However, for this study, the researcher assumed that some of the students in the Hispanic data category from the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) were designated as English learners and received ELD services during some or all of their K-12 education. English learners make up 18.1 percent of the total enrollment in California public schools, and eighty percent of the 1.13 million English learners are Spanish speakers and identified as Hispanic (CA Dept of Education, 2022). Therefore, most of the US-ELs who are now in community college would fall into the category of 'Hispanic' in the CCCCCO data.

'Hispanic' was used only to describe categorical data from institutional reporting. This study used 'Latino' to describe students from Mexico, Central America, and South America.

Delimitations

This study had several delimitations based on the research questions, theoretical frameworks, and research design. First, the study focused on a particular group of students: US-educated English learners. Other subsets of English learners and student groups were not included to focus on the higher education transition experiences specific to English learners who graduated from high school in the U.S. Second, due to student demographics in California and the area of research, the study was limited to native Spanish-speaking students.

Additionally, only one community college was used for this case study. Schools within the same region had different curricular responses to AB 705. Focusing on one school supported an in-depth exploration of the students and supports at the institution. This in-depth exploration could yield richer narratives from students to better understand their academic experiences and needs as they transition to higher education.

The single case study design limited the generalizability of the findings and results. However, the study utilized multiple data sources and thick descriptions to enhance the findings' applicability. Given the lack of scholarship on this student population, it was critical to concentrate on collecting detailed, comprehensive data to understand students' academic, social, and emotional needs as they transitioned to higher education.

Definitions

US-Educated English Learners

Multiple labels exist for students learning English as a second language and the programs that serve them. The focus of this study was students whom the researcher referred to as US-educated English learners (US-ELs). US-ELs are students who immigrated to the United States as children speaking a language other than English at home (Harklau et al., 1999; Lacina & Griffith, 2017; Patthey et al., 2008; Roberge et al., 2008). These students were identified as second language learners and received English language support and instruction for some or all of their primary and secondary educations in the U.S., then graduated from high school in the U.S. The literature also referred to these students as Generation 1.5 students because they are neither first- nor second-generation immigrants but somewhere in between (Roberge, 2002). However, since 1.5 carries deficit connotations and US-EL is used most frequently in current literature, it is the term that was used for this study.

Additional definitions and labels for English language learners and the programs that support them are examined in Chapter Two.

Assembly Bill 705

California's Assembly Bill 705 (AB 705) significantly changed community college course placement and curriculum in 2018 by mandating that all community colleges in the California Community College (CCC) system "maximize the probability that a student will be able to enter and complete transfer-level composition within a year, and within three years for students

beginning in ESL” (Shaw et al., 2018, p. 77). In addition, AB 705 eliminated remedial prerequisites and placement testing for English and math, allowing students with a GPA from a U.S. high school to enroll directly in courses they need to complete degrees or transfer requirements to four-year schools (CCCCO, n.d.; PPIC, 2022). AB 705 was strengthened in 2022 by AB 1705. Both bills are explored more deeply in Chapter Two.

Summary

Chapter One introduced the problem addressed in this study, the purpose of the study, the guiding research questions, and the significance of the study. The chapter also presented the theoretical frameworks that guided the research, which are explored in greater detail in Chapter Two. The chapter discussed the researcher's assumptions and the study's delimitations and provided definitions and abbreviations used throughout the dissertation.

Chapter Two will review literature comprising the topics introduced in Chapter One, including an examination of US-educated English learners and the barriers they face in higher education. Chapter Two will also explore California's legislative developments to understand the changing landscape for community college students, including US-educated English learners. The next chapter will conclude with an analysis of English language instruction for US-educated English learners, including both ESL and transfer-level English support courses.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

California public schools currently educate 1.128 million English learners, with another 1 million reclassified as English proficient (California Department of Education, 2022). In total, 30% of California's students enter the school system as English learners, and 40% speak a language other than English at home, with the majority (82%) speaking Spanish (California Department of Education, 2022). While most are in elementary school, 34% are in secondary grades seven through twelve (California Department of Education, 2022).

This dissertation aimed to describe the experiences of US-educated English learners (US-ELs) within the current educational, social, and political climate as they completed high school in the United States and then transitioned to community college. The research intended to give voice to their experiences and needs and inform educational practices.

Chapter Two introduces the theoretical frameworks that guided this study and discusses the literature related to US-ELs' transition to higher education. First, the educational paths of US-ELs are discussed, including an analysis of how they differ from other groups of English learners. Next, the chapter examines the barriers to higher education that US-ELs can face and the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on them and their families. Additionally, the chapter considers recent legislation in California – Assembly Bills 705 and 1705 – and

the impact these bills had on enrollment, placement, and course offerings in California's community colleges. Lastly, it explores instructional approaches specific to US-ELs to fully understand what the literature establishes as the best academic engagement and support options.

Theoretical Frameworks

Three separate yet related theoretical frameworks—Critical Race Theory/LatCrit, Intersectionality, and Community Cultural Wealth—were used for this research to fully understand the diverse lived experiences of US-educated English learners.

Critical Race Theory/LatCrit

Racism remains a critical social issue in the United States (Yosso, 2005). Initially used by legal scholars working to explain systemic racism in the justice system, Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a framework used to “theorize, examine and challenge the ways race and racism implicitly and explicitly impact on social structures, practices and discourses (Yosso, 2005, p. 70). CRT in education starts with the premise that race and racism are endemic to and permanent in U.S. society and challenge deficit-informed research (Solorzano et al., 2000; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2005).

While education has the potential to empower students, it also has the power to engage in students' oppression and marginalization (hooks, 1994; Freire, 1970, 1973 in Yosso, 2005, p. 74). CRT and its branches, which include Latino, Asian, Native American, and Feminist Critical Theory, “challenge the

ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses” (Yosso, 2005, p. 74). Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit) extends CRT to include racial subordination experienced by Latinos based on immigration status, language, culture, accent, surname, and culture (Yosso, 2005).

Intersectionality

The complex identities of English learners, the diversity of their lived experiences, and the variety of resources they bring to higher education make Intersectionality an essential theoretical framework for educational research (Barker, 2021; Roland, 2018). When combined with other theoretical approaches, Intersectionality allows researchers in higher education to better understand systems of inequity and advantage and their impact on student experiences and outcomes (Nichols & Stahl, 2019). As a framework for higher education, Intersectionality challenges inequities by focusing on marginalized, invisible students and looking at their diverse experiences and outcomes through multiple social categories (Barker, 2021; Cuba et al., 2021; Nichols & Stahl, 2019). As a research lens, Intersectionality highlights varying student identities, provides a holistic representation of students, and informs the research (Acevedo-Gil, 2019).

Intersectionality was a valuable theoretical framework for this research as it provided insight into the complex, lived experiences of immigrant students and an understanding of their experiences with circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic, political or legislative changes such as AB 705, or national events such as the increased racist rhetoric and policies during the 2016-2020 administration (Barker, 2021; Cuba et al., 2021; Nichols & Stahl, 2019; Núñez,

2014). Intersectionality can improve educational institutions by “revealing disparities, validating the lives and stories of previously ignored individuals and groups, empowering individuals and communities, and removing barriers within social structures that limit opportunities for marginalized people” (Barker, 2021, p. 35).

Community Cultural Wealth

Within the CRT framework, Yosso (2005) uses the concept of Community Cultural Wealth, which includes six forms of capital that often go unrecognized, to describe the assets Students of Color bring to the classroom. Aspirational, linguistic, social, navigational, familial, and resistant capital are all tools of wealth that immigrant students bring to the classroom and use to succeed in higher education and beyond (Yosso, 2005). Viewing students through a lens that recognizes these strengths counters the deficit narrative and focuses on these students’ cultural assets and wealth (Yosso, 2005). Research conducted through a CRT and Community Cultural Wealth lens allows educational institutions to expose cultural deficit theorizing, restructure around the skills, abilities, and knowledge of Students of Color, and cultivate racial, social, and linguistic justice (Yosso, 2005).

Who are US-Educated English Learners?

Early research by Roberge (2002, 2008) and Singhal (2004) provided a broad overview of US-ELs to better understand their academic experiences, needs, and importance in an interconnected global economy. Current research

into the higher education experiences of US-ELs by Kanno (2021), Cuba et al. (2021), and Hayward et al. (2022) gave an understanding of the challenges facing US-ELs in today's social and legislative climate and the critical role of community college to their long-term academic success.

Definitions

There are multiple labels to describe English learners in education, including Language/Linguistic Minority (LM), Limited English Proficient (LEP), English as a Second Language (ESL), English Language Learner (ELL), Generation 1.5 English Learner (1.5), and English Learner (EL) (Núñez et al., 2016; Roberge, 2002). These labels, as shown in Table 2.1, make it difficult to identify students, distinguish them from other groups of students and programs, and research and track their academic progress (Núñez et al., 2016).

Table 2.1. Common Labels and Abbreviations for English as a Second Language Students

Name (Abbreviation)	Definition
Emergent Bilingual	A term to refer to students who receive English language development (ELD) services in K-12. Some educators argue that this is more appropriate than English Learner (EL) because it values students' linguistic capital and eliminates deficit terminology. In this study, <i>Emerging Bilinguals</i> will be used in conversation with students. English Learner (EL) will be used in the study to connect it to other studies and be consistent with educational data and research (Núñez, 2016).

English Learner (EL)	The most commonly used term to refer to students learning English as a second or third language. Also referred to as English Language Learners (ELL). (<i>Common Acronyms in the TESOL Profession</i> , 2023)
English Language Learner (ELL)	Another commonly used term to refer to students learning English as a second or third language. Same as English Learner (EL). (<i>Common Acronyms in the TESOL Profession</i> , 2023)
English Proficient (EP)	Students who speak a language other than English at home and are proficient in English, or were previously classified as ELL, but have reclassified as EP into mainstream classes. (CA Dept of Education, 2022)
Generation 1.5 English Learner (1.5)	Students who immigrated to the U.S. as children and graduated from high school in the U.S. They were classified as English Learners on enrollment and were language courses for part or all of their K-12 education (Harklau et al., 1999; Lacina & Griffith, 2017; Roberge et al., 2008). Same as US-educated English learner (US-EL).
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	Previously used to identify K-12 English Learners. This term is still in use by the federal government but is used less frequently due to its deficit connotations (<i>Common Acronyms in the TESOL Profession</i> , 2023).
US-Educated English Learner (US-EL)	Students who immigrated to the U.S. as children and graduated from high school in the U.S. They were classified as English Learners on enrollment and took ESL courses for part or all of their K-12 education. (Harklau et al., 1999; Lacina & Griffith, 2017; Roberge et al., 2008)

Deficit overtones in some of these labels cause them to no longer be used by researchers or educators. Some educators support identifying these students as *Emergent Bilinguals* to eliminate deficit connotations and labels that can impact student identity and elevate their linguistic capital (Kalisek, A., personal communication, 2023). Núñez et al. (2016) use the term English Learner (EL) to

describe English learners and recommend that higher education researchers use this term for future research to more easily trace these students' trajectories and synch with K-12 programs.

For this research, to avoid deficit language and conform with the terminology used in K-12 education, the term US-educated English learner (US-EL) will be used to distinguish post-secondary students who have immigrated to the U.S. as children, attended K-12 public school, and received a diploma from a U.S. high school from other EL groups, primarily international students and immigrant adults.

There are also many names and acronyms for English language courses and programs in K-12 schools and in higher education. The most common are listed in Table 2.2 along with their definitions.

Table 2.2. Common Labels and Abbreviations for English as a Second Language Programs

Name (Abbreviation)	Definition
Credit ESL	Community college courses taken by either international or immigrant students (David & Kanno, 2021). Students pay full tuition and receive credit, that in most cases will not count toward a degree or transfer to a CSU or UC school. Some California Community Colleges are working to make these credits transferable as foreign language courses (ASCCC, 2019). Programs will vary but some schools focus on academic reading, writing, and grammar for higher level students intending to continue in higher education.
English as a Foreign Language (EFL)	Refers to programs for international students in the U.S. on a visa to study English and other subjects (<i>Common Acronyms in the TESOL Profession</i> , 2023).

English Language Development (ELD)	Programs in U.S. K-12 education to help English learners achieve language proficiency (CA Dept of Education, 2022). This can include bilingual instruction, transitional or developmental programs, or structured English immersion. K-12 students can be reclassified as English Proficient (EP) and move out of ELD into mainstream courses that do not involve English language instruction.
English as a Second Language (ESL)	While ESL can refer to students, much of the literature uses ESL to reference academic programs (<i>Common Acronyms in the TESOL Profession</i> , 2023).
Non-credit ESL	As part of the Adult Basic Education program of most community colleges and adult schools, non-credit ESL courses are funded by state and local government budgets. Students do not pay tuition, nor do they receive credit for courses completed. Grading is Pass/Fail. Non-credit ESL courses are limited to those living in-state and are open to students over 18 regardless of documentation status or educational background (Becker, 2011; David & Kanno, 2021; Rutan et al., 2019; Taylor, 2017). Most non-credit ESL programs include comprehensive courses from low beginning to advanced students in grammar, speaking, listening, reading, and writing, and can also include classes in pronunciation, conversation, vocational English, and computer skills.

Distinguishing US-Educated ELs from Other ELs in Higher Education

There was agreement in the literature about the differentiation between groups of English learners and the key characteristics of these students. The primary areas of differentiation were immigration experiences, visa status, and K-12 educational experiences. Research demonstrated the need to identify the

unique academic requirements of the US-EL students and tailor language support services to meet their needs separate from other groups of English learners and native English-speaking students (Patthey et al., 2008; Roberge, 2002; Roberge et al., 2008). It may appear straightforward to define this generation of students broadly, but doing so oversimplifies their complex educational, linguistic, and life experiences (Benesch, 2008).

International EFL Students. Within higher education, there are three distinct groups of English learners. One group is international students studying in the U.S. on a visa, typically referred to as EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. EFL students gain knowledge of English via explicit instruction from schools in their native country and have a solid academic background in their native language (Núñez et al., 2016; Roberge, 2002). International students come to higher education in the U.S. with high economic and social capital, strong academic skills, and linguistic awareness (Roberge, 2002). They typically had English instruction in their native country that focused on academic reading and writing, emphasizing structure and content over oral communication (Núñez et al., 2016; Singhal, 2004). As a result, they often had little experience in verbal communication and U.S. culture (Singhal, 2004). In the U.S., international students typically attended credit-bearing ESL courses focused on academic grammar and writing (Bunch & Endris, 2012; Flowers, 2013).

Non-Credit English Learners. The second group of community college English learners is those taking non-credit ESL courses. Non-credit ESL courses

provide comprehensive skills-based instruction in grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing for low-beginning to advanced adult students (David & Kanno, 2021). Non-credit ESL courses are offered in California as part of the adult basic education program at no cost to students. Grading is pass/fail with no credit earned. Non-credit ESL students typically immigrated to the U.S. as adults and completed all of their education in their native country. The goals of non-credit students vary from acclimation to U.S. culture, improved jobs, vocational degrees, or credit programs (Becker, 2011; Rutan et al., 2019).

US-Educated English Learners. The third group is US-educated English Learners (US-ELs). These students were born in other countries, arrived in the U.S. before the age of 18, attended school in the U.S. as English learners, were classified as English learners and received English language development (ELD) services, and graduated from high school in the U.S. This categorization can include students who traveled back and forth between their native country and the U.S. to live with relatives, “parachute” children of parents who travel back and forth multiple times, and parents who immigrated to the U.S. to live permanently, with and without documentation, (Roberge, 2002; Singhal, 2004). It also includes children born in the U.S. who spend part of their childhood in another country before returning to the U.S. (Singhal, 2004).

The diversity of US-ELs comes from the exceptional variation in their immigration experiences, including their age at immigration, level of education in their native countries, and K-12 experiences in the U.S. The immigration experience itself can be impactful on a student’s education. Students can

experience trauma associated with immigration due to circumstances before, during, and after immigration (C. Beck, personal communication, March 24, 2023). Multiple relocations and extended gaps in schooling during and after immigration can adversely impact student learning and language acquisition (Roberge, 2002).

Age at immigration and the amount of schooling in the student's native language also impact language acquisition. For example, an English learner who immigrated at five years of age, reclassified as English proficient, and mainstreamed into classes by third grade will graduate from high school with a different set of academic literacy skills than one who immigrated at 16 years old and never transitioned out of ELD or one who immigrated at six and experienced a one-year gap before enrolling in school in the U.S (Flowers, 2013).

US-ELs typically develop excellent oral communication skills and are often indistinguishable from monolingual English students in conversation (Asher, 2011; Bunch & Kibler, 2015; Harklau, 2000; Roberge et al., 2008; Singhal, 2004). Most US-EL students learn English implicitly through exposure to the language through social activities, movies, TV, and music. Cummins (1979) and Roberge (2002) emphasized the immense difference between basic communicative English skills and English for academic purposes. Much of the literature on US-ELs focused on academic reading and writing (Allison, 2008; Asher, 2011; Bunch & Kibler, 2015; Lacina & Griffith, 2017; Patthey et al., 2008; Singhal, 2004). This difference is one of the key factors that distinguishes US-EL students from

international EFL students and adult immigrant English learners and highlights a critical differential in instructional and support needs.

US-ELs in Higher Education. Research on the transition of US-educated English learners to higher education is limited (Hayward et al., 2022; Núñez et al., 2016). However, when combined with research on K-12 English learners, we can better understand these students' post-secondary academic needs. Immigrant students typically enter public schools in the U.S. in the grade that most closely matches their age as an English learner. There, they begin their public education in the U.S. K-12 system. Some, but not all, immigrant students who arrive as adolescents have well-developed literacy in their first language and experience with reading and writing, which provides a significant advantage as they begin transitioning to school in the U.S. (Flowers, 2013; Roberge, 2002). Conversely, those students who do not have first language literacy will struggle as they learn to read and write in a language that they do not yet fully understand (Allison, 2008; Cummins, 2011; Kanno & Harklau, 2012; Lacina & Griffith, 2017; Roberge, 2002).

For students who immigrate in adolescence, transitioning to middle or high school in the U.S. can add trauma to the already challenging experience of moving to a new country. The label of *English learner* and subtractive schooling that removes their native language, culture, and academic well-being can reduce students to a cycle of low expectations, low achievement, alienation, and diminished aspiration (Harklau, 2016). Within the public school system, English learners can face linguistic, cultural, and racial discrimination, ostracization from

the mainstream, and either be viewed as foreigners or too Americanized, depending on the situation (Roberge et al., 2008). In addition, English learners who transition to mainstream classes often do not get adequate instruction and practice in academic reading and writing or access to Advanced Placement classes, leaving them unprepared for college-level reading and writing (Cuba et al., 2021; Davila & de Bradley, 2010; Núñez et al., 2016).

US-ELs are often considered a homogenous group of students but are diverse in their skills, educational needs, goals, linguistic abilities, and backgrounds (Núñez et al., 2016). Therefore, for community colleges to provide the academic support and resources US-ELs need, it is critical to look at the strengths and resources and understand the educational goals and needs of US-educated English learners (Núñez et al., 2016).

Challenges Faced by US-Educated English Learners

The literature on US-EL experiences in higher education examined the impact of multiple factors on student access and persistence. After relocating to a new country and assimilating into a new language, life, and culture, US-ELs live between two languages, cultures, and expectations, all while going through the typical angst and development of adolescence. While some research showed “immigrant optimism” as a positive factor in educational persistence and outcomes (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Núñez, 2014), others highlighted the multitude of challenges faced by immigrant adolescents as they navigate a new language, life, and culture (Asher, 2011; Barker, 2021; Chaney & Clark, 2020; Cummins, 2012; Gonzalez et al., 2013; Harklau, 2013; Kanno, 2021; Perez,

2021; Roberge, 2002; Rojas-García, 2013). In addition, research showed that some challenges are external to the students, including racist rhetoric and practices toward Latino immigrants, negative experiences in the U.S. K-12 public school system, documentation status, financial challenges, and under-representation of English learners in higher education (Almon, 2012; David & Kanno, 2021; Harklau, 2013; Kanno & Cromley, 2013). Conversely, US-ELs also experience internal struggles as they attempt to straddle dual languages, cultures, and expectations within their families, schools, and social groups (Asher, 2011; Cuba et al., 2021; Núñez et al., 2016; Roberge, 2002; D. G. Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). The literature did not indicate that one of these is more significant than the other; instead, the challenges converge on each other to make higher education unimaginable, impractical, and impossible for many US-educated English learners.

US-ELs experience constant identity negotiation as they navigate cultures, languages, home, school, and self, and their identities can be fluid, especially for students pursuing higher education (Barker, 2021; Chaney & Clark, 2020). Others do not and feel alienated from one or both of the social and linguistic worlds they move between (Roberge, 2002). As their spoken English develops, US-ELs often become language brokers for their parents and siblings. They juggle family responsibilities, schooling, and immense pressure to work and support the family (Roberge, 2002). Older students can experience anxiety and depression, emotional and cognitive difficulties, and culture shock even after many years in the U.S. (Roberge, 2002). US-EL students' integration into

American society and attitudes toward education are strongly influenced by their families (Rojas-García, 2013). While some first-generation immigrant parents want their children to attend college in the U.S. after high school, others do not understand or support higher education and expect their sons and daughters to work full-time to help the family (Perez, 2021; Roberge, 2002). Immigrant girls and women have added domestic responsibilities at home while their parents are working, such as caring for siblings and doing housework, which works against them in pursuing higher education (Harklau, 2013).

The Impact of Racism on Identity and Culture

California is home to 11 million immigrants, 50% of whom are from Mexico and Latin America, and 2.2 million undocumented immigrants, many of whom are children and college-age adults under 25 or U.S. citizens born to undocumented parents (Johnson, H. et al., 2021; Pew Research Center, 2019). Recent literature discussed how increased racism toward immigrants from Mexico and Latin America since the 2016 election, documentation status of students and their parents, and a lack of identification to U.S. education inhibits access to and persistence in higher education for Latino students, including US-ELs.

In a quantitative study, Gonzalez et al. (2013) studied 171 middle and high school Latino students from immigrant families to understand the impact of cultural identity and barriers to entry on the educational aspirations of Latino adolescents. The study found a negative relationship between Latino identification and regard for their ethnicity and educational aspirations (Gonzalez et al., 2013). The study posits that most Latino students living in the U.S. do not

have examples of Latinos who complete formal education in the U.S. and that stereotypes of manual labor for Latino immigrants persist. This creates a deficit mentality for Latino adolescents as they consider post-secondary educational opportunities (Gonzalez et al., 2013).

Additionally, the legal status of students or parents can create an unsurmountable barrier to access to higher education for students (Gonzalez et al., 2013). The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Act (DACA) was enacted in 2012 to allow DACA students to work, attend school, and contribute to their communities without the threat of deportation. Despite these protections, DACA continues to face legal challenges, discouraging undocumented students from pursuing higher education and facing multiple barriers if they do (Perez, 2021; The Associated Press, 2022).

Finally, the rise of the Make America Great Again (MAGA) wing of the Republican party and its loud anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies has impacted Latino students directly. Today, Latino college students have shared experiences of emboldened racism, microaggressions, discrimination, and lowered mental health and safety due to the political climate (Chaney & Clark, 2020; Cuba et al., 2021; Muñoz et al., 2018). These negative narratives and portrayals of Latino students create barriers to educational opportunities and higher education (Cuba et al., 2021). Even worse, repetitive exposure to racist stereotypes normalizes them, and over time, they may be internalized by Latino students (Cuba et al., 2021).

Systemic inequalities are found in U.S. public schools as well, and some researchers placed responsibility for English Learner underachievement on the school system itself (Cuba et al., 2021; Cummins, 2011; Davila & de Bradley, 2010). Public schools have failed to invest in research-based practices for English learners (Cummins, 2011). As a result, ELs are concentrated in under-funded, low-performing schools with fewer quality teachers and principals and lower academic achievement (Kanno & Cromley, 2015).

Other researchers blamed a public school system that marginalizes English learners and racist school practices that remove their culture and language and promote monolingualism over multilingualism (Benesch, 2008; Kanno & Cromley, 2015; Motha, 2014; D. G. Solorzano, 2019). Kanno & Cromley (2015) specifically called out negative attitudes surrounding Latino ELs' bilingualism contributing to low academic achievement and persistence in higher education.

Although in K–12 public school education in the United States, ELLs, in general, are far more likely to be characterized as limited English proficient than “emergent bilinguals” (García, 2009), hostility towards Hispanic students' use of Spanish and the denial of their linguistic capital seem particularly strong, which could lead to ELLs' sense of self-doubt and lack of confidence in their linguistic identity (Kanno & Cromley, 2015, p. 33).

This linguistic hostility occurs despite research that showed student bilingualism as a positive influence on academic achievement in both languages (Lacina & Griffith, 2017).

Kanno (2021) and Núñez (2016) concluded that the most significant barrier to higher education for English learners is sub-par education in K-12, perpetuating the cycle of marginalization, underachievement, and inadequate academic preparation for college. Kanno & Cromley (2013) went further stating that reducing English Learners to their financial or immigration status removed the focus from the structural inequities they face in K-12.

US-ELs are caught between two generations, countries, languages, and cultures - their family's native culture, language, identities, and US-born peers. They are a product of two countries and cultures but are not fluent in either. Despite their status as emerging bilinguals, their educational experiences can leave them feeling less than their peers and defined more by what they lack than what they possess (Cummins, 2012; Kanno, 2021).

Academic English and Second Language Acquisition for US-Educated English Learners

It is generally agreed that the verbal communication skills and American acculturation of US-educated English learners obfuscate their reading and writing proficiency (Asher, 2011; Lacina & Griffith, 2017; Roberge, 2002; Singhal, 2004; Bunch & Kibler, 2015). On the contrary, there was no explicit agreement on the type of instruction that best supports their academic needs when they reach higher education. Some research showed that many English learners do well in

transfer-level English when provided concurrent or corequisite academic support (Hayward et al., 2022). Other research pointed to US-ELs' limited instruction in and experience with academic reading and writing that, along with the metacognitive learning strategies, is required for them to succeed in higher education (Allison, 2008; Cummins, 2012; Kanno, 2021; Kanno & Cromley, 2015; Lacina & Griffith, 2017; Núñez et al., 2016; Patthey et al., 2008; Roberge, 2002; Singhal, 2004). Other studies advocated project-based language learning that develops academic reading and writing skills on a foundation of students' existing verbal skills (Lacina & Griffith, 2017).

US-educated English learners are not true ESL students. It takes one to two years for students to become conversationally fluent in English, which many of these students accomplish during their K-12 educations, but research showed that English learners typically require at least five years to achieve true fluency in academic English (Cummins, 2012; Patthey et al., 2008). In many cases, US-ELs have limited proficiency in their first language and an inability to write academically in either language (Singhal, 2004). US-ELs are emergent bilinguals with abilities in both languages but are neither fluent nor confident in either.

Academic Reading and Writing

For US-ELs, language and literacy acquisition vary greatly for multiple reasons, including first language literacy, age on arrival, educational gaps and disruptions, and access to mainstream academic content in the K-12 education (Flowers, 2013; Roberge, 2002).

Extensive reading across the curriculum is critical for academic success, but many US-ELs graduate high school with limited reading experience, either in English or their native language (Krashen, 2004; Singhal, 2004). Extensive reading, across the curricula and for pleasure, introduces students to different styles of language outside of conversational discourse that is necessary for academic success, but many US-EL students graduate without reading a scholarly book or novel (Allison, 2008; Lacina & Griffith, 2017; Roberge, 2002).

However, Kanno & Cromley (2013) conducted a quantitative study that disputed the argument that strong reading is necessary for higher education access and attainment. The study followed 24,599 eighth graders, including English monolingual, English proficient, and English language learners, for twelve years from middle school until post-college graduation. Their data showed that after controlling for other variables, reading scores did not impact either college access or attainment (Kanno & Cromley, 2013).

Students who acquired language through oral and aural means lack grammatical correctness in their writing (Roberge, 2002). Academic writing in post-secondary education requires familiarity with “complex linguistic structures and rhetorical styles that are not typically used in everyday social interactions” (Asher, 2011, p. 43). Much of the linguistic input that English learners get in middle and high school came from other English learners, so they may have learned incorrect forms that are reflected in their writing (Roberge, 2002). Writing is a struggle for many English learners because they lack academic instruction

that allows them to think critically and express what they know through writing (Kanno, 2021; Lacina & Griffith, 2017).

Metacognitive Skills

English learners have limited access in high school to rigorous academic reading and writing curricula and advanced college preparatory courses (Kanno, 2021; Núñez et al., 2016). These students are often relegated to remedial classes throughout high school, leaving them without the academic reading and writing experience or college-level academic skills (Kanno, 2021; Núñez et al., 2016). Higher education requires metacognitive skills for study and research, including notetaking, paraphrasing, reading strategies, drafting, revising, and editing (Allison, 2008; Singhal, 2004). Unfortunately, many English learners in K-12 public education are unable to take courses that provide this critical instruction before they graduate high school, so they arrive at community college without the entire repository of academic knowledge required to succeed (Kanno, 2021; Núñez et al., 2016).

Despite the considerable research into the academic gaps of US-ELs, Kanno & Cromley (2015) concluded their large quantitative study with “the critical finding that academic capital factors play a lesser role for ELLs’ college access” (p. 33). They did not believe that academic capital is unimportant but that other factors are in effect when considering barriers to higher education access and completion (Kanno & Cromley, 2015).

Barriers to Higher Education for US-Educated English Learners

Community colleges are open-access institutions for vocational programs, two-year degrees, and certificates, and transfer to four-year universities (UCOP, n.d.). However, access to higher education by US-ELs, including community college, is complicated by multiple variables (Brenneman, 2020; Bunch & Endris, 2012; Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Núñez et al., 2016). Kanno (2021) has written extensively on these barriers and demonstrates how structural, socioeconomic, cultural, linguistic, and familial barriers collude to block US-educated English learners' access to higher education.

