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ESL teachers and their work: a study based on interviews conducted with teachers of English as a second language.

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ESL TEACHERS AND THEIR WORK

A STUDY BASED ON INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

A Dissertation Presented

by

SARAH P. YOUNG

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Many people have shaped my thinking and sustained my spirits. I appreciate the guidance of my dissertation committee. The study was possible because of Earl Seidman whose strength and passionate belief in the values embodied in the research created the methodology. Jerri Willet shared with me her expertise in ESL teaching and brought to the project her invaluable ability to be excited by the work of students. Margo Culley offered me common sense, hard-headed but compassionate intelligence and a rare capacity to accept me with all my imperfections while inspiring me to overcome them.

Linda Guthrie solved a major technical hurdle by typing the transcripts. She went beyond the typing and through her intelligent questioning helped me to think about what I was doing.

Mary Schatzkamer, anchored my mind and heart in every moment of crisis and helped me to believe that my first working draft would eventually lead to a dissertation. Sharon Santilli provided me with intellectual engagement and a penetrating honesty that has kept me running up the long distance telephone bill. Kay Williamson helped me through the proposal stage by her friendship and example.
The members of my comprehensive committee Judy Solsken, Luis Fuentes and Sonia Nieto, guided me with skill and understanding through much original coursework and directed my first steps in educational research.

All of my family has helped me to believe in myself and my goals. My husband, Glenn Young, was steadfast and patient. His support was critical in several important senses of that word.

The real names of the 22 teachers who participated in the study do not appear here, but they were at the heart of everything. I came as a stranger and they received me with the open willingness that I am sure they also show to their students. They gave of their time and their knowledge and I am grateful to have learned from them.
The study explores the experience of teaching English as a second language (ESL) from the teacher's vantage point. Twenty-two participants were selected from four levels of Massachusetts educational institutions: elementary school, middle and secondary school, community college and four-year college or university. Three tape-recorded interviews, each lasting ninety minutes, were conducted with each participant and later transcribed. Material was presented in the form of profiles composed in the words of the participants and thematic chapters.

The study revealed sources of strength that participants found in their work and obstacles that confronted them. They gained strength from their ability to respond to the needs of their students and from drawing on a variety of resources in order to do this.
The participants' programs were peripheral to their institutions. Problems centered on meshing with the mainstream, scheduling, employment conditions and credit for ESL courses. The participants had conflicting attitudes of support toward their sponsoring programs.

Many study participants combined the work of ESL teaching with administrative and programmatic responsibilities. Within the classroom they faced specific problems such as the teaching of disparate student groups and the need to enable students to meet institutional standards in writing. The ESL classroom provided a protected environment.

ESL teaching is done predominantly by women. Gender was a factor in classroom roles. Issues of gender affected both participants and their students. Male perspectives were briefly explored, including those of a teacher who was gay.

Conclusions were that professionalism for ESL teachers will be enhanced by the encouragement of certification standards, teacher education, and scholarly work. Traditional notions of professionalism need to be broadened, however, to incorporate elements of caregiving in language teaching and wholistic views of experience that were apparent in the participants' stories. Professionalism will be hindered by societal unwillingness to grant that status to work done primarily by women. Material support and the involvement of mainstream teachers are important to the success of ESL teaching in educational institutions.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Immigrants and refugees, resident language minorities, foreign visitors, and foreign scholars - for all of these, teachers of English as a second language help provide the communication skills that shape the terms of societal access. Teachers of English as a second language are important people engaged in a process fundamental to the history and future of the United States.

The importance of ESL teaching has to some degree been acknowledged in its increasing number of practitioners, its professional organizations, its qualification standards and the growing body of scholarship that informs it. However, the experience and meaning of the work to the people who actually do it is little understood. To understand this requires the insider's view - not the view that looks at it, but rather the view that looks from it, from inside of ESL teaching out to the world that touches upon it.
What are the predicaments that face ESL teachers? What strengths sustain them in their work? What obstacles stand in the way of that work? The people best able to provide the insider's view of ESL teaching are ESL teachers. The present study has sought their viewpoint through interviews with the teachers themselves, interviews aimed at eliciting the experience of ESL teaching and the meaning that it has for those who do it.

It is worth noting that the field of teaching English as a second language stretches around the world and, when practiced outside the English speaking countries, ESL is usually referred to as EFL, English as a foreign language. The term that best encompasses the entire entity is ESOL, English for speakers of other languages. This includes both the international dimensions of the field and the fact that English is frequently learned as a third or fourth language, not just a second language. For the purposes of this study, the more familiar term, ESL, is used and, in general, the scope of the discussion will be most relevant to situations in the United States where English is the language of the larger surrounding community. It is not likely that the study will be as strong a source of connections in areas such as Puerto Rico and American Samoa where English is not the language of the broader community.
The primary focus of this research is on the actual experience of the ESL teachers who were interviewed for the study. There are also other substantial sources of knowledge about ESL teaching, although this knowledge is seldom examined from the teacher's point of view. In providing a background introduction for the study, material has been arranged here to explore the literature of the field not by directing it at teachers, but rather by organizing it around the teacher's vantage point.

It is important to remember that the following discussion provides background based on existing literature in the field. It was not compiled for the purpose of prejudging the interviews that were conducted with the teachers nor did it provide the basis for questions that were pursued in the interviews.

The literature of ESL teaching reveals that the work of ESL teachers takes place against a background of enormous uncertainties. There are underlying uncertainties related to the status of those who are taught by ESL teachers: the country's language minorities. There are additional uncertainties that relate to ESL teaching itself: disciplinary, institutional, professional and methodological uncertainties. All of these provide the background against which ESL teachers carry out their work.
ESL teachers are situated in the midst of a broad national conflict over the way in which those outside the mainstream of U.S. society will establish their place in that society. The question touches ESL teachers in relation to ideals and behaviors that relate to language minorities. Do national ideals concerning language minorities embody cultural assimilation or cultural plurality? Does national behavior coincide with either of these goals or does it reflect both blatant and subtle exclusion? There is no agreed upon answer to these questions, nor is there agreement on the role that education plays in thwarting or advancing the often ambiguous ideals of the country (Greer, 1972; Ravitch, 1978; Weider, 1985).

National dilemmas concerning the integration of language minorities create a number of uncertainties which underlie ESL teaching. How will immigrants be admitted to the U.S.? How will they mesh with U.S. culture and what role will language play in this process? Closely tied to issues of immigration is the question: In what language shall access to the culture be granted? Must that language be English? In this area ESL teaching becomes involved in issues involving language policy in general and bilingual education in particular. Another area in which unclear issues connect to ESL teaching concerns patterns of global domination and the interaction of these patterns with the access that the United States affords to foreign students. ESL teaching also involves a group of people who have repeatedly declared that access to white, western culture and
the language of that culture was not their first choice: the Native Americans.

The dilemmas created by unresolved social issues in the United States combine with another set of dilemmas to further complicate the background against which ESL teachers carry out their work. These dilemmas can be frequently traced back to our still imperfect understanding of language, the substance of ESL teaching. What is language? How does it work? How is it learned and how is it taught? Our difficulty in definitively answering these questions complicates the disciplinary relationships of ESL teaching, its institutional and professional place and its methodological foundations.

Disciplinary Uncertainties

ESL in particular and language teaching in general have an uneasy root system in the discipline of linguistics. There is no precise date for the establishment of this root system, but the founding of the International Phonetic Association in 1897 by a group of linguists and language teachers was a significant milestone. Both linguistics and language teaching have grown in similar ways over the years. As language teaching has moved to view its subject matter in broader and broader units, it has been able to draw upon linguistic theory that has also widened its scope to include sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics (Howatt, 1984; Stern, 1983).
However, the close relationship between linguistics and language teaching has not been an easy one. Linguistic theories have been difficult to translate into the classroom and changes in theory such as Noam Chomsky's transformational grammar create major problems when they overturn linguistically based teaching methodologies. The field of applied linguistics has grown up partly in order to close the gap between language teaching and theoretical linguistics, but the relationship is still not clearly delineated (Stern, 1983).

If the relationship of linguistics and language teaching is uneasy, there is for ESL a further underlying question. What is the relationship of ESL teaching in particular to second language teaching in general? There is a broad assumption, expressed in theoretical and pedagogical scholarship (e.g. Brown, 1987; Stern, 1983; Strevens, 1977), that there are common principles of language learning that can be generally applied in situations where a second language is being learned. This would indicate that learning English as a second language is closely related to learning French, German or any other second language that might be studied in the United States.

Nevertheless, in spite of fundamental similarities between ESL and foreign language teaching, circumstances combine to produce different manifestations of the same underlying principles. For example, foreign language teaching is affected by the fact that foreign language teachers frequently come from a background in which courses like "Lyric Poetry of
the Golden Age" or "French Civilization" predominate more than do similar courses in the training of ESL teachers.

Di Pietro (1983) has criticized foreign teacher preparation programs, noting that major university preparation centers list 73% of their courses as predominantly literary with only 12% stressing linguistics and 3% pedagogy. Guidelines for the preparation of ESL teachers, while not expressed in percentages, indicate a greater emphasis on pedagogy and linguistics (TESOL, 1975). Differences such as these can obscure the similarities that exist in all second language teaching and can contribute to disciplinary confusion.

Another issue underlying ESL's disciplinary root system is the question of the field's relationship to first language research and teaching. A number of researchers whose work provides inspiration and guidance to ESL teachers draw heavily on studies that have been done with first language users. Stephen Krashen's theories of second language acquisition (1981, 1982) combine both first and second language research. Ann Raimes (1985) and Vivian Zamel (1982, 1983), have carried out studies of the writing process that have applied research approaches used with first language writers to ESL students. In ESL reading, authors of classic works for first language readers (e.g. Goodman, 1972; Smith, 1975) figure prominently in second language research (e.g. Clarke, 1980; Cziko, 1978; Eskey, 1986).
The uncertain relationship of ESL to first language research and teaching as well as to foreign language teaching and to linguistics increases the difficulties of establishing a particular identity for ESL teaching. This becomes a factor in the institutional and professional problems that are discussed in the following sections.

One resolution of the disciplinary issues faced by ESL has been suggested by Stern (1983). He indicates that the multidisciplinary nature of language teaching resembles that of education. This similarity may develop into a permanent linkage, but to date ESL's disciplinary proliferation has not resolved itself into established patterns. This can be seen in the phrase so often employed in the help wanted advertisements of professional newsletters: "required: M.A in TESOL or related field."