Deficit Perceptions and Linguistic Insecurity

One barrier to US-ELs accessing and completing higher education is deficit perceptions and lowered expectations by teachers that become internalized by students, causing them to lower their academic goals and perceive college as out of their reach (Kanno, 2021). The deficit mindset begins in the K-12 system, and over time ELs can internalize and accept the lowered academic expectations that have been communicated to them, directly or indirectly. Kanno (2021) noted that in the K-12 system, teachers and staff can blame English learners' perceived linguistic and familial shortcomings for their academic underachievement and devalue the bilingual capital of English learners (Kanno, 2021).

Linguistic insecurity refers to “feelings of inferiority about one’s speech as measured against an exterior standard of correctness” (Kanno, 2021, p. 100). Linguistic insecurity is a significant barrier for some English learners, causing

them to either not challenge themselves academically or hold themselves back from full participation (Kanno, 2021). The U.S. is steeped in English monolingualism, with English becoming a gatekeeper into higher levels of academics and society (Kanno, 2021; Motha, 2014). English learners' language abilities are perceived by themselves and others as a deficit because their English language proficiency is always viewed as less than what is required. These internalized messages become part of students' attitudes toward themselves and their academic potential after graduating high school.

College Knowledge

Conley (2005) outlined critical components required for college readiness, referring to them as *college knowledge*. College knowledge includes:

- Core academic knowledge and skills across the curriculum.
- Vital cognitive skills that allow students to problem-solve, analyze, synthesize, and reason.
- Non-cognitive skills that allow students to manage their time and academic planning, seek help from teachers and faculty, and work in study groups.

Kanno (2021) highlighted the challenges that English learners face in attaining college knowledge and wrote that these skills are “not distributed equally among students and families from different racial and ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic status.” These barriers work against US-educated English learners' access, persistence, and attainment of educational goals in higher education.

Financial Constraints and Immigration Status

The literature cited the financial burden of college, the pressure to work full-time, and family obligations as barriers to higher education for English learners (Almon, 2012; Harklau, 2013; Kanno & Cromley, 2015; Núñez et al., 2016; Roberge, 2002). English learners are likelier to have low socioeconomic status than monolingual English students. 75% of ELs come from low-income families and live 200% below the poverty level (Kanno & Cromley, 2015; Núñez et al., 2016). Lack of finances makes the cost of college unattainable for many US-ELs and puts pressure on students to immediately go to work full-time after graduating from high school to support their family (Almon, 2012). Additionally, the lack of parental knowledge about the U.S. higher education system, which requires FAFSA application, SATs, and complicated admissions and registration processes, adds to the problem even further (Airhart, 2022).

As of 2023, 22 states and the District of Columbia allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition, and 17 states and the District of Columbia provide access to state financial aid (Higher Ed Immigration Portal, n.d.). Undocumented students, including DACA recipients, are not eligible for federal financial aid, and eight states actively block undocumented students from accessing in-state tuition (Higher Ed Immigration Portal, n.d.; Studentaid.gov, 2022). In 2021 427,000 undocumented students were enrolled in higher education, with 181,000 of these students holding or eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status (Higher Ed Immigration Portal, 2021). Students with undocumented parents may be unwilling, hesitant, or unable to

access higher education (Higher Ed Immigration Portal, 2021). Kanno & Cromley (2013) stated that “immigration status may be functioning as a hidden factor in inhibiting Hispanic ELs’ college access” (p. 33).

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on English Learners

Research showed that the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted the learning of students of color, including English learners (Lazarin, 2022; Pier et al., 2021). Systemic inequities in technology access and literacy that predated the pandemic affected an estimated 5 million K-12 English learners (Lazarin, 2022). The pandemic exposed and exacerbated these systemic inequities in the U.S. educational system for vulnerable student populations, including English learners (Kanno, 2021). When classrooms shifted to remote learning, Latino students could not fully participate because of multiple barriers, including language, poor digital literacy, lack of access to digital devices and reliable internet, and a lack of instructional resources tailored to their needs (Pier et al., 2021).

During the pandemic, America’s immigrant and linguistically diverse families experienced higher job losses and over-representation in essential jobs (Sugarman & Lazarin, 2020). A year or more of interrupted learning combined with economic, social, and familial disruption disproportionately impacted English learners’ language, academic education, and social and emotional health (Lazarin, 2022). This student population experienced challenging home learning

environments during the pandemic due to high COVID-19 rates, economic and food insecurity, and childcare difficulties (Lazarin, 2022). Remote learning kept ELs isolated from their teachers and peers and gave them limited opportunities to use academic and conversational English (Lazarin, 2022). The language development of English learners can regress after five or more months without consistent occasions to speak, write, listen, and read in English (Sugarman & Lazarin, 2020). This is especially critical for reaching the level of academic English that is the foundation of educational success (Sugarman & Lazarin, 2020).

Testing in the K-12 schools showed critical setbacks in English learner language and academic development during the pandemic, with learning loss being most devastating for middle schoolers (Lazarin, 2022). One study of 19 California school districts found that ELs experienced a learning lag of 3.8 months in English (Pier et al., 2021). Overall, there was a higher learning loss for Hispanic students than for White students in English language arts (Pier et al., 2021). In addition, students who were previously low achieving experienced more significant learning lag than those who were not. Research indicated that losses for all English learners could persist for years to come (Sugarman & Lazarin, 2020).

These drops are cause for alarm as these students graduate from U.S. high schools and enter the community college system.

US-ELs' Transition to Community College

The overwhelming majority of K-12 ELs who pursue higher education attend community college (Almon, 2012; Bunch & Endris, 2012; Núñez et al., 2016; Salas et al., 2011). In the past decade, California has placed increased responsibility for basic education, including second language instruction for English learners, on its community colleges through legislation and increased funding (Rutan et al., 2019; Shaw et al., 2018; Taylor, 2017).

The mission of the California Community College system is to “offer academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level for both younger and older students, including those persons returning to school” (*California Community Colleges Mission*, 2022). Historically this has included non-credit courses in English as a Second Language and remedial courses in math and English, as well as courses for credit toward a technical certificate, two-year associates degree, or transfer to a four-year institution (California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, 2019). As a result, community colleges play an integral role in the ability of many underserved students to fill in gaps in their academic readiness and reach their higher education goals.

However, rates of persistence and completion of academic goals in community college among Latino English Learners are alarmingly low (Almon, 2012; Núñez et al., 2016). Razfar & Simon’s study of Latino ELs in a large California community college provided data and insight into this under-researched student population (Razfar & Simon, 2011). Among the findings:

1. Fifty-eight percent of the Latino ELs in the study were not enrolled in credit-bearing classes when they began.
2. Sixty-three percent did not advance beyond the level they began.
3. After two semesters, 62 percent of the students had dropped out of community college.
4. Eighty-five percent dropped after five semesters of classes with no degree.
5. Only forty-three percent of ELs successfully completed the college ESL program.
6. Thirteen percent of ELs graduated despite having higher cumulative GPAs than the non-ELs.

US-ELs attending community college typically began in remedial classes with limited access to credit- or degree-bearing coursework (Hayward et al., 2022). Prior to AB 705, it was not unusual for California community college students to have neither a two-year degree nor transferrable credits after many years of taking courses (Hayward et al., 2022).

Prior to 2019, course placement in community colleges was done via tests (Benesch, 2008; Roberge et al., 2008). Newly matriculated students, including English learners, took a placement test to determine which level of math and English they could take, regardless of their high school GPA or courses passed in high school (Flowers, 2013; Michelman, 2022; USC Rossier, 2022; White et al., 2021). Multiple studies show that placement testing contributed to lower completion and transfer rates for students, including US-ELs, by putting them on

long tracks of remedial coursework that did not count toward a degree (Núñez et al., 2016; Shaw et al., 2018; White et al., 2021).

Equity for marginalized students in the California community college system was the intent behind California's landmark Assembly Bill 705 (CCCO, n.d.). AB 705, which became law in California on January 1, 2018, eliminated placement testing and remediation for students with a high school diploma from a U.S. high school, and allowed students to go directly to credit-bearing, transfer-level coursework (CCCO, n.d.).

California Assembly Bill 705

Significant structural reform to community college course placement and curriculum came in 2018 when California signed Assembly Bill 705 (AB 705) into law (Acres, 2021; Shaw et al., 2018; USC Rossier, 2022). AB 705 directed all community colleges in the California Community College system to “maximize the probability that students complete transfer-level math and English courses in one year’s time” (Acres, 2021; Shaw et al., 2018; USC Rossier, 2022). In addition, AB 705 eliminated remedial prerequisites and placement testing for both English and math, allowing students with a GPA from a U.S. high school to enroll directly in courses they need to complete degrees or transfer requirements to four-year schools (CCCO, n.d.; PPIC, 2022).

English Course Placement for ELs Post-AB 705

AB 705 mandated that schools “maximize the probability that a student will be able to enter and complete transfer-level composition within a year, and within

three years for students beginning in ESL” (Shaw et al., 2018, p. 77). AB 705 directed colleges to eliminate placement tests and use multiple measures for students with a high school diploma from a U.S. high school, including high school grade point average, high school transcripts, or course history to guide student course placement upon matriculation to ensure that courses completed in high school are not repeated and that students have immediate access to transfer-level classes (Shaw et al., 2018). For US-ELs, this meant choosing between ESL and transfer-level English, as most remedial English courses were removed from course schedules. A survey of English faculty in the Los Angeles Community College District showed overwhelming support for multiple measures to determine course placement, with 89 percent calling this an important change to current policy (USC Rossier, 2022).

US-educated English learners were not considered in the initial drafts of AB 705 (Shaw et al., 2018). The California Chapter of TESOL intervened with the legislators to distinguish English as a Second Language coursework from remediation and ensure that English learners are given adequate time to achieve the academic language needed for success in higher education (Shaw et al., 2018). The final wording of AB 705 called for a three-year timeline to enroll in transfer-level English for English learners (Shaw et al., 2018).

Instruction in English as a second language (ESL) is distinct from remediation in English. Students enrolled in ESL credit coursework are foreign language learners who require additional language training in English, require support to successfully complete degree and transfer

requirements in English, or require both of the above. (AB 705 Section 1 [a][7] as cited in Shaw et al., 2018).

Prior to AB 705, only one-third of students seeking degrees who began in ESL coursework completed transfer-level English within six years (Hayward et al., 2022). Schools have local control over their curriculum, but Hayward et al. (2022) stated that AB 705 dramatically influenced the design, implementation, and placement practices of ESL sequences in community colleges to ensure students reach transfer-level English within three years.

Implementation of AB-705

To prepare for a post-AB-705 scenario, many schools implemented or boosted supports for students, including corequisite courses, tutoring, smaller class sizes, and longer classes to ensure student success in transfer-level coursework (Baca, 2021). However, corequisite support fluctuated, with some schools enrolling over a third of their students in corequisite courses, other schools not offering corequisite support at all, and faculty being split on the effectiveness and feasibility of corequisite remediation (PPIC, 2022).

Furthermore, the CCCCO provided colleges with additional curricular guidance for ESL, which included ESL pathways to transfer-level English that bypass remedial English courses, integrated courses in ESL skills (e.g., reading/writing/grammar), increased professional development for ESL and transfer-level English faculty, and transfer credit for transfer-level credit ESL courses (Hayward et al., 2022).

A qualitative study by the RP Group of AB 705 implementation at 14 California community colleges reported believing that all students can complete transfer-level English in their first year if they have support (White et al., 2021). However, the literature also stated that some faculty had concerns about instructors adopting deficit mindsets that would negatively impact their confidence in students' abilities to successfully complete transfer-level English courses (Kanno, 2021; PPIC, 2022). The RP Group's qualitative report delivered recommendations ranging from professional development for all faculty, including part-time, and robust collaboration across campus, including between English and ESL departments, to ensure student success (White et al., 2021). Many colleges reported changing the ESL curriculum or adding corequisite courses to support English learners enrolled in transfer-level English (White et al., 2021). Others started or expressed interest in starting a transfer-level English equivalent (TLEE) course for ESL students (Hayward, 2020).

Overall, AB 705 was hailed as a success by many California community college educators and administrators by providing equal access to college math and English courses and increasing the number of students starting in and completing transfer-level college composition. In addition, they claimed that racial and ethnic gaps have decreased, with Black and Latino students being as likely to start in transfer English as whites and Asians (PPIC, 2022).

Criticism of AB 705

Not all educators and organizations are calling AB 705 a success (FACCCtivism, 2022). A study of English faculty in the Los Angeles Community

College District showed that one-third did not believe AB 705 promoted equity (USC Rossier, 2022). One stated that AB 705 has perhaps made things “worse because you’re taking students who are not actually prepared to be in college, in a college-level course” (USC Rossier, 2022, p. 25). Most faculty believed that remedial courses were necessary to serve students in the open-access community college system (USC Rossier, 2022). However, any remaining remedial or developmental math or English courses disappeared in 2022 with the passage of AB 1705.

Background on AB 1705

Assembly Bill 1705 (AB 1705) passed the California Assembly and was signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom in September 2022. AB 1705 expanded on AB 705 in three key ways. First, it ensured that colleges enroll students in math and English courses “with the greatest likelihood of completing degree and transfer requirements” (PPIC, 2022, p. 3). Further, it clarified that colleges bear responsibility for ensuring that students have academic support to reach their goals and that colleges must not require students to repeat courses they have passed in high school (PPIC, 2022).

Guidance from the CCCCCO (Lowe, A. December 23, 2022. *Memorandum to California community college faculty and executive administration*) was that English learners with a high school diploma from the U.S.:

1. Must be enrolled directly into transfer-level English;
2. Cannot enroll in noncredit coursework (including noncredit ESL);

3. Can enroll in credit ESL only if multiple evidence-based measures show that the student is highly unlikely to succeed in transfer-level English based on their grade point average and coursework and complete transfer-level English within a three-year timeframe;
4. Can be required to enroll in additional concurrent support, including language support for ESL students;
5. Can only enroll in non-credit courses that are required as co-enrollment in transfer-level coursework (Lowe, A., 2022).

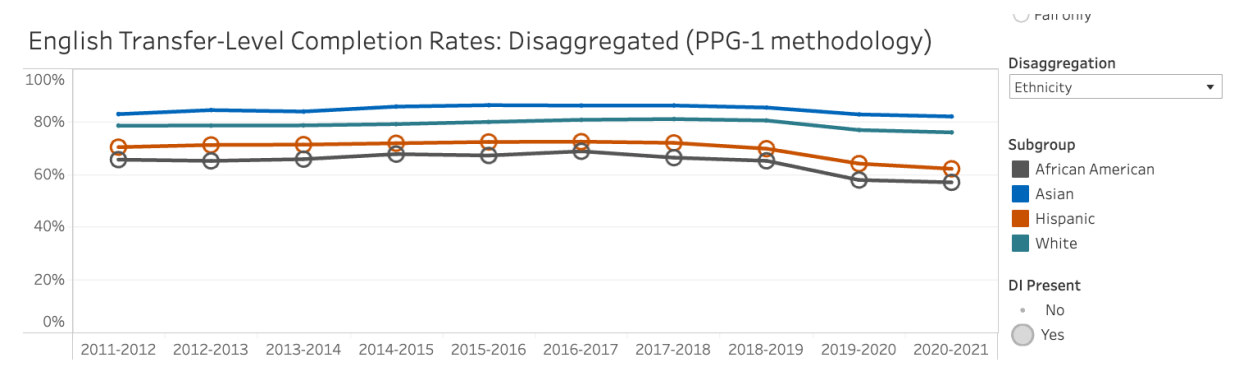
Table 2.3. California Legislation Comparison: Assembly Bills 705 and 1705

AB 705 (2018)	AB 1705 (2022)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminates testing for class placement. 2. Uses multiple measures including high school transcripts and GPA for student class placement. 3. Prohibits community colleges from enrolling students in courses that they passed in high school. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Builds on AB 705. 2. Requires that California community colleges expand efforts to enroll and support students in transfer-level math and English. 3. Requires community colleges to place students directly into transfer-level English and math courses. 4. Requires community colleges to provide access to academic support to students who need or desire it.

Critical voices opposed AB 1705, including the Academic Senate and the Faculty Association for California Community Colleges (FACCC), which argued that the bill ignored the mission of the CCC to provide remedial academic support for students who require it to be successful (PPIC, 2022). They added that, like AB 705, AB 1705 is an unfunded mandate that did not provide schools or faculty

the resources or professional development to support the wide-ranging academic needs of students under the new laws (PPIC, 2022). The FACCC believed that AB 1705 was overly legislative, removed options for students, and prevented college faculty from having purview over the curriculum (FACCCtivism, 2022). As shown in Figure 2.4, FACCC cited widening achievement gaps between black and Hispanic students and the need to support students at all academic levels by providing access to the curriculum necessary for their educational goals.

Figure 2.4. California Transfer-Level English Completion Rates 2011-2021



CCCCO. (2022). *Transfer-Level Gateway Completion Dashboard | California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office*. <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/transfer-level-dashboard>

Data on Achievement Gaps Post-AB 705

Data from the CCCCCO dashboard from 2019-20 and 2020-21 on transfer-level English completion rates of California community college students by ethnicity showed widening equity gaps for Black and Hispanic students since AB

705 went into effect (CCCCO, 2022). It is important to note that the number of unsuccessful students was likely higher because the CCCCCO's dashboard did not include students who dropped the class before census (FACCCtivism, 2022).

It is not possible to identify the number of US-ELs in the CCCCCO reporting because under current reporting structures, once students leave the K-12 system and enter higher education, they are no longer identified and tracked as English learners. However, eighteen percent of the California K-12 school population are English learners, and eighty-five percent of those students speak Spanish and are classified as Hispanic. Therefore most US-educated English learners who have continued to community college would fall into the Hispanic category on the CCCCCO's reporting dashboard (California Department of Education, 2022).

Using the CCCCCO data, shown in Table 2.5, one can see the impact that AB 705 and the COVID-19 pandemic have had on Hispanic students, some of whom are US-educated English learners.

Table 2.5. Transfer-Level English Completion Rates Pre- and Post-AB 705

Timeframe of Completion: 1 Year					
Starting at: Transfer Level English					
Student Population	Cohort Size	2018-19 Pre AB705 Successful Transfer Level English Completion Rates	2018-19 Pre AB705 Successful Transfer Level English Throughput	2018-19 Pre AB705 Unsuccessful Transfer Level English Throughput	2018-19 Pre AB705 Unit Ratio Complete to Non Complete
California	214,506	75%	160,355	54,151	0.338
Hispanic	93,555	70%	65,083	28,472	0.437
College	Cohort Size	2020-21 AB705 Successful Transfer Level English Completion Rates	2020-21 AB705 Successful Transfer Level English Throughput	2020-21 AB705 Unsuccessful Transfer Level English Throughput	2020-21 AB705 Unit Ratio Complete to Non Complete
California	247,978	68%	169,448	78,530	0.463
Hispanic	112,350	62%	69,602	42,748	0.614
	Additional Students 2018-19 to 2020-21		Additional Successful Completions 2018-19 to 2020-21	Additional Unsuccessful Completions 2018-19 to 2020-21	Unit Ratio 2018-19 to 2020-21
California	33472		9093	24379	2.681
Hispanic	18795		4519	14276	3.159

Note: Adapted with permission from Judge, 2022 using data from:
 CCCCCO. (2022). *Transfer-Level Gateway Completion Dashboard | California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office*. <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/transfer-level-dashboard>

Before AB 705 and COVID-19, 65,083 students successfully passed transfer-level English, or 70% of the cohort for that year. After AB 705 went into effect, there was a clear increase in the number of Hispanic students who passed transfer-level English: 69,602. This data is referred to as *throughput* – getting to and through a specific course within a specified period – and higher throughput is often cited as evidence of the success of AB 705 (Hayward, 2018). The data showed that in 2020-21, 4,519 more Hispanic students accessed and successfully completed transfer-level English than the prior year under AB 705. However, the data also showed that more students took transfer-level English, and the percentage of students successfully completing it fell from 70% to 62%.

Going further, the data for unsuccessful transfer-level English completion showed that 28,472 Hispanic students were unsuccessful in completing transfer-level English pre-AB 705. This number jumped to 42,748 in 2020. While an additional 4,519 Hispanic students completed transfer-level English, an additional 14,276 failed in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and one-year post-AB 705 implementation. While data showed a clear increase in the number of students accessing transfer-level English, it also showed a significant increase in student failures. Significantly, these numbers did not include students who dropped the course before census or, in other words, students who registered for the course, then decided to drop it in the first few weeks of the semester (FACCCtivism, 2022). This could include students who changed to another class, decided they did not want or need the course, or that it was beyond their abilities.

Overall, 18,795 more Hispanic students accessed transfer-level English in 2020-21 than in 2018-19, but only 4,519 (24%) successfully completed it. To get these additional students through, more than 14,276 (76%) were pushed to transfer-level English and did not complete it. For every one additional successful Hispanic student completing transfer-level English, there were three additional failures. To use an analogy developed by East Los Angeles College math professor Daniel Judge, Hispanic students were more likely to survive the Titanic than transfer-level English (FACCCtivism, 2022). Preliminary evidence suggests that students who are unsuccessful in transfer-level courses drop out of community college altogether (FACCCtivism, 2022).

US-EL Language Instruction in Community College

US-educated English learners need courses and instruction that promote completing academic goals, whether vocational, two-year, or transfer degrees. California's K-12 English learners are profoundly underserved in academics and college preparation, which results in inequities between racial and ethnic groups in higher education (Hayward et al., 2022; Kanno, 2021; Núñez et al., 2016). For US-EL students to succeed, community colleges must fill the gap in academic English literacy for students who are not yet proficient in English while supporting and acknowledging the vast barriers that prevent US-ELs from persisting toward their higher education goals (Kanno, 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2019; Rutan et al., 2019). Núñez (2016) called for English composition faculty and administration to “recognize and take responsibility for the regular presence of second language writers in writing classes, to understand their characteristics, and to develop instructional and administrative practices that are sensitive to their linguistic and cultural needs” (p. 67). Equity-minded approaches such as this hold higher education institutions accountable for the success of English learners (Núñez, 2016).

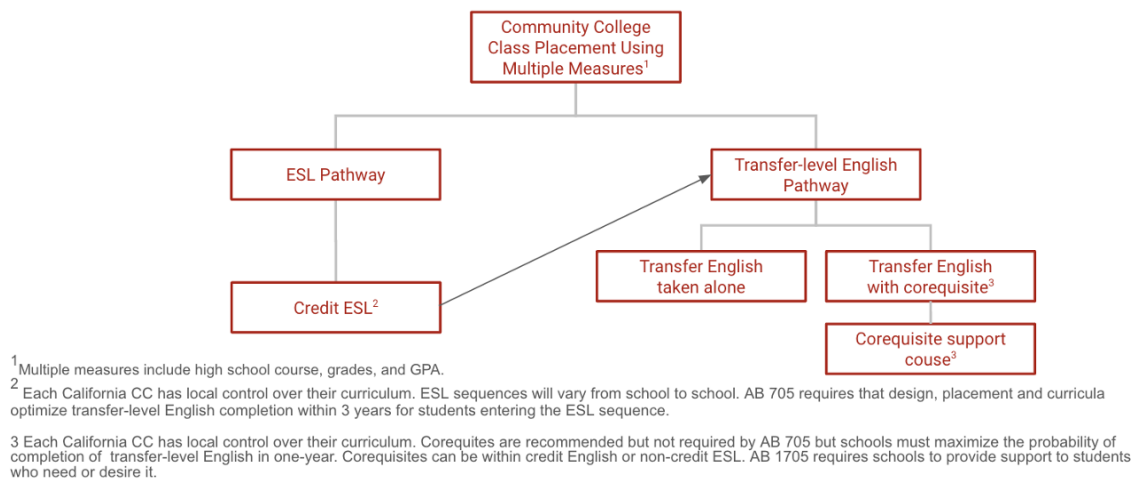
The literature suggested pedagogical approaches to support US-ELs in postsecondary education, including credit ESL courses, increased professional development for English and ESL faculty, and corequisite support courses. AB 1705 removed non-credit ESL as an option for high school graduates unless taken as a corequisite for transfer-level English (A.B. 1705, 2022). Consequently, the most current literature specific to California ELs post-AB-705 recommended

that US-ELs proceed directly to transfer-level English or credit ESL, with data showing better outcomes for ELs when they bypass ESL (Hayward et al., 2022).

Transfer-Level English for US-ELs

While the data showed Hispanic students, some of whom are US-ELs, successfully completing transfer-level English at lower rates post-AB 705, a quantitative study of California English learners by Hayward et al. (2022) showed that US-ELs have much better success if they enter community college and go directly to transfer-level English rather than taking ESL courses. Under AB 705, English learners seeking transfer to a four-year California UC or CSU via community college have two pathways toward transferable college-level English. Using multiple measures for placement, US-ELs with high school data can go directly to transfer-level English (noted in Hayward et al.'s study as the *English Pathway*), or they can begin in credit ESL (noted in Hayward et al.'s study as the *ESL Pathway*) (Hayward et al., 2022).

Figure 2.5. Transfer-Level English Pathways Under AB 705 and AB 1705



Hayward et al. (2022) examined data on groups of students classified as ELs in high school who enrolled in California community colleges and entered either the credit ESL Pathway or the English Pathway. They found that ELs had much higher success rates when they enrolled directly in college-level English composition than in the ESL Pathway (Hayward et al., 2022).

The odds of EL US high school graduates who entered directly into transferable, college-level English composition successfully achieving throughput within one year of their initial enrollment in the sequence were more than eight times greater than the odds of similar students who entered the ESL Pathway. (Hayward et al., 2022, p. 12)

The study found that this link was consistent regardless of ESL intensity in high school coursework and GPA: ESL courses prolonged the time to college-level classes and reduced the likelihood of success (Hayward et al., 2022).

Furthermore, they found that the English Pathway did not overwhelm English learners, and they were able to pass without a lengthy remediation (Hayward et al., 2022). The study supported the placement of US-ELs directly into the English Pathway with language support incorporated rather than isolated, as in ESL classes (Hayward et al., 2022).

The study's author Craig Hayward, Ph.D., conducted research for the RP Group on behalf of the California Community Colleges and was part of the Multiple Measures Assessment Project Team for AB 705 (Hayward, C. 2018; Newell, M., 2022). In a personal communication with Dr. Hayward, the

researcher asked if the study differentiated between credit ESL for International EFL students, credit ESL for US-ELs, and noncredit ESL. Dr. Hayward replied:

The research focused specifically on academically oriented ELs who [are] US high school graduates and who are seeking to complete a degree and/or transfer. That is a very specific and relatively small subset of the overall EL population. These students are overwhelmingly degree and transfer-focused and represent a distinct population of English learners. (Craig Hayward, personal communication, October 31, 2022).

Dr. Hayward viewed noncredit ESL students as most often not seeking a degree or transfer but basic English for work, general living purposes, or citizenship while acknowledging some overlap between the upper levels of noncredit ESL and the lower levels of the credit ESL curriculum (Craig Hayward, personal communication, October 31, 2022). The guidance from the CCCCO is that under AB 1705, US-ELs are disallowed from enrolling in noncredit ESL (except as a concurrent course) and must enroll in credit ESL (for which they must pay full tuition), which aligns with Hayward's research (Lowe, A., December 23, 2022). Furthermore, Dr. Hayward was clear in his opinion that the number of California English learners who are high school graduates and focused on obtaining a post-secondary degree is small.

Integrated Skills Courses for US-ELs

The most commonly cited pedagogical approach for instruction for English learners in higher education was integrated literacy skills instruction in grammar, reading, and writing, sometimes combined with oral language tasks (Bunch &

Kibler, 2015; David & Kanno, 2021; Hayward et al., 2022; Lacina & Griffith, 2017; Núñez et al., 2016). This approach can be applied in an ESL class or an ESL section of transfer-level or pre-transfer-level English (Núñez et al., 2016). Research from Hayward et al. (2022) focused on integrated literacy skills instruction within the credit ESL pathway leading directly to transfer-level English.

It is important to note that research showed that English instruction that centers on the explicit teaching of traditional grammar and discrete literacy skills did not help English learners succeed in college-level work (Bunch & Kibler, 2015). Pedagogies geared specifically toward US-educated English learners that did appear in the literature focused on integrated skills instruction, oral language use, culturally responsive teaching, and the development of metacognitive skills for research, study, and critical thinking (Bunch & Kibler, 2015; David & Kanno, 2021; Singhal, 2004).

Integrated skills instruction combines multiple skill areas (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) organized around discipline-specific content and authentic language tasks (David & Kanno, 2021). Research from a summer writing bridge program specific to US-ELs provided important pedagogical recommendations to help students succeed. The program offered small group instruction in academic reading and writing before US-ELs began college, using the strength of their oral language as a foundation to start writing instruction (Lacina & Griffith, 2017). The program understood the positive influence of language, including bilingual and biliteracy proficiency, on academic achievement (Lacina & Griffith, 2017).

Bunch and Kibler (2015) built on this, writing that “academic literacy in higher ed [for US-ELs] requires engaging in intellectual discussions, comparing and contrasting ideas, generating hypotheses, listening and taking notes, reading a variety of texts, summarizing and synthesizing information, and writing short answer responses and essays” (p. 22).

Bunch and Kibler’s (2015) research included observing a course at Chabot College in northern California called Accelerated Reading, Reasoning, and Writing, a four-unit, one-semester, developmental English course that leads directly to transfer-level English. Students in the course were 25% EFL, 20% were in ESL in K-12, and 70% speak languages other than English at home. The course has increased the number of students that access and complete transfer-level English, but it also “offers opportunities for US-EL students to engage in rigorous academic language and literacy environment in a shortened time sequence requiring instructors to prioritize and integrate language interventions” (Bunch & Kibler, 2015, p. 25).

It is important to note that Chabot’s Accelerated English course instructor focused on students’ second language issues. Grammar was not taught directly, but the instructor highlighted errors and discusses them with students to increase their understanding of grammatical structures in writing. The instructor believed that English learners, including US-ELs, benefited from the academic rigor of the class and were able to proceed to transfer-level English confident in their abilities (Bunch & Kibler, 2015). (Note: This class has since been removed from the Chabot course schedule due to AB 1705.)

Professional Development

The literature also pointed to the need for increased professional development for ESL and transfer-level English instructors to ensure that all community college English have awareness and understanding of the English learners at all instructional levels that are grounded in cultural proficiency (Bunch & Kibler, 2015; Hayward et al., 2022). As the number of English learners in community college grows, it is recommended that English teachers receive professional development in second language acquisition and best practices for supporting English language learners (Singhal, 2004). Community college English faculty who do not have experience with or awareness of English learners will need help understanding their needs or effectively helping them develop academic language (Singhal, 2004)..

Other Recommendations

Finally, to support all students, including English learners, as they transition from high school to transfer-level English, much of the literature recommended co-requisite support options (Bunch & Kibler, 2015; David & Kanno, 2021; Hayward et al., 2022; Stahl & Hern, 2017). Katie Hern, English Instructor at Skyline Community College, co-founded the California Acceleration Project (CAP). CAP is a faculty-led network that works to improve student outcomes in community college math and English. In a 2017 interview, Hern talked about corequisite English courses stating that they produced remarkable increases in student completion and reduced racial and ethnic achievement gaps (Stahl & Hern, 2017). “They are, frankly, THE most powerful approach to helping

underprepared students be successful," Hern asserted. Quantitative data backed Hern's claim by showing higher completion rates and lower achievement gaps for students of color at Skyline Community College, with an overall transfer-level English completion rate of 78 percent, with 73 percent of Hispanic students passing (CCCCO, 2022).

Summary

English learners are an under-studied student population, and research on their transition to higher education is even more limited. There is very little qualitative research on US-educated English learners who immigrated to the U.S. as children and learned English in the US K-12 public school system to understand their transition to higher education and academic needs. Their voices are undeniably missing from the literature.

The literature differentiated between international students, adult immigrants, and students who immigrated as children and graduated from high school in the U.S. Furthermore, multiple studies demonstrated wide variances in English learners' academic strengths and abilities based on their age of immigration, first language education, interruption of education due to immigration and family moves, K-12 ELD experience and level of access to mainstream coursework. Research demonstrated that US-educated English learners are a unique student population with linguistic strengths, social and emotional challenges, and academic needs that vary from student to student and are differentiated from international students and adult learners.

Multiple studies have shown the barriers and challenges US-ELs face, including deficit perceptions, linguistic insecurity, lack of understanding of and support with the college application process, financial challenges, and family immigration status. Additionally, recent studies showed that the COVID-19 pandemic had a more significant impact on Latino students and families. The conversion to online learning resulted in language loss for many English learners.

Finally, recent legislative changes in California have impacted US-educated English learners' matriculation to community college, as well as their course offerings and support options. Consideration of their needs was an afterthought as the legislation was being written. Four years after AB 705's implementation, many community colleges have not incorporated academic support for students in transfer-level English, including English learners, even as course completion rates decline for students of color.

The literature showed that English learners are more likely to enter higher education through community college. Still, even then they face multiple barriers to access and completion, so it is imperative that we study and understand their educational experiences and listen to their needs to mitigate outcome disparities. To that end, this study aims to listen to community college students who recently graduated from high school and were designated as English learners in middle or high school. The objective is to amplify student voices and use their words to inform best practices for curriculum and support, both academic and social-emotional, as described in Chapter Three, which outlines this study's research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study aimed to understand the transition of US-educated English learners from high school to higher education in the years following the implementation of AB 705 and the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter Three described the research methods that were used, data collection and analysis methods, and the theoretical frameworks that provided the foundation for the research. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How are US-educated English learners experiencing academic English across the curricula in community college?
2. What programs and supports do US-educated English learners need to prepare them for and/or support them in transfer-level English?
3. How are US-educated English learners connecting with these programs and supports, and how do they affect student outcomes and behaviors?

Safir et al. (2021) described the need for educational research methodologies that do not exacerbate oppression, colonialism, systemic bias, and inequity. To call forth deeper understanding and engage in research that drives change, Safir (2021) called for deep listening that seeks to understand.

To transform our schools, we need a nuanced and antiracist way to engage in “improvement” (or perhaps we need to dump that work altogether). We need mechanisms for listening to elders, community

leaders, and students and families at the margins who can collaborate *with* us to reimagine outdated approaches. We need to position teachers and principals as change agents rather than consumers of curricula and programs, zigzagging from one intervention to the next (Safir et al., 2021, p. 71).

This study intended to employ deep and thoughtful listening as US-educated English learners discuss their lives and educational experiences. The goal was to examine their transition from high school to community college , understand their academic and social needs better, and listen to their ideas as to how they believe community college could better serve them and their communities.

Research Design

To date, most of the research on the educational experiences of US-ELs is quantitative. The literature calls out this research gap and the need for qualitative studies of student experiences, noting that English learners in higher education are particularly under-researched (Brenneman, 2020; David & Kanno, 2021; FACCCTivism, 2022; Hayward et al., 2022).

A two-phased qualitative case study was used to understand and honor the lived experiences of US-ELs and tell their stories holistically. Qualitative case studies enable researchers to explore complex research of real-life phenomena in-depth, using multiple sources of information and data collection in a fluid manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ebneyamini & Sadeghi Moghadam, 2018).

Cuba, et al.'s study of Latino English learners inspired the research design by describing the effectiveness of case studies for educational research.

The case study design with an intersectional lens allowed us to learn about the participants' stories, how they identify themselves, and how they experienced education in the U.S. through in-depth interviews. This approach allowed us to move beyond the categories of Latino and EL and to see the participants as whole beings. (Cuba, et al., 2021, p. 65)

The study took place at a southern California community college federally designated as a Hispanic-serving institution, so it was essential to return to the frameworks that guided the study: Critical Race Theory/LatCrit, Community Cultural Wealth, and Intersectionality. The first lens, LatCrit, is essential to educational research by challenging deficit-informed ideas and examining the ways race and racism impact the educational structures and practices that students experience in both K-12 and community college (Guajardo et al., 2020; D. Solorzano et al., 2000; D. G. Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2005). The second, Community Cultural Wealth, recognizes and honors the multiple forms of frequently unrecognized capital that Students of Color bring to the classroom (Yosso, 2005). Lastly, Intersectionality highlights diverse student identities and provides a holistic representation of students to inform the research (Acevedo-Gil, 2019; Cuba et al., 2021). All three frameworks guided the research design, interviews, and participant interactions throughout the study and served as lenses through which the data was analyzed and interpreted.

This case study required open, free sharing of experiences, perspectives, and ideas from both student and faculty participants to mirror reality in a way that allowed the researcher to fully explore and explain the experiences of this unique student population. Creswell & Creswell (2018) describe the qualitative research process as 'emergent,' meaning it cannot begin with a strict, unchanging plan. An exploratory case study design allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the topic and learn about the issue from the participants' perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This research aimed to establish a foundation for further research on US-educated English learners in California community colleges. The study is not generalizable due to the vast differences between institutions, English language curriculums, and students. Still, the design study is replicable by schools wanting to analyze student academic engagement and needs and by high schools wishing to strengthen academic preparation for English learners.

Research Setting

This study occurred at Southern California Community College (SCCC), a pseudonym for a mid-size California community college federally recognized as a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI). To be recognized as an HSI a school must enroll at least 25 percent Hispanic students (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Approximately one-third of the students in the K-12 school districts surrounding the college are English learners, which made it an ideal location for the research.

Since AB 705 was implemented, SCCC removed all remedial English courses from the schedule and increased the presence of the tutoring center to help students with coursework, including English. At the time of the study, SCCC did not offer concurrent or corequisite support courses for transfer-level English but was in the process of creating one that will be in place after the research is complete. While SCCC's overall completion rates for transfer-level English were lower than they were in 2018-19, and more students are passing and failing transfer-level English, SCCC's English completion declines were not as steep as comparable colleges in Southern California.

SCCC had an extensive non-credit ESL program offering classes online and in person. It also had a small credit ESL program that offered classes primarily online but also in person for both US-resident English learners and international students on a visa. These classes focused on academic writing and were the only pre-transfer level English classes available to US-educated English learners.

Participation in the study was voluntary, and the researcher assumed that the opinions and experiences shared by the participants were honest and accurate. Classroom observations, artifacts, and campus interactions triangulated student stories and narratives.

Participant Section and Recruitment

Phase 1 of the case study included interviews with faculty and counselors who interact with US-ELs in and out of the community college classroom. Up to

ten faculty participants consisting of counselors who advise students on course placement and pathways, faculty from credit English, credit ESL, non-credit ESL, and tutoring center faculty and staff. Attention was paid to talking with faculty familiar with students, courses, and support services before 2019, when AB 705 went into effect, or as part of the AB 705 compliance workgroup. The researcher attempted to include both full-time and part-time adjunct faculty in the interview process since adjuncts accounted for approximately 70% of all faculty. The researcher also requested that faculty participants invite students who met the criteria to join Phase 2 of the study and provided a survey link for them to share.

Phase 2 consisted of two student interviews at the beginning and end of the semester. Student participants were recruited through multiple avenues, including instructor and counseling referrals, snowball sampling from recommendations, fliers, and email (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Case studies typically include four to five participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), but the researcher attempted to include ten student participants in either individual or group interviews.

When a potential participant was identified, they received a message about the study and a link to an online survey. The survey helped qualify students within specified criteria, including arrival to the U.S. in middle school or high school, ELD placement in middle school or high school, and high school diploma from the U.S. within the past three years, and provided some background on the student. Participants who fit the research criteria were invited to participate with a letter and informed consent statement outlining the study

format, audio recording guidelines, and confidentiality assurance signed before the interview. Participants who did not fit the criteria received a letter thanking them for participating in the survey.

To encourage student participation and respect their time and commitment to the interviews, students were offered \$50 to participate in one interview and \$50 to participate in a second interview at the end of the semester.

Data Collection

Qualitative research data comes from multiple sources, including interviews where participants are encouraged to share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences openly, and other artifacts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research data for this study came from the careful review, organization, and sensemaking of the participant interview data.

“Interviewer and interviewee are in partnership and dialogue as they construct memory, meaning, and experience together” (Madison, 2012, p. 28). The study aimed to elicit detailed narratives to understand the post-secondary educational experiences of US-educated English learners' experiences. This required intensive interviews that went beyond basic questions and used inventive, fluid, genuine techniques that patiently encouraged participants to reflect deeply and talk honestly about their experiences (Madison, 2012). It also will require active, sympathetic listening and mindful, respectful rapport between the researcher and participants (Madison, 2012). Reflection centered on humility

reminds me that *I do not know* and must “trust upon the knowledge of the knowers” (Madison, 2012, p. 39).

Phase one faculty and staff interviews were held individually to allow participants to speak freely and openly. Interview requests were made to counselors, ESL and English faculty, and faculty from departments that engage in student learning, such as tutoring. Interviews took place in person on campus or by Zoom, depending on the participant’s preference. Questions were topical in nature and centered around their experiences with students formerly classified as English learners and honest reflections on student needs in their area of expertise (See Appendix G).

Phase two student interviews took place individually or in small groups depending on student preference and availability. At the initial interviews, the researcher asked open-ended exploratory questions focused on the students’ educational experiences and goals (See Appendix F). The second interview occurred at the end of the semester and asked exploratory questions about student experiences that semester and their recommendations (See Appendix G). If needed, follow-ups were scheduled with individuals to clarify answers.

All participants were assured that their identities would not be revealed to anyone within the institution. Interviews for both groups were recorded, and the researcher took notes on body language, expressions, the atmosphere in the room, and any other notes that would not be picked up on a recorder.

Audio recordings from faculty and student interviews were submitted to a third-party transcription service Rev.com. The company uses AI speech

recognition to transcribe audio files accurately via a secure file uploader. Rev.com uses the highest level of security on its platform and, on request, deletes files once the transcription is complete. Digital audio files from the interviews were deleted from the researcher's audio devices and computer once data collection was complete. All data was stored on a password-protected computer and/or a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home office.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, two researchers can analyze the same data and reach entirely different conclusions or generate contradictory theories. Likewise, a qualitative researcher can analyze data created without notes, coding, or transcripts and develop a self-absorbed hypothesis based on their uneven analysis. This study intended to tell the participants' stories and generate conclusions based on their lived experiences. For this reason, a constant comparison data analysis was used to ensure that the researcher stays close to the words and feelings of the participants without relying on memory or assumptions (Fram, 2013; Turner, 2022). In constant comparison analysis, data is coded and then compared across multiple categories to identify patterns, with continual refinement as new data are collected.

Data collection, coding, and analysis co-occurred, looking for comparisons between participant interviews and responses, using the data to show differences and similarities and the reasons behind them. Qualitative data software Nvivo enabled the researcher to pull the data into categories and themes that could be

seen as visual relationships and then interpreted into an organizational framework. High-level coding allowed for abstract ideas, and low-level coding focused on factual data that guided the analysis (Madison, 2012). The data was grouped in a way that allowed the researcher to focus clearly on telling the story of the participants' experiences.

Validity and Trustworthiness

To ensure the validity of participant responses, triangulation was used wherever possible to compare participant experiences and interactions with the responses from faculty. It was also possible to triangulate student responses for validity, yet the diversity of experiences between students limited this (Carter et al., 2014). Participants received transcripts to allow them to modify or change any of their responses before the data analysis was complete. Participants were not shown other participants' data, nor was there any discussion between groups to ensure confidentiality.

As a researcher, the qualitative analysis, interpretations, and conclusions must be reliable, credible, and written with the utmost integrity. Thick description, or densely descriptive facts that provided cultural context and elevated the participants' voices, combined with reflexive practices that limited the researcher's subjectivity, provided the necessary academic rigor and validity to the study (Sankofa, 2022). In addition, this study held space for those whose stories have been unheard in quantitative data and used a decolonizing

methodology that gave voice to those who are easily marginalized and ignored (Sacks, 2015).

Positionality of the Researcher

In qualitative studies, the researcher is an instrument within their own design study. They conduct the interviews, collect the data, elicit meaning, observe behavior, review the documents, and then analyze and interpret the data to reach conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). While protocols are used, the researcher is the one to gather and interpret information, and the researcher's background can shape the direction and outcome of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Positionality is critical to qualitative research because it requires the researcher to recognize and reflect on their own biases, privileges, and power to understand how they can influence the participant interactions and interpretations of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

I am currently an adjunct instructor in the non-credit ESL department at a Hispanic-serving California community college. I teach low-beginning adult immigrants, mostly Spanish speakers who received their education outside of the U.S., so the students I teach are different from the students in this study. However, I have had US-ELs in my classroom several times as they registered for my class, believing that they needed to “start from the beginning.” These students were quickly referred to counseling for appropriate class placement, yet they lingered in my mind as I wondered if they found a class that was right for them and continued their studies. These interactions introduced me to US-

educated English learners. This, combined with my knowledge of changing placement and course availability due to AB 705 and the challenges students face post-COVID, inspired this study.

I'm originally from the Pacific Northwest, the fourth generation in her family to grow up there. After graduating high school, I attended community college for two years before transferring to a four-year university in Washington state. After trying and failing in French, I discovered a love for the Japanese language, which I studied for three semesters. I moved to Japan after graduation and taught English there. After returning to the U.S. I married a Japanese national and we had one daughter. She grew up speaking Japanese and English and I actively encouraged her language development and connection to her family in Japan. She completed college in Southern California, is bilingual, has dual Japanese and U.S. citizenship, and currently lives in Tokyo.

In 2017 I moved to Southern California and returned to college to pursue a master's degree in Education with an emphasis in TESOL – Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. I was motivated to change careers and return to teaching ESL in 2017 because of the growing hostility toward immigrants and racist rhetoric, along with a sincere desire to support the many immigrants in my community through language instruction.

Several aspects of my position could have challenged this study: whiteness, authority, and otherness. As a white woman and a part-time faculty member, student participants may have perceived me as having a position of power and authority and not felt safe in the interview process. I hope my

kindness and empathy helped me to establish trust that enabled participants to open up and share their experiences honestly.

Another potential barrier to gathering data was the white privilege of the researcher. Latino students encounter racism, microaggressions, oppression, and barriers as they work to access higher education (D. Solorzano et al., 2000). Muñoz et al. (2018) called on individuals wanting to be allies to “unpack their own White privilege and White fragility” (p. 48) and then wrestle with their positionality in order to decentralize their own emotions. The theoretical frameworks of the study – LatCrit, Community Cultural Wealth, and Intersectionality – along with the researcher’s acknowledgment of white privilege will stop the perpetuation of bias, oppression, systemic racism, colonialism, and white supremacy toward what Dr. Jamila Dugan calls “deep, equitable, culturally sustaining” listening and learning (Safir et al., 2021, p. 29).

Finally, SCCC faculty may have hesitated to talk openly about students with a perceived outsider. Brown (2018) reminds us that through an empathic connection that allows people to be heard and accepted, we can build connection through trust, kindness, acceptance, curiosity, understanding, and gratitude. Reflexivity, integrity, and upfront transparency about the research goals helped build confidence as the researcher worked with multiple individuals to complete this study.

Summary

This research aimed to listen to US-educated English learners' academic and social experiences to understand their transition to higher education. This two-phased case study employed interviews with community college faculty and students to amplify the voices of US-educated English learners and magnify their experiences in higher education. The unstructured data was transcribed, coded, and categorized to identify themes, categories, and recommendations. Maximum attention and care were taken to maintain confidentiality and ethical consideration through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and researcher reflexivity throughout the study.

The next chapter describes the research findings.

CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Introduction

This study aimed to understand the academic experiences and community college engagement of US-educated English learners (US-ELs) since the implementation of California Assembly Bills 705 and 1705 and the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter reviews the research methodology and data analysis and offers a detailed blueprint for addressing the research questions using the theoretical frameworks of LatCrit, Community Cultural Wealth, and Intersectionality. The following research questions guided the study: 1.) How are US-educated English learners experiencing academic English across the curricula in community college? 2.) What programs and supports do US-educated English learners need to prepare them for and/or support them in transfer-level English? 3.) How are US-educated English learners connecting with these programs and supports, and how do they affect student outcomes and behaviors? These research questions informed the interview questions for both students and faculty, as outlined in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Research Questions and Their Connection to the Interview Questions

Research Questions	Student Interview Questions	Faculty Interview Questions
1. How are US-educated English learners experiencing academic English across the curricula in community college?	<p>Tell me about your experiences coming to the U.S. and learning English.</p> <p>Do you think that high school prepared you for college? In what ways?</p> <p>What is your educational goal?</p> <p>What classes are you taking? How did you decide what classes to take?</p> <p>How was English 1A/ESL for you?</p> <p>Did you consider taking ESL? Why or why not?</p>	<p>What changes have you noticed since AB 705 was implemented?</p> <p>What changes have you noticed in students since the pandemic?</p>
<p>2. What programs and supports do US-educated English learners need to prepare them for and/or support them in transfer-level English?</p> <p>3. How are US-educated English learners connecting with these programs and supports, and how do they affect student outcomes and behaviors?</p>	<p>What role did your family play in your decision to go to this college?</p> <p>Did anything or anyone else encourage you to attend college?</p> <p>Was your counselor helpful as you planned your classes?</p> <p>Are there any clubs or activities that you'd like to join?</p> <p>What has been the biggest challenge in your transition from high school to community college?</p> <p>What advice do you have for your college to better support bilingual students in community college?</p>	<p>What resources have been offered to English learners to help them in or prepare them for transfer-level English?</p> <p>Has the school implemented (or will they be implementing) any changes to support English learners?</p> <p>Are there any changes that need to be made to classes or supports to better support English learners?</p> <p>If you could wave a magic wand, what would you change or implement to support English learners on campus?</p>

Theoretical Frameworks

This qualitative case study aimed to elevate the voices of US-educated English learners by sharing their academic experiences and engagement in community college through the lenses of Critical Race Theory (CRT)/LatCrit, Intersectionality, and Community Cultural Wealth.

CRT and Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit) challenges the impact of race and racism on educational structures, practices, and discourses, including the racial subordination experienced by Latinos in education (Yosso, 2005).

Intersectionality allows researchers in higher education to understand systems of inequity and advantage and their impact on student experiences and outcomes (Nichols & Stahl, 2019). As a framework for higher education, Intersectionality challenges inequities by focusing on marginalized, invisible students and looking at their diverse experiences and outcomes through multiple social categories (Barker, 2021; Cuba et al., 2021; Nichols & Stahl, 2019). As a research lens, Intersectionality highlights varying student identities, provides a holistic representation of students, and informs the research (Acevedo-Gil, 2019).

Community Cultural Wealth, as shown in Figure 4.1, calls attention to the unrecognized capital that Students of Color bring to the classroom and use to succeed in higher education (Yosso, 2005). Viewing students through a lens that recognizes this capital counters deficit narratives and focuses on these students' cultural assets and wealth (Yosso, 2005).

Figure 4.1. Community Cultural Wealth Model as Defined by Yosso



Acevedo, N., & Solorzano, D. G. (2023). An Overview of Community Cultural Wealth: Toward a Protective Factor Against Racism. *Urban Education*, 58(7), 1470–1488. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00420859211016531>

Table 4.2 categorizes and associates these theoretical frameworks with this study's thematic findings, which guide the responses to the research questions.

Table 4.2. Frameworks and Categories, Research Cited, and Thematic Findings

Framework	Research Cited	Category	Thematic Findings
CRT/LatCrit	hooks, 1994; Solórzano et al., 2000; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2005	Racial Discourse and Microaggressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher/student discourse • Faculty attitudes
		Programs and Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESL/Speaking • Online classes • Challenges navigating college registration • Tutoring • Summer Bridge • Counselors

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dreamers Resource Center • EOPS • English 1A experiences and supports • Resistance to Support • Challenges connecting with supports
		Language Support and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish speaking faculty • No club or org for ML students
Community Cultural Wealth	Yosso, 2005	Aspirational assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacrifices by parents • Desire to achieve their parents' dreams
		Linguistic assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual • Translating for family from a young age
		Familial Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sacrifice of parents for their children's educations • Parents' encouragement to go to college to get better jobs
		Navigational assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-12 experiences • Helping families
Intersectionality	Acevedo-Gil, 2019; Barker, 2021; Cuba et al., 2021; Nichols & Stahl, 2019; Núñez, 2014; Roland, 2018	Students Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigration status • Connection to US/home country
		Feelings of Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hesitant to ask for help
		Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afraid to speak up • Hard on themselves • Linguistic insecurity

Chapter Four will describe the demographics of the faculty and student participants, the research design and approach, and the data collection process. The chapter then focuses on data analysis, transforming the narratives into coherent patterns and themes that align with the frameworks.

Case Study Participants

The case study was conducted at a southern California community college federally designated as a Hispanic-serving institution. Data was collected in two phases between July and December 2023. The phased approach allowed the researcher to understand the institutional systems and structures from a faculty perspective before talking with students about their academic and social experiences at the college. This approach also allowed the researcher to triangulate narratives and increase the trustworthiness of the findings (Saldaña, 2016).

Participant Recruitment

For phase one, 13 faculty participants were recruited by email to participate in a 30-minute individual interview. The faculty participants included counselors, student services staff, and English and ESL faculty, who regularly instruct, support, or make decisions that impact US-ELs (Table 4.3). Seven faculty participants were female, and four were male. Five identified as Latino/a, and six were non-Latino/a. All faculty participants had been at the college for five years or more, had experienced the transition to AB705 and the pandemic, and had regular interactions with English learners. To ensure confidentiality, all faculty participants were assured that they would be referred to in the research findings only as ‘faculty.’

Table 4.3. Faculty Participants

Faculty Participants	Interview requested; participated in study	Interview requested; did not respond
Teacher	7	1
Counselor	3	5
Student Support Services	3	1
Total	13	7

Interviews took place in person or on Zoom, and each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. During this time, faculty answered the researcher's questions about their experiences with US-ELs, their understanding of and opinions about their needs in transfer-level English, and student learning outcomes.

For phase two, student participants were recruited via flier, school newsletter, social media, and Canvas. A QR code directed students to a Google Form to input personal data to determine their study eligibility. Twenty applicants were ineligible because they did not graduate from high school in the U.S. or were native English speakers (see Table 4.4). Ten students were contacted and agreed to participate in the study.

Table 4.4. Student Recruitment Results

Total number of student responses	32
Not eligible; did not meet criteria	20
Eligible, didn't respond to interview request	2
Eligible, participated in research	10

Student Participant Educational Demographics

The student participants selected for the study were all born in Mexico or Central America, immigrated to the U.S. before age 18, enrolled in school, and received a high school diploma from a school in southern California. After graduation, they enrolled at Southern California Community College (SCCC) to pursue a degree. Student participant demographics are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Student Participant Demographics

Name	Native Country	Age at Immigration	Grade Starting US K-12	Grade Student Reclassified	Academic Goal	English courses taken
Male 1	El Salvador	12	6 th	12 th	Transfer to CSU or UC	Enrolled in 1A
Male 2	El Salvador	13	7 th	n/a	Transfer to CSU	Two semesters of noncredit ESL Taking 1A Spring 24
Female 1	Mexico	5	K	7 th	Transfer to CSU	English 1A
Female 2	Mexico	16	10 th	n/a	Two year AA	Taking 1A Spring 24
Female 3	Mexico	5	K	9 th	RN	Taking 1A Spring 24
Female 4	Mexico	11	7 th	10 th	Transfer to CSU	Taking 1A Spring 24
Female 5	Mexico	6	4 th	12 th	M.Ed. Special Ed	English 1A
Female 6	Mexico	10	5 th	9 th	Undecided	Taking 1A Spring 24
Female 7	Mexico	17	12 th	n/a	M.Ed. Special Ed	Non-credit ESL English 1A
Female 8	Mexico	15	8 th	n/a	B.A. Education	Non-credit ESL English 1A

Seven students graduated from high school in or after 2020 (the year after AB 705's implementation and the COVID-19 pandemic). All but two students, Female 3 and Female 4, enrolled at SCCC immediately following graduation. Female 3 went to work for one year before enrolling, and Female 4 spent time traveling between Mexico and the U.S. because of family circumstances before enrolling in community college. Female 5 graduated in 2019 but has been continuously enrolled in community college part-time since graduation. Student demographics by high school graduation year are shown in Table 4.6

Table 4.6. Student Demographics by High School Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Number of Students (Research Identifier)
2023	2 (M1, F6)
2022	3 (M2, F2, F3)
2021	1 (F8)
2020	1 (F7)
2019	1 (F5)
2018	1 (F1)
2008	1 (F4)

The number of semesters completed at SCCC varied among the participants, as shown in Table 4.7. Six students were in their first or second year of community college. Females 7 and 8 spent two years in non-credit ESL before

enrolling in credit courses, and Female 5 had been continuously enrolled part-time since graduating high school.

Table 4.7. Student Demographics by Time Spent in Community College

Number of CC Semesters Completed	Year of Community College	Number of Students (Student Identifier)
Newly enrolled	1	3 (M1, F6, F3)
2	2	4 (M2, F1, F2, F4)
4	3	1 (F8)
6	4	1 (F7)
8	5	1 (F5)

Table 4.8 shows the educational and career goals of the student participants. Four intend to study education to become teachers, with three wanting to pursue master's degrees in special education. One student plans to study criminal justice to become a police officer, another is interested in business administration, and one wants to study kinesiology to work in sports. Of the undecided transfer degree-pursuing students, one is interested in special education, another in nursing, and one is currently learning American Sign Language in hopes of becoming an interpreter and is also interested in real estate. Female 2 intends to pursue a university degree in sociology, psychology, or criminal justice in hopes of working with Spanish-speaking immigrants.

Table 4.8. Student Demographics by Educational and Career Interests

Educational Goals/ Career Interests	Number of Students
Special Education	3
Education – Spanish/ESL	1
Criminal Justice	2
Nursing	1
Business	1
Kinesiology	1
Undecided	1

Data Collection

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 13 faculty members and ten students. The interview questions were designed to understand the institution's programs and structures and the students' experiences from immigration to enrollment in community college. The interviews were semi-structured, using scripts that allowed additional questions and follow-up as needed.

The interviews took place in person or on Zoom. Faculty interviews were between 30 and 45 minutes, and student interviews were between 45 and 60 minutes. The researcher employed thoughtful listening and genuine dialogue with the faculty and students to answer the research questions through the lenses of the theoretical frameworks and inform best practices to attract, support, and retain US-educated English learners in community college.

Research Data Analysis

Interview transcripts served as the primary data source for both faculty and students. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed using the online transcription service Rev.com. Because the transcriptions were done using AI technology, the researcher reviewed the transcripts for accuracy and listened to the recordings to ensure accuracy. Once accuracy was confirmed, the researcher uploaded the transcripts into the qualitative data analysis software program NVivo.

Transcripts were coded in predetermined topics in general chunks as described by Saldaña (2016) and then analyzed conceptually for themes using Excel. In Vivo codes, word frequencies, and text searches were run and analyzed using NVivo's Query function.