Institutional Uncertainties

Closely related to disciplinary uncertainties in ESL teaching are institutional uncertainties. Questions about the source of the theory that supports ESL teaching help to produce institutional questions about the programs that teach ESL students and train ESL teachers. Do ESL students really need specially trained teachers? Can they perhaps be taught equally well by teachers who have received their training in linguistics, foreign language teaching or first language teaching? Do ESL students need special programs? Why can't they be part of the same programs that serve first language students or foreign language students? Which
programs or departments should train ESL teachers and sponsor ESL research?

Discussions concerning the place of ESL students in college composition courses are typical of the quandaries produced by problems of institutional place. In a professional newsletter, Dean Bodkey (1985) comments, "If only we could verify through research that our approach is significantly more productive for the development of ESL writing abilities than the approach used by the English department composition for regular students, we would certainly gain in self-confidence when arguing our case." Kathleen Bailey (1986), on the other hand, notes that the problem is not entirely one of research, but a practical issue of college and university professors who assess the progress of ESL students on the basis of inadequate contacts.

Problems of institutional place lead to other issues that grow out of institutionally based qualifications. For example, should ESL teachers have special certification requirements? Since its establishment the national professional organization, TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), has been successful in prompting 34 states to establish requirements for ESL teachers (Wright, 1988). At the same time, even in states where certification has been established problems remain. In Massachusetts, for instance, a "grandfather clause" has made any elementary school teacher and any high school English teacher eligible to teach ESL. Those teachers who have been "grandfathered" into their positions have not been allowed to seek ESL certification, even if trained
in the field. Thus their certificates show that they are permitted to teach ESL, but not that they are qualified to do so (Irujo, 1986).

Another problem created by a lack of institutional place for ESL teaching is the question of academic credit for ESL courses. Newsletter articles offer practical guidelines for combatting academic politics that keep ESL courses in second rate positions. The basic issue revolves around the fact that native speakers who meet institutional standards for course work receive credit for taking a foreign language, but non-native speakers who meet the same institutional standards are not granted credit for taking English (Barnes, 1985; Blakely, 1987; Oprandy, 1987). In April of 1987 the TESOL organization voted overwhelmingly in favor of granting credit for ESL in institutions of higher learning (Oprandy, 1987).

**Professional Uncertainties**

Uncertainties of institutional place and the uncertainties of disciplinary place mentioned earlier are both factors in further problems that occur in ESL teaching: uncertainties of professional place. If the disciplinary and institutional relationships of ESL courses are in doubt, what should be the status granted to the instructors of ESL courses? The following statement by Thomas Buckingham indicates that it is a problematic question.

The ESL teacher is being unfairly exploited in nearly every teaching context from bilingual programs to intensive and adult nonacademic
programs. Every level of professional endeavor is affected, from the teacher aide to the Ph.D. seeking secure employment in a university setting. Strong affirmative action needs to be taken on the part of the profession in upgrading such things as teaching loads, scheduling, salary, employment security, fringe benefits and written contracts (Bogotch, 1981, p. 46).

ESL teachers who are employed part-time have been particularly concerned about employment problems. In 1974, Pamela Polos noted the appearance of "a new kind of para-professional" (Polos, 1974, p. 51) in community colleges: ESL teachers with M.A. degrees, with the duties of teachers and the pay of paraprofessionals. Thirteen years later the same kind of issues were still the topic of professional meetings (Griffeath & Ablow, 1987).

Problems of part-time employment may be indicative of poor treatment meted out to ESL teachers, but Adelia Wheeler (1981) has pointed out that in adult education, at least, ESL teachers are not the victims of worse treatment than that that afforded to teachers of other subjects. In this area she notes that all teachers are treated poorly, particularly in grant-funded programs where the hours are essentially full-time but salary and benefits are not.

One method for trying to determine the extent of employment dissatisfaction is to conduct a survey. Lanier (1985) made a survey of ESL teachers in the Washington, D.C., area to try to establish reasons for job dissatisfaction, but found that they were diffuse. Another survey of employment conditions (Krueger and Prince-Nam, 1987) was directed at
understanding the nature of job satisfaction among ESL teachers in Massachusetts. It was conducted among members of the Massachusetts Association of Teachers of English as a Second Language. Among the findings of this survey were that while more than 80% of the respondents were very to somewhat satisfied with their profession, almost 50% were somewhat to very dissatisfied with their compensation. Another recent national survey (Blaber and Tobash, 1989) indicated that salary, professional qualifications of ESL teachers and employment conditions were the issues of greatest concern to respondents.

Unresolved issues about professional place lead to questions about professional degrees. Are advanced degrees worthwhile? The Blaber and Tobash survey (1989) said that some respondents “questioned the wisdom of teaching institutions ‘grinding out’ more and more instructors” (p.5), when they are so undervalued. Recent issues of the TESOL Newsletter have published comments about the proliferation of graduate ESL programs and the lack of positions that require such qualifications (Redfield, 1986). Rebutting this have been other comments pointing the increased professionalism and higher quality of teaching represented by advanced degrees (DeGrande, 1987; Maurice, 1987; Staczeck, 1987). In at least one study higher pay has also been reported as a result of advanced degrees (Day, 1984).

The preceding debate over the merits of teacher training programs could not take place if such programs did not exist. That they do exist is due in large measure to the efforts of the national professional
organization, TESOL. TESOL has concerned itself with many aspects of the problems that confront the occupation's search for professional place. Teacher preparation was one of the major reasons for bringing the TESOL organization into existence.

When TESOL was founded in the mid-sixties, a survey taken by the Center for Applied Linguistics showed that there were about three courses in ESL teacher training in about thirty universities and colleges. (Harris, 1973). TESOL has fostered growth in this area by such things as the publication of Fanselow and Light's (1977) book, Bilingual, ESOL and Foreign Language Teacher Preparation. The organization has also published eight editions of its Directory of Professional Preparation Programs in TESOL in the United States. The 1986 edition showed 143 programs, a substantial increase from 1966 (Eckard, 1987).

Another way in which TESOL has dealt with issues of professional place has been by providing, within the organization, sixteen professional places. These are the interest sections in which every TESOL member can find a home that reflects his or her major field of activity. In February, 1987 (Susan Bayley, personal communication, 1987), the interest sections of TESOL were, in order of their size:

1. Teaching English Internationally, 1,888 members
2. ESL in Higher Education, 1,529 members
3. ESL in Adult Education, 915 members
4. ESL in Secondary Schools, 649 members
5. ESL in Elementary Education, 662 members
6. Applied Linguistics, 567 members
7. English for Foreign Students in English-Speaking Countries
   537 members
8. Teacher Education, 275 members
9. ESL in Bilingual Education, 271 members
10. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 258 members
11. Research, 253 members
12. Program Administration, 194 members
13. Materials Writers, 185 members
14. Refugee Concerns, 181 members
15. Standard English as a Second Dialect, 71 members
16. Teaching English to Deaf Students, 66 members

Professional place can also be found in a rapidly proliferating group of subspecialties that have developed in the field of ESL teaching. Most of these subspecialties are branches of ESP, English for Specific Purposes. Their names explain their purposes: English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and Vocational ESL (VESL). All of these subspecialties have generated research and teaching materials (Robinson, 1980) as well as new problems and new questions (e.g., Widdowson 1983).

Before leaving this topic, it is well to point out that issues of professional place are partly decided in the operation of societal forces that confer status. Professions, for example, are classified according to
their characteristics, their prestige, their development and their role in society (Flexner, 1915; Goode, 1969). In the categorizing of professions, two points are particularly relevant to teachers of English as a second language. One is that the status of occupations has some relationship to the status of women (Bose and Rossi, 1983; Leggatt, 1970; Mason, 1984; Simpson and Simpson, 1969; Stober, 1984). Another is that university level teachers are more generally recognized as possessing professional status than are high school and elementary school teachers (Etzioni, 1969; Leggatt, 1970; Martin and Roberts, 1984). These two factors are particularly relevant in a field that has a high proportion of women and encompasses both university and public school teachers.

**Methodological Uncertainties**

Methodological uncertainties in ESL teaching arise out of the field's proliferation of pedagogical choices. Complicating this, the development of cassette recorders, computers and other technological devices have superimposed more choices upon a structure that already suffers from overabundance. "The proliferation of approaches and methods is a prominent characteristic of contemporary second and foreign language teaching. To some, this reflects the strength of our profession....To others, however, the wide variety of method options currently available confuses rather than comforts" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. vii). At least one author (Pennycook, 1990) has contended that the level of debate over methodology may be without substance, since it is difficult to establish that method actually exists.
It is not just the abundance of options and the sprawling nature of debate that creates methodological problems. They also come about because, as different language teaching methodologies have succeeded one another, emotional investments in their correctness have built up. Transitions from one to another are often traumatic. David Harris (1973) speaks of the "shattered complacency" that occurred when ESL shifted away from audiolingualism. The toppling of audiolingualism was unnerving partly because it linked psychology and linguistics in a way that seemed to provide language teaching with an invulnerable scientific base.

At present a variety of approaches are utilized in ESL teaching. There are still teachers who draw upon past approaches such as the direct method, audiolingualism and cognitive code methodologies. Also used are a series of differing methods that include the silent way, community language learning, suggestopedia, total physical response and the natural approach. Although these methods co-exist, they vary widely. Sometimes apparent differences in methods, such as the extent to which activities are teacher-directed, mask important similarities such as a reliance on group participation. On other occasions characteristics that cause methods to appear similar, such as a concern with the affective well-being of the student, mask underlying differences, such as whether the student is conceived of as an active and responsible agent of learning or as one who must adopt an infant-like state of surrender (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).
An approach that is widely used at present is communicative language teaching. This is a generalized approach that has grown out of theories of communicative competence which have expanded Chomskyian notions of linguistic competence to include the socio-cultural factors that affect language use. Practitioners working within this general framework often utilize some of the methods mentioned above. Another term that is heard more frequently is the phrase "eclecticism".