Results of the Study

The findings were organized thematically using the three theoretical frameworks that guided the study, as outlined in Table 4.2. The first framework, CRT/LatCrit, focuses on how the institution empowers or marginalizes Latino US-EL students. The findings within the LatCrit framework are divided into three themes: 1) Transfer-Level English Language Experiences Post AB 705; 2) Racial Discourse and Microaggressions; and 3) Programs and Structures.

The next framework, Intersectionality, is divided into three themes and examines the students' 1) Lived Experiences, 2) Feelings of Trust, 3) Identities, and 4) Connection and Sense of Belonging.

Finally, the Community Cultural Wealth framework highlights the cultural assets that US-ELs bring to community college and examines the participant findings related to 1) Aspirational, 2) Familial, 3) Navigational, 4) Social, and 5) Linguistic Capital.

Each section concludes with a summary of the research findings, including the student experiences, student needs, and the research questions that are addressed. The structure of the findings and how they relate back to the research questions are shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9. Research Findings by Frameworks and Themes

Framework	Theme	Research Questions Addressed
LatCrit	1) Transfer-Level Experiences Post-AB 705 2) Racial Discourse and Microaggressions 3) Programs and Structures	1, 2, 3 1, 2, 3 1, 2, 3
Intersectionality	1) Lived Experiences 2) Feelings of Trust 3) Identities 4) Connection and Sense of Belonging	1, 2, 3 1, 2, 3 2 2
Community Cultural Wealth	1) Aspirational Capital 2) Familial Capital 3) Navigational Capital 4) Social Capital 5) Linguistic Capital	2 2 2, 3 2 1, 2, 3

Student Experiences at SCCC Through the LatCrit Lens

While education has the potential to empower students, it also has the power to engage in students' oppression and marginalization (hooks, 1994; Freire, 1970, 1973 in Yosso, 2005, p. 74). CRT and its branches, which include

Latino, Asian, Native American, and Feminist Critical Theory, “challenge the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses” (Yosso, 2005, p. 74). Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit) extends CRT to include racial subordination experienced by Latinos based on immigration status, language, culture, accent, surname, and culture (Yosso, 2005).

The first section examines SCCC’s response to AB 705 and US-EL experiences in transfer-level English post-AB 705. Next, the study discusses the racial and linguistic microaggressions that US-ELs experienced from English faculty, in and out of the classroom. Finally, the study looks at the US-EL's engagement with programs and structures at SCCC to understand how these experiences influence Latino US-ELs at SCCC.

US-EL Experiences in Transfer-Level English Post-AB 705

When AB 705 and, later, AB 1705 were enacted, the Chancellor’s office included recommendations to all California community colleges to support students enrolling directly in transfer-level math and English, primarily through corequisite or concurrent support courses (California Community Colleges, 2023). The CCCCO also provided colleges with additional curricular guidance for English learners, including increased professional development for ESL and transfer-level English faculty (Hayward et al., 2022). AB 1705 goes further and places the responsibility on community colleges to ensure that students have academic support to reach their goals and complete required coursework (PPIC, 2022).

The English faculty at SCCC, a Hispanic-serving institution with over 70 percent Latino students, implemented none of these changes and decided not to add a corequisite or concurrent English support class for students or hold any professional development for faculty. One faculty member shared SCCC's response to the pending legislation.

Before AB 705 passed, it had been on the horizon for years. Full-time faculty tend to be held responsible for keeping up with these legislative changes that will impact our students, and there was a period of change in trying to adapt and get ahead of the curve. But there was such dissent towards the idea of AB 705 that it kind of stopped in its tracks. By the time the law passed, where many other institutions were ready with curriculum for a co-requisite, directed self-placement, additional supports, writing labs, or something like that, we had nothing. And there were a lot of reasons: the pandemic slowed things down, philosophical differences, people having personal issues, not being able to continue working on this curriculum, all that good stuff. From my perspective, that was a faculty failure (personal communication, June 2023).

Other faculty shared this frustration at the departmental response and believed that corequisite support courses should have been in place when the law was enacted. Faculty identified themselves as the ones responsible for proactively responding to the legislation, yet failed to do so because of “disagreement,” “dissent toward the bill,” and “fatalistic shoulder shrugging” (personal communications, June/July 2023).

AB 1705 has passed, and we still have not gotten our corequisite English course through Curriculum. It's still being written. And so, from my perspective, we've responded much too slowly. We've identified what resources would be helpful, but we've dragged our feet because, philosophically, there's some concern about the legislation from an English perspective, and I think that's a massive disservice to students (personal communication, June 2023).

One faculty member expressed frustration over the lack of corequisite support courses for students: "Because it's been a while [since AB 705 went into effect] ... we have been asking departments to get on board and provide extra support, but it hasn't happened" (personal communication, June 2023).

Only one faculty member expressed a desire to reinstate remedial English classes, saying it was the only way to support students. "[Students] are shocked that we don't offer developmental English anymore. And they're like, can you please offer something? Our students need it, and they're asking for it. I know that there is a demand for it as well as a perceived need for it" (personal communication, June 2023). Other faculty contradicted this claim, stating that "students don't ask for remedial courses" (personal communication, June 2023).

Most faculty felt that students could succeed with support from their teachers and tutoring and that students would benefit from a corequisite support course. "I think that a co-requisite would work well. It would be an extra unit, which would focus on grammar and doing very basic things. I think that would help" (personal communication, September 2023).

The English coursework trajectories of the student participants varied greatly and are outlined in Table 4.10. To complete an Associate Degree or Associate Degree for Transfer (AD-T) at SCCC, students must complete freshman composition, also known as English 1A. Five of the ten student participants had completed or were in the process of completing this pivotal course. Two students enrolled directly in English 1A after high school, while the other three took English 1A after taking a remedial English class or several semesters of non-credit ESL. Of the five students in the study who successfully completed English 1A, only one finished with no issues. Four out of five students struggled academically with English 1A.

Table 4.10. Student Participants' English Pathways and Outcomes

Student	English Courses	Modalities	Outcomes
Female 1	ENG 1A completed	Asynchronous Online	Struggled with academics and instructor. Passed with a B.
Female 5	Took pre-transfer English at another community college. ENG 1A completed	Synchronous Online	Pre-transfer course at another school "really helped" by filling the gaps from high school English. Passed with a C. Experienced microaggressions from instructor during class. Didn't want online but evening in-person class wasn't available.
Female 7	ESLN – 5 semesters ENG 1A completed ENG 2 enrolled and dropped	Online during pandemic, then in person	Positive ESLN outcomes. Passed 1A with an A. Experienced racial and linguistic microaggressions from instructor who forced her to drop ENG 2.

Male 1	ENG 1A completed Fall 23	In person	Almost dropped the course. Passed with a B
Female 8	ESLN – 4 semesters ENG 1A completed Fall 23	ESLN in person, 1A online	Struggled with online asynchronous. Passed with a C
Female 2	None yet. Didn't know that ESL courses were available to US-ELs when enrolling in Fall 22. Enrolled in a certificate program.	In person	Failed multiple courses. Enrolling in non-credit overlay of credit ESL Spring 24.
Male 2	ESLN – 2 semesters	Synchronous Online	ESLN helped prepare him for credit classes. Taking 1A Spring 2024
Female 3	None yet	Online – doesn't have transportation	Taking non-English GE courses online. Struggling to connect with counseling and support programs online.
Female 4	None yet	In person	Taking 1A in Spring 2024
Female 6	None yet	In person	Taking 1A in Spring 2024

Female 1 and Female 5 completed English 1A prior to our interview and shared their experiences in the class. Female 1 took the course online in the Fall of 2022 and was confident about taking it when she enrolled. She felt that high school prepared her for academic English, and she also felt equally strong in Spanish and English. In this class, which was held online asynchronously, the teacher did not provide any guidance or talk to the students about academic support, such as tutoring. Female 1 said it was a challenge when asked how the class was.

Female 1: It was really hard. I've never had a bad experience with any classes. That was my first class that I really struggled with and had a really hard time with. I even contacted my counselor because I wanted to drop it at one point because it was just too much for me. But then she's like, oh, just stick with it, try to finish it. And surprisingly I did, but it was really hard.

Researcher: What made it hard?

Female 1: Some of the work was really hard, and the teacher was very strict on her grading. If you didn't do it the way that she wanted it, she didn't work with anything. She automatically gave a bad grade, so it wasn't really helpful.

Researcher: Did the teacher ever talk to you about where you could go to get help?

Female 1: No, she never did. She never tried to help me.

Researcher: Did the other students feel the same way?

Female 1: I didn't talk to any of the other students, but based on the discussion comments on the assignments, everyone was asking her for help.

Researcher: What grade did you get in English?

Female 1: I got a B, and I've had all As since I started. That was my first B, actually (personal communication, August 2023).

Faculty spoke about the differences between student learning in English 1A taught online versus in person.

Online is not the same. They don't learn the same. Being in the classroom is much more effective. When I taught online during the pandemic, the students never asked me any questions. They never did. But now they will ask me questions about every little thing, which is something that they need to do.

Female 8 took English 1A online “because I don't have a lot of time. It's because I have two jobs. I work in the mornings and also I work in the afternoons” (personal communication, January 2024). Her course was held online asynchronously, yet she reported receiving good support from her professor.

Female 8: So the thing with him, he always emailed me, and he was like, oh, if you need to improve your writing, just do this. Just watch this video that I just published. You can see the difference between this and this. And I was just trying to keep working to watch the videos and also to improve my writing. I was sending emails to him as well, and he was like, you're correcting this, but you need to change this. And that's the way that we worked together.

Researcher: And did you tell your professor that you are an English learner?

Female 8: I did. I told him, ‘I'm sorry, but sometimes I'm having trouble writing because this is my second language. So sometimes I confuse myself with some words.’ And he [replied] ‘*I have a lot of students like you that they came to my class and told me that, but they did so good. So*

don't worry. You're going to be good in this class. I'm going to help as well" (personal communication, January 2024).

In addition to her professor, she got a lot of support from her EOPS counselor in Spanish over the semester, which helped her persist in English 1A.

[My EOPS counselor] was like, *'This class is going to be hard. You need to try your best. You need to keep working on it. And if you need help, just let me know. I can help you. But you need to produce.'* She's always calling me. (personal communication, October 2024).

Female 8 shared that she passed English 1A with a C. When asked if, in retrospect, she would have done better taking the class in person, she first shared a reason for preferring online and then agreed that it might have been a better outcome.

I don't know, to be honest. It's because sometimes when I'm taking the class in person, I think that it's harder because sometimes the teacher's asking you questions and I don't like to answer. But I think maybe in that class, yeah, it would be more easy" (personal communication, January 2024).

Female 5 took English 1A at SCCC in the Fall of 2022 after transferring from another community college where she had been able to take a pre-transfer English class that was still on the schedule despite AB 705.

It definitely helped me a lot because I got information that I never learned in high school, so it truly did help me. It helped me with my grammar, it helped me with commas, and then it helped me with my reading as well.

So it was very helpful. And then when I transferred [to SCCC], I was like, okay, now I have to take English 1A (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 5 described 1A as “hard.” She prefers classes in person but had to take the course online because she works full-time and there were no in person evening classes available. The class was online synchronous, and she described one class experience on Zoom that made the course more difficult for her. Her experience will be described in the next section Racial Discourse and Microaggressions.

Male 1 graduated high school in June 2023 and started at SCCC in September 2023. He enrolled in English 1A in the Fall semester. Before enrolling, a friend told him he would have to take a placement test for English (a practice that ended in the Fall of 2019 after the passage of AB 705). Male 1 assumed he would have to take ESL and was surprised he could enroll in English 1A his first semester (personal communication, August 2023). His counselor enrolled him directly into the class with no further discussion.

At our first interview, the semester had just begun, and Male 1 didn’t know how English 1A would be, so a second interview was held at the end of the semester. Fortunately, he said it had been a good semester for him, and he would finish English 1A with a B grade.

In my English class, I struggled a little bit with the instructions. Sometimes I fell behind because I didn't understand the instructions well, so I had to go to office hours or stay after class to talk to my teacher and ask for help,

and he would help me. He explained everything again to me (personal communication, December 2023).

Male 1 talked with his professor at the beginning of the semester to tell him that he was an English learner and was fortunate to have an understanding, compassionate teacher who was willing to help students. "I told my professor that English was my second language and that I struggled a little bit, and he said that was okay. He said he would help me to overcome that" (personal communication, December 2023). When asked about his professor and what made him feel safe or comfortable going to him for help, he shared about the professor's patience in helping students succeed and the trust he instilled in him.

He is very patient. He knows that English is my second language, so he always tries to, doesn't let me, how can I say it? Not let me get behind. He tries to put me with the other groups and treats me like another student. He doesn't let me fall behind, and then he comes back for me (personal communication, December 2023).

Male 1 emphasized how difficult English 1A was for him as we spoke, so I asked if he ever considered dropping the class.

Male 1: At the beginning, yeah. I was scared. I thought I couldn't do it, but I had another teacher, my history teacher, who told me, '*If you already started, why would you drop? You have a good grade. Why would you drop if you have a good grade and you have the opportunity to finish?*'

Researcher: If you hadn't talked to that teacher, do you think you would have dropped?

Male 1: Yes.

Researcher: Really?

Male 1: Yes, because I didn't feel prepared for that level of English (personal communication, December 2023).

The faculty discussed ways to manage transfer-level English classes and support students without a corequisite support course. Many teachers have adjusted their classes to fit student needs but emphasized that these changes are for and needed by all students, not just English learners. They spoke of being open-minded, less strict, flexible, and creative in using whatever teaching tools are required to help students learn and succeed.

The classes have slowed down. Students are struggling a lot, and so I have to pause. For this semester, I wasn't going to give them time to work on their essays in class because I didn't realize they needed it. But they asked for it, so I gave them at least 30 minutes so they could work on their essay and ask me questions (personal communication, September 2023).

Summary: US-EL Experiences in Transfer-Level English Post-AB 705.

This section focused on SCCC's response to AB 705 and US-EL's experiences in English 1A post-AB 705. The faculty narratives and student experiences revealed the consequences of the English faculty's failure to provide student corequisite support in English 1A or professional development for English faculty. It also showed the challenges that US-ELs had when taking English 1A online. However, student experiences also revealed the positive impact that supportive professors who acknowledge and respect second language learners in their

classroom can have on student learning. Finally, these findings demonstrated that transfer-level English is difficult for US-ELs. The findings are summarized and connected to the research questions in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10a. US-EL Experiences and Needs in Transfer-Level English, and Research Questions Addressed

Program	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
English 1A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no corequisite support course for students in English 1A. • US-ELs experience academic neglect, microaggressions, and negative attitudes from teachers. • Four out of five US-ELs struggled with the difficulty of English 1A and considered dropping the course. • Support and encouragement from professors who know some students are English learners improves student outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive, patient faculty. • A corequisite support course, especially one that is geared toward ELs. • Faculty professional development that eliminates negative attitudes and microaggressions toward English learners. • Professional development to English professors in supporting English learners in their classrooms. 	RQ1, 2, 3
English 1A Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online English 1A courses were more difficult for US-ELs than in-person. • One US-EL took English 1A online asynchronously because of work but also to not get called on in class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More in person classes, including evenings. • Better support for online classes. • Counselors encourage US-ELs to take English 1A in person. 	RQ1, 2, 3

Racial Discourse and Microaggressions Toward Students

During the faculty interviews, three of the thirteen faculty shared concerns about harmful attitudes toward the department's English learners. "I don't think we as a school do enough to celebrate those students and help them see themselves in a positive light and see [their language abilities] as a talent instead

of a burden” (personal communication, June 2023). Another noted an increase in hostile rhetoric among English faculty “that refers to our students as unintelligent. I've been trying to call it out, and I'm not the only one” (personal communication, June 2023).

Another faculty shared a story of an SCCC English instructor who uses the first week of school to “weed out all the students who aren't committed through a system of assignments. I made the comment, *‘Do you think that really works?’* And they said, *‘Well, they don't come back.’* It made me want to cry” (personal communication, June 2023).

Female 7 experienced this in her English 2 class. She took English 1A after completing five semesters of non-credit ESL to improve her speaking. She reported going into English 1A with strong reading and writing skills and received an A grade at the end of the semester. After 1A, she wanted to take another English class and registered for English 2 but spoke about her experience that caused her to drop the class after four weeks. She began by explaining that the instructor started the semester by telling the students how difficult the class would be and giving a lot of assignments.

I would turn in all my assignments, but he would always give me 4 out of 10. And I would ask him, ‘What do I need to do?’ but he wouldn't give me suggestions or say what I did wrong. The semester had just started, and my grade wasn't passing, so I sent him an email. And I was like, ‘What can I do to get my grade up?’ And he was like, *‘Oh, here's my number. You can call me, and we can talk.’*

He told me, *'You shouldn't have taken this class. I told you guys that it was really hard before it started.'* I knew that. I saw the emails, but I thought I could handle it. And then he started speaking to me in Spanish. I didn't know he spoke Spanish. He said in Spanish, *'This class is so hard; why are you taking it?'* I didn't know what to say. It was quiet. And he said, *'You should have already dropped the class.'* And I was like, okay. And I just hung up, and I cried. No one makes me cry. Not even my dad. I told the counselor, and she said, *'Oh, I'm so sorry that that happened'* and that she already had reports about him (personal communication, October 2023).

Female 7 dropped English 2 after this interaction.

Female 5 took English 1A online. She prefers classes in person but had to take the course online because she works full-time and there were no in person evening classes available. The class was online synchronous, meaning the class met live on Zoom with the professor. She described one class experience on Zoom that made the course more difficult for her.

I don't remember my professor's name. I truly always loved my professors and I'm so grateful for them. He was a bit challenging, and there were points where I felt very sad because of things he would tend to say. I remember one time I reached out to him, and we were in Zoom class, and everybody was on, and I said, *'I don't quite understand you. Can you give more examples or break it down a little bit for me?'* And he was just like,

'You should have learned this in high school.' And I was just like, 'Oh, okay.' And from that day, I never asked questions in that class. And that was the first time I had ever asked questions in a classroom because I was always like, I'm going to ask something stupid, and it's not going to look good. And the day that I was like, 'I'm going to ask something,' it just went really wrong. I understand there are some people that truly are really lazy and just want the answers for everything. But at that moment, I truly needed help. I didn't quite understand him, and he talked really, really fast. And it made it harder because I was like, I can't keep up (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 5 passed English 1A with a C. However, as one faculty shared, "There's a big difference between passing English with a B and passing English with a C" (personal communication, July 2023). These experiences highlight two experiences of students wanting to succeed, asking for help from their English professors, and being met with microaggressions.

Summary: Racial and Linguistic Microaggressions Toward Students. This section focused on the racial and linguistic microaggressions from professors toward English learners in their classes. After the implementation of AB 705, SCCC failed to implement any professional development to help their English faculty better support students and English learners in their classroom, despite the recommendation to do so from the Chancellor's office.

The previous section shared one student's story of a professor showing no interest in helping students. Overall, of the five student participants who took

English 1A, three had professors who either did not help them or were racially and linguistically hostile toward the US-ELs when they asked for help. These findings are summarized and connected to the research questions in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11. US-EL Experiences with Racism and Microaggressions, and Research Questions Addressed

Program	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
English 1A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three out of five US-ELs in English 1A experienced academic neglect, negative attitudes, and/or racial and linguistic microaggressions from professors. • These attitudes and actions are known by faculty and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty professional development that eliminates negative attitudes and microaggressions toward English learners. • Professional development to English professors in supporting English learners in their classrooms. • Zero tolerance policy for racism or microaggressions toward students, faculty, or staff. 	RQ 1, 2, 3

Programs and Structures

SCCC has multiple programs – academic curriculums or departments dedicated to student support – and structures – policies, practices, and procedures used by faculty and staff to support students. In addition to being immigrant English learners, many US-ELs are low-income, first-generation college students, have parents who do not speak English, have DACA status, have undocumented family members, or are undocumented themselves (Chaney & Clark, 2020; Patthey et al., 2008; Roberge, 2002; Salas et al., 2011; Serventy & Allen, 2022). They are also still learning English, academic English in particular (Kanno, 2021). This section will review the programs and structures at SCCC to

support this student population and their narratives about how these experiences helped or hindered their academic progress. Each sub-section will review a program and be followed by a summary of student experiences, needs, and their connection to the research questions.

English as a Second Language Courses. Since the implementation of AB 705, degree-seeking students with a diploma from a U.S. high school are expected to enroll directly in transfer-level English (PPIC, 2022). Under AB 705, English learners can elect to take ESL classes, but they are still required to take transfer-level English within three years (PPIC, 2022). For US-ELs, this means choosing between ESL and transfer-level English, as “all remedial English courses were removed from SCCC’s course schedule” (personal communication, July 2023). The decision to enroll in English 1A or ESL is one that US-ELs can make with the help of a counselor using their high school transcript or by taking a guided self-placement test available on the school’s website (SCCC website, 2023).

SCCC offers both credit and non-credit ESL courses. Before AB 705 and the removal of placement tests, SCCC’s credit ESL courses focused on academic writing and served two key student populations: international EFL students and US-ELs.

[The pandemic] completely obliterated the international [enrollment], although that is coming back, and the new laws have obliterated the [US-ELs]. Now [credit ESL] students are primarily non-traditional immigrant

students, often students who already hold degrees in their home countries and are working as some level of professional.

To help boost enrollment, credit ESL courses have added non-credit overlays that allow students to take an ESL course that “doesn't add units to their unit count [and impact their] financial aid” (personal communication, June 2023).

[The classes] are identical in every way except for the fact that half the seats are for international credit students and half the seats are for non-credit students. [Non-credit] classes only count as elective credits for a local degree, no different than if you took a yoga class, but for our immigrant students, it is free for them as opposed to being worried about units (personal communication, June 2023).

At SCCC, very few newly graduated US-ELs enroll in the credit ESL program, and the program itself “doesn't generate a lot of enrollments” (personal communication, June 2023). While a formal study has not been done, some faculty speculate that “lack of transferability or applicability to a degree is a deterrent for enrolling in a credit ESL class” (personal communication, June 2023).

In addition to credit ESL, SCCC has a large non-credit ESL department that “primarily serves adult immigrant students who received all their schooling outside of the U.S” (personal communication, June 2023). According to the SCCC course catalog, the non-credit ESL program includes six levels of comprehensive courses focused on grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as pronunciation and vocational English courses. Three of this

study's ten student participants began their community college coursework in comprehensive non-credit ESL courses (ESLN).

Three of the ten student participants began community college in SCCC's ESLN program. The students spoke of the personalized counseling they received in Spanish from the non-credit counselors, which guided their decision to enroll in these courses. "They helped me in Spanish to get into classes and encouraged me to learn English" (personal communication, November 2023). None of the students considered taking credit ESL or its non-credit overlay, which is not affiliated with the ESLN program.

Male number 2 was admitted to a California State University (CSU) as a high school senior but felt that he needed more preparation and enrolled in ESLN courses at SCCC instead. He spoke positively about his experiences with counselors who worked with him in Spanish and told him about the ESLN classes. "I have trouble understanding all the processes to take classes or what classes to take. So they have really helped me a lot, and they're always there to help me and help me understand everything" (personal communication, October 2023). He stated that his focus was on improving his reading and writing, and he took two semesters of ESLN courses online. "I actually like [online learning], but it's very risky because it is easy to get behind, but if you pay attention and do everything, I think is very helpful and can be the same as an in-person class" (personal communication, October 2023). At the time of the interview, Male 2 was enrolled in four business administration courses and had English 1A on his program plan for Spring 24.

Females 7 and 8, friends who conducted their interviews together, also decided to enter ESLN before taking credit courses at SCCC. Female 7 was in the U.S. until the age of 7 when she returned to Mexico, and then she returned to the U.S. in her senior year of high school. She remembered some English but was placed in ELD in the 12th grade, which she repeated before graduating in 2020 at the onset of the pandemic. After graduating, she enrolled in SCCC's lower-level ESLN courses online, and when classes returned in person in Fall 2021, she enrolled in Level 3 with the hopes of improving her spoken English and making friends. When asked if this Level 3 class was the type of class that she needed at the time, Female 7, who is very shy and soft-spoken, said, "I think I needed more speaking because I knew how to write, but when she asked questions or something, I didn't know how to respond" (personal communication, November 2023). Female 7 went on to pass English 1A with an A and transferred to a CSU in Spring 2024.

Female 8 also stated that her struggles with speaking in English drove her decision to take ESLN. "I was like, oh, my English is no good at all. So I have to take these classes to help me more with my speaking" (personal communication, November 2023). Since she was working during the day, Female 8 took ESLN comprehensive classes in the evening before moving to credit classes. Female 8's determination echoed in her final comment about ESLN when she repeated the phrase, "I have to do it," in reference to moving out of ESLN and into regular credit classes and pursuing her academic goal of becoming a teacher.

Well, in my first two years, I was only taking ESLN classes, and then I decided to take the normal classes with credits because I was like, I have to do it. If I don't do it now, I'm just wasting my time (personal communication, November 2023).

Summary: English as a Second Language Courses. This section provided an overview of SCCC's credit and noncredit ESL (ESLN) options. Three of the ten students enrolled in comprehensive ESLN courses to improve their speaking, listening, reading, writing, and grammar before moving into credit courses. All students reported having good experiences in ESLN courses and with the noncredit counselors who helped and encouraged them in Spanish. The student experiences, needs, and the research questions addressed are listed below in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12. US-EL Experiences and Needs in ESL, and Research Questions Addressed

Program	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
ESL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US-ELs at SCCC prefer comprehensive non-credit ESL classes to improve grammar, reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension. High-quality counseling in Spanish from noncredit counselors made a positive difference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to non-credit ESL courses, which is no longer allowed under the Chancellor's guidelines. 	RQ1, 2, 3

Counseling. All students talked about relying on their counselors for help with everything from financial aid forms to course selection, program planning,

and enrollment. Faculty echoed this, emphasizing the importance of bilingual academic counselors who can support students in their native language. This section will focus on the interactions between students and counselors, and focus on some of the challenges students have had getting the support needed to complete their degrees.

Every student participant agreed that being able to speak to the counselors in Spanish was critically important for them. “One of my counselors talked to me in Spanish because she noticed I was struggling when speaking. It felt good being able to speak my Spanish again” (personal communication, October 2023). Male 2 was initially assigned to a counselor associated with the athletic program but was later moved to a Spanish-speaking counselor. “Registration was difficult and the counselor didn’t speak Spanish, so she sent me to another counselor that speaks Spanish. They helped me” (personal communication, September 2023).

The importance of bilingual counselors and staff was echoed frequently in the faculty interviews. “In a given week, I speak to at least five students who request a Spanish-speaking counselor. And because I am bilingual, I get the privilege of speaking with those students in Spanish” (personal communication, June 2023). Others confirmed that students regularly request a Spanish-speaking counselor to help them through enrollment, courses, academic program plans, and financial aid. One faculty shared, “Because I cannot assess their writing or speaking ability, it’s only when [US-ELs] talk to me in Spanish that I can

ask, *'How comfortable are you in taking college-level English classes?'*"

(personal communication, June 2023).

The extra attention in their native language was both appreciated and needed by the students, who are first-generation English learners and do not have parents to help them navigate college. However, six of the ten students talked in great detail about the struggles they had connecting with a counselor and getting the support they needed.

My parents don't speak English and couldn't help. I had to figure it out myself and find people who could help me with financial aid. The counselor helped me to understand because I didn't know how it worked (personal communication, August, 2023).

At first, I talked to three [counselors], but then I talked to one that I really liked. He was Hispanic, and he really explained to me that I can get classes for business. And he showed me some classes and really encouraged me and helped me out. And he really explained a lot to me. He gave me a lot of choices. We talked for 15 minutes. And he helped me to do everything, like the applications and all that (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 3 is facing multiple barriers to achieving her goal of becoming a nurse and is working to access support from counseling online because she does not have transportation or the support of her parents. At the time of the interview,

she was enrolled in classes but said that she was struggling to get help with financial aid.

They need my mom's information, but my mom told me not to put anything of hers, so they told me to use my dad, and I'm like, I don't have contact with him either. I don't have contact with him at all. He's incarcerated. [The counselor] saw that I was tearing up and everything, and I'm like, I don't have proof, but they told me that I needed to have something so they can put it in the financial aid, and I'm like, I don't have anything.

Female 2 spoke in detail about her indecision about what classes to take and what degree to pursue.

My mom, one day she brings me to see a counselor and he told me, oh okay, if you want this major just take this. But I didn't remember it because I was lost about everything. So then before, after that I had a meeting with another counselor, but she was speaking Spanish. So that was so much easier for me because at that time my English was so bad. I'm still trying, still working on it (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 2 wound up enrolling in a two-year certification program that did not require English 1A but did require a Psychology class that she failed and had to retake over the summer. She followed up with me at the end of the semester to talk about her academic experiences and the changes she had made to her program plan. She said that she failed another class because of, in her words, “the English barrier,” and decided to switch to an AD-T degree and take the non-

credit overlay of ESL to improve her English and prepare her for English 1A (personal communication, December 2023). When I asked why she had not considered taking ESL when she first enrolled, Female 2 discussed her experience with her counselor and her confusion about what English classes were available and what would be most appropriate for her.

Female 2: When I talked to a [English speaking] counselor, he just told me the classes I have to take for my major, and he didn't tell me anything about, oh, you should take English classes. And that's why I didn't know about the English classes here. I thought that those classes were just for students who were learning English. And because I did the first level in English in high school, I thought I can't take those classes here. So, I only realized this semester that I was able to take [ESL] classes.

Researcher: Would you have taken them if your counselor had told you in your first semester that you could take an ESL class?

Female 2: Yes, definitely. Because I knew at that time that I needed it even more than I need it now (personal communication, December 2023).

Female 2 is enrolling in credit ESL and changing her major as of Spring 2024, three semesters after enrolling at SCCC.

Females 7 and 8, who began in non-credit ESL, discussed their experiences with the counselors in the non-credit department who worked with them in Spanish to get into classes and encouraged them to learn English. One of them recounted with a laugh, "They helped me a lot in Spanish. That's so important. He was like, 'I have to speak with you in English because you have to

learn.' [I said] 'No, I don't like it! Speak Spanish with me!'" (personal communication, October 2023).

These students reported that their experiences with counseling changed when they transitioned from noncredit to credit classes and worked with different counselors. They found that the counselors gave them conflicting information and did not guide them in the way they needed. Female 7 shared her experience with counselors who did not give her a program plan that aligned with her academic goals and then did not tell her that she had enough credits to transfer.

Well, it was difficult also because of the counselors. All of them said different things, and since they didn't help me that much, I would just look at the programs online and say, 'Oh, I need this.' And so I did it by myself. But then my teacher said that she needed the program plan for my courses. So I went to a counselor, and he was like, 'Why aren't you transferring? You're done. You only need one more class.' But a month before I had gone to another counselor, and he put me in classes, but he didn't tell me that I could transfer already. It was all last minute. They didn't help much.

Female 8 had a similar experience getting contradictory or conflicting information from counselors, which led to her applying for EOPS for counseling and support.

Because the counselors, I was talking with them a lot of times, and they told me, you have to take this class. But then I was going with another counselor, and they told me, no, you have to take this. Everyone had a

different opinion. I don't know why, but now I feel I'm more comfortable with my counselor because she helped me a lot. She's in EOPS.

Female 8 is one of two students in the study who are enrolled in the EOPS program, which will be discussed in the next section.

Summary: Counseling. Counseling was the program that all of the US-ELs had experience with. All reported working with a counselor in their native language, but some had to meet multiple counselors before finding one who could help them in Spanish. The US-ELs reported relying heavily on counselors to help navigate higher education enrollment and financial aid forms. Several students had difficulty connecting with a counselor and getting clear, consistent information, including information about ESL course pathways. The exception was the noncredit counselors who could guide students to ESL courses and then to credit counseling within two to four semesters of coursework. Student experiences and needs with counseling and the connection to the research questions are listed in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13. US-EL Counseling Experiences and Needs, and Research Questions Addressed

Program	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US-ELs had trouble: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> connecting with Spanish-speaking counselors. getting clear, consistent program plan information. getting information on English/ESL course options. Three US-ELs were very disappointed with counseling support – one ‘did it myself’ and two self-referred to EOPS. US-ELs needed extended support with FAFSA and DREAM Act completion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy access to Spanish-speaking counselors Time to explain and understand course options and programs Complete information on English pathway and support options Information about EOPS enrollment – US-ELs don’t know about it but most qualify. DACA and Dream Act support and resources 	RQ1, 2, 3

Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS). Two of the student participants reported struggling to connect with counselors for help with registration and acknowledge Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, or EOPS, with keeping them enrolled, on track, and in college. In EOPS, students meet with a counselor multiple times over the semester and receive long-term educational planning, financial support for books, CSU and UC fee waivers, and Priority One registration for classes aimed at keeping them enrolled and achieving their academic and career goals (SCCC website, 2023). The EOPS website lists ‘language besides English spoken at home’ and AB 540 status as eligibility criteria, along with financial need and good academic standing (SCCC website, 2023).

However, neither student receiving EOPS services learned about EOPS from a college staff member nor college communication. A family member referred Female 1 to EOPS, and Female 8 accidentally found it while walking through campus.

Female 1, who describes herself as equally fluent in English and Spanish and confident going into college, struggled with registration and enrollment. “So registering and then figuring out the classes that go with your major. I had no idea how to do any of that. No one in my family has been to college” (personal communication, September 2023). Her mother-in-law told her about EOPS, and she enrolled. “I was so lost. But once I joined EOPS, I felt like it was easier because I had a lot of help from my counselor” (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 8 also connected with EOPS after struggling to get answers to her questions about her program plan.

The noncredit counselors helped me a lot for ESLN. But when I got to credit classes, I talked with the counselors a lot of times, and they told me, *‘You have to take this class.’* But then I talked with another counselor, and they told me, *‘No, you have to take this.’* And because I’m really curious, I was walking through the campus, and I saw these big letters ‘EOPS,’ and I went in and asked them, ‘What is this?’ And they told me, *‘We can help you. You’ll have a counselor, and we can help you with your classes and everything.’* And I decided to apply, and that’s it. I don’t know why, but now I feel I’m more comfortable with my EOPS counselor because she helped

me a lot. I love her. And she's always like, '*You have to do this. Do it*'
(personal communication, October 2023).

Both students credit EOPS for their continued enrollment and academic success. They believe that if they had not discovered EOPS, they would not have stayed at SCCC (personal communications, September/October 2023).

Table 4.14 summarizes the students' experiences in EOPS, their needs, and their connection to the study's research questions.

Table 4.14. US-EL EOPS Experiences and Needs, and Research Questions Addressed

Program	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
EOPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who were enrolled in EOPS credited the program for keeping them enrolled. They don't know about EOPS and other programs that can help them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about EOPS enrollment – US-ELs don't know about it but most qualify. 	RQ 2, 3

Dreamer Resource Center. The Dreamer Resource Center exists to help successfully transition undocumented, AB 540, and DACA students into college by providing academic counseling, free immigration legal services, mental health support, financial aid assistance, and dedicated study space (SCCC website, 2023). Two of the study's student participants identified as Dreamers and received support from this program. The counselors at the Dreamer Resource Center assisted these students, in Spanish, which enabled them to enroll and receive the financial support and in-state tuition they needed to continue at SCCC. One shared that "one of the counselors from the Dreamer Center helped

me fix a mistake on my California Dream Act application” (personal communication, December 2023), and another Dreamer got help transferring credits and filling out the Dream Act application to get financial aid support to continue in school. Both students showed gratitude for a program supporting them with specific needs, saying, “They are amazing” (personal communication, September 2023).

Table 4.15 lists the students' experiences with the Dreamer resource center, needs, and connection to the study's research questions.

Table 4.15. US-EL Dreamer Resource Center Experiences and Needs, and Research Questions Addressed

Program	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Dreamer Resource Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US-ELs needed extended support with FAFSA and DREAM Act completion. The Dreamer Resource Center helped US-ELs with DACA and Dream Act forms and renewals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy access to Spanish-speaking counselors DACA and Dream Act support and resources 	RQ 2, 3

Summer Bridge Program. Every faculty interview talked about the school's summer bridge program for first-generation college students and saw it as a critical program to help prepare incoming students for the rigors of college. The program includes a “College 101” course and a week-long course to prepare students for transfer-level English courses, essays, and MLA formatting for references and citations (personal communications, June/July 2023). These courses help students by “simulating the college experience,” “practicing the English skills that I see many students have issues with,” and helping students

“build foundational skills in English and math to help get them ready for college” (personal communications, June/July 2023). One faculty member took the benefits of the summer bridge program beyond academic support, saying it is “helping students understand themselves as students, and how they learn, and give them some tools for becoming learners” (personal communication, July 2023).

Four of the ten students participated in the summer bridge program before beginning their first semester at SCCC. Two of the students enjoyed it and said that it was helpful for them. “I feel like it helped me a lot because it was my first experience in college, so before going to regular classes, I felt a little bit more confident” (personal communication, September 2023). Another student shared, “Yeah, it really helped. Like getting the idea of how college works, how to work with a professor, and how to ask questions and communicate with them. That was something I, I really felt. I was nervous” (personal communication, August 2023).

The student who didn’t have a good experience in the summer bridge program did the orientation online because they didn’t have transportation to the main campus. “It’s just that I wasn’t used to doing classes on the computer, and everything was on the computer, so I had trouble with that. We hardly had any explaining, so my friend, because we were doing it together, she would always be helping me out” (personal communication, September 2023).

One student who discussed the summer bridge program was overwhelmed trying to navigate enrollment, registration, and orientation on her

own and missed the summer bridge program entirely. “I was so lost about everything” (personal communication, September 2023).

Table 4.16 lists the students' experiences with the summer bridge program, their needs, and the connection to the study's research questions.

Table 4.16. US-EL Summer Bridge Program Experiences and Needs, and Research Questions Addressed

Program	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Summer Bridge Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It helped some US-ELs, but most felt it wasn't long enough and wished it were in Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cohort-style first-gen program in Spanish and English for US-ELs and families for support throughout the year. 	RQ 2, 3

Peer Tutoring. As mentioned in the previous section, SCCC's English faculty made the decision not to implement a concurrent support class for English 1A after the implementation of AB 705. Instead, they relied on an existing academic support program: peer tutoring. Guidance from the California Community College Chancellor's Office calls out tutoring as an academic support option for students in transfer-level English, including English learners (California Community Colleges, 2023; CCCO, n.d.).

SCCC's tutoring center has trained peer tutors who are available to help students one-on-one with assignments across the curriculum, online or in person (personal communications June/October 2023). However, these services depend on faculty to request a tutor and promote tutoring in their classes.

The best way tutoring can serve English students is by the faculty telling students that it exists, walking them through the tutoring center's Canvas page, and telling them where they are located, in-person or online. Buy-in from the faculty is the number one way students seek us out. And we hear from students all the time, 'I had no idea tutoring was available.' The tutoring center would love to help even more students, but it needs the faculty's partnership to announce it and share what tutoring can do for their students (personal communication, October 2023).

Many students reported learning about the tutoring center from their teachers, although one student reported struggling in her online English 1A course and never hearing about tutoring as a resource for additional help. "No, she never told us" (personal communication, September 2023).

Yet while most of the students knew about the tutoring center, most did not use their services. Female 5 works full-time and shared, "Yes, [my English 1A professor] did talk about the tutoring center, but the tutoring center was not working with my work schedule. I could never go" (personal communication, September 2023). Another shared, "Yeah, tutoring helped. I went just once, but I know I have to go more. I'm just so busy" (personal communication, October 2023). Faculty also mentioned time as a barrier to tutoring as academic support. "[Students are] already committing time to come to class. They have another hour or two to give up to go to tutoring, and it is so difficult for many of our students to carve out that time for themselves" (personal communication, June 2023).

Male 1 was in English 1A but did not go to the tutoring center, even when he was struggling in the class. He shared about being afraid to go to tutoring for help.

Student: I was going to go, but then I got scared.

Researcher: Why were you scared?

Student: I don't know. I got nervous and I was like, I'll just ask more questions in class to my teacher (personal communication, December 2023).

Overall, the student participants rarely utilized the sole academic English support program available to students at SCCC post-AB 705 and 1705. Possible reasons why will be explored in more detail in the section on student identity.

The summary of US-EL experiences with peer tutoring, their needs, and the connection to the research questions are summarized in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17. US-EL Peer Tutoring Experiences and Needs, and Research Questions Addressed

Program	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Peer Tutoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some professors didn't tell students about the availability of peer tutoring. US-ELs who were aware of tutoring didn't use it because of fear, linguistic insecurity, mistrust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedded in-class tutors for English 1A – especially bilingual tutors – to provide consistent support as well as a contact at peer tutoring to help them feel comfortable going there. 	RQ 1, 2, 3

Summary: Student Experiences at SCCC Through the LatCrit Lens

This section looked at findings related to the courses and supports within SCCC using a Latino Critical Theory lens to understand how they empower or subordinate Latino US-educated English learners' educational experiences.

The section reviewed SCCC's response to AB 705, student experiences in English 1A, racial discourse and microaggressions experienced by students, and the programs and structures set in place to support students, including US-ELs, such as English as a Second Language courses, Summer Bridge Program, Counseling, Extended Opportunities for Students (EOPS), and the Dreamer Resource Center.

While only half of the students had taken English 1A, four of the five struggled with the class and had trouble getting help, one had a professor online who did not provide any support to students, and two experienced racial and linguistic microaggressions from the English faculty. Conversely, the student experiences also showed the positive impact that care and encouragement from faculty can have on a student's persistence and ultimate success.

Three students started in non-credit ESL, which provided a supportive academic foundation for them and helped them bridge to credit classes. One of the major challenges for the students was with registration, program planning, course selection, and financial aid, and needing Spanish-speaking counselors to help them. All of the students needed assistance from Spanish-speaking faculty and relied on them heavily, but in several instances, it took multiple counselors and multiple visits to get what they needed. US-ELs had challenges connecting

with people and programs that can support them, such as EOPS and ESL courses, which is a theme that will emerge again. Two of the students needed and utilized SCCC's Dreamer Resource Center for assistance specific to their AB 540 and DACA paperwork. Finally, the sole academic support program available to students outside of the classroom – tutoring – was rarely utilized by these students.

The next section will explore themes related to the theoretical framework of Intersectionality, exploring the students' diverse lived experiences, feelings of trust, and identities in and out of the classroom.

Student Experiences at SCCC Through the Lens of Intersectionality

As a framework for higher education, Intersectionality challenges inequities by focusing on marginalized, invisible students and looking at their diverse experiences and outcomes through multiple social categories (Barker, 2021; Cuba et al., 2021; Nichols & Stahl, 2019). Intersectionality combines well with other theories to highlight diverse student identities, provide a holistic representation of students, and inform the research (Acevedo-Gil, 2019). This section builds on the framework of Intersectionality and examines the students' *Lived Experiences, Feelings of Trust, and Identities* to highlight the diversity of the student participants and provide a holistic representation of students.

This section recounts the students' own narratives of immigrating to the U.S. and starting school in K-12, where they all began learning English, as well as their reasons for enrolling in community college and their academic goals.

They talked about their feelings and emotions as immigrant children coming to the U.S. to live and attend school. These narratives provided a holistic picture of the student's social, emotional, and academic backgrounds that helped better understand their experiences in higher education (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Cuba et al., 2021; Ebneyamini & Sadeghi Moghadam, 2018).

Lived Experiences of US-ELs

Chapter Two discussed the diversity that US-ELs bring to higher education with regard to their academic skills, educational needs, academic and career goals, linguistic abilities, and backgrounds (Núñez et al., 2016). The group of ten student participants exemplified this diversity. Table 4.5 described the students by pseudonym, native country, grade they started school in the U.S., grade that they were reclassified from ELD to mainstream English classes (if applicable), higher education academic goals, and English courses they have taken or plan to take in community college.

Immigrating to the United States as Children. The students shared their immigration stories, some in more detail than others, and all were different. While many students came to the U.S. on visas, others came without immigration documentation, either for themselves or family members. Three student participants traveled back and forth between the U.S. and Mexico as children.

Several participants discussed family separation and immigration challenges. Male 1 shared about leaving family behind in El Salvador at the age of 12 when they were able to join his father in the U.S. "It was like, something really like difficult. I came with my mom and my siblings. Leaving my

grandparents or my cousins, all my family, really broke my heart” (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 5 recalled crossing into the U.S. with a *coyote* and walking through the desert with her mother when she was five years old. “It was really hard crossing to the United States. I remembered my mom and I made it first, and it took my dad another month and a half” (personal communication, September 2023). While she now has DACA status, her parents remain undocumented. She talks about the responsibility she took on at a young age, supporting her parents while they worked in the fields, and her fears that she’d never be able to get an education as an undocumented immigrant.

I remember when I was younger, I stressed a lot over the fact that when I graduated high school, I couldn't afford to go to college. I thought if you're from another state, you have to pay the out-of-state tuition, and I told my mom it's going to be something that I can't do. I would tell her that even if I go to school for early childhood development, I'm not going to be able to work because I don't have a social security number. So I would just think all these things, and I was just like, I'm going to have to work out in the fields like them. And then we found out about the Dream Act, and I was so thankful. I am still so happy (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 6 was born in the U.S. but returned to Mexico at around two because of family immigration issues. They returned when she was 10, yet some in her family remain undocumented. Female 2 was separated from her mother for three years before joining her in California. “I was 13 years old when my mom

came here, and I stayed [in Mexico] with my grandparents for three years. It was so hard. I thought my mom didn't love me because she left me in Mexico” (personal communication, September 2023).

Starting School in the U.S. All of the students in the study began school in the U.S. soon after arriving. The median grade that students began school in the U.S. was 6.5, and the students who were reclassified to English Proficient (EP) spent an average of 4.5 years in English Language Development (ELD). The median grade students moved out of ELD was grade ten, and five of the ten students graduated high school without being reclassified or ever taking a mainstream English class. Figure 4.2 demonstrates the variance in K-12 English language learning among the students. It also shows that many of them leave high school while still learning English.

Figure 4.2: Student Educational Demographics

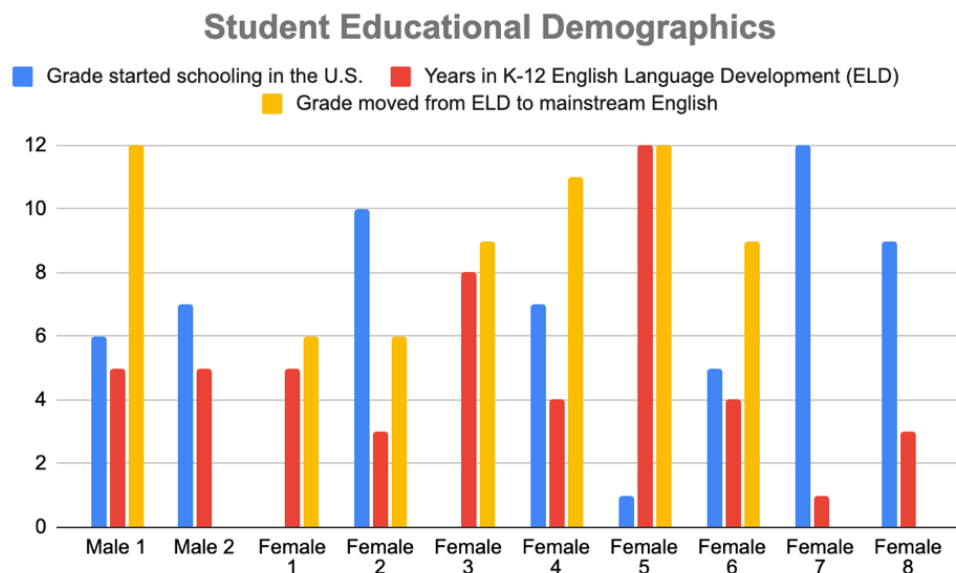


Figure 4.2 also demonstrates that English proficiency and college readiness cannot be measured by the amount of time a US-EL has lived in the U.S. Female 5 came to the U.S. at the age of 5, but learning English was challenging for her because of dyslexia that wasn't diagnosed until the fourth grade. Subsequently, she was not reclassified as English Proficient until her senior year of high school. Today, oral communication is quite easy for her, yet she struggles with reading and writing due to her dyslexia. English 1A was difficult for her, but she completed it with a grade of C after taking a pre-transfer English course at another community college.

Conversely, Female 7 arrived in the U.S. at 17 in her senior year of high school. She had lived in the U.S. until the second grade when her family returned to Mexico. Instead of graduating from high school on time, she repeated her senior year in ELD, then spent two years in SCCC's non-credit ESL courses before transitioning to credit classes, including English 1A, which she passed with an A. Yet, unlike Female 5, she struggles most with oral communication. Reading and writing come easily for her, but in conversational English, she is painfully shy and focused her ESL classes on improving her speaking skills.

Figure 4.2 also shows that US-ELs with similar immigration backgrounds can have very different educational experiences, as demonstrated by Males 1 and 2. Male 1 arrived in 6th grade, and Male 2 arrived in 7th. Male 1 was reclassified his senior year of high school, and Male 2 was not, despite asking to be. Male 1 went straight to English 1A at SCCC and passed with a B. Male 2

spent two additional semesters in non-credit ESL before transitioning to credit classes and planned to take English 1A the following semester.

Preparation for College. Most of the students who were reclassified before they started high school graduated feeling prepared for college. Female 3 was reclassified in middle school and shared that “I had to take English throughout high school, so I was pretty good at doing research projects, presentation projects, essays. It prepared me for the challenges that I might have learning English” (personal communication, September 2023). Male 1, who was reclassified before his senior year of high school, felt that high school prepared him for college, but with a caveat: “And at the same time, no. I mean, they help me to prepare, but I still feel like I'm behind the other students that I graduated from high school with” (personal communication, August 2023).

Male 2 discussed how his high school teachers explained college and what to expect. “Some teachers really tried their best to make us understand how college is going to be. I had some teachers who were really good at explaining it, so I had an idea how it was going to be” (personal communication, September 2023). But Female 8 said that high school “prepared me just for the language for English, but not at all for college” (personal communication, October 2023).

Female 5's English language learning was complicated by dyslexia, which was diagnosed in the 4th grade. Language learning and a learning disability combined to slow down her progress and resulted in her staying in ELD until her senior year of high school, despite starting school in the U.S. in kindergarten. She talked about the impact ELD had on her preparation for college.

When I got out of high school, I was so afraid of going to college because it was like, oh my God, what am I going to do? I wasn't learning what I was supposed to be learning. We weren't learning a lot of grammar. And I remember I had friends that were not in ELD, and they would show me what they were learning, and I would ask myself, why aren't we learning those things? Why are we learning easier things? One time, I did tell my teacher, and I said I'm not going to progress if I'm learning things that I would learn in fifth grade. So when it was time to get into college, I was so afraid because I was so unprepared for when I had to take English or when I had to take history because I'd been doing the easier stuff (personal communication, September 2023).

Identifying US-ELs in the Community College Classroom. As discussed in Chapter Two, once US-ELs graduate from high school and enter higher education, they are no longer identified on their school records as English learners (Núñez et al., 2016). This makes it challenging to proactively identify and reach out to English language learners who could benefit from additional language or support services. When asked about their interactions with English learners in the classroom, most faculty discussed students' lack of self-identification as English learners and their negative perceptions of their linguistic abilities.

In the classroom, faculty interactions with US-ELs varied widely. "I kind of just assume [they are English learners] based on their writing. So I can tell, okay, this is a second language learner" (personal communication, October 2023).

Other teachers have students ask for extra time because they're learning a new language or use friends to help them in their native language.

I think when AB 705 first started, and students were no longer taking English 61 as a prep, they came into my class as groups with their friends and would help each other. There would be one student who would translate. I remember when this first started happening, it didn't bother me. I just thought, well, this is interesting. Later, when the student would come up to me and they would speak to me in Spanish, I would say, 'Can you speak in English? My Spanish is not very good.' And they would always look at me like they were super disappointed. And then they would bring their friend, and their friend would explain things to me (personal communication, July 2023).

Another English teacher said that while students have never identified themselves as English learners, they notice a lot less stigma attached to it. However, others feel that instructors do a disservice to students by not openly supporting multilingualism among students. "I think the biggest thing is we've taught them as a society not to reveal themselves, and it's a huge misstep. And if the instructor does not make space for them, they will continue to hide" (personal communication, June 2023).

Summary: Lived Experiences of US-ELs. This section explored the lived experiences of US-ELs, including their immigration experiences, educational experiences in the U.S., including ELD classification and reclassification, their preparation for college, and US-EL experiences in the classroom from a faculty

perspective. Table 4.18 summarizes their lived experiences, along with student needs and the research questions this section addresses.

Table 4.18. Lived Experiences and Needs of US-ELs, and Research Questions Addressed

Theme	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Diversity of education and immigration experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US-ELs immigrated at different ages, had different educational experiences, and graduated from high school with varying English proficiency and college preparedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple levels of academic support. A variety of course options including comprehensive ESL, including speaking and listening, and corequisite support for English 1A. 	RQ 1, 2, 3
Identifying US-ELs in the Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not easy for professors to identify US-ELs in the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professors who make it safe for students to identify themselves as language learners. Extend student tracking to grade 20. 	RQ 1, 2, 3
College Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many US-ELs are not prepared for college in high school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professors who do not assume that all students know and provide additional support Provide cognitive and non-cognitive support in corequisite courses. 	RQ 1, 2, 3

Student Identities

Some of the student participants spoke at length about their identities as bilingual Latino/Latina immigrants living in the United States. They had strong connections to their native countries, culture, and the Spanish language, but their comfort level in the U.S. varied from student to student. Female 2 shared, “Actually, I feel so proud because I have the honor to be between two different cultures and take the best things from one and the other” (personal communication, September 2023). She continued later in the interview talking

about the impact immigrating to the U.S. had on her life. “It's just that I feel proud to be Latina, and I feel proud to be here because I can't imagine ... I know that I'm from Mexico, but I can't imagine my life if I wasn't here” (personal communication, September 2023).

Two students talked about feeling uncomfortable living in the U.S. Female 6, a U.S. citizen who was ten years old when she moved from Mexico to California with undocumented family members, expressed a longing for her native country and mixed feelings about staying in the U.S.

I was used to Mexico. I was free there. I had places to go close to where I lived. But here I'm in one place, and I'm not able to live. I have nowhere to go. So even though there have been years here, it's still difficult getting used to it. Some people have asked me [if I want to return to Mexico], and I'm still not sure (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 7, who came to the U.S. in 2018 before her senior year of high school, had similar feelings. When asked if she thought about returning to Mexico, she softly replied, “Yeah.”

Female 8 came to the U.S. alone to live with her father and shared that she thinks about returning to Mexico. Her mother tried to come with her but was denied a visa, and she remains in Mexico with her siblings.

I don't have my mom and my sisters with me or my cousins or my grandma. So sometimes I feel like, oh, I want to go to Mexico with my family. But I remember that I have my dad, so I don't want him to live here alone (personal communication, October 2023).

Only one student, Male 2, felt the same in the U.S. as he did in El Salvador. "I don't feel anything. I feel like I am always going to be the same" (personal communication, September 2023).

Three of the participants shared that they became shy after moving to the U.S. and having to communicate in English. Female 3 shared, "What makes me feel shy is that I might mess up" (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 4 started school in the U.S. in the seventh grade at age 11.

Learning English as a second language, I became a little more shy. Back in Mexico, I would be the center of the classroom. I liked dance and sports, and that has changed here. I became more shy than I was before. It was a big change. The first month it was really difficult. I just wanted to go back to everything being normal (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 7 came to the U.S. as a baby and attended school through first grade before returning to Mexico. She returned to the U.S. during her senior year of high school.

Female 7: Sometimes, it's because I don't like to speak English. I know that I have to do it, but I don't like it because sometimes when I say something wrong, I feel so bad.

Sometimes people say, oh, it's not like that. You have to say this. And my mind is on my head, and that's when I stop talking.

Researcher: Are you as quiet in Spanish as you are in English, or does English make you quiet?

Female 7: I think English. I am not that shy in Spanish (personal communication, October 2023).

Summary: Identities

This section summarized the US-ELs' feelings around their identities as Latino/Latina immigrants, their connections to their native countries, and how they have changed since coming to the U.S. These are summarized in Table 4.19, along with student needs and the research questions addressed.

Table 4.19. Identities and Needs of US-ELs, and Research Questions Addressed

Theme	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their Latino/Latina identities are strong. • US-ELs are connected to their native countries, cultures, and language. • Some US-ELs became shy when they came to the U.S. and had to learn English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A campus that recognizes and celebrates cultural and linguistic diversity 	RQ 2

Trust and Mistrust

In the student stories, we learned of their immigration experiences, fear of documentation status for themselves or their family, racial and linguistic microaggressions against them, and the insecurities they have about their English language abilities. Many also talked about racism and bullying from their peers and from the country they now call home. With this backdrop, trust and security emerged as important themes for understanding their experiences in higher education.

Faculty mentioned trust as a non-academic barrier to higher education for US-ELs. They believed that trust between students and faculty was imperative for students to open up and become willing to access support to help them succeed. One faculty member said, “At the beginning, they're shy, but then once they start to see that I'm there to help them, they'll ask questions. They'll feel more comfortable” (personal communication, July 2023). Another noticed a mentality of fear among some immigrant students. “As a representative for the college, you have to give them that support and that trust. I think as soon as they feel that, they open up and are eager to learn and continue” (personal communication, July 2023).

The need for trust extends outside of the classroom to ancillary support services such as tutoring. “Tutoring could be a great option for our students, but if they don't feel comfortable or trust someone, they will not pursue it” (personal communication, October 2023). This is one possible reason why most US-ELs reported not using the tutoring center for academic support. In the previous section, ‘Feelings about their language abilities,’ many students talked about their shyness and insecurity when speaking in English. They also discussed feeling self-conscious about their English, afraid of making mistakes, or appearing “stupid” by asking questions. The primary academic support at SCCC – tutoring – requires students to proactively request help from a program they are unfamiliar with. One student shared about being afraid to go to tutoring for help.

Student: I was going to go, but then I got scared.

Researcher: Why were you scared?

Student: I don't know. I got nervous, and I was like, I'll just ask more questions in class to my teacher (personal communication, December 2023).

US-ELs become very independent in their homes and families, often serving as translators for their parents, taking on adult responsibilities at a young age, and developing a "figure-it-out kind of mentality" (personal communication, June 2023). They expressed feeling accustomed to being on the margins of school, staying quiet, and not drawing attention to themselves. Female 2 said, "I don't ask questions because I don't want to stand out" (personal communication, October 2023). Male 2 shared, "I like to do all things by myself. I'm trying to be more responsible" (personal communication, September 2023). One faculty member saw this as a cultural challenge for many students of color.

I do see that it's a little bit more difficult for, and maybe it's a cultural thing for Hispanic students or black students as opposed to white students to ask for help or seek out services or feel confident enough to ask those questions for resources or assistance. I think that barrier number one is just getting them to be confident enough in themselves and know how to advocate for themselves and say, 'I don't know,' or 'I'm not going to pass this class. What can I do?' There's almost a sense of shame when it comes to having to disclose that you're not passing a class because then it's either embarrassing or they feel that they're not competent enough.