The presence of broad approaches should not obscure the emotional strain created by a variety of methodologies that often appear contradictory. In the title of a recent article, Alan Maley (1984) aptly sums up the attitudes of many who take sides in methodological controversies: "I Got Religion! Evangelism in Language Teaching." Stephen Krashen (1987) has stated that eclecticism is obscene, although he makes clear that this statement refers to theoretical hypotheses rather than to classroom choices. Peter Strevens (1987), speaking from a British point of view, has pointed to the existence of dogmatism in U.S. ESL teaching. Maley has described a situation where the level of controversy was sufficient that it prompted some teachers to respond seriously to a published spoof on the methodology of teaching from a telephone directory.

In addition to the relatively recent proliferation of teaching methodologies there is historic split in language teaching that dates back to the classical period of Greece and Rome (Howatt, 1984; Kelly, 1969). The two sides in this split have been given many different names, but the terms "naturalism" and "formalism" will be used here. Wilga Rivers (1981)
has placed the origins of this split in the period when Latin was disappearing as a spoken language. In this period the earlier reliance on a practical use of Latin dwindled and rules and forms became the classroom norm. Since that time there have been swings in emphasis between those who look to natural acquisition as a model to be emulated in the classroom and those who give attention to more formalistic classroom techniques.

At present Krashen and Terrell's (1983) Natural Approach might be considered a contemporary attempt to emulate nature in the classroom. The Natural Approach is a method which is not grammatically sequenced. It stresses the use of comprehensible input and the exchange of meaning in an emotionally supportive atmosphere. A present day counterpart of formalistic techniques might be the explorations into learning strategies made by O'Malley and Chamot (1985) and Tarone (1984). Rather than stressing unconscious language acquisition, these studies emphasize consciously controlled techniques for monitoring learning and negotiating meaning.

The search for methodological place is a complicated one. Language teaching faces an historic tension between naturalism and formalism. Complicating this inherent tension is a proliferation of methods, each with its own techniques and its own theoretical foundations. In addition, there are decisions to be made regarding the use of new technologies. ESL teachers have many options in their search for methodological place and the variety of choices does not always contribute to ease of mind for the practitioner.
Summary

The work of ESL teachers is critical for a country affected by a large population of immigrants and a world made smaller by communications. Although the work of ESL is situated in the midst of important events it is also placed amid national disagreements about appropriate ways in which to respond to these events. In addition to this surrounding uncertainty, the ESL teaching profession exists amid a series of other uncertainties that relate to its disciplinary base, its institutional and professional place and its methodological techniques. Who are the teachers who carry out their work amid so many uncertainties?
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE RELATING TO THE SUBJECT AND THE METHODOLOGY

The Treatment of Teachers in the Literature on ESL Teaching

Research that is based on the experience of ESL teachers needs to concern itself with other studies of this experience as well as with literature about the qualitative methodology that makes such a study possible. In the literature related to ESL teaching, the teachers themselves appear primarily in roles that categorize them as instruments of policy and theory or as recipients of advice. Although passing reference is made to their knowledge and importance (Krashen, 1982; Savignon, 1983) they are not seen as individuals whose life experience is a starting point for acquiring important information about the field. In order to find common ground for a review of the literature the following discussion will show how the constituent characteristics of the proposed research arise in that small body of literature that can be said to have some relevance to the present study.

One way of looking at the major concerns in ESL is by seeing them as a continuum that has become progressively broader and less static. In the 1960's, when the U.S. ESL professional organization was founded, a
structured view of language dominated. Epitomizing this view was audiolingualism, a by-product of World War II language schools that was grounded in structural linguistics and linked to behavioral psychology (Harris, 1973; Moulton, 1961).

This viewpoint was challenged by the Chomskyian understanding of language as a generative entity, a view that emphasized creativity and process. Theories of the second language acquisition process (e.g. Krashen, 1981, 1982), the nature of discourse and meaning (e.g. Widdowson, 1978), interlanguage (as summarized in Brown, 1980) and reading and writing processes (e.g. Clarke, 1980; Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1982, 1983;) exemplify this broad, active view of language.

It seems a natural progression to move from a consideration of the processes of language and learning to those who utilize those processes, the language learners. Current research in ESL has found it increasingly necessary to include the language learner in its field of vision (Larsen-Freeman, 1985; Morley, 1987). The basic processes mentioned above have been further extrapolated into explorations of the nature of input (e.g. Gass and Madden, 1985) learning strategies, (e.g. O’Malley and Chamot, 1985; Tarone, 1984), classroom interaction (e.g. Seliger and Long, 1983) and cultural influences (e.g. Saville-Troike, 1985a).

ESL teachers have not been completely left out of the kind of research outlined above. However, they have been seen as instruments, managers or mediators. Their role has been as the recipients of advice urging them to
re-formulate classroom constants such as listening, speaking, reading and writing into terms that are compatible with current research. Although there are provisions for actually soliciting the teacher's viewpoint in Richards and Nunan's (1990) work on teacher education, they are the exception rather than the rule. In a field that is, of necessity, concerned with human issues, it is surprising that ESL teachers are so regularly treated as instruments rather than as individuals. They have not even been deemed worthy of investigations into stress, morale and burnout, although research indexes show ample interest in such topics for other teachers.

On those rare occasions when ESL teachers are the purported focus of a study, their actual role is usually to respond to issues that have been formulated outside their experience. There are studies that have recorded the responses of ESL teachers to grammatical usages (Ramirez and Milk, 1986), textbook illustrations (Pearson, 1983), and instructional needs (McGroarty, 1985). Researchers have compared the teaching and learning styles of ESL teachers (Grosse, 1985) and advised them on crisis intervention (Cao, 1986). ESL teacher skills have been examined as a basis for assessing school policies toward children with limited English in a particular school district (Sanchez and Felix, 1986). There are studies that offer advice to ESL teachers regarding desirable attitudes and techniques (Saville-Troike, 1985b). There are studies that have measured programs, teacher attitudes, school districts and schools of which ESL teachers are a part (e.g. Gross, 1983). Such studies and others of a similar nature do not evidence, from either a qualitative or a quantitative
point of view, an interest in the experience or the meaning of ESL teaching as it is seen by the people who actually do the work.

Even in discussions of teacher education, ESL teachers are often seen as elements in equations that are concerned with issues such as the role of applied linguistics (Stern and Strevens, 1983) and competency based teacher education (Fanselow and Light, 1977). In an exception to this treatment of ESL teachers, Penelope Alatis (1983) outlined some typical events that occur in the day of high school ESL and foreign language teachers. She recorded obligations such as hall duty, lunchroom duty, paper work and classroom distractions. She noted that administrators and teaching colleagues felt that new teachers needed more training in classroom management and discipline and that teaching colleagues found the most discouraging aspects of their profession to be the amount of paperwork and peripheral responsibilities. Richards and Nunan (1990) also include in their work on teacher education, approaches designed to elicit the experience of ESL teaching and the meaning it has for beginning teachers.

Another study that has a basis in the experience of teachers is Moskowitz's (1977) percentage rating of the characteristics of outstanding foreign language teachers as perceived by former students. Even this study gives us no way to get at the subjective meaning that terms such as enjoyment, fairness and flexibility have either for those who are said to possess them or for the study's respondents. However, it is interesting to know that the qualities rated highest in Moskowitz's survey are
knowledge, preparedness, fluency, willingness and ability to answer questions, enjoyment and fairness.

**Literature that Treats ESL Teaching Biographically and Subjectively**

There is a lack of literature with a direct relationship to the present study, but it is possible to examine material that shares some of the fundamental characteristics of the interview approach used to gather the material for this research. One of these characteristics is a biographical approach.

In general, language teachers have not received biographical treatment, although biography has been used as an organizing device in historical studies of language teaching (Howatt, 1984; Titone, 1968). Biography also figures in occasional journal articles (Redman, 1967; Tickoo, 1982) and in obituaries (Hornby and Jones, 1950; M.L.L., 1973). However, in most of these studies biography serves as an appendage to the real purpose of the work which is usually to describe a particular approach to language teaching.

When biography is simply an appendage to a discussion it does not serve to place experience in context. Without a relationship between topic and life context the meaning of the topic to the individual becomes lost. Without that contextual meaning, there is little reason for biography to be present at all. In a true biographical treatment a relationship is
established between the thought or action described and the context from which it grows.

One language teacher who has received genuine biographical treatment is Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670). He is a figure of such stature that those who have written about him have felt obliged to pay attention to his life as well as his work (Monroe, 1971; Sadler, 1966). Howatt (1984), in his biographical sketch of Comenius, shows how his unique picture book for teaching Latin, *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* grew out of a life that was motivated by unhappy childhood experiences in education, religious devotion and the pursuit, during the Thirty Years' War, of independence for his Moravian homeland. Howatt describes how the philosophical and educational achievements of Comenius connect to the major events in his life.

For this study, the significant thing about Comenius is that he is one of the few language teachers who has been deemed worthy of biographical consideration. It is possible to see, through the focal point of his life, the way in which language teaching intersects with personal, societal and historical forces. In the case of Comenius, this unifying view has been imposed by his biographers to a greater extent than is the case in the present study. Because the present study draws from material in which participants have already made subjective linkages, the researcher will not impose connections in the same sense that a biographer of a distant figure must do.
It is worth pointing out that we know about Comenius because he was a luminary of his time. Because we don't know much about his less famous contemporaries, our vision of that time and our relationship to it may be inaccurate. Present-day educators tend to identify with the reform aspect in the work of Comenius. It would be valuable to also have the stories of his seventeenth century contemporaries, those ordinary teachers who, unsure of their place in education, laid the foundations of the now scorned grammar-translation method of language teaching. Perhaps we would discover that they and not Comenius are the spiritual ancestors of contemporary U.S. ESL teachers.

Although biographies such as those of Comenius bring the forces of history and society together within the events of an individual life, they lack an element of subjectivity that is important to the present study. Subjectivity searches for the insider's view rather than for meanings imposed from the outside. A major goal of this study is to understand the meaning of ESL teaching through the reflections that individuals have about experiences they have lived through themselves. It does not focus on the opinions that another person has of an ESL teacher's experience, nor does it seek information about ESL teachers' responses to issues formulated by others. Biographies of distant figures cannot aim at these goals, but autobiographical work frequently has an important subjective component.

Two works that share this subjective approach are the autobiography of Leonard Covello, *The Heart is the Teacher* (written with Guido
DiAgostino, 1958) and Sylvia Ashton-Warner's famous diary, *Teacher* (1963). Neither of these is completely topical, since Ashton-Warner, a resident of New Zealand, would not have described herself as an ESL teacher and Covello was primarily an East Harlem school principal who taught ESL for a very brief time. Nevertheless, both serve as useful points of reference for the present study.