And then that goes into a more holistic type of counseling of what else do you have going on? Maybe it's their upbringing, or they're used to handling

things on their own, and now they have to rely on other services to help them succeed. And that's hard for a lot of students to come to terms with (personal communication, October 2023).

One faculty discussed how the establishment of trust with students, especially timid, quiet students who can easily get lost, is crucial in helping to keep this student population on their educational pathway,

It's very important for us to be aware as an institution that if we want the students to be successful and eliminate those students getting lost, they must feel safe and comfortable. It's hard to have a conversation with all students, but I think instructors can help the quiet ones, the ones who are shy, or the ones who tend to get lost. A lot of times, they're the smartest ones. They're very smart, very bright. So if there is also a way where we could eliminate those students getting lost, and make sure that they're aware of all their resources, and guide them into the right educational pathway, that could be a way [to support them] (personal communication, August 2023).

Another faculty member discussed the importance of teachers creating a supportive environment in the classroom that encourages students to work collaboratively and seek out the help they need to succeed.

Does the teacher cultivate an encouraging vibe in class where you work with your classmates, study together, and have study sessions? Can they reach out to the instructor when they need help or come to office hours? There's a lot more support that needs to happen now because they're

being put into this higher level English class” (personal communication, June 2023).

Summary: Trust and Mistrust. This section examined a recurring theme from US-ELs regarding their trust and mistrust of people and programs. The narratives revealed the impact that mistrust had on the students as they pursued higher education and the possible causes for it. Table 4.20 outlines these experiences, as well as student needs to build trust and the research questions this addresses.

Table 4.20. Trust and Mistrust in US-ELs and Research Questions Addressed

Theme	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Trust and Mistrust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many US-ELs are afraid to ask questions or stand out. • It takes time for US-ELs to build trust in people and programs. • Some US-ELs became shy and fearful when they moved to the US and had to speak English. • Many US-ELs don't like to ask for help or be vulnerable. They are very independent and used to doing things themselves. • Some US-ELs are undocumented or have undocumented family members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A campus that supports US-ELs and bilingual students linguistically, academically, socially, and emotionally. • Programs that allow them to get to know people and programs and establish trust and security. • Professional development for teachers in culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy. 	RQ1, 2, 3

Connection and Sense of Belonging

Most of the students, including those taking classes online, indicated that they feel a sense of belonging on campus and connected to SCCC. When asked what or who made them feel connected, the students talked about the people and places on campus but also mentioned the absence of clubs or programs

dedicated specifically to them – bilingual US-educated English learners – that could provide social connections, guidance, mentoring as they navigate their way through community college.

For Female 4, the library was the place she went to connect. “I love the library. I go around and see what's going on. I just want to be part of everything. I want to see what clubs they have and what else I can do. I’m really excited” (personal communication, September 2023). For Female 3, it was the academic programs that pulled her in. “[SCCC] has many different programs. I researched everything about nursing school, and I saw that they have so much, so I got excited, and I started attending and everything” (personal communication, September 2023).

Other students found connections and sense of belonging through the faculty and staff at SCCC. Male 2, who took two semesters of non-credit ESL before moving to credit courses in business administration to transfer, felt a sense of caring from the faculty and staff even though he was taking classes online. “I don't know, but I feel like they care about people like me who don't understand everything, and they have a lot of people to help people like me” (personal communication, September 2023). Female 5 also talked about how the people at SCCC create a supportive, welcoming environment for her.

I think staff and professors can be very welcoming, and thank God I've had really, really good professors. Just my one class was not a good experience. I think everybody has always been amazing and welcoming,

even the students. So, I always feel like I am part of it (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 2 felt connected to SCCC because of her on-campus job, where she was able to study and talk to other faculty and students during her shift. “I feel so happy to be just even sitting there and saying, “Oh, hello, welcome and have a great day.’ I feel great to be here and to be in college” (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 8’s sense of belonging came from her non-credit ESL classes. “I feel connected because of the ESLN classes and the students. I saw a lot of them in class, and it made me more comfortable” (personal communication, October 2023). Her friend, Female 7, talked about the sense of belonging she got from a mentoring program in her major, early childhood education.

The peer-to-peer program [makes me feel connected] because we are all learning, and most of them are learning English too. It’s a program of my major where you have a mentor who guides you through the classes and things that maybe can help you, like workshops to learn more about the field.

This discussion of connection and mentorship prompted some students to talk about clubs and extracurricular activities they wished they could participate in. Some shared that they wanted to join a club or play sports but couldn’t because of time or transportation or because they could not find a club that was right for them. Others noted that no club resonated with them as immigrant language learners and wished there was something specifically for them. “A club

for students who are learning English. Make a club like that. I would love that. I would love that” (personal communication, September 2023). The need for social connection will be explored further in the next section.

Summary: Connection and Belonging. This section examined the feelings of connection and belonging that US-ELs had at SCCC and what made them feel that way. It also identified areas where they were not able to connect and ways that SCCC could strengthen this connection through programs. The findings and research questions addressed are shown in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21. Connection and Belonging in US-ELs and Research Questions Addressed

Theme	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Sense of Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US-ELs felt connected to SCCC, whether they were online or in person. US-ELs need more opportunities for social connection with students like them, as both peers and mentors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social clubs and opportunities to meet other US-ELs and get involved on campus. 	RQ 2

Summary: Student Experiences at SCCC Through the Lens of Intersectionality

This section examined the experiences and feelings of the student participants through the lens of Intersectionality, which recognizes how social categories, such as race, gender, class, language, immigration status, and ethnicity, intersect and influence individuals' experiences within educational settings.

This section began by listening to the students' *Lived Experiences* to understand when and how they arrived in the United States and the impact

immigration had on their educations and families. Three of the ten students shared about lack of documentation for themselves or family members, and half talked about family separation and the pain of being away from their native country. Seven of the ten students do not have a parent who speaks English to help them navigate college, and all would be considered first-generation college students, although one has family members who graduated from college in their native country.

The section also looked at the *Feelings* and *Identities* of the student participants. All of the students shared the challenges they had learning English, their feelings of insecurity about English, in particular speaking English, and fears of making mistakes or looking foolish. These feelings of insecurity lead to many of them being afraid to ask questions or ask for help, particularly of people of programs that they are not familiar with or have not established security or trust with. All of the students had strong feelings about their native language, culture, and country, yet they also felt a sense of belonging in college. These feelings came from the people who were there to help and support them, including teachers, staff, and fellow students.

The final section, Community Cultural Wealth, will highlight the Aspirational, Familial, Navigational, Social, and Linguistic capital US-ELs bring to community college.

Student Experiences through the Lens of Community Cultural Wealth

The previous sections described the experiences of US-ELs in community college and their lived experiences and identities. This section focuses on the Community Cultural Wealth that the student participants bring to the classroom and campus, including aspirational, familial navigational, social, and linguistic capital (Yosso, 2005). When viewed through a CRT lens, Community Cultural Wealth challenges deficit-informed structures and views students' cultural capital as assets that can improve educational access, equity, and justice (Yosso, 2005). The narratives from US-ELs reveal that while they possess significant *linguistic capital* as bilingual students, they also possess *aspirational*, *resistant*, and *familial capital* that helps them persist in higher education, as shown in Table 4.22. However, they demonstrated a need for *navigational* and *social capital* to help them transition to and succeed in higher education.

Table 4.22. Cultural Capital in Student Participant Narratives

Forms of Cultural Capital	Examples Heard in Student Narratives
Linguistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being bilingual• Student acts as translator for parents
Navigational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immigrating to a new country• Going to a new school in a new language• Taking care of home and family• Figuring out how to enroll in college
Aspirational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hopes and dreams• Family sacrifice• Helping family/siblings• Better life for future generation
Familial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support of family• Parental reason for coming to the U.S. – wanting better for their children• Desire to succeed for parent/family still in native country

Resistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faced bullying and/or racism in K-12 due to race and language • Persisted after microaggressions by teacher • Fighting linguistic insecurity to keep trying
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting with peers • Desire for social group or club for students like them

Aspirational Capital

Yosso (2005) refers to *Aspirational Capital* as “the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers” (p. 77). All of the student participants spoke about adversities, injustices, and challenges that they had experienced, including racism, fear, family separation, and the struggles of assimilating into a new country and school in a new language. Yet, their stories also show hope and optimism, as well as an ability to not give up as they work toward their educational goals at SCCC.

For many, their aspirations were fueled by their ELD teachers in middle school and high school. Despite their fears and insecurities about their English abilities, their teachers encouraged them to learn English and motivated them to keep going in school. Female 2 shared that her teacher made her feel safe. “She was really helpful and told us we are in a good place and we don't have to be afraid. That was a message that she was always trying to transmit to us, to the students” (personal communication, September 2023).

Male 1 shared about his first middle school ELD teacher and his high school ELD teacher and their positive impact on him.

[My ELD teacher] always pushed me like, you know, she was like motivating me. She was like, you are 12 years old, and you have a lot of

time to develop your English skills. And she never gave up on me because <laugh> at first I wanted to go back to my country because I didn't like it here. It was difficult. And she always said, no, you have an opportunity. Your daddy worked for 15 years to give you the opportunity to come to this country, so don't let it go. She always used to tell me that. And [my high school teacher] helped me a lot. Much of the English that I learned, I learned with him. He was always there. When I graduated, I went to his class to thank him because he did a lot for me" (personal communication, August 2023).

Female 3 shared about the challenges she had learning English and the support and encouragement her ELD teachers gave her not to give up.

[Learning English] was very hard for me. I just didn't comprehend. but my teachers, they motivated me. They're like, you know what? You can do this. I worked harder, I studied harder, and I passed the exam because they told me that if I didn't pass the exam for ELD in middle school, I was going to have to take it in high school. And I'm like, no, I don't want to do that. So I ended up passing it (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 4 echoed the struggles of moving to a new country and working to learn a new language, as well as the opportunity she sees in higher education.

I came here when I was 11, and I started seventh grade. I didn't know anything. No numbers, not anything. It was really difficult for me the first two years. It was a big change. I just wanted to go back to everything being normal. It was really difficult at first, but then it changed and

everything became really, really cool. And then I started getting better at math. I really love math. And then yeah, everything became better and better. Now going to college is just an opening, a big opening for me right now (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 5 works full-time, has dyslexia, and graduated in 2019. Despite being in her fifth year of community college, she remains optimistic and highly motivated to finish.

I wanted to finish my whole associate's degree in four years. Sadly, I couldn't. I've tried to be a full-time student or take at least three classes. It was just really hard for me. It was too much work, too much to understand, too much to process. And I was just like, okay, I need to break it down a little bit. And even if it takes a really long time for me to graduate, I'm going to get there soon. I'm almost going to finish. I have six more classes left, and right now, I'm taking two. So, hopefully, I will graduate by next year (personal communication, September 2023).

Male 1 shared how his frustration at being behind his peers academically fueled his desire to continue in higher education.

I still feel like I'm behind the other students that I graduated from high school with. And that's one of the things that makes me more nervous about college because it's sometimes frustrating, you know, knowing that I may struggle a little bit more than other students or that I have that possibility of failing a class because, you know, my English. That's

something that makes me frustrated, but at the same time, it motivates me to continue.

Female 2 faced a lot of racism from other students in high school but talked about how those experiences empowered her.

My classmates, they were like, 'Go back to your country. Immigration is coming.' And I'm like, I have my resident card. But right now I say thank you to all the people that did those things because I feel happy to go through all those things that at that time were bad. For me now, I'm less afraid (personal communication, September 2023).

In her second interview, during which she talked about failing another class and deciding to return to ESL to improve her English before continuing with credit classes, Female 2 shared how her aspirational capital helps her push through adversity.

I love to be here and feel so grateful to have access to this education. One of the phrases that helps me to continue is 'I deserve this.' So, if I'm here to study at college, if I have the classes that I have, it's because it's my time to know myself better and understand the constraints that are uncomfortable or scary for me (personal communication, December 2023).

Table 4.23 provides an overview of US-EL demonstrations of Aspirational Capital, their needs, and the research questions addressed.

Table 4.23. Aspirational Capital in US-EL Narratives and Research Questions Addressed

Form of Capital	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Aspirational Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US-ELs persist at community college after experiencing failure, multiple semesters of ESL, full-time work, racial and linguistic microaggressions, fear, and insecurity. The students were clear and focused on their educational and academic goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A campus that recognizes and acknowledges their lived experiences, successes, and aspirations. Teachers that support and encourage them rather than putting them down 	RQ 2

Familial Capital

All but one of the students talked about the support that they had from family to continue their education, which research has shown to be critical for immigrant students (Almon, 2012; Harklau, 2013; Kanno & Cromley, 2015; Núñez et al., 2016; Roberge, 2002). Yosso (2005) discusses how *Familial Capital* “engages a commitment to community well-being” and understands “the importance of maintaining a healthy connection to our community and its resources” (p. 79).

Some of the students are from families with low levels of education and came to the U.S. to help give their children educational opportunities. One comes from a highly educated family with parents and a brother who have college degrees. Female student 5, whose parents are undocumented field workers with 5th-grade and 11th-grade educations, described the support her family had given her to help her attend college.

My parents are very supportive, and I love that. And my sister was a person that played a big role in my life because she was like Mom. When we moved here, my parents were so busy [working in the fields]. And I always tell them, I understand you guys were so busy because you guys wanted to give us the best life that you possibly could. So my sister was the one who would take me to school, make sure I got my homework done, and make sure we all ate. So she was mom. And she's the first person in our family who graduated from college.

The students talked in heartfelt detail about their families being their primary motivators as they pursue higher education. Male 1 shared about his father coming to the U.S. to work and support his family in El Salvador.

I decided to continue with my education because of my family. My dad worked for 23 years in the United States. He always worked. And he was always with me. He never left us behind. He always helped us. Like whenever he could, he would send us money, or he would always call us every weekend to see how we were. And that's something that really motivated me to continue my education. Because he gave me the opportunity. If I have an opportunity to make a difference in my family, being from another country, coming from behind everyone, and going forward, I won't lose that chance to try and make a difference. And maybe one day I could help other students that are in the same position as me, you know? And my family, they always tell me, you know, continue your education. Never give up (personal communication, August 2023).

Female 5 walked across the border and through the desert at the age of 5 with her mother, a coyote, and a group of other immigrants trying to reach the U.S. Her father joined them a month later, and both of her parents went to work as migrant fieldworkers, jobs that they still do today. While she has DACA status, her parents remain undocumented. Her story demonstrates multiple forms of valuable cultural capital that have helped her persist through multiple educational challenges.

At one point, I felt like the adult trying to teach them, and it was tough. I started staying home alone when I was 10 years old. I had to learn how to cook. I remember I would cook so they would have their dinner ready. I would clean. When I was 16, my dad didn't want to let me work because he wanted me to focus on school. And I told him, 'I promise you that I'm not going to stop going to school. I just want to feel like I'm able to help you guys because you guys work so much.' I always felt so bad for them when it was like 90 degrees or 100 degrees. And I know that they're outside, and I'm just like, oh my God. And I remember thinking, oh, that's going to be me because I'm going to get out of high school, and that is going to be my life. So it was just so hard (personal communication, September 2023).

Female 7 has a brother with special needs, and he inspires her to become a special education teacher. "I think what motivates me is my brother. I know that I need to finish college and get a degree. I know that I'll need to take care of him later" (personal communication, October 2023). Female 8 wants to be a teacher

like her mom, who is still in Mexico, and shared that both of her parents support her and motivate her to continue her education. “My father is helping me a lot. He's supportive of my life. My mom says, ‘I'm really proud of you. Just keep doing it’” (personal communication, October 2023).

Only one student did not have the support of her parents to continue her education. Female 3 faced pressure to stop her education after graduating high school to support her mother's business. “We were working together and everything, and she didn't want me to study. She has a cleaning company, so she wanted me to work with her” (personal communication, September 2023). She went against her mother's wishes and moved out to pursue her goal of becoming a nurse. While she doesn't have parental support, she shared about the support she has received from her extended family. “My mom doesn't want nothing to do with me. But my grandparents and uncles, they encourage me to [go to school]. They say that I'm smart and that I have the patience for it, and that I can do it. With encouragement, I can do it (personal communication, September 2023).

Yosso (2005) stated that *familial capital* connects Students of Color to the well-being of the broader community and enlarges *familia* to include extended family and community. Female 3 described facing multiple barriers to higher education, including a lack of transportation and no access to her parents' financial information for financial aid, but the support of her extended family combines with her aspirational capital to support her desire to help the

community in nursing. This commitment to the community is heard in a recommendation from Male 1 on how to support English learners like him.

Maybe one of the things that I think would be crucial to help high school students is to make more presentations in high schools for students who are in ELD classes. In high school, I have friends there who are like me. They don't speak English that well, and they don't know much about college. And I asked them if they want to continue to college and they say no because they're scared. They don't know much. So I try to talk to them and tell them some of my experience in college, but they're still like, 'I'll think about it' because they don't have much information about it. Most of the college presentations are in English, so they don't understand it yet. They don't know that there are resources that they can get in college that could help them (personal communication, December 2023).

Table 4.24 provides an overview of US-EL demonstrations of Familial Capital, their needs, and the research questions addressed.

Table 4.24. Familial Capital in US-EL Narratives and Research Questions Addressed

Form of Capital	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Familial Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many US-ELs have families who have sacrificed for their children's educations. They respect their parents' and grandparents' dreams for them. They feel a responsibility to their families and their community. Family separation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs that engage parents and students in Spanish and establish trust and connection with the institution. 	RQ 2

Navigational Capital

Navigational capital refers to an ability to move through educational and social institutions. As Yosso (2005) points out, “Institutions are not created with Communities of Color in mind (p. 80). Students of Color must develop skills to successfully negotiate racially hostile educational systems (Yosso, 2005). In the previous sections, all of the students shared their experiences navigating new schools, in a new country in a new language as children when they first came to the U.S. These experiences gave them a set of navigational skills that did not translate to higher education, as all of the students spoke of needing significant help registering for college, applying for financial aid, developing a program plan, and choosing classes. The students spoke about the navigational support that they received from SCCC’s Spanish-speaking staff and indicated that it was something that they both wanted and needed. However, they also pointed to gaps in support that created challenges for them, gaps that they navigated by seeking help from EOPS, non-credit ESL, a new counselor, or figuring it out independently.

As called out in the section *English Language Support Post-AB 705*, three of the five students in credit English classes received insufficient or negligible support from instructional faculty. AB 705 and 1705 recommend *Professional Development* for instructional faculty to support students in transfer-level English, and the student experiences underscore the necessity of reframing both instruction and mindset from deficit-based to asset-based (PPIC, 2022; Yosso, 2005).

The most frequently heard request to instructional faculty from US-ELs related to having more patience, support, and understanding. One student said that sometimes she needed academic support in ways that professors do not always relate to. “Sometimes they say ‘*look it up*’ or ‘*go read about it*’ instead of really trying to help you” (personal communication, September 2023). Another shared needing “mostly academic support, but not a lot of professors relate to it” (personal communication, September 2023).

They asked for “more understanding professors who are helpful and understand our situation” and for the teachers to be “open-minded and have a little bit more patience with us, not make us feel like we should have learned this a long time ago” (personal communication, September 2023). Most of SCCC’s English faculty are white, and one bilingual faculty member noted that “[They] don’t know how difficult it is trying to manage two languages. Students are already struggling with imposter syndrome, so faculty having more compassion toward those students will go a long way” (personal communication, June 2023).

Many students recalled not clearly understanding instructions or assignments and called for professors to pause and “make sure that we understand what they are saying and to pay more attention to people like me” (personal communication, September 2023). Two of the students wanted professors to see them in a more humanist way. “Sometimes they have to understand the student as a student, how he or she is feeling, and what is the thing that they can do to help them more. Having a little more care and compassion” (personal communication, October 2023).

Students also wanted easier, more efficient access to information from the college that would allow them to navigate college more efficiently. One student asked for “More announcements like resources that we could use or people that we can contact for help” (personal communication, August 2023). Another wanted information in the form of a program specifically for first-year, first-generation English learners “that continued throughout the year as a resource for students to go to for help” (personal communication, September 2023).

Finally, students reinforced the need for information about programs that can give them the support they need. The students who enrolled in EOPS all shared finding that critical program on their own or through a familial recommendation (personal communications, September/October 2023). Likewise, the tutoring center relies on faculty to notify students about their existence and availability for academic support, something that one English 1A student reported their professor not doing (personal communication, September 2023).

The students all came to college with some navigational capital but expressed needing additional support to help them learn to navigate higher education. Improved student engagement and professional development for faculty will support all students but also provide essential navigational capital to Students of Color, including US-ELs, and give them skills that will serve them as they complete community college, transfer to four-year universities, and enter the job market (Yosso, 2005).

Table 4.25 provides an overview of US-EL demonstrations of Navigational Capital, their needs, and the research questions addressed.

Table 4.25. Navigational Capital in US-EL Narratives and Research Questions Addressed

Form of Capital	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Navigational Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They grew up navigating complex systems on their own or for their parents. • US-ELs need significant help navigating community college including registration, course selection, financial aid, and program planning. • They prefer getting help in Spanish. • Professors told US-ELs to find their own answers when asked for academic help rather than helping them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better information about and access to support programs such as EOPS, tutoring, and counseling. • Peer mentors who can help them navigate higher education. • An ability for counselors to identify US-ELs on enrollment. • Professors who provide both answers and encouragement so that students feel safe asking for help. 	RQ 2, 3

Social Capital

Yosso (2005) points to *Social Capital* as a critical form of cultural wealth that supports Students of Color as they navigate educational institutions. Social capital connects students with peers, resources, and programs that can provide access to jobs, scholarships, activities, and other forms of support that are so crucial for Students of Color, including US-ELs, as they work their way through higher education (Yosso, 2005). The student participants shared an absence of social connection in their experiences at SCCC.

When asked, “Do you feel that College of the Desert adequately supports bilingual students like you?” Female 1 replied, “I don't think so. They don't really

have anything. {There are no} programs, nothing like that, and the teachers don't mention anything" (personal communication, September 2023). Females 7 and 8 went to the Fall club recruitment event looking for a club for bilingual students like them but didn't find one. They expressed disappointment in finding clubs for other student populations but not for them.

The Día de los Muertos celebration was really good, and there was one ESLN event that was fun. We played games with the people that are still learning English. I think [these events] made us feel more part of [campus], but since then, I haven't seen anything else. [The college] does events for other clubs. They should also include us (personal communication, October 2023).

Others noted that there was not a club that resonated with them as immigrant language learners and wished there was something specifically for them. "A club for students who are learning English. Make a club like that. I would love that. I would love that" (personal communication, October 2023. Male 1 talked about how a social group would benefit him personally and other bilingual students.

A club for students who are bilingual would be a good program to be part of. Maybe that would encourage more students like me who don't like to be in public to come out. And because I want to change that, I'm just too quiet. Maybe knowing that there are other students that have the same situation (personal communication, December 2023).

Some of the students shared about playing sports in middle and high school and wanting to play sports at SCCC. However, neither were involved with sports because of time or transportation. SCCC has intercollegiate sports teams for men and women but no recreational or intramural sports teams (SCCC website, 2023). Male 2 was on an intercollegiate team at SCCC his first year, but was unable to continue. "I went to El Salvador and was there almost two months, so I was late to the practices. And in college, they're serious, and they don't take late players (personal communication, September 2023). Athletics helped Male 1 get through high school, and he wants to study kinesiology in order to work in athletics. However, he chose not to join an athletic team at SCCC because of his fears about English and his classes.

I like sports. I played soccer in high school. That's something that was something that changed my mind because I didn't like high school. It was something that I was thinking about [doing at SCCC], but you know, that's a lot of responsibility. But I was thinking like maybe my next year. First getting started with my classes, the most important thing, my classes. And then just doing something out with sports (personal communication, August 2023).

Female 3, who is shy and struggling with transportation issues, said she played basketball and volleyball in high school and "I would probably do sports or something" if they were accessible and available (personal communication, September 2023).

One final observation related to academic support, trust, and extended social capital for students was heard from both a student and a faculty member in the form of in-class tutors for transfer-level English. While tutoring is a form of academic support, an embedded peer tutor who is in the classroom helping students regularly can become a connection or mentor to programs and structures outside of the classroom, as well as social-emotional support and encouragement. One faculty member shared the academic support it would provide their students.

I would love to have an embedded tutor in my classes so that there are two individuals in the room who students can look to for guidance and for answers. The worst thing that happened was that I had a classroom full of 28 students, and 15 of them had questions, but I could only go to one student at a time. And even when they were working in groups, it was difficult because each group had a question. I always felt like I would like to spend five more minutes [them], but I need to get [to other groups] because we only have 30 minutes left of class (personal communication, August 2023).

Female 2 felt that extending peer tutoring support to the classroom would “focus on all the students because every student in the classroom is the same. It's not just the student that doesn't speak English. [And] it is more for the instructors to be more aware of the student situations” (personal communication, September 2023). Her observation connects back to the issue of trust and US-ELs not wanting to stand out, as discussed in the previous section. An embedded

peer tutor in the classroom provides academic support as well as a form of social capital in that they get to know a peer student who can advise and support them and provide a connection to academic services at the tutoring center and other campus resources.

Table 4.26 provides an overview of US-EL demonstrations of Social Capital, their needs, and the research questions addressed.

Table 4.26. Social Capital in US-EL Narratives and Research Questions Addressed

Form of Capital	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Social Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like all student groups, US-ELs want to connect with students like them. • US-ELs want a social club for bilingual students where they feel linguistically safe, make friends, and have fun. • Opportunities to play recreational sports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A club and safe space for US-ELs and bilingual students. • School-supported events and programming. • A recreational sports league for all students that does not require the commitment of a club team. • In-class English 1A peer tutors to provide students with a person that they know outside of class for trusted campus connections. 	RQ 2

Linguistic Capital

US-ELs come to school with rich *linguistic capital* that comes from their language and communicative skills and experiences. The experiences that bilingual children have translating for their parents and helping them navigate complex situations provide them with meaningful social experiences, literacy skills, language abilities, and familial responsibility from a very early age (Yosso,

2005). Female 5 recounted her experiences translating for her parents and taking responsibility for helping them communicate after they came to the U.S.

I remember I was like eighth grade, seventh grade, having to go to the hospital with them, and translate as a little kid by myself, not knowing how to tell the doctor specific things. I didn't know how to translate so I would look it up on Google and then I would be like, this is what I mean, or this is the word I'm trying to say. The doctor telling me what was wrong with my dad and me having to explain to my dad while the doctor said this, the doctor said that. So it was really hard. We had to learn how to fill out our paperwork for the doctors. At a young age there I am reading the papers and just having my mom's put her signature. When I would get things from school that she needed to sign, I had to read the paper to her. We had to read the mail to her. Everything was like, we need to help our parents out. And at one point I felt like the adult trying to teach them, and it was tough. I started staying home too alone when I was 10 years old. I had to learn how to cook. I started by learning how to make an egg watching YouTube videos (personal communication, September 2023).

Yet, despite the *linguistic capital* that all of the students possess, they all spoke negatively about their English abilities, particularly their spoken English, or saw their English as a deficit rather than a strength. These feelings are demonstrated in the comments many of the student participants made. All of the students were able to participate in the interview in English without the help of a translator, yet most of them spoke negatively or neutrally about their English

abilities and about being bilingual. The most commonly heard concern related to their ability to communicate verbally in English.

“Sometimes I struggle with my English speaking, like getting the words right so people understand me.” Female, 6, has lived in the U.S. since age 10.

“There's a lot to improve still. I catch myself sometimes when I speak to people. I have to stop and think, how do you say that word?” Female 5, in the U.S. since age 5

“I'm still scared to speak, but I don't know how to figure out the words. Even right now, I feel a little bit afraid, like that anxiety.” Female 2, in the U.S. since age 16.

Female 3 compared her English to her Spanish, feeling that she could speak very quickly in Spanish, but in English, “I don't do a good job.”

The students' insecurity about their oral English abilities showed up in several ways in college. Multiple students discussed fear or anxiety of making mistakes when speaking English. Female 7 made the decision to begin community college in non-credit ESL, saying, “I didn't feel comfortable with my English. I think I needed more talking because I knew how to write, but when [the teacher] asked questions or something, I didn't know how to respond.” Female 3 became afraid to speak because “I might mess up or something” (personal communication, September 2023). Female 2 shared her fears from high school that she still has in the classroom.

I remember that every time I went to school, I was always scared. In class, if the teacher asked me something, I thought, ‘I don't have the answer. I

don't understand the class.' Even right now, I feel a little bit afraid, like that anxiety (personal communication, September 2023).

When asked about the value of a corequisite support class for English 1A, one student who had just completed the course discussed wanting support for oral communication, not with writing or grammar. After hearing about the course, he quickly replied, "Yes, I would join that class." When asked what type of academic support would be most useful, he said it would be helpful with the oral presentations that were required for 1A. "That would be good. Maybe sometimes people have that [feeling] they can't speak well, but they don't have the courage or someone that helps them. Encourage them to speak in front of people" (personal communication, December 2023). His comments validate the linguistic insecurity that US-ELs bring to community colleges despite the rich linguistic capital of their bilingualism.

This linguistic insecurity was heard from faculty who observed a strong hesitation or unwillingness in US-ELs to seek out or ask for help for both academic and non-academic questions or issues. There is a hesitation to ask questions in class because of their feelings of intimidation and fear of appearing incapable if they do not understand an assignment. "They don't want to ask stupid questions and put themselves in a vulnerable spot" (personal communication, October 2023). The reality of these fears was exemplified in the experiences in English courses that were shared by Female 5 and Female 7 and recounted in the earlier section on Microaggressions.

Faculty reported that many US-ELs hesitate to register for community college because “they feel that they lack English knowledge” (personal communication, August 2023). Another commented that students tend to put themselves down, saying, “My English is really bad. They do not say that they’re still learning English, and I don’t want to say that all students are that way, but for the most part, we hear many students knock their skills down” (personal communication, August 2023).

Table 4.27 provides an overview of US-EL demonstrations of Linguistic Capital, their needs, and the research questions addressed.

Table 4.27. Linguistic Capital in US-EL Narratives and Research Questions Addressed

Form of Capital	US-EL Experiences	US-EL Needs	Research Questions Addressed
Linguistic Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US-ELs have tremendous linguistic capital from their experiences learning English, translating for family, and attending school in the U.S. • US-ELs are very insecure about their English, spoken English in particular. • This insecurity holds them back in higher education. • The insecurity stems in part from the racial and linguistic microaggressions they’ve experienced from teachers, peers, and others, and English monolingualism in schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESL courses that include a speaking/listening component to help US-ELs become more confident. • A campus that celebrates and supports multilingual students. • Professional development to English professors in supporting English learners in their classrooms. • Zero tolerance for racial or linguistic microaggressions from faculty toward students or other faculty or staff. 	RQ1, 2, 3

Summary: Student Experiences at SCCC Through the Lens of Community Cultural Wealth

This section examined the Aspirational, Familial, Navigational, Social, and Linguistic assets US-ELs bring to community college. These cultural assets help US-ELs navigate higher education, as shown by their aspirational and familial capital. It also highlights opportunities for community colleges to bolster students' capital wealth to better support them in their universities, jobs, and communities, as shown by their linguistic, navigational, and social capital. Chapter Five will explore these opportunities to protect and build student cultural wealth and the benefits of doing so more deeply.

Summary

This chapter presented the qualitative data and results from the two phases of research that studied the transition of US-educated English learners from high school to community college in the years since the implementation of California Assembly Bills 705 and 1705. Phase one examined the research questions from a faculty perspective, while phase two gave voice to the students' experiences, feelings, and ideas about learning English and pursuing higher education in community college. The qualitative research examined the supports and services US-ELs used to achieve their educational goals through three theoretical frameworks: LatCrit, Intersectionality, and Community Cultural Wealth.

The next chapter will discuss the US-EL experiences in higher education within the context of the theoretical frameworks, summarize the findings, recommend ways for educational leaders to better support US-ELs in community college, discuss the study's limitations, and recommend future research.

CHAPTER FIVE:

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

“The most important voices in the room are the ones that we are not hearing from. The ones that no one is talking about.”

This research was inspired by the young English learners that I saw struggling to find an English class where they felt they belonged and this quote from a community college counselor. U.S.-educated English learners (US-ELs) arrive in the U.S. as children speaking another language, usually Spanish, and attend public school in the American K-12 system as English learners. Some students are reclassified as English proficient and are mainstreamed into regular classes. Others arrive in middle or high school and need more time to fully develop their academic English skills. Once they graduate from a U.S. high school, those wishing to pursue higher education will likely begin at a community college (Núñez et al., 2016). They are a student population that is neither well-researched nor understood. Still, they are in American community colleges striving to complete academic degrees in their second language in institutions that neither recognize nor listen to their needs.

This study examined the transition of Latino US-educated English learners (US-ELs) from high school to community college. The COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of AB 705 and 1705, which removed remedial courses in math and English and required U.S. high school graduates to access and pass

transfer-level math and English courses within one year of enrollment, significantly changed the learning landscape for all California community college students. However, the impact of this legislation on students who graduate from high school still learning English is not well understood. Previous research demonstrated the barriers that this student population faces and their pedagogical needs as they work to complete higher education, including significantly lower rates of access to and completion of higher education (Kanno, 2021). However, research into their post-secondary education academic needs is limited, and qualitative studies on their experiences are scarce (Kanno, 2021; Kanno & Harklau, 2012; Núñez et al., 2016). Furthermore, no qualitative research on US-ELs includes their voices, experiences, and perspectives, particularly in the years since the implementation of AB 705 and the COVID-19 pandemic. This study can inform educators and educational leaders of practices and programs that support this critical student population in community college and position them to achieve their academic goals in community college and beyond.

Understanding the Transition of US-Educated English Learners to Community College

Three research questions guided the study: 1) How are US-educated English learners experiencing academic English across the curricula in community college? 2) What programs and supports do US-educated English learners need to prepare them for and support them in transfer-level English? 3)

How are US-educated English learners connecting with these programs and supports, and how do they affect student outcomes and behaviors?

The research for this qualitative case study took place at a Southern California Community College (SCCC) that is federally designated as a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI) with a Hispanic student population of over 75 percent. The ten student participants selected for the study were all born in Mexico or Central America, immigrated to the U.S. before age 18, enrolled in school, and received a diploma from a Southern California high school. After graduation, the participants enrolled at Southern California Community College (SCCC) to pursue a degree.

The study began by interviewing faculty to understand SCCC's programs and structures, their experiences with US-ELs, and their understanding of and opinions about the students' academic needs post-AB 705. This was followed by in-depth interviews with the student participants about their experiences immigrating to the U.S., learning English, graduating high school, and beginning community college. The researcher was specifically interested in knowing how US-ELs are doing in English 1A or transfer-level English, which they must access and pass within one year under AB 705 unless they choose to begin in ESL, in which case they have three years to access and pass English 1A. The researcher also wanted to understand how US-ELs are experiencing community college programs and structures and listen to the students' recommendations on how community colleges can support English learners like them.

This chapter discusses the results of the study and ties the findings back to the existing literature, as Chapter Two describes. The researcher then provides recommendations to community college educators, administrators, and policymakers based on both the students and the theoretical frameworks, followed by suggestions for future research, given the study's limitations.

Discussion of Findings

Three theoretical frameworks were used as lenses through which the research was designed, conducted, and analyzed: LatCrit, Intersectionality, and Community Cultural Wealth. LatCrit, a branch of Critical Race Theory, centered on the students' voices and experiences to challenge the dominant white-centered deficit discourse and examine how race and racism impact educational structures and practices for Latino students (Guajardo et al., 2020; D. Solorzano et al., 2000; D. G. Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2005). Intersectionality highlighted diverse student identities and centered their lived experiences to provide a holistic representation of students and inform the research (Acevedo-Gil, 2019; Barker, 2021; Cuba et al., 2021; Nichols & Stahl, 2019). Community Cultural Wealth recognized the multiple forms of capital that Students of Color bring to the classroom (Yosso, 2005). Together, these frameworks provided a lens to view the students' experiences in community college, and gave significant insight into how US-ELs are experiencing academic English, the challenges they face in pursuing higher education in the U.S., and what community colleges can do to help US-ELs succeed.

This case study revealed the student participants' vast educational and experiential diversity, academic needs, and experiences with campus programs and structures. Each student had a unique path to community college. However, the similarities in their academic experiences reveal both the challenges US-ELs face in higher education and the resources they use to persist. These differences and similarities allowed the researcher to answer the research questions and present recommendations for educational leaders to support this vital student population. The following section examines the findings related to the students' experiences in academic English (RQ1), their experiences with programs and supports (RQ2), their connections with those programs and supports, and how they affect student behavior (RQ3).

Research Question 1: How Are US-Educated English Learners Experiencing Academic English in Community College?

Half of the US-ELs in the study had taken and passed English 1A, which is the required transfer-level English class for degree-seeking students. The student experiences showed that English 1A is challenging for most US-ELs, even with professors who understood that they were still learning English and supported them throughout the class. US-ELs would benefit from a corequisite support course, especially one developed with English language learners' linguistic and academic needs in mind.

Transfer Level English is Challenging for US-ELs. All but one of the students struggled with the English 1A. One reason the students struggled academically and emotionally was the rigor of the class for them as second

language learners. Three students seriously considered dropping the course before the end of the semester. Guidance from the Chancellor's Office on AB 705 and 1705 implementation recommended that community colleges add corequisite support courses for transfer-level math and English. Still, at the time of the study, SCCC did not have one available to students on their course schedule. Most faculty agreed that a corequisite course for English 1A was needed and that students would benefit from such a course. Furthermore, the participants indicated that they would register for the corequisite course if it were available, and they were told about it.

US-ELs Experience Microaggressions from English Faculty. Guidance from the Chancellor's Office on AB 705 and 1705 implementation also recommended professional development for faculty, including training on providing academic support to English learners. Again, SCCC's English faculty did not provide any professional development for teachers to help them better support students going directly into transfer-level English. Beyond their academic struggles, three of the five students who took transfer-level English courses experienced negative faculty attitudes, racial and linguistic microaggressions, and educational neglect by their professors. Faculty participants validated the student experiences by saying that they knew of teachers who engaged in harmful, racist practices toward students. Scholarship on US-educated English learners calls out negative attitudes surrounding Latino English learners' bilingualism as contributing to low academic achievement and persistence in the higher education educational system. English learners can face linguistic,

cultural, and racial discrimination in education and be left feeling that their language abilities are inadequate and that they do not belong in higher education (Cummins, 2012; Kanno, 2021; Roberge, 2002).

While SCCC, a Hispanic-serving Institution with a majority Latino student population, has many supportive, culturally competent faculty, the fact that three of five student participants experienced racial microaggressions and academic neglect from transfer-level English faculty and that they have not implemented any corequisite support courses for students, is alarming.

Supportive Professors Help US-ELs Persist in English 1A. The student participants with linguistically and academically supportive professors for English 1A credited their professors for keeping them engaged and on track. However, they still struggled to complete the course. Across the curriculum, students were well-served by instructors who recognized the presence of English learners in their classrooms, proactively ensured that they understood assignments, and provided encouragement and resources for academic support.

English 1A is More Difficult Online. The student participants also struggled when taking English 1A online. About half of SCCC's English courses are offered online in a synchronous or asynchronous format. Their reasons for taking the course online varied. One student wanted to take it in person but couldn't because there was no evening class available that worked with her work schedule. Another student took English 1A online to avoid being called on in class or having to speak out loud in front of peers and the instructor. The students found that the online modality made it harder for them to understand

assignments, get additional help, and access support and feedback from the professor.

US-ELs Struggle with Linguistic Insecurity. All of the US-ELs in the study discussed their challenges in speaking English in front of others and understanding the English spoken to them in and out of the classroom. All of the students participated in the study without the aid of a translator. Several students said they feel fully bilingual and confident in their academic abilities in English. Others expressed concern about or criticism of their English. In either case, linguistic insecurity was persistent among all the student participants.

At school, some student participants discussed not wanting to stand out and being afraid or hesitant to ask for help. They avoided raising their hands to ask questions because they did not want to look “dumb.” They feared being called on in class because they may not understand the question or know how to answer verbally. The students said they sometimes do not understand what the professor is saying or what the assignment is but are afraid to ask for clarification because they could be met with judgment and humiliation. This linguistic insecurity is something that the students continually navigate at school, no matter how long they have been in the U.S. The students' insecurity and the negative reactions they received from professors could be heard in the interactions they recounted during their interviews.

This common theme from the students about their oral communication varied from the literature, which often found oral communication to be a key strength of US-ELs (Asher, 2011; Bunch & Kibler, 2015; Harklau, 2000; Roberge

et al., 2008; Singhal, 2004). Linguistic insecurity is seen in the literature as a significant barrier for some English learners, causing them to either not challenge themselves academically or hold themselves back from full participation (Kanno, 2021), as was seen in the student who chose to take English 1A online to avoid having to speak out loud in class. The U.S. is steeped in English monolingualism, with English being a gatekeeper into higher levels of academics and society (Kanno, 2021; Motha, 2014).

Linguistic fears and insecurities hold US-ELs back in the classroom and prevent them from asking questions, seeking help, and speaking up in an academic setting. The only students who felt linguistically supported by faculty were those in noncredit ESL and two students in English 1A. However, it was not enough to overcome their linguistic insecurity.

The programs and structures at SCCC do not work to make English learners feel safe and seen, nor do they actively support and celebrate bilingual or multilingual students. Students who feel linguistically insecure hold themselves back from full participation in school and do not challenge themselves academically (Kanno, 2021). Furthermore, negative attitudes surrounding Latino ELs' bilingualism contribute to lower academic achievement and persistence in higher education (Kanno & Cromley, 2015). Multiple researchers have connected low academic achievement in higher education to educational institutions that marginalize English learners and racist school practices that remove their culture and language and promote monolingualism over multilingualism (Benesch, 2008; Kanno & Cromley, 2015; Motha, 2014; D. G. Solorzano, 2019).

The US-ELs in this study perceived their language abilities as a deficit, and most viewed their language proficiency as less than required for higher education. Their interactions at SCCC did nothing to enhance their linguistic confidence. Conversely, linguistic microaggressions from their professors confirmed their insecurities and enhanced an internal barrier that held them back from full participation in the classroom and on campus.

Research Question 2: What Programs and Supports Do US-Educated English Learners Need to Prepare Them For and Support Them in Transfer-Level English?

One of the most important takeaways from this study was the incredible diversity of US-ELs insofar as their academic experiences and needs, educational backgrounds, immigration stories, and English abilities. There is no one-size-fits-all academic prescription for US-ELs. Instead, community colleges can recognize their diverse linguistic backgrounds and ensure that options for courses and language support exist at all levels, from ESL to the highest level of English, and across the curricula and throughout campus. Key programs are English as a Second Language courses, Counseling, and extracurricular programming.

Noncredit ESL Courses Benefit US-ELs. Noncredit ESL courses, which are credit- and tuition-free and have flexible enrollment, provided essential academic English preparation for three of the student participants. AB 705 requires high school graduates to access and complete transfer-level English within one year of enrollment, but it allows US-ELs to enroll in ESL and take up to

three years to access and complete transfer-level English (CCCCO, n.d.; Shaw et al., 2018). The three students spent two to five semesters improving their English before moving into credit courses. One student had been admitted to a CSU but had yet to be reclassified from ELD and felt that he needed to improve his reading and writing before attending university. Two other students wanted to improve their spoken English before taking credit courses that count toward their major.

At the time of the study, all three students had moved out of noncredit ESL into credit courses, and one transferred to a CSU the following semester. Unfortunately, as of summer 2023, guidance from the CCCCCO eliminated noncredit ESL as an option for high school graduates (Lowe & Hetts, 2023; Lowe, A.N., communication, December 23, 2022). The guidance specifies that US-ELs must enroll in credit ESL, which is tuition-bearing, adds units to their course load, and appears on their transcript. Importantly, it removes agency for US-ELs to determine the best coursework for themselves. Taking away language courses that benefit US-ELs and help them transition to academic English equates to an additional barrier to higher education.

The students all praised the direction and encouragement they received from the non-credit counselors. Unfortunately, students who received guidance from mainstream credit counselors did not receive the same course pathway options and direction as the students who began in noncredit. Most reported not talking with or being asked by their counselors about being second language learners. One had a counselor who never told her that ESL classes were

available to her. She spent three semesters failing classes before changing her program plan and returning to ESL to improve her reading and writing.

Comprehensive Counseling in Spanish is Critical. The primary nonacademic support program that students interacted with was counseling, which relates to RQs 2 and 3 related to student connections with programs and supports and their outcome on student behavior. Counselors were critical to the student participants. Even more critical were counselors who could work with the students in their native language of Spanish. All of the student participants were first-generation college students. They did not have parents who could help them navigate higher education because of language barriers and a lack of understanding of the system. Additionally, US-ELs have more complex needs due to their immigration status, the challenges of filling out the FAFSA and other financial and immigration forms, and understanding academic programs and language support options.

All the student participants emphasized how important it was for them to work with Spanish-speaking counselors. Unfortunately, students are not identified as English language learners when they register for community college and initially meet with a counselor. Most students reported challenges finding a Spanish-speaking counselor and receiving proper counseling and guidance based on their English language abilities. Most met with multiple counselors throughout their time at SCCC. The students who started in noncredit ESL reported receiving excellent academic guidance from the noncredit counselors who helped them find language support classes and the encouragement that

they needed. However, in credit counseling, half of the students reported having challenges getting the information and support they required. The students with credit counselors also reported not learning about ESL course options, with one returning to ESL after struggling academically for three semesters and participating in this study.

The students were also unaware of critical programs, such as Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), that can give them focused, ongoing support. Two study participants were enrolled in EOPS and credited the program for keeping them in college. However, they found EOPS independently or from a family referral, not from the college. English learner status qualifies most students for EOPS support, but students cannot get help from a program they are not aware of.

Two undocumented student participants discussed receiving advice and help with forms from SCCC's Center for Dreamers. Enrollment, financial aid, and FAFSA are exceptionally complicated for students with DACA status, on expired visas, or have undocumented parents. Programs such as this provided expertise and trustworthy support for these students to get and stay enrolled in college.

US-ELs Lack Opportunities for Social Connections. College students want opportunities to meet other students who share their interests for friendship and socializing, and US-ELs are no different. All of the US-ELs in the study noted looking for a club or organization on campus for students like them who were immigrant English learners and not finding one. The club would serve several critical functions. First, it would be a safe place for them to meet other students

and participate in social activities without having to worry about language, bullying, or racism. Next, it could connect them with older students to serve as friendly mentors, advisors, and role models. And last, the students saw a club like this as a way to feel more involved and connected to campus and have opportunities to give back, both on campus, and to US-ELs in the area high schools.

Several of the students in the study played sports and were discouraged at the lack of recreational athletic clubs for students wanting to play for fun. While they played in high school, jobs and academics made participating at the club level difficult. Beyond the physical benefits, a recreational sports league on campus for all students would be a great opportunity for US-ELs to expand their connection to school, make friends, and expand their social capital.

Research Question 3: How Are US-Educated English Learners Connecting With These Programs and Supports, and How Do They Affect Student Outcomes and Behaviors?

Two key themes emerged from the student interviews that highlight students' internal barriers as they interact with professors, counselors, and other support programs on campus: linguistic insecurity and trust. These internal barriers provide insight into Research Questions 3, which relates to the programs and supports students need and how they connect with them.

Trust and Mistrust are Barriers to Higher Education for US-ELs. Both students and faculty identified trust and mistrust as barriers to students asking questions or seeking help in college. When combined with detrimental lived and

educational experiences, linguistic insecurity creates an elusive mistrust of faculty, programs, and structures in US-ELs. Some of the students shared that since coming to the U.S., they have experienced racism, discrimination, and bullying from peers, teachers, or society because of their language, race, or both. Their personalities transformed from being loud and outgoing in their native language to being shy and insecure in English. Some student participants were undocumented, DACA recipients, or had undocumented family members and became accustomed to living in secrecy and not standing out.

These experiences and feelings created a reluctance or unwillingness to seek support from professors, tutoring, or other unknown, uncertain resources. This desire to go unnoticed can create insurmountable barriers as they pursue academic degrees in higher education (Almon, 2012; David & Kanno, 2021; Gonzalez et al., 2013; Harklau, 2013; Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Perez, 2021).

Findings that support US-EL's lack of trust related to student academic support from peer tutors at the tutoring center. Peer tutoring is an academic support program available for students needing additional help with classes, yet the student participants rarely used it. When asked why, they pointed to reasons of time, not knowing about it, but also because they did not feel comfortable seeking help from an unknown entity. One solution proposed by faculty was embedded tutors in every English 1A course to support students. In-class tutors would also build a connection between the classroom and the tutoring center and help students feel comfortable going there for additional help.

When students did find a person or program that they connected and established trust with, the outcomes were very positive. All three students who began in noncredit ESL transferred to credit courses; one completed English 1A, one began taking business courses, and the third transferred to a CSU in Spring 2024. All praised the Spanish-speaking counselors in the noncredit office who supported and encouraged them to continue to take ESL classes and pursue their goals. The two students enrolled in EOPS credited their Spanish-speaking counselors for keeping them enrolled and on track and did not think they would have stayed in school without the program. The Dreamer Resource Center was another program that provided critical support to students needing help with AB 540, DACA, and Dream Act paperwork. The staff quickly and easily established trust and connection with the students and worked with them in Spanish so that they could remain enrolled in college.

Cultural Capital in Education

Community Cultural Wealth was a pivotal framework for this study and came out strongly when listening to the students talk about their experiences in life and education. US-educated English learners bring a wealth of cultural capital to higher education, and identifying cultural wealth in Students of Color allows educators to develop programs and structures within schools that transform and empower students and their communities (Yosso, 2005).

This framework, when combined with LatCrit and Intersectionality, enabled the researcher to go beyond the research questions as the students told their

stories and identify areas of strength as well as vulnerability. This section will connect the findings to the cultural wealth that US-ELs in the study brought to community college and the critical role that cultural wealth plays in their educations.

Familial and Aspirational Capital

All of the student participants came to college with strong *familial capital*. Their families strongly influence US-EL students' integration into American society and attitudes toward education (Rojas-García, 2013). The students talked about their parents' sacrifices for them to have better lives in the United States and access to higher education. The students also have a great deal of *aspirational capital*, which is clearly demonstrated through their persistence in college despite racial microaggressions, linguistic challenges, failure and setbacks, and semesters of ESLN to improve their language before starting. Research showed immigrant optimism as a positive factor in educational persistence and outcomes (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Núñez, 2014). *Familial* and *aspirational capital* greatly influence the persistence and success of the student participants as they pursue higher education (Acevedo & Solorzano, 2023; Delgado Bernal & Alemán, 2017; Rojas-García, 2013; Yosso, 2005).

Linguistic Capital

The students also possess a tremendous amount of *linguistic capital*. Research shows that bilingualism positively influences student academic achievement in both languages (Lacina & Griffith, 2017). All of the students began school in the U.S. without speaking English. Many overcame fear, anger,

frustration, and difficulty learning a new language as children navigating a new school in a new country. Many acted as interpreters for their parents from a young age. One of the student participants shared about being the linguistic go-between her parents and doctors at a very young age, filling out medical forms, and Googling information to explain it in English on their behalf. Despite their strong *linguistic capital* and bilingual status, nearly all student participants expressed insecurity about their English abilities, mainly their spoken English.

Social and Navigational Capital

While the student participants come to college with *familial*, *aspirational*, and *linguistic capital*, the study findings showed that student participants lack *social capital* and *navigational capital*. All students discussed how difficult it was to navigate college registration and enrollment and relied heavily on counselors to help them. They also reported feeling ignored by student social programs and activities, which, through their eyes, had programs for every imaginable student group except theirs. They lacked spaces to make friends and connect with peers who could both provide social opportunities and be the source of guidance and support that every college student needs. The students all wanted a safe space to go, but there was nothing for them. As a result, they felt isolated on campus and found friendship and support only within their classes or majors.

By recognizing and valuing the cultural capital that Students of Color, including Latino US-ELs, bring to higher education, educational leaders can engage in practices and build structures that develop and protect community cultural capital in students, and eliminate deficit discourses and academic threats

on their campuses. Recommendations for developing programs and practices to cultivate students' cultural wealth are discussed in the following section.

Summary of Findings

This section explored the findings from the case study to answer the research questions through the lenses of three theoretical frameworks. The study showed how US-ELs have experienced academic English and their experiences with faculty, counselors, and support programs at a Southern California community college. The results highlighted the need for:

- Corequisite support in transfer-level English courses;
- Robust non-credit ESL courses focused on comprehensive English, including speaking and listening, and college preparation;
- Professional development for professors on supporting English learners in the classroom with culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogies;
- Comprehensive Spanish-language counseling that connects US-ELs to appropriate English course pathways;
- Improved connections to programs on campus that can support them;
- Social activities and clubs for bilingual students.

Unfortunately, the student narratives revealed racial and linguistic microaggressions and neglect by their English professors. The findings also

highlighted two key factors that hold students back from connecting with programs and structures in higher education: trust and linguistic insecurity.

The framework of Community Cultural Wealth sheds light on the cultural assets that are powering the US-ELs to persist through the multiple challenges they have faced, as well as the areas where they need support. This awareness of cultural capital creates an opportunity for educational leaders to design programs that develop cultural wealth, not only in US-ELs but in all Students of Color, and eliminate deficit discourse and racial and linguistic microaggressions from their campuses.

The following section first outlines the recommendations from the students to educational leaders on supporting students like themselves. It then describes a cultural wealth framework to help educational leaders transform their campuses into institutions that strengthen and support multilingual students.

Recommendations to Support US-Educated English Learners on Community College Campuses

To disrupt the deficit narratives and empower students, educational leaders must develop and maintain programs that specifically support US-educated English learners in our community colleges and correct the deficiencies within the system. This section begins with the students' recommendations on what they want to see in community colleges to better support students like themselves. Their recommendations are centered around culturally responsible support from faculty, language support, social opportunities, and programming,

and better access to information and programs. Student recommendations are followed by a recommendation for a framework to strengthen and support multilingual students by focusing on student cultural wealth and the findings from this study. The section concludes with recommendations for advocacy and changes at the state government level.

Recommendations from the Students

The student participants all shared their recommendations to community colleges on how they could better support US-ELs. The most frequently heard requests related to professors and support in the classroom. The students want professors to understand that some students are still learning English and to show patience and support toward these students. Many of the students did not feel that their professors related to their needs or cared about helping them and asked them to take a more humanist approach to their students. The students also reported not always understanding instructions, assignments, or expectations, mainly when professors spoke quickly. Building trust and making it safe for students to ask questions or clarify understanding will help US-ELs succeed in the classroom.

The students also wanted to see a program geared specifically toward first-generation students in Spanish and English that was ongoing throughout the year. SCCC offers a three-week summer bridge program for first-generation students that a few of the students participated in with mixed results. They all saw the benefits of the existing bridge program but felt it could go further to support US-ELs throughout the year. A cohort of students would be a resource

for US-ELs, providing support and a place to meet other students and peer mentors. One student recognized the opportunity to bring such a program to US-ELs while they are still in high school because many are unaware that higher education is available to them.

The students valued Spanish-speaking faculty on campus, particularly counselors. They wished it was easier to connect with a Spanish-speaking counselor and get clear information about programs and their options for English language academic support.

The students also called for more effective access to resources and information. An embedded first-gen cohort program would connect students with essential programs such as EOPS, the Dreamer Resource Center, and bilingual counselors who are well-versed in the needs of US-educated ELs.

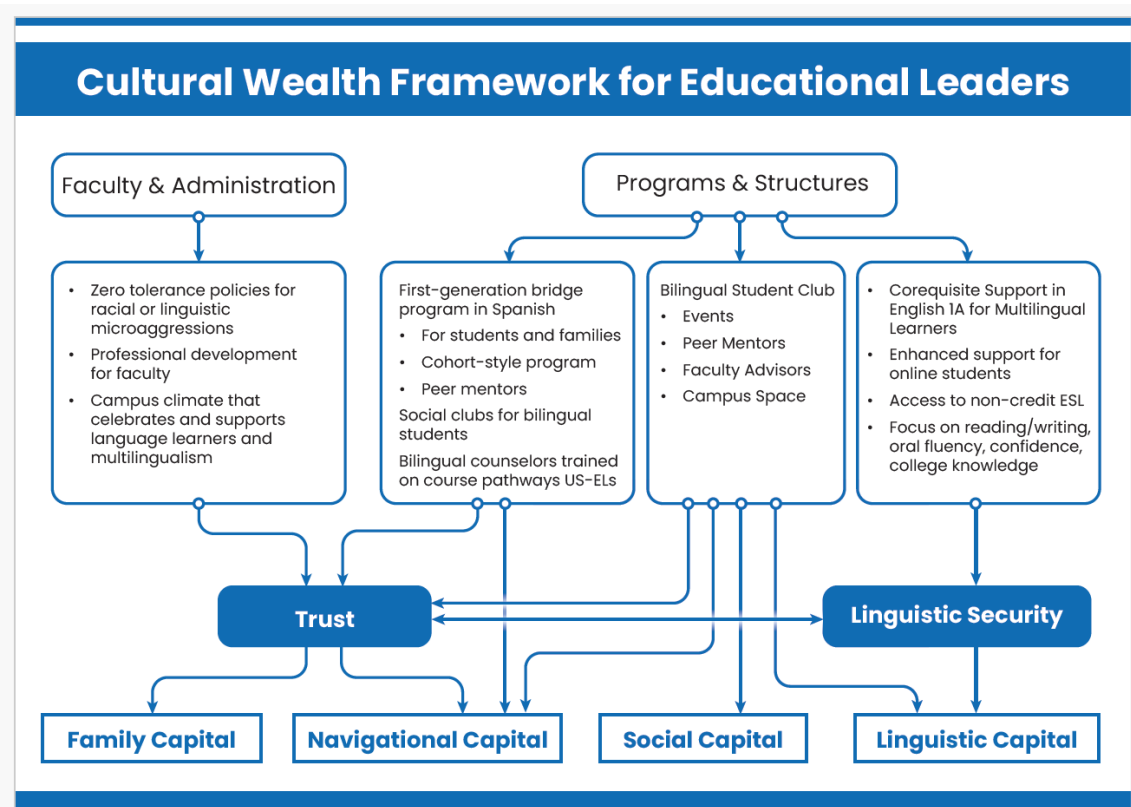
The students also wished for a club for bilingual, immigrant students like them. Multiple programs and clubs exist for other student groups, but nothing related to US-ELs or bilingual students. The students want a club to meet other bilingual students, connect with mentors, plan and participate in events and activities, and have a place to gather and make friends. US-ELs also thought that a club like this would help them overcome the shyness and insecurity that they felt when speaking English and help them to get more involved on campus.

Framework for Building Student Cultural Wealth

The student narratives exposed the challenges and vulnerabilities that US-ELs face in both academic English and higher education. However, the narratives also revealed the tremendous cultural wealth US-ELs bring to campus

and how harmful educational practices deplete that wealth. Through listening to the voices of US-educated English learners, this study has formulated a framework for transformational change on community college campuses (Figure 5.1). The framework is grounded in the theoretical frameworks that guided the study – LatCrit, Intersectionality, and Community Cultural Wealth – and the students' voices. The framework puts forward programs and practices that will nurture the cultural capital that US-ELs enter community college with, eliminate destructive practices on campus, and construct programs that develop social and navigational wealth that will serve students as they transfer to four-year universities and beyond.