Covello's story is the experience of an Italian immigrant who made his life's work the teaching of young men growing up in New York's East Side. He lets us share his experiences as a village scholar in Southern Italy. We see him in New York City, watching his mother die of cultural isolation as well as disease. We understand his relationship with the religious worker whose protégé he was. Because of what we know about him, we realize that the way in which he taught English was a life choice as well as a methodological choice.

We see less of this in Ashton-Warner's diary. In the artistry of her portrayal she focuses so tightly on the classroom that we don't know how other factors in her life were embedded in her teaching. However, her account of using language as a bridge between the Maori and English cultures vibrates with an intensity that leaves no doubt as to the subjective meaning of the experience or the strength of her engagement with societal forces.

Substantive conclusions from the lives and work of Comenius, Covello and Ashton-Warner are so great and varied that it is difficult to
summarize them. Perhaps the major impression that their stories leave is that each of these individuals achieved significant insights into learning through physical and mental contact with ordinary people who were wrestling with problems of language. One has a sense that perhaps the most significant elements in this process were that the insight came out of actual contact and out of an appreciation for the importance of everyday acts carried out by plain people. In the case of Comenius, this is particularly remarkable.

Although the biographies of Comenius, Covello and Ashton-Warner do not entirely match the aims of this study, they do share some of the qualities that this study seeks. There is little else that achieves this, although there are tantalizing fragments of material scattered in a variety of places.

Of this fragmentary material, many of the stories with the most impact come from the great periods of immigration to the United States. We have glimpses of rural schoolmistresses in North Dakota having their awkward first encounters with the immigrant families who will board them (Carlson and Carlson, 1981). We hear the saga of Miss Sarah Moore who brought English to the Italian labor camps (Cordasco, 1975). We capture a small segment of time in which a young woman instructor in an evening class repeats, "I sit" to a weary group of immigrant workmen (McClymer, 1982). We understand the excitement of Marian Dogherty waiting to greet her first class in Boston's North End (Dogherty, 1943). In addition to these stories from the immigration periods, contemporary
stories of ESL teachers can often be found in short, autobiographical sketches that are printed in professional newsletters (e.g. Bixby, 1987; Nelson, 1986). These sketches often focus on experiences teaching overseas.

The preceding discussion has focused on work that is related to the present study primarily through its biographical content. There are several studies that are related to the present work not through their biographical content, but because they are about ESL teaching and have emphasized subjectively generated material.

One of these studies was conducted by a Hong Kong ESL teacher, Belinda Ho Fong Wan Kam (1985). For four months she kept a diary of a teaching experiment in which she used two different methods of teaching. Although she quotes only a few passages from the diary, one gets a sense of how her subjective understanding shaped her growing comfort with occasionally instructing in her students' first language. Diaries have also been used by ESL teachers as instruments of self evaluation. (Bailey, 1990; Bailey & Ochsner, 1983). It is particularly common to associate diaries with language learning situations (Bailey, 1983; Bailey & Ochsner, 1983; Brown, 1985).

A needs analysis (Viera, et al., 1975) of teachers working with Hispanic students in the public schools of Holyoke, Massachusetts, used statistical methods of analysis to examine data that were developed out of subjective expressions of teachers' concerns. Although the study was
not limited to ESL teachers and the data were presented in composite third person profiles, the study does share with the present one a commitment to letting the participants generate the issues. Data from the study revealed that participants had many concerns. Most prominent were the wide heterogeneity in classroom populations; the lack of congruence in attitudes toward school among teachers, parents, students and community; concerns arising out of differing cultural values; and concerns in which class and culture were inextricably mixed.

Another study that shares commonalities with the present research is Defoe's (1986) examination of ESL teachers in Canadian junior colleges. In this study the focus was on the teachers' views of their roles as transmitters of Canadian culture. The issue in Defoe's study was generated by the researcher, but information was gathered through open-ended, ethnographic interviews. Quotes from the participants are illustrative rather than extended first person accounts, but one comes away from the study with a sense that participants had a major role in shaping the data. The study showed that culture was so embedded in language that teachers did not normally separate the two. However, they were aware of both factors.

Among the interesting observations of this study were the difficulties that teachers expressed in dealing with intergroup prejudices that appeared among their students. Another finding was that some teachers felt awkward serving as representatives of Canadian culture, because they did not see themselves as representative and, in fact,
sometimes felt in conflict with the mainstream culture. Teachers also reported difficulty in drawing a line between their role as teachers and as counselors or emotional supports. The role of ESL teachers as cultural brokers has also been explored in a questionnaire study (Stockwell, 1980) and suggestions for crisis intervention have been offered by Cao (1986).

A presentation of the insider’s view was the goal of José Cintrón (1985) in his ethnography of bilingual teachers working in a California elementary school. One ESL teacher was among the group of five teachers that were the focus of this study. The study indicated that the bilingual and non-bilingual teachers in the school were divided into separate camps and that there was incipient hostility between the two groups. The placement of the ESL teacher in the bilingual camp is interesting but, the reader has little sense of his work in the context of his life. Nor is there that sense present in comments on the other participants since they are presented primarily in the form of their responses to school administrators, to non-bilingual teachers and to each other.

There is little research in which the subjective understanding of ESL teachers, arrived at in a biographical, experiential context, determines the issues to be treated. This context is important because of its relationship to the research method employed in this study. It allows the research to be wholistic without being abstract, concrete without being fragmented. It anchors the research in the actual details of real experience which extend outward to include societal factors affecting that experience.
These characteristics are possible in part because the research is built upon the creation and exploration of personal documents.

**Literature Relating to Methodology: Issues in Work with Personal Documents**

The term "personal documents" has been used by Bogdan and Taylor (1975) to refer to "materials in which people reveal in their own words their view of their entire life, or a part of it, or some other aspect about themselves. Personal documents include such diverse materials as diaries, letters, autobiographies and transcripts of long, open-ended interviews" (p. 6). By this definition the interviews of the present study will result in the creation of personal documents. Personal documents have become an increasingly important tool for research in the social sciences and the present research falls within this general category of research.

As described above, personal documents vary widely in their form. They also vary in the way they are used in different disciplines. The historian who examines a diary to confirm events of a past century uses personal documents differently than the anthropologist who records the life story of a person who is part of a little known society. Personal documents are used in psychology, sociology, literature and linguistics. In all of these disciplines different research issues arise in their use (Allport, 1942; Culley, 1985; Gottschalk, Kluckhohn & Angell, 1946).
The use of personal documents in the research outlined in this proposal is influenced by the study's basis in phenomenology. Particularly as it has been developed in the work of Alfred Schutz (1967), phenomenology is concerned with the nature of subjective understanding, which according to Schutz, is the basis of all understanding. Subjective understanding grows out of the way in which we select items out of the flow of things around us and endow them with meaning based on our own projects and motives. In the work of Schutz, subject and object take on an inextricable unity.

This epistemology stands in direct contradiction to a line of reasoning that sees both the world and the human beings in it as objects that can be viewed apart, responsive to mechanistic laws. This positivistic view of the world, which has dominated science and technology since the time of Newton, has been challenged in laboratories as well as philosophical treatises. Floyd Matson (1966) has delineated this challenge and expressed it in the following terms.

...man's deepest and most reliable knowledge of the world around him - in particular of himself and others - is attained not through detachment but attachment, not by reductive analysis, but constructive synthesis, not in a state of estranged aloofness but in something like an act of love. (p. 235)

Translating premises such as these into discovery procedures has been the task of phenomenological researchers. At bottom, the procedures
that they have developed aim at gaining the "insider's view," reconstructing the reality of the events being studied through the eyes of the people involved in them (Schwartz & Jacobs 1979). Research that is based on a reconstruction of the insider's view is forced to consider the relationship of the individual to the group. Also requiring consideration is a closely related issue concerning the degree to which material from personal documents shapes the researcher's conclusions and the degree to which the data itself is shaped by elements already existing in the researcher's mind.

It is of central importance to consider the question of how research with personal documents shapes or is shaped by theory (Allport, 1942). Allport defines the problem as one of finding a place within a range of choices that fall between illustration and induction. In the range nearest illustration, personal documents are not a source of knowledge but rather an ornament to theories conceived in other forums. At the other end of the range, induction, interpretation grows entirely out of the documents themselves. Allport notes that there is no single correct location in the range, but states that it is unlikely that any interpretation can be considered completely inductive. To a large extent the issue is defined by the organizational problems faced by the researcher who, to present the material, has to reduce it and order it in some way. Ordering is not an objective process, but rather one that indicates at least some degree of interpretation on the part of the researcher.
Erickson (1985), touches upon the problem of individuals, groups and social theories and holds out the hope that the general can be created out of the specific. He visualizes individual meaning contexts as the first elements in a progression of building blocks that will define social theories and permit cross-cultural comparisons. Other researchers have been more cautious about the process of generalizations.

David Schuman (1982), who, with Kenneth Dolbeare, laid the groundwork for the research method that will be used in the proposed study, has said that his work "reflects a conscious effort to move from the singular to the collective" (p. 201). He notes, however, that research based on the experience of individual human beings forces an acceptance of multiple truths. Because social policy must be judged by its effect on individuals he is willing to make judgments based on his research. However, he does not claim to be moving toward theoretical universality nor does he anticipate that all his judgments will be correct.

Seidman, Sullivan and Schatzkamer (1983), whose development of Schuman's methodology provides the structure for this research, also incorporate the experience of the single individual into group themes. However, the group is not seen as a source of universal theory or an arena for the testing of hypotheses. Rather, it broadens the range of connections available for those who draw upon the research. The authors caution that these connections do "not lead to easy certainty. The level of conclusiveness to which we can come is appropriately limited by a
methodology which illuminates the complexity and wholeness of people's experience rather than simplifying and fragmenting it" (p. 666).

The research upon which this study is built does not solve the riddle of the individual and the group or the relationship of social theory to specific human experience. However, in describing group patterns that develop out of individual experience it utilizes a collective framework that preserves individual integrity. In adopting this approach, it places a value on everyday life.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN

Background Issues
Affecting the Selection of Study Participants

One of the important initial considerations of this study was the development of a suitable basis for selecting participants. There are few absolutes to guide the process of decision making in work with personal documents. In the present study, the continuum of possibilities ranged from a case study of a single ESL teacher to a grouping that included the widest possible spectrum of teaching situations. The goal was to choose participants who would give the greatest breadth possible to a small study but who would also share sufficient similarities in their work to give rise to common themes. ESL teaching is characterized by a diversity that makes it difficult to find this kind of balance.

This diversity is created first of all by a fundamental division in ESL teaching that separates those who teach in situations where English is the primary language of the larger society from those who don't. Beyond this initial distinction, there are divisions in ESL teaching that describe the level at which teaching takes place: elementary school, secondary school, higher education and adult education. These levels are somewhat
ambiguous since middle school is technically neither elementary nor secondary school and since the category of higher education includes both community college teachers and those at four-year institutions. These levels also imply an age range that doesn't always apply to ESL students. For example, immigrant students often are placed in public school classes well below their age group and immigrant families with young children are sometimes served by classes that are thought of as "adult" education.

The diversity that characterizes ESL teaching does not necessarily fall along predictable lines. For example, ESL teachers usually work with students who are of different language groups. Sometimes one teacher will have only Japanese students and another will have only Hispanic students. However, ESL teachers generally assume that their classes will have more than one language group. In a single ESL class students may run a gamut that includes a Norwegian tourist, an urban Colombian immigrant and a rural Southeast Asian refugee. Different languages, different alphabets, different educational backgrounds, and different oral and spoken competencies are the rule in ESL classes.

For this reason it would have been unsuitable for participants to have been selected on the basis of the language groups of their students. Furthermore such a selection would not have achieved real homogeneity. Linguistic homogeneity may mask cultural diversity. An urban Puerto Rican student, a student from the Mexican countryside and a Venezuelan suburban resident all come from Spanish speaking situations. However, they may exhibit different educational backgrounds, different class
backgrounds and widely differing cultural assumptions. In addition students from similar language and cultural backgrounds can have differing language goals. Some may seek survival skills whereas others may require English for scientific or technological purposes.

Other kinds of diversity in ESL teaching also occur in a random fashion that makes them an unsuitable basis for participant selection. For example, some ESL students are immigrants and some are temporary foreign visitors. However, these divisions are ambiguous in the way they affect ESL teachers. Immigrant students are often served by teachers in the public schools and community colleges while foreign students are probably less common in these institutions. However, foreign students are also found in high schools and elementary schools as a result of exchange programs and foreign parents working in the United States. Furthermore, community colleges are seeing an increase in foreign student enrollment (Jenkins, 1983). Foreign students tend to appear in higher proportions in colleges and universities, but these institutions also have immigrant students.

Since the difficulties in selecting a participant pool for the study were apparent from the beginning, a pilot project was conducted to look for information that would shed some light on the issue. In designing the pilot it was decided to introduce another segmenting factor into the world of ESL teaching, geography. The participants for the pilot were chosen from a single county in the state of Massachusetts. Four participants
were chosen. The participants were selected from elementary, secondary, higher education and the community college level.

One of the goals of the pilot project was to discover what kinds of networks were important in the work of ESL teachers. The initial assumption was that geography would play an important role in determining those networks. For this reason the pilot project further emphasized geography by selecting three participants from a single city. The purpose here was to see if those participants displayed any commonalities that might be related to their geographical location and which differentiated them from the one participant who was from another area.

It should be pointed out that it was coincidental that the study included both a university and a community college teacher. Originally these two categories had been thought of as falling into the general area of higher education, but investigation revealed that community college ESL teachers often served much the same population that was served in adult education classes. It should also be pointed out that the pilot project limited participants to teachers who were being paid for their work, thus excluding a large number of volunteers. Also excluded were para-professionals, teacher trainers and administrators. The pilot included both part-time and full-time teachers, one male teacher and three females.
In general the pilot project revealed significant shared characteristics among the participants, regardless of the educational level at which they were teaching. Whether dealing with first graders or university students, they had students who were experiencing culture shock and the intense feelings generated by not being able to rely on the language that was intimately bound to their thoughts, feelings and human relationships. Whether they were helping a Spanish-speaking mother utilize the structures of the school system or a foreign student utilize the city bus system they were serving as cultural brokers. Whether they defended their programs to principals or deans and whether they explained their role to professorial or public school colleagues, they were serving as professional brokers.

Thus, the different educational levels at which the pilot participants worked were bridged by similar experiences. In many cases commonalities arose because all of the teachers were employed in institutions of formal education and because institutional networks played an important role in their work. This was an unexpected result. The pilot had originally been designed on the premise that geography would be the important unifying factor among participants, but that proved not to be the case. However, the finding that institutional networks provided such significant commonalities among the participants pointed the way to a reasonable basis for selecting a participant pool possessing both unity and diversity: the selection of participants from teaching situations in educational institutions. Once this basic parameter was set, other characteristics had to be considered in the selection of study participants.
Further Factors Affecting Participant Selection: Demographics and Access

By making educational institutions the basis for participant selection, a unifying foundation was established that permitted the study to include many diverse elements of ESL teaching. However, not all elements of diversity were included. For example, because the study included only participants working in institutions of formal education, it eliminated a broad spectrum of adult education: teachers working in grant programs based in libraries, charitable organizations and other community settings. To some extent, the student population of adult education programs appeared in community college classes, but, ultimately the study may offer fewer connections to teachers working in adult education programs. However, this is a comparatively small sacrifice in breadth, given the combination of unity and diversity that was possible in a participant pool drawn from educational institutions.

In utilizing educational institutions as a basis for selecting participants, the research did not aim to become a study of institutions nor to present interview material in an institutional framework. Many of the concerns raised by participants in the pilot project had both an institutional aspect and also a broader societal aspect. Interview material in this study has been reported in terms of the linkages that seem inherent to the material itself. Material was not limited to that which related to institutional issues nor was it segmented according to the institutional levels at which participants were employed.
Once the major framework for participant selection had been decided upon, an effort was made to choose participants from within that framework in a way that reflected the proportions that actually occur in ESL teaching. It was not easy, however, to discover those proportions. The groups most interested in compiling such figures are the professional organizations. These organizations lack the resources for detailed analysis, even at the basic level of male and female members. Furthermore, those figures that the professional organizations do possess are skewed by the fact that they draw only upon members of the organization, which by no means includes all teachers in the field. The national TESOL organization has estimated that about 20%-25% of the members in state affiliates are also members of the national group, but the essential problem still remains because there are many ESL teachers who are not members of state organizations (Susan Bayley, personal communication, November 17, 1987). The figures that apply to the special interest sections of TESOL, presented earlier in the study, also reflect this problem.

The same problem is an underlying difficulty in an employment survey that drew upon voluntary respondents to a mailing compiled from the membership of the Massachusetts professional organization. In this survey Krueger and Prince-Nam (1987) differentiate between community college and university level teachers, but not between elementary and secondary level teachers. A Regents Publishing Company survey does not include university level teachers ("ESL Teachers," 1985).
Employment directory includes all levels, but omits many institutions and has no numbers for others.

Two recent surveys that took place under the auspices of the national professional organization had a high rate of participation from members in higher education. In a survey in which the TESOL organization tried to learn more about its members and their desire for particular services of the organization, the responses from teachers in higher education were more than double those from teachers in elementary and secondary schools (Susan Bayley, personal communication, January 23, 1989). In a recent employment concerns survey (Blaber and Tobash, 1989) the greatest number of respondents were in universities and four-year colleges. Numbers of responses, of course, may reflect interest levels rather than numbers of people employed at those levels.

The results of two studies conducted for the U.S. government raise further problems (Waggoner, 1978, 1984). Both of these studies surveyed ESL teachers in the public schools. However, the studies were not limited to teachers whose primary responsibility was English as a second language. The 1978 study, for example, included teachers giving ESL help to at least one student. In the present research interviews were conducted only with teachers whose primary employment responsibilities were in ESL. This eliminated individuals who were predominantly bilingual teachers, teaching one or two ESL classes. In Waggoner’s figures for 1980-81, which were reported in 1984, the distribution was as follows: preschool/kindergarten, 3.4%; elementary, 35.4%; secondary, 39%;
multilevel, 5%; unknown, 17%. The preschool level has not been included in the present study.

In addition to the difficulties of obtaining accurate figures that would reflect the number of ESL teachers working at the various institutional levels, there was also difficulty in gaining accurate figures that would give the percentages of males and females in ESL teaching. A manual count of first names in the 1987 Directory of MATSOL, the Massachusetts ESL professional organization, indicated a total of 385 female members and 82 male members. Krueger and Prince Nam's (1987) study of Massachusetts ESL employment conditions showed similar proportions of 80.3% female respondents and 19.7% male. Again, it must be remembered that these figures are skewed because they draw on the professional society's membership.

Numbers were additionally complicated by the fact that public school districts have different structures for addressing the needs of children in the grades after elementary school. Secondary and middle school have been classed together in this study, although two teachers classed as elementary school teachers also taught some students who might have been in middle school in a different school district. The study included a slightly higher percentage of participants at the four-year college and university level, in keeping with the results of the Blaber and Tobash study (1989). The following chart indicates that the 4 participants from the pilot were included in the study along with the 18 subsequent participants. There were 16 women and 6 men in the study, a total of 22.
### Table 1: Distribution of Participants

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional levels from which participants were drawn</th>
<th>Number of females</th>
<th>Number of males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>elementary school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary &amp; middle school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community college</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four-year institutions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Totals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution of pilot participants incorporated into the study</th>
<th>Number of females</th>
<th>Number of males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>elementary school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary &amp; middle school</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>four year-institutions</td>
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**Totals**

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<th>Number of females</th>
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<td><strong>Elementary school</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Four-year institutions</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Totals**

46
The study did not include interviews with paraprofessionals, volunteers, teachers working in community based programs or teacher educators. One study participant had, at the time of the interviews, moved primarily from teaching into administration and another participant was engaged partly in teaching and partly in administration. In the course of conducting the study many participants were found to have assumed administrative duties, frequently by default or coincidence, but in general an administrative category was not included in the selection of participants. Inevitably something was lost by not including participants from all possible domains, but what was gained was the ability to conduct a small scale study that incorporated a great deal of diversity. Some of this diversity can be seen by referring to the description of participant characteristics located in the appendix.

Once a basis for selecting participants was established it was necessary to actually be able to contact ESL teachers and ask them to participate in the study. In the present study it was possible to gain access to ESL teachers without requiring the intervention of hierarchical gatekeepers. Probably the most helpful source of participants was the state professional organization, MATSOL. MATSOL is a strong organization that produces both membership directories and program directories. Using these resources it was fairly easy to contact ESL teachers directly. It was important, however, that participants not all be MATSOL members, and one way to get around this was to begin by calling MATSOL members, but to request a reference to other ESL teachers. It was also possible to
get references to other ESL teachers from friends in the profession. Close friends were not selected as participants.

Once a list of potential participants had been created it was important to actually make contact with them. The process of contact involves several important issues. Teachers are busy people. It is frequently difficult simply to get in touch with them through telephone calls to their institutions and one is always conscious of imposing on their time. At the same time, it is critical to arrange an initial face-to-face meeting with them to explain the nature of the project and the commitment required by the participant. At this time one can stress the importance of the project and its potential benefit to the field as well as its possible rewards in the kind of reflection that it affords to participants. In the course of doing this it is also important to explain the limitations of what is being done.

The researcher wants to make these explanations in such a way that they do not begin to shape the situation, causing the participants to slant their reflections to topics they believe the researcher values. All of this needs to be done in the initial contact visit and it is important that it be done by the interviewer. Third party contacts may, on the surface, seem helpful, but actually they are a potential source of great confusion. It is important to warn the participant that material of a personal nature may arise and to explain to them the degree of control that they have over the process and the material. They need to understand that steps will be taken to protect their anonymity, but that anonymity cannot be guaranteed.
Some of this was done just prior to the first interview in a thorough review of the consent form.

The teachers who participated in the study were all selected from educational institutions located in the state of Massachusetts. Massachusetts is an area that was readily accessible to the researcher and small enough that participants could be contacted and interviewed with some degree of convenience. At the same time the state offers a wide variety in its population and possesses a number of characteristics that are important in a study based on the experience of ESL teachers.

ESL teachers in Massachusetts make up the sixth highest membership in the TESOL organization. There are over eighty colleges and universities in Massachusetts. The state has at least thirty-three junior colleges and community colleges, fifteen of which are public institutions. The state professional organization lists ESL teachers in both two-year and four-year institutions. Massachusetts was one of the first states to institute bilingual education. A large number of both elementary and high schools have ESL teachers teaching English in bilingual programs.

Massachusetts also has a population of diverse ethnic backgrounds. It reflects current immigration trends in that Asian immigration has been on the increase, changing from 3,469 in the decade before 1960 to 21,600 in the following decade. (U.S. Census, 1980, Chapter D) The state also has 74,910 residents of Puerto Rican origin. (U.S. Census, 1980, Chapter C) In
the period of 1975-1980 the state experienced substantial immigrations from Portugal, the West Indies, Greece, Italy and the Azores.

The state of Massachusetts has ESL teachers working in a variety of localities. Most of these locations are large and small municipalities and the majority of participants worked in this kind of setting. The study included both full-time and part-time teachers. The pilot project indicated that both the full-time and part-time participants faced the same major issues. For example, both served as cultural brokers for their students and as professional brokers for their occupation. Three of the four pilot participants had held both full-time and part-time positions. A pattern of part-time and full-time employment is indicated in the Krueger and Prince-Nam study (1987). The contextual issues developed in the first part of this study apply to part-time ESL teachers as well as those who teach full-time.

Structure and Interpretation of the Research

The interview structure of this research was not designed to create or test hypotheses. Nor was it designed to contribute to or illustrate general theories of the social sciences. The interviews of the present study were not shaped by a question and answer format. Rather they were shaped by the experience of the participant and the researcher's desire to elicit that experience as the participant viewed it (Seidman, Sullivan and Schatzkamer, 1983).
Each of the participants in this study was individually interviewed by the researcher on three different occasions. Each interview took ninety minutes and interviews were generally spaced at intervals of between three days and one week. The ninety-minute period of each interview allowed for a range and depth of discussion in each meeting. At the same time it did not stretch the participant to the point of exhaustion. The intervals between interviews allowed time for thoughts from the previous interview to solidify without allowing so much time that they became lost. Thus the interview technique addressed issues of time and context in several ways. It allowed time for deep discussion in each interview and it provided contact between interviewer and participant over a period of time (Seidman, Sullivan and Schatzkamer, 1983).

In the first two interviews each participant was asked to focus on actual experiences of the past and present emphasizing, not a linear relationship of cause and effect, but rather a reconstructing of the details of actual experience (Seidman, Sullivan and Schatzkamer, 1983). A third interview focused on the meaning the participants made of their experience. This interview structure was used with the objective of encouraging the participant, at the time of the third interview, to utilize the experiences of the first two interviews as the basis for a conscious reflection on meaning. This method did not ensure that meaning would be made in this way, nor did it exclude other types of meaning-making. Any human communication involves the exchange of multiple meaning signals. Meaning was made in all the interviews as the participants selected
certain experiences out of the flow of activities that made up their lives. However, the process was designed to build toward a reflection on the meaning of a group of related experiences that were rooted in the concrete experiential details of the participants' lives and work.

Throughout the interviews the goal was to understand and facilitate the revelation of experience and meaning. The interviews were not a bending of the participant's experience to fit a plan that was preconceived by the interviewer. On the other hand the interviewer was a part of the process, not only in defining the structure that focused on past, present and meaning, but also as a partner in mutual interaction. The result of the interviews is a product that can be most accurately be described as a jointly created personal document.

The interviews in this study focused on individuals. The goal was not to obtain a view of the ESL classroom from the point of view of the teacher, students, administrators and community members. The focus was on the individuality of the teacher's experience, its history, its details and its meaning. In the presentation of the interview material the experience of individuals was expanded through connections that were made with the experience of other individuals who were also engaged in the work of teaching English as a second language. Thus, the research does not function like a written photograph of a group or an event. It is a study of individuals and the linkages between individuals who are engaged in a common profession.
The structure of phenomenological, in-depth interviewing requires for its success a sense of equity between interviewer and participant. This does not mean equality, or sameness, since the roles of interviewer and participant are different and at different stages each member of the partnership exercises different types of control over the research process. It does mean a sense of fairness and justice and a commitment to honor both the experience of the participant and the research itself (Seidman, Sullivan and Schatzkamer, 1983). Building a sense of equity can contribute to the ease that participants feel in speaking in a private rather than a public voice. The private voice best reveals the concrete details of experience and the subjective reflection on meaning that is sought in the interviews.

The interviews done for this study were tape recorded and a written transcript of the recording was be made. Material was interpreted on the basis of the written record. It is in the interpretation of the material that the researcher acts most clearly as a filter of the interview experience, since it is the researcher's role to search the material for important connections between individual experiences as well as to choose those excerpts from the interviews that compose individual profiles. These two forms of interpretation, the establishment of common themes and the composition of individual portraits were the primary methods of interpretation utilized in this study.

Every effort was made to protect the anonymity of the participants. Proper names were changed and material that would have been inclined to
reveal identity was not used. Complete protection can never be guaranteed because it is always possible that someone who knows the participants will have enough clues to pierce the cloak of anonymity. However, scrupulous attempts were made to keep this from happening.

Researchers who use personal documents are aware of the capacity of the editing process to preserve or destroy the essence of the documents (Allport, 1942; Gottschalk, 1945). In the complex interaction of researcher and material, Culley (1985) notes that editing results in a loss of exact representation, but points out that it can be regarded as one more stage in an ongoing process of reality construction. She suggests that an ideal approach is to let the reader be as much aware as possible of the method that guided the editing process. Seidman, Sullivan and Schatzkamer (1983) concur in this, but acknowledge that only a "study of the study" (p. 665) can portray the concrete detail of material selection, the heart of the researcher's work.

Bearing in mind the difficult nature of editorial decisions, several fundamental guidelines were followed in the present study. No notations were made as to whether particular quotations came from the first, second or third interviews, although in general the profiles have not included much biographical information from the first interview. Material in the profiles has been placed in the order in which it occurred in the interviews. Where a paragraph is inserted out of order it is preceded by an ellipsis. This can be readily recognized because in such cases the ellipsis comes at the beginning of the paragraph.
The words of the profiles are the words of the participants although for the sake of readability the hesitations, repetitions and syntactic irregularities of the spoken word have been deleted. Habitual expressions of spoken speech such as "you know" and "I mean" have also been omitted. Since these are so common in spoken language, there are no editorial marks to show that this has been done. However, where substantial intervening material has been eliminated, an ellipsis indicates this. Where words of the researcher are inserted to help the flow of the story those words appear in brackets. Occasionally a proper name is changed in order to protect anonymity. Generally the proper name is changed to a generic term such as "the principal" or "this city" and that term is put in brackets.

All aspects of the research design have affected this study, but in the end the major shaping has been done by four fundamental forces. One of these shaping factors is the experience of each participant considered as an individual. The process through which each individual is chosen to participate and the way each person's story holds together as a unit reveals something about ESL teaching. Something else is revealed in the the selection of the participants as a group and the way in which their stories connect to one another. Thirdly, the study has been influenced by what the researcher has brought to it in terms of personal interest and relationships established to other literature in the field. Finally the study has been influenced by the reader and a desire to share with the reader material that is likely to be meaningful. What is often most meaningful
in a study such as this one is the opportunity that the reader has to make direct contact with the words of the participants. The following chapter makes that possible through the presentation of profiles of five of the study participants.
CHAPTER 4

PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

This chapter contains the profiles of five participants. The profiles have been constructed in the words of the participants. They have been chosen from each level of teaching included in the study's participant pool: elementary school, secondary school, community college and four-year college or university. The individual profiles enable the reader to get a sense of how a person's story develops within a life context. Seeing several profiles together helps the reader to follow issues that appear in the stories of more than one individual. The profiles presented here foreshadow some of the themes that are developed in later chapters. A theme may appear in a single profile or in a number of them.

One theme which is present to some degree in all the profiles is the complexity of the participants' relationships with the institutions in which they are situated. In the profiles that follow, participants express feelings of anger as well as feelings of gratitude for good institutional situations, perhaps an understanding principal or a good administration. Sometimes the appreciation of a good situation arises because of previous bad experiences. The lack of status accorded to ESL teaching is an underlying element in some experiences that participants relate.
A primary function of ESL teaching is to enable students to achieve some sort of working relationship with the mainstream and that awareness appears in most of the profiles. It may, for example, be embedded in a comment about how a particular learning activity prepares students for American academic life. It may appear in different ways in different stories, provoking one set of issues for the elementary school teacher who wants her ESL students to understand a class field trip and another group of problems for the community college teacher who wants her students to be able to call in sick or carry on casual conversations with co-workers on a new job.

Different aspects of participants' lives interact with their work. One of the participants, Frederick Haussman, is a gay man who is committed to living openly as such. He feels that some of the cultural tolerance that exists in ESL teaching has helped him to do that. However, he has decided to leave ESL. One reason is that he has become a victim of AIDS and he feels that the difficulties of working in the field will ultimately shorten his life. Although Haussman feels that his job is a relatively good one, given the state of the field as a whole, his situation serves as a reminder that ESL teaching often provides few resources in terms of money and employment benefits that can help its members in times of tragedy.

The stresses of working in ESL appear throughout the profiles. The low status of the profession is reflected in comments about the physical surroundings in which some of the participants worked. One participant,
Esther Gleason, talks about her part-time work in an elementary school and her feeling of being pulled in many different directions. One reason she is part-time is because her program is not considered significant enough to rate a full-time teacher.

Gleason also works part-time because it is the only kind of situation she can reconcile with the duties she has assumed as a wife and mother. In another profile, Marylin Villard talks about how she, too, started out in ESL on a part-time basis, again because she was raising children. The low status of ESL seems to interact with the situation of women who have assumed primary care for their children, resulting in a reinforcing action between people who need part-time work and institutions who are unwilling to channel enough money into ESL programs to support full-time teachers. The difficulty of finding full-time work in ESL programs in higher education creates hardships that are vividly described by Frederick Haussman.

In one of the profiles secondary school teacher Frank West introduces two themes that will appear in later discussion: the importance of writing and the difficulty of working with students who have little educational experience or preparation. West is interested in writing for its own sake, but he also notes that academic institutions measure students by their ability to write, something on which a number of participants commented. Although West is pleased with the writing course he teaches, he is frustrated by difficulties of responding adequately to students who have had little experience or success in
academic institutions. In different ways, this frustration was shared by other participants who are not profiled here.

A proliferation of pedagogical methodologies has characterized ESL teaching and Frederick Haussman notes this with suspicion in a reference to the "isms" that float about him. Other teachers who are profiled here also comment on methodology. Marylin Villard is enthusiastic about co-operative learning approaches and Maria Winters expresses her belief in language acquisition, a concept that is often used in a methodological sense that contrasts it with language learning. In spite of these affiliations, the sentiment that comes through in these profiles and in the comments of most participants is that of a willingness to try many different things. Marylin Villard's career has been one of trying a series of different things and Maria Winters notes that she encourages eclecticism and sharing among teachers.

The themes that have been highlighted here are those that appear in later discussion. At the end of the profiles additional themes will be mentioned that relate to the material in the chapter immediately following. Highlighting the thematic elements that appear in the profiles establishes one type of relationship with the material. However, it is not the only relationship possible. One reason for presenting the profiles in the words of the participants is that it enables readers to encounter the participants directly and to discover relationships that are personally meaningful to them.
Profile of Marylin Villard

[At the time of the interviews Marylin Villard was teaching at two different universities. She began teaching ESL twenty years ago in a community based program. She was originally trained as an elementary school teacher and an English teacher. She had taught a variety of subjects to native speakers at the elementary, junior high and high school levels.]

[As a young mother] I can remember walking up [Main Street] pushing a baby carriage and crying and deciding that I had to have a little bit of something else to do.... I had had a little experience teaching a South American woman some English.... and I decided to apply for a job at the [local] high school teaching immigrants at night. They said yes, they needed me, they could hire me. I had to go and take some courses at [one of the colleges] at the same time so I could teach. So I did that. I went and took this absolutely useless course and began to teach, at first two nights. I was home with first one baby and then two babies, but I was teaching two nights a week and that was very satisfying. I spent loads of time making lesson plans and correcting papers and bringing coffee pots with me and all kinds of motherly things. I discovered I loved it....

It was wonderful. Teaching ESL is wonderful. 1.) It was wonderful because they were immigrants and they desperately wanted to learn English, just desperately; 2.) They were wonderful people who were so grateful for anything you did for them. 3.) It gave me a chance to be creative again. I was doing all kinds of really silly things. When I think
about them now they weren't so bad because I didn't know anything about teaching a language.

But I would carry boxes of objects, related objects and teach them the name of objects with some structure. I did some awful things, but you know they weren't so bad at the time, when I look back on them. And it was fascinating to me. I really didn't know a lot of people from other cultures. It was sort of my first experience with people from other countries and there was a great variety of everything from Central American maids to a French chef and his wife. All kinds of wonderful people and I loved them.

I really got very, very involved with it. It really consumed a lot of my time. Even though I only taught four hours a week, I spent a lot of time planning and cutting out and writing little scripts and doing all kinds of things... I wasn't thinking about language. I was actually writing some very interesting material which I've since all thrown out at some point. I'm sorry I did, because it would be useful to go back just to see what happened....

I spent mornings with play doh, with cooperative nurseries, with PTOs, all the things we all did in those days--food co-ops, neighborhood block associations, working for politicians, all those things. But I felt like a human being and not just a mother and wife out there. It was my own little domain. It was my kingdom. I got a lot of gratification. It also gave me a chance to be creative, I think - all of those things....
Even when I put out a newspaper for [a volunteer organization] it was not the same thing. It wasn't just that it was unpaid. It just didn't give me the same pleasure that the classroom gave me. I'd been teaching for a long time. I really hadn't known anything else. And I think my life had felt quite empty when I didn't have that kind of relationship with people, with students.... I was having lots of fun with my kids as long as I had something to balance it. I mean I did, you know. I liked cooperative nurseries and the food co-op, and I liked reading to my kids and taking them to the library and taking them to the children's museum and doing all of that. It's just that this, for me, was separate....

...At one point the director of one of the master's programs called me and said he had heard about me and could he send me a student teacher. I thought I had nothing to learn because I was so wonderful and here she came in and she knew all kinds of things I didn't know and had all kinds of methods I had never seen and knew about textbooks. I was really removed from the field. I just went with my coffee pot and taught English and did the right things sort of, hit or miss. And because I had taken this student teacher I had a free course at [the university] and went back and took a course in first language acquisition.... It was wonderful. At that point I decided to enroll in the master's program.

It was very exciting. You have to understand I'd been teaching all these years without knowing anything and suddenly I was hearing about
I didn’t know any of this existed. The first time I think I went to a TESOL [Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages] conference which was held in Boston I was just overwhelmed. I went and I heard people doing presentations on using radio news in the classroom. I had never thought about it. I went home right away and prepared a lesson. It was at the time when people were talking about functional, notional [methods]. I went home and I experimented with all of that stuff that was voguish at the time. I probably tried everything. I was impressed by everything…. But by the time I went to a MATSOL [Massachusetts Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages] presentation, I turned to a friend… and we kind of looked at each other and said, "We could do that." I think one of the things that had happened was somewhere along the line I realized that I had some good ideas that other people didn’t have, and once again I had the confidence that I had some expertise to share or something
exciting to share and that I could try it, experiment with it and that people might listen....

I'm interested in reading everybody's research, and I probably read everything in the writing field about ESL, which isn't very big. The basic writing field, that is stuff out of CCNY that deals with basic writers, that is natives with deficiencies and in the English field, so that I subscribe to all of [that]. I'm a member of NCTE [National Council of Teachers of English] and I subscribe to all their materials. I probably read just about everything there is to read in the field and I do that as well with listening and reading. I'm very interested in it.

And certainly what it does for me is that aside from teaching, which I think is creative intellectually, it adds a component that makes me not get tired and helps me to not get tired of what I'm doing. What I don't have the time for but see in the future that I might want to move into is some actual research. That's just a fleeting thought.... I had said at one point when I get tired of this I'll go and get a doctorate. And I see that as a possibility, but I'm not tired of it. I'm writing another book now and I've got enough sort of odds and ends that make me put it off. I've been doing this for a long time and it's still exciting for me....

There is absolutely no reason to get a doctorate in this field unless you want to do administration and I can't imagine that I would want to do administration.... Even if you got a doctorate in administration and you got a job - there are no jobs that pay well in this field. They don't exist. I've
done some looking around. I have a pretty good idea always of what the job market is. Unless there are consulting jobs in which you absolutely kill yourself and have to do lots of hiring and lots of supervising and the rewards are not that gratifying. I suppose that if you really went into the Stanley Kaplan kind of thing, [if] they opened up some kind of really major private school, you might make some money. But basically you don't make money in this field.... The director of the program... doesn't get a living wage.... The only thing that would interest me would be to teach in a school of education and that would be the only reason for ever wanting to get it.

...What I've learned to do is very little. That's really something I've become very interested in. I'm very interested in co-operative education.... I will give students, when they come in, a reading passage, maybe a fairly lengthy piece to read, generally from a university text book. It might have multiple choice answers at the end, questions and answers. I will never take them in. Students learn that after they finish reading they walk around and see if other people have finished and they battle over the answers by themselves so that people get used to the fact that it's noisy and that some people may be doing one thing and other people doing another and that I very often won't give them the answers at the end. I make them very dependent on recycling the language so that it isn't a teacher giving the answers or one person in the class giving the answers....

What there is is a lot of conversation, there's a lot of going back into the text, there's a lot of recycling of language which these people need. They need to talk. They need it if they're going to develop vocabulary.
They have to use the words over and over again. And if there's a teacher up at the front and the brightest student in the class is giving the answers all the time, these students don't get the opportunity to do it. So I can really go through a complete class, as long as I'm well prepared, of not saying a word....

I think it's also wonderful for them to do that kind of arguing. A lot of [the] Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians come from very quiet cultures and they don't know how to do this in the American university class. [They] don't really know how to say, "You're wrong. I'm going to show you. I can find the answer for you." I think they have to learn all these skills and that's how they learn. They learn to do it in groups and they get better and better at it as the semester moves on.

...I go out of my way, and worry about students who are absent and things like that. It may be that that's the role of every good teacher.... Very often you're the only real native contact that the student knows well, so that you're still often recommending gynecologists, eye doctors, dentists. You're still often telling students where to go and shop. Clearly there is that role. You're often making calls to the university to see if you can get them to some kind of person who will facilitate them more than the bureaucracy will....

One thing that [ESL] does do is it helps you to see differently. It helps you from becoming ethnocentric. You start to think of it as an anthropologist. You start to not be shocked that women wear veils and you
start to be really accepting and respectful of other people’s traditions and beliefs.... When I first started to teach, I was pretty critical of women who would wear veils and arranged marriages and all of this. When there were clashes in classes between cultures, I always sort of took my side. But I think I really have a greater appreciation - I would hardly wear a veil or hardly let anyone arrange a marriage for me. Then again, I’m not sure that their way is worse than my way. It’s different....

...I would like [ESL] to be considered a very academic profession and an exalted and important profession. But when I describe myself as an English as a second language teacher I don’t feel it. I think it’s the university’s lack of recognition.... There’s the feeling that anybody can do it, anybody could be a volunteer and do it. There isn’t any awareness of how much knowledge one has to have, both about teaching and about the language and about the theory about acquiring a language.... We really do a great service for the university and we bring in far more money than they give to our department.... I am very often inspired to write letters or inspired to go and see people. The issues that have gotten me going are bad office space, bad classroom space, a slight to our department in a university publication, grouping us with tutoring services, lack of funding for conferences, cutting down budgets and xeroxing books, even while we have expanding roles. That kind of thing gets me going....

I think back [when I first started in ESL] what happened was that I had a lot of energy, I was very enthusiastic, I was dedicated, I was a hard worker and I was creative. All of those things will get you a long way,
even if you don't know anything about what you're doing. In fact, it will
get the students somewhere towards their goal, but not in the most
efficient way possible. A lot of learning the language is making people
feel, aside from teaching this body of knowledge, it is making people feel
confident and enthusiastic. At least they have a better chance of
[learning].

So I think that's what it was about then. I really didn't know what I
was doing. I knew there were eight parts of speech. I don't even know if
that's true anymore, but I had been taught there had been eight parts of
speech. I had studied Latin.... I had never thought about languages. I knew
French, I knew English and it had never dawned on me that the adjectives
went in different places. I had never done any contrastive analysis. I had
never thought about why the Japanese didn't learn articles. I really knew
nothing. And I talked too much. I put on a show.

[Now] I don't do any of the same things. I think that the basic
enthusiasm and energy and creativity and trying to create interesting
materials are there, but I now have a clearer idea of knowing what it is
I'm teaching, what it is I'm trying to teach. I think about how I'm going to
teach, the best way to teach those things. I have a clearer idea of student
needs and that I change all the time, but the change is more conscious.

It was just chance. I think it was just chance [that I found ESL when I
was a young mother]. The chance was that I found something to do. Maybe
if I had gone and worked with alcoholics at that point or started to sell
cosmetics - well, no, that wouldn't have worked. If I had done something
totally different, that's what I would have become involved in. I just had
to find something to do a few hours a week that was not related to
domestic things. Running the food co-op didn't satisfy me. I had to find
my own place apart from my family for a few hours a week.
Profile of Frederick Haussman

[At the time of the interviews Frederick Haussman was working at the university level. He was primarily an administrator although he taught an occasional class. He began ESL teaching overseas. His work in ESL in the United States had been at the college and university level.]

A year after I graduated [from college] I decided to go to Europe... [I] got a job at a [language] school.... I have ambivalent feelings about [the school]. It was excellent training for dealing with teaching issues, thinking on your feel and having to do it fast. You had to walk into these lessons and see where the last teacher had left off, and then you picked up on it. [I enjoyed] spending time with the students and learning things about the language that I had never thought about before, but only by struggling to teach it, because they didn't give us any training. They went out with a dragnet. If they had sold a bunch of lessons, they went out on the street and said, "Ah, you speak English. You are now a teacher." And threw you in the classroom. The other interesting thing about the language school was learning about labor relations....

Every single teacher there agreed that working issues were not good and that something needed to be done.... One of the things was the tremendous discrepancy between what the students paid and what the teachers were paid. It was outrageous. Another was that there was comparative job security for only a few people and for a very small core of people, what they called a guaranteed minimum that was explicitly in the
contract. Most of the people just took what came along. Then for everybody, whether they had the minimum or not, was the problem of the school's total control over hours and the fact that it was convenient for them to schedule us heavily in the morning, heavily in the evening and leave our afternoons shot because there weren't very many students in the afternoon.

I came back from [Europe], I did my master's degree [in applied linguistics] and, poof, I was a real professional English teacher with two years of experience behind me.... [After that I taught overseas.] In some ways it was the most exciting year of my life, but not all pleasant.... I had some professional problems. The director of the English program I was working in did not like what I did and told me so in no uncertain terms, in a way that made me feel very unhappy and slightly resentful because I also felt that I had been set up for it in terms of the framework they had. Although I had that experience at the [language school], I really had very little standard classroom experience, and they kind of told us this is what to expect, this is what to work with. And then this conference we had after her first observation, she said, "Well, you're not really supposed to use those books. Those are just something for the students to hold onto because they want a book." I had been floundering around and trying to work with these things that I thought were horrible....

Then towards the end of the school year the academic vice president called me to his office and said, "Mr. Haussman, we have a problem."... The gist of it was that they had been watching me all year and there was this
funny sort of everybody blaming everybody else. The [people of the country] would say, "Oh no, you're not having a problem because you're gay here. We've known about this for hundreds of years and don't really care." And the Americans all said, "It's them." And they said, "It's the Americans."...

They asked me to leave and I said that I had a two year contract. This was in April which is pretty late in the year and where was I going to find a job? I said that all to them, "What am I supposed to do when I get back? Wash dishes?" He said, "Well, that's not really our concern." Suddenly I just got very angry. I didn't yell at him or anything, but said, "You're dealing with a lifetime's accumulation of anger here. You can deal with it here in this office or you can deal with it at the next faculty meeting." And they gave me part of my salary for the next year. Somebody else said, "But if you had really been brave, you could have gotten the whole thing." I felt pleased at least not to be walking off the plane with zero money....

[I came back to an East Coast city here in the States and] I liked it at first, except that the city [universities] where I worked were fueled primarily by adjunct labor and they had no interest in - I understand it, but they have no interest in creating real jobs for people. You were forced to piece together junk work at three or four different places and grade your papers as you rode the subway between them. Also, I found it infuriating that, on top of that, I don't think that most of the places had any genuine interest in the (ESL) students other than as a way to fill their coffers. The private universities in the obvious way, and the city university insofar
as it was able to get additional state aid on a per capita basis. They had no incentive to teach anybody anything and get them out of the system. In principle they always had cut off points and deadlines and things but I don't think it was really structured in a way that made for good teaching or a satisfactory work experience. Also it was just not easy to live there on what we got....

It became clear to me that ESL as a profession, at least as it was practiced in [that situation] was not something that a person would want to go into and do for itself. It was OK as a means to an end, if you got your satisfaction in life out of other aspects of your existence. Either you put in your time at work and simply enjoyed your leisure, because that was what you wanted out of life, or you were a writer and you needed something that put bread on the table. But it wasn't more than that because your real interest was in your free time and what you were doing then. It was very hard for me to look at ESL as anything a responsible person with any self respect would want to do under the circumstances there. It was very demeaning....

[When I moved to this city and came to my present job at this university] I felt that this was one of the few places where the administration really cared about what was going on, rather than simply doing it as a money making machine, and the bureaucratic business didn't exist solely for that purpose. There's a lot of it here, a lot of it, but I feel that most of it is well thought out and genuinely provides a useful set of
parameters that allow teachers to get on with their business in a creative way....

...Five years ago I gradually was getting more into administrative things and what happened was that [I began to feel] that I could do this better than I do with teaching. With teaching I always felt guilty because I wasn't doing enough, and I really didn't want to do more. And with the administrative sorts of things I felt like I could point to a job well done and say, "Yes, I've done that. It got done on time and got done well and I don't have to feel guilty about it." And it made it possible for "X" number of people who do enjoy teaching and feel perfectly comfortable in the classroom to get in and do what it is they do.

...Interviewing [prospective teachers] was really something I detested the first time I did it, almost as much as being interviewed. I'm probably a little bit more used to it and like it now. It made me uncomfortable because the person being interviewed is probably very nervous. Sharing the responsibility of whether somebody does or doesn't get a job made me somewhat uncomfortable....

[Interviewing is] mainly an effort to get a sense of the person's personality and also to get a sense that, for me, I see whether they can articulate what really happens in the classroom. Whether they get off on a binge of jargon, or whether they can say, "On a typical day we'll spend "X" minutes or a half hour doing xyz." If they can say this is what the
classroom feels like, this is what happens, I think that’s interesting. It’s not that I have any commitment to it being any particular set of activities, just can that person tell me what happens. I think it’s almost instinctive, because I am myself very suspicious of theory and jargon.... I always kind of faded out when the "isms" started whizzing past my ears.... Just how does an interviewee respond to the question? Do they tell you what they do or to they tell you what sort of abstract paradigm they try to plug into? And I’ll tolerate [that] as long as it’s backed up by some concrete things that happen. But if it’s just the blahism and the blahisms and I believe in the blahism, I feel like you don’t know what the person does....

Advanced Composition is, although I’ve done just about anything and everything, that tends to be my forte.... I’m actually a pretty stuffy teacher. Part of my impatience is that I don’t do in my own classroom a lot of what many people perhaps assume is just absolutely required of an up-to-date and attentive professional in the field.... I do get a little defensive sometimes because I’m pretty traditional. I think I do well, but for people who have great reservations about that approach in general, it doesn’t matter how well you do it. Perhaps I’m projecting how I would hold somebody responsible if I were an adherent of an “ism”.

[In one of my composition classes] I did a little Thoreau and some poetry and some Martin Luther King. We read things that I liked and I had to convince them that they liked it, too. And then they had to write about it. They had to write something, that’s all. I didn’t care what they wrote.... The people who hung in there for the semester clicked and we had good
intelligent conversations about things that I liked, that I liked to talk about and I had the impression that they enjoyed themselves, too.

[We ended up with] nine; we started out with about 15 [students]. That’s not uncommon, though, in the spring and fall because we’re in an extension situation where people [have] a hard time and frequently are busily occupied with work, family, whatever other things occupy people’s minds. And often I think what happens is that people bite off more than they can chew at the beginning. There’s a fair amount of attrition.

...Two years ago when [there was a death in my family] I truly found myself at midlife thinking, what can I do in a place where even though I really have quite a good job for my field, I’ll never be able to afford a house, in