Figure 5.1. Cultural Wealth Framework for Educational Leaders



Transforming the Campus. Transforming campuses into institutions that encourage and advocate for Latino US-ELs must begin at the top. Educational leaders must take a stand against racial and linguistic microaggressions toward all students, including students who are still mastering English. It also requires institutions to embrace and celebrate the linguistic capital that so many students possess and to build students up while tearing down the practices that harm them. This can begin with leaders fostering a campus climate that celebrates and supports multilingualism in ways that matter to bilingual students and faculty.

Faculty, staff, and administration must participate in paid professional development focused on developing cultural proficiency for working with language learners and understanding their needs in the classroom. These trainings should be wrapped into faculty and staff evaluations and given the highest consideration during reviews for tenure and promotion. Reports of racism or aggression against a student must be addressed and taken seriously.

Funds should be dedicated to professional development and training for all full-time and part-time instructional faculty, administration, and staff. However, the need for trained teachers to teach English courses, including corequisite support courses, is critical. Most English faculty have Masters degrees in English literature or composition and do not have any training or experience instructing English learners. At a minimum, English faculty teaching corequisites for US-ELs should be required to obtain TESOL certificates. TESOL certification for all community college faculty would go far in ensuring that English learners are

given the best possible opportunity to succeed both in English classes and across the curriculum.

Finally, as we move away from the COVID-19 pandemic, community colleges must ensure they offer more face-to-face courses, including English 1A with support, in both day and evening timeslots. US-ELs struggle with online learning, particularly asynchronous modalities, and found English 1A to be even more difficult when taken online.

However, online courses are preferred or necessary for some students. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that online students receive the same level of support and instruction as in-person students, including access to corequisite support courses, synchronous Zoom time with professors, embedded class tutors, and access to peer tutoring.

Trust and security can grow only when classrooms and campuses are free from racism and microaggressions. *Linguistic capital* can flourish when students are supported by their professors and feel safe, secure, and celebrated on campus as second-language learners. Trust and security also extend to family, which includes their extended family and the community, expanding the student's *familial capital* (Yosso, 2005).

Transforming Programs and Structures. Two critical vulnerabilities for US-ELs are navigating higher education and connecting socially with other students. The student participants called for a program with them in mind that addressed their needs as first-generation college students and language learners. Such a program, conducted in both English and Spanish, would engage students and

families and connect them as a cohort of students with staff and peer mentors and to programs and structures on campus that expand their *navigational* and *social capital*. The program could also create opportunities for bilingual student workers to work on campus and gain career experience.

To support the social well-being of US-ELs, colleges should ensure that clubs and programs dedicated to bilingual students exist and are supported on their campuses. These clubs should be student-led, supported by bilingual faculty and administrators, and provide physical space and funding for programs and events focused on bilingual learners and cultural celebrations. Expanded recreational athletics also provides social capital for students, including US-ELs.

By eliminating the challenges that US-ELs have at the onset of their college experiences and creating safe spaces where students are seen and cared for, schools build trust that expands their *familial*, *navigational*, and *linguistic capital*. The addition of social programming builds students' *social capital*. Cultural capital supports Students of Color, including US-ELs as they continue in higher education (Yosso, 2005) .

Transforming the Classroom. Legislation has permanently changed community college enrollment, and faculty must engage in professional development that enables them to serve students equitably within the new landscape. All faculty, mainly English faculty, must recognize that second-language learners are in their classrooms and develop culturally proficient and linguistically sound instructional practices to support their success (Núñez, 2014). English departments must ensure robust corequisite support is available for

students, including language learners. Some California community colleges have developed two unit corequisites for English language learners that may be models for others (Maiullo, 2024). ESL and corequisite options should consider student needs in all instructional areas, including oral communication and presentations, which most of the students felt insecure about. English departments can then partner with Counseling and Student Services to communicate English 1A corequisite and ESL options so that counselors can effectively advise US-ELs on options for coursework.

Schools must also work to build equitable support for online students, recognizing that completing English 1A coursework online can be difficult for language learners, particularly in an asynchronous environment. Access to corequisite support courses, synchronous Zoom time with professors, embedded class tutors, access to peer tutoring, and supportive professors will help US-ELs needing online courses succeed.

Cultural Wealth Framework Summary. Systemic change to serve Latino US-ELs must start at the top with administrators and educational leaders, and this framework provides an outline for building systemic change within a community college. The framework is designed to implement programs that build students' trust and linguistic security, protect and enhance students' cultural wealth, and eliminate deficit rhetoric and damaging educational practices. Students will be more successful when schools design policies and programs around this framework. When community colleges protect and develop student cultural wealth, Students of Color, including Latino US-ELs, are more likely to

complete their degrees and leave college with the ability to advocate for themselves, resist racism or oppression, and engage in social justice in their communities (Acevedo & Solorzano, 2023; Martin-Beltrán et al., 2018).

Recommendations to Support US-ELs in Public Policy

One of the challenges in supporting US-ELs in higher education is identifying them. When US-ELs graduate from high school, they are no longer identified as English language learners on their school records. Expanding student tracking from PK-12 to PK-20 would identify students as language learners in their community college records and allow programs to reach out to them individually or as a group. Doing so would also provide valuable data and insight on US-ELs for educational researchers.

Three student participants began community college in non-credit ESL classes before moving into credit coursework. Unfortunately, the California Community College Chancellor's Office removed non-credit coursework as an option for US-ELs as of summer 2023. This restriction on noncredit courses does not appear in the actual text of AB 705 but was added by the CCCCO when they developed guidance for community colleges after AB 1705 (Brill-Winkoop, W., personal communication, January 19, 2023; (Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act, Calif. Assembly Bill 1705 (2012 & Rev. 2022)., 2022). The Chancellor's Office sees Noncredit ESL as a program for immigrant adults who did not attend school in the U.S., and the intent of AB 705 and 1705 is to prevent English learners from being caught in an endless cycle of remediation (Craig

Hayward, personal communication, October 31, 2022). However, the student experiences in non-credit ESL at SCCC clearly show the benefits such coursework has for students. Lobbying both the Chancellor's office and the state assembly would help US-ELs who benefit from noncredit ESL classes and preserve an academic option for them.

Finally, US-ELs are disincentivized to begin in ESL under the California Promise Program. The Promise Program provides financial assistance, grants, and free tuition to qualified students. However, it is limited to two years once a student graduates from high school and enrolls in community college. It would benefit US-ELs if exceptions were granted to English learners that would allow them an additional one to two years to master academic English in noncredit coursework before enrolling in the California Promise Program.

Recommendations for Further Research

While this study was intensive and thorough, it included the voices of just ten Latino US-ELs at one community college. Four years after the implementation of AB 705, confusion and frustration around the legislation and its impact on English learners remains. Educators and educational leaders would benefit from more studies where student voices are heard, particularly in schools offering a corequisite tailored for US-ELs or other nonacademic programs and supports. Replicating this study among multiple schools to compare supports and student outcomes with those of this study to help point toward a best practice or better practices.

Further research on student outcomes in English 1A and ESL courses would benefit students and faculty working diligently to pivot their instruction to US-ELs post-AB 705. Research is needed across the community college system to understand the English corequisite models and their impact on student outcomes, including outcomes for US-ELs.

One of the things I found most interesting in talking with the students was that they all struggled with language insecurity. In-depth research into the impact of support for bilingual students in K-12 and on college campuses on their linguistic feelings and identities would be instrumental.

Likewise, some educators' negative attitudes and hostility toward students, including English language learners, confounded me. Racism and microaggressions have no place on college campuses, especially in the classroom, from professors. Administrators would benefit from research into the persistence of these attitudes, best practices for changing them, and removing faculty who harm students, even those with tenure.

Furthermore, all the students had the support of their families and did not indicate that they faced financial pressures to forego school and go directly to work. A study focused on US-ELs' experience in school without the support of their families and overcoming financial barriers would benefit these students.

Finally, this study focused on Latino US-ELs at a Hispanic-serving Institution in Southern California with a Latino student population of over 75 percent. Despite this designation as an HSI, Latino US-ELs at the research site are not being served academically or linguistically. It would be beneficial to

replicate the study at other HSIs, including community colleges and universities across the U.S, and non-HSIs to understand higher education practices and US-EL experiences better.

Additionally, while this study focused on Spanish-speaking Latino US-ELs in Southern California, there are US-ELs from other parts of the world in community colleges nationwide. Studies specific to different student groups and their academic and social needs would add to the scholarship on and understanding of them. The framework outlined in this study could be extended to benefit all Students of Color. Research related to fostering cultural capital through student programs and structures in community colleges and the outcomes of such programs would expand this work and inform best practices for building students and creating campuses that transform students and their communities.

Limitations of the Study

The majority of California community colleges offer corequisite or concurrent support courses for transfer-level English, and many did a good job anticipating and preparing for the implementation of AB 705. The research site chosen for this study did not implement any corequisites or professional development after AB 705. This limited the study's research into the student outcomes for US-ELs as they completed English 1A with corequisite support.

Ten students were included in the study, which is a small subset of the total number of US-ELs on the campus. I was also limited by the students who

volunteered to participate in the study. Volunteer participants represent a subset of students who may be more motivated or connected to campus and exclude the viewpoints of students who have had different experiences.

While most of the students were eager to talk and share their stories and conveyed a sense of trust in me as a researcher, some were less willing or able to speak openly. Because of this, there may be gaps or omissions in their experiences and understanding.

Conclusion

I never heard from someone that's ... that is really interested in helping a student from another country because, I mean, it is the first time I heard from someone or a counselor, or, I mean ... a doctorate. Someone that's really like, trying to help or making a difference in the students that came from another country who want to go to college. Thank you.

(Male 1, personal communication, August 2023.)

In this chapter, I shared the findings on the transition of US-educated English learners from high school to community college in the years since the implementation of AB 705 and the COVID-19 pandemic. The results centered on the student experiences in English 1A, their interactions with programs and structures on campus, and the students' recommendations for better supporting them as they work toward their educational goals. In my recommendations to

educational leaders, I put forth a cultural wealth framework that campuses can use to transform their campuses in ways that support not just US-ELs but all multilingual students and students of color. I also shared recommendations to policymakers on ways to build equity for US-ELs into legislation and policies. Finally, I provided recommendations for future research on this under-researched student population and the limitations of this study.

I am honored and humbled to share the stories of these incredible students. They told me how amazed they were that their experiences could be useful to a researcher and how hopeful they were that it would help other students like them. They have experienced more challenges and difficulties than most of us will ever know, and I am in awe of their courage and determination.

Bring these remarkable students into the conversations in your classrooms and colleges. Give them a seat at the table. Allow them to speak in the language they are most comfortable with and listen deeply. Hear their stories and what they have to say. Ask them what they need from you. Follow through and build trust. Move mountains to help them succeed.

They are the most important voices in the room.

APPENDIX A:
ONLINE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX A:

Online Student Questionnaire (via Google Forms with QR code)

Hello! My name is Lisa Davenport, and I am a doctoral candidate in California State University, San Bernardino's Educational Leadership program.

I am conducting a research study entitled *The Most Important Voices in the Room: Understanding the Academic Needs of US-Educated Latino English Learners in Higher Education*.

If you were an English learner in middle or high school and are interested in participating in the study, please complete the online survey form below. It contains 13 questions that will take approximately 10 minutes to answer.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me or my dissertation chair Dr. Becky Sumner, at the CSUSB College of Education.

1. Are you at least 18 years of age?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. What is your native language?
3. What is your native country?
4. When did you immigrate to the U.S.?
 - a. Year _____
5. What grade did you begin school in the U.S.?
 - a. Grade _____
6. Did you receive ELD services? For how many years?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Number of years
7. Did you receive a diploma from a U.S. high school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. If yes, what year? _____
8. When did you enroll at this community college?
 - a. Year _____
9. Are you a full-time student? (12 units or more)
 - a. Yes, full-time
 - b. No, part-time
 - c. Other _____
10. What is your educational goal?
 - a. Certificate
 - b. AA degree
 - c. Transfer to CSU/UC
 - d. Unsure

11. Do you work in addition to going to school?
- a. Yes, part-time
 - b. Yes, full-time
 - c. No
 - d. Other _____
12. Are you the first in your family to attend college?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Unsure
13. What is the highest level of education for each of your parents?
- | Mother | Father |
|--|--------|
| a. Did not finish high school | |
| b. High-school graduate | |
| c. Some college but did not graduate | |
| d. Associate Degree (AA/AS) | |
| e. College graduate (BA/BS) | |
| f. Advanced degree (MS, MBA, Ph.D., EdD) | |
14. What English course are you enrolled in or have you taken at community college?
- a. Non-credit ESL
 - b. Credit ESL
 - c. English 1A
 - d. Not enrolled in English
15. Are you willing to participate in one 60 minute interview in September and a 45-60 minute follow-up interview in December? Students will receive up to \$100 for their time and participation.
- a. Yes*
 - b. No**

*If yes: Thank you for being willing to participate in an interview! Please provide your name and best contact information so I can follow up with you once I have reviewed all the responses.

**If no: Thank you for your responses! Please provide your name and contact information so that I can follow up if I have any questions.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Text/WhatsApp: _____

APPENDIX B:
STUDENT LETTER AFTER SUBMITTING ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE
(STUDENTS NOT MEETING THE CRITERIA)

APPENDIX B

STUDENT LETTER AFTER SUBMITTING ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE
(STUDENTS NOT MEETING THE CRITERIA)

[Date]

Dear [student],

Thank you for completing the online questionnaire for my research study entitled *The Most Important Voices in the Room: Understanding the Academic Needs of US-Educated Latino English Learners in Higher Education*.

At this point, this concludes your participation in this study. My dissertation chair is Dr. Becky Sumbera, in the CSUSB College of Education. If you have any questions or require any more information, please feel free to contact her.

Thank you again for taking the time to assist me with my questions.

Sincerely

Lisa Davenport
Doctoral Candidate
James R. Watson & Judy Rodriguez Watson College of Education
California State University San Bernardino

APPENDIX C:
THANK YOU LETTER UPON COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE
(INTERVIEW REQUEST)

APPENDIX C

THANK YOU LETTER UPON COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

(INTERVIEW REQUEST)

[Date]

Dear [student],

Thank you for completing the online questionnaire for my research study entitled *The Most Important Voices in the Room: Understanding the Academic Needs of US-Educated Latino English Learners in Higher Education*.

You are invited to participate in a 60-75 minute interview for this study, with the possibility of follow-up questions for clarification purposes if needed. In the interview, I will ask questions about your background as an English learner and your experiences in community college. You will receive \$50 for participating in this first interview.

A second interview will take place in November and will take 45-60 minutes, plus follow-up questions for clarification if necessary. You will receive an additional \$50 for participating in the second interview.

We can complete the interview in person or over Zoom. If we meet in person, I would prefer to meet on campus, but if you cannot come to campus, another convenient location can be arranged. You can complete your interview alone or with 1-2 other students in the study. Please let me know your preference.

Attached you will find a statement of Informed Consent which details the parameters of your participation. The interview will be audio recorded for transcription, and your confidentiality will be ensured throughout the study.

Thank you again for completing the survey and your willingness to share your experiences and ideas. If you would like to participate in the interviews, please reply to let me know your availability.

My dissertation chair is Dr. Becky Sumbera in the CSUSB College of Education. If you have any questions or require any more information, please feel free to contact her. Thank you again for taking the time to assist me with my research.

Sincerely

Lisa Davenport

Doctoral Candidate

James R. Watson & Judy Rodriguez Watson College of Education
California State University San Bernardino

APPENDIX D:
INFORMED CONSENT

APPENDIX D:

INFORMED CONSENT

The Most Important Voices in the Room: Understanding the Academic and Social Needs of US-Educated Latino English Learners in Higher Education

The study you are being invited to participate in is designed to investigate US-educated English learners' transition from high school to community college. This study is being conducted by *Lisa Davenport, Ed.D. candidate*, under the supervision of *Dr. Becky Sumner, Assistant Dean of Education, California State University, San Bernardino*. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: This study's purpose is to understand the transitions of US-educated English learners from high school to community college and to identify their academic and social needs. Expected results include an understanding of the experiences of US-educated English learners in community college and their interactions with various structures and supports within the college. This project addresses a wide gap in the existing literature. It will inform the dialog on curricular development, teaching practices, and student support services at California community colleges and high schools. This study will highlight implications for policy and practice and areas for future research.

DESCRIPTION: You will be invited to participate in two interviews. Your participation in the first interview will require approximately 60-75 minutes of your time, and the second will need 30-45 minutes of your time. You can conduct your interview alone or with a group of 1-3 students. The interview will be conducted in a format preferable to you, either face-to-face or a virtual remote conversation using Zoom. The date/time and interview location will also be scheduled at your convenience. A follow-up interview may be requested if necessary. With your permission, all interviews will be recorded.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation is entirely voluntary. You do not have to be in this study, and you do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. You may skip any questions and can freely withdraw from participation at any time.

CONFIDENTIAL: To maintain confidentiality, I will use pseudonyms for the college's name and all participants. Your name will not be used, and utmost care will be taken to protect your confidentiality. To further disguise the identity of participants and the names of people mentioned in the interviews, I will also use pseudonyms for all participants. Additionally, I will disguise the ethnic/racial identity of the participants and anyone mentioned in the interviews. Moreover, academic titles and profiles will be disguised with generic terms such as staff, faculty, or counselor.

The audio recordings will be transcribed and submitted to a third-party transcription service, Rev.com. Rev.com cites that all files are stored securely using TLS 1.2 encryption. Additional measures indicate that the Rev. files are only made available to the professional assigned to the transcription. The company requires that all

professionals sign strict confidentiality agreements. Once transcriptions are received, I will request that Rev.com delete the files associated with my transaction. The audio recordings will be destroyed after the transcribing of data. The data will be stored in the researcher's home office in a locked file cabinet and/or a password-protected computer to safeguard the data.

DURATION: The extent of student participation would include two interviews, with the possibility of one follow-up interview, if needed, and a final interview at the end of the semester. The first interview(s) would last approximately 60-75 minutes, and the final interview will last 30-45 minutes. Following the interview(s), you could be contacted via e-mail with follow-up or clarifying questions. Such an exchange would require at most ten minutes time. Following the interview, you will receive a transcript of the interview, along with a scanned PDF of the signed consent form. All participants will be granted the opportunity to review their transcript, confirm, and/or withdraw the transcript from the study.

Faculty interviews will last approximately 30 minutes, with a possible follow-up interview if needed. Following the interview, you will receive a transcript of the interview, along with a scanned PDF of the signed consent form. All participants will be granted the opportunity to review their transcript, confirm, and/or withdraw the transcript from the study.

RISKS: I know of no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you by participating in this research study. Your identity, institution, college, and course involvement will remain confidential.

BENEFITS: I do not know of any way you would benefit directly from participating in this study.

AUDIO/VIDEO: I understand this research will be recorded via audio/video. Initials

CONTACT: If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Lisa Davenport. For answers to questions about the research and research subjects' rights, or in case of a research-related injury, please contact Dr. Becky Sumner. You may also contact California State University San Bernardino's IRB Compliance Officer.

RESULTS: This study will be published as a part of Lisa Davenport's dissertation. Likewise, it may be disseminated through various outlets, including conference presentations and publications. Findings will be published online through Scholar Works, an online institutional repository for California State University San Bernardino.

CONFIRMATION STATEMENT:

I have read the above information and agree to participate in your study.

SIGNATURE:

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

APPENDIX E:
PROTOCOL FOR STUDENT INTERVIEW #1

APPENDIX E:

Protocol for Student Interview #1

Introduction: I'm a graduate student at California State University San Bernardino, and I'm interested in learning from community college students who moved to the United States and learned English in middle and high school. I'm thankful that you are here to talk about your experiences. For this study, I'm particularly interested in understanding how it was for you to transition from high school to community college, especially in your English classes. I also want to understand your experiences registering for classes, deciding what to take, your educational goals, and your feelings about college so far. We will talk about all of these things in this first interview and then again at the end of the semester to talk about your experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can stop the interview at any time or skip questions you do not want to discuss. As I mentioned in the informed consent, I will use a digital recording device to record the interview. If you want to avoid being recorded, please let me know before we begin. I can stop the recording at any point during the interview. I may take notes during the interview, but please don't think I'm not listening to your words or paying attention. The purpose is to help me remember, as I will be listening carefully during our time together. May I begin recording?

[start recording]

2. Tell me about your experiences coming to the U.S. and learning English.
3. Do you think that high school prepared you for college? In what ways?
4. Why did you decide to attend this school, and what is your educational goal?

Prompts:

- a. *What role did your family play in your decision to go to this college?*
- b. *Did anything or anyone else encourage you to attend college?*

5. What classes are you taking? How did you decide what classes to take?

Prompts:

- a. *For students not enrolled in 1A currently:*
Are you going to take/have you taken English 1A?
How was English 1A for you?
Do you think you will need (or Did you need) additional support?
- b. *Did you consider taking ESL? Why or why not?*
- c. *Was your counselor helpful as you planned your classes?*

6. What or who has helped you the most with your classes?

Prompts:

- a. *Have you used any of the academic support services at school?*

Which ones?

7. What has been the biggest challenge in your transition from high school to community college?

Prompts:

- a. *Have the biggest challenges been academic? Social? Something else?*

8. What advice do you have for your college to better support bilingual students in community college?
9. Describe where you hope to be in two years. What will help you get there?

[Stop recording]

That was a lot of questions, and I thank you for sharing your experiences. Do you have any questions for me? I will follow up with you if anything needs to be clarified, and I will send you a copy of the transcript so you can check it for accuracy. The second and final interview will be in November, and I will follow up with you to schedule a date and time. Thank you!

APPENDIX F:
PROTOCOL FOR STUDENT INTERVIEW #2

APPENDIX F:

PROTOCOL FOR STUDENT INTERVIEW #2

Introduction: Thank you for coming to this second interview. For this interview, I'm interested in hearing about how the semester was for you.

As before, your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can stop the interview at any time or skip questions you do not want to discuss. I will be using a digital recording device to record the interview. If you don't want to be recorded, please let me know before we begin. I can stop the recording at any point during the interview. I may take notes during the interview, but please don't think I'm not listening to your words or paying attention. The purpose is to help me remember, as I will be listening carefully during our time together. May I begin recording?

[Start recording]

1. What was the best thing that happened this semester, and why was it great?
2. What or who supported you the most academically?
3. What could the school or your instructor have done differently to improve your learning?
4. What was the biggest challenge for you? How did you work through it?
5. What was missing? What did you need but not get or wish you could have gotten?
6. Think back to the advice that you had for the school in your first interview. *(Provide if necessary.)* Has that advice changed?
7. Imagine you could wave a magic wand to improve English classes to make them better for bilingual students. What would you change, and why?

[Stop recording]

I know that was a lot of questions, and I thank you for sharing your experiences. Do you have any questions for me?

I will follow up with you if anything needs to be clarified, and I will send you a copy of the transcript so you can check it for accuracy. Thank you for being part of my study!

APPENDIX G:
PROTOCOL FOR FACULTY INTERVIEW #1

APPENDIX G:

PROTOCOL FOR FACULTY INTERVIEW #1

Introduction: I'm a graduate student at California State University San Bernardino, and I'm interested in learning about the transition of US-educated English learners – students who immigrated to the U.S. as children, learned English in middle or high school, received their diploma, and are now attending community college. For this study, I'm particularly interested in understanding how these students are experiencing English courses in the years since Assembly Bills 705 and 1705 and the pandemic. I'd like to understand how students decide what courses to take, engage with faculty and academic support services, and how they are doing in classes.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can stop the interview at any time or skip questions you do not want to discuss. As I mentioned in the informed consent, I will use a digital recording device to record the interview. If you don't want to be recorded, please let me know before we begin. I can stop the recording at any point during the interview. May I begin recording?

[start recording]

1. Please discuss your role at your college. What is your title and position?
2. How long have you worked in your current position?
3. What is your level of interaction with English learners?
4. What changes have you noticed since AB 705 was implemented?
5. What changes have you noticed in students since the pandemic?
6. What resources have been offered to English learners to help them in or prepare them for transfer-level English?
 - a. Has the school implemented (or will they be implementing) any changes recommended by the Chancellor's office to support English learners?
7. In your opinion, are student outcomes more or less equitable today than they were in 2019? Can you explain your answer? Is this the same or different for English learners?
8. Are there any changes that need to be made to classes or supports to better support English learners?

9. If you could wave a magic wand, what would you change or implement to support English learners on campus?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you so much for your participation! I will send you the interview transcript so you can review it for accuracy and follow up if I need clarification on any of the responses.

APPENDIX H:
FACULTY INTERVIEW EMAIL REQUEST

APPENDIX H:

FACULTY INTERVIEW EMAIL REQUEST

Good Morning/Good Afternoon XXXX,

My name is Lisa Davenport, and I am a doctoral candidate in California State University, San Bernardino's Educational Leadership program. My dissertation, *The Most Important Voices in the Room: Understanding the Academic Needs of US-Educated Latino English Learners in Higher Education*, aims to explore the transitions of US-educated English learners from high school to community college, particularly related to their needs in academic English in the years following the implementation of AB 705 and 1705 and the pandemic.

I am writing because you are an essential faculty member working with these students. I would appreciate the opportunity to conduct an interview with you that will take between 30 to 60 minutes. If you are interested in participating, we can meet at a time and location of your choice in person or over Zoom. The interview will be recorded

Please let me know if you would be willing to consider my request or if you would like to discuss it further. The research has been approved by CSUSB's Institutional Review Board. I can provide this documentation if needed.

Thank you in advance for your consideration!

Best regards,
Lisa Davenport

APPENDIX I:
FACULTY STUDENT RECOMMENDATION EMAIL REQUEST

APPENDIX I:

FACULTY STUDENT RECOMMENDATION EMAIL REQUEST

(to be sent after interview to request student recommendations)

Good Morning/Good Afternoon XXXX,

Thank you very much for your time today! As I mentioned, I am looking for students to participate in the second phase of interviews for my dissertation, *The Most Important Voices in the Room: Understanding the Academic Needs of US-Educated Latino English Learners in Higher Education*.

The criteria for student participation is as follows:

1. 18 years of age
2. Immigrated to the U.S. after age 11
3. Native Spanish-speaker
4. Classified as an English learner and received ELD services in K-12
5. Received a high school diploma
6. Attending community college full- or part-time

If you have students who fit this criteria and might be interested, please forward the attached document to them. It contains an introductory email and a link to a survey. (**See APPENDIX A**)

Thank you for your help with my research!

Best regards,
Lisa Davenport

APPENDIX J:
RECRUITMENT FLIER



This study has been approved by the California State University San Bernardino Institutional Review Board.

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR A RESEARCH STUDY

- **Are you a current student at COD?**
- **Did you learn English as a Second Language in middle or high school?**

Eligible participants will be compensated up to \$100 for two interviews during the Fall semester.

Click the QR code to apply:



QUESTIONS?

CONTACT: LISA DAVENPORT

**LISA.DAVENPORT6720@CSUSB.EDU
425-289-6800 TEXT OR WHATSAPP**

APPENDIX K:
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

APPENDIX K:
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

May 31, 2023

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Expedited Review

IRB-FY2023-360

Status: Approved

Prof. Becky Sumbera and Ms. Lisa Davenport
COE - TeacherEduc&Foundtn TEF, Users loaded with unmatched Organization affiliation.
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
[San Bernardino, California 92407](#)

Dear Prof. Becky Sumbera and Ms. Lisa Davenport:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "THE MOST IMPORTANT VOICES IN THE ROOM: UNDERSTANDING THE ACADEMIC NEEDS OF U.S.-EDUCATED LATINO ENGLISH LEARNERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION" has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino. The CSUSB IRB has weighed the risk and benefits of the study to ensure the protection of human participants. The study is approved as of May 31, 2023. The study will require an annual administrative check-in (annual report) on the current status of the study on May 30, 2024. Please use the renewal form to complete the annual report.

This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses. Investigators should consider the changing COVID-19 circumstances based on current CDC, California Department of Public Health, and campus guidance and submit appropriate protocol modifications to the IRB as needed. CSUSB campus and affiliate health screenings should be completed for all campus human research related activities. Human research activities conducted at off-campus sites should follow CDC, California Department of Public Health, and local guidance. See CSUSB's [COVID-19 Prevention Plan](#) for more information regarding campus requirements.

If your study is closed to enrollment, the data has been de-identified, and you're only analyzing the data - you may close the study by submitting the Closure Application Form through the Cayuse Human Ethics (IRB) system. The Cayuse system automatically reminds you at 90, 60, and 30 days before the study is due for renewal or submission of your annual report (administrative check-in). The modification, renewal, study closure, and unanticipated/adverse event forms are located in the Cayuse system with instructions provided on the IRB Applications, Forms, and Submission Webpage. Failure to notify the IRB of the following requirements may result in disciplinary action. Please note a lapse in your approval may result in your not being able to use the data collected during the lapse in the application's approval period.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following as mandated by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) federal regulations 45 CFR 46 and CSUSB IRB policy.

- **Ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.**
- **Submit a protocol modification (change) if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implemented in your study.**
- **Notify the IRB within 5 days of any unanticipated or adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research.**
- **Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system once your study has ended.**

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risks and benefits to the human participants in your IRB application. If you have any questions about the IRBs decision please contact Michael Gillespie, the IRB Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval number IRB-FY2023-360 in all correspondence. Any complaints you receive regarding your research from participants or others should be directed to Mr. Gillespie.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

King-To Yeung

King-To Yeung, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

KY/MG

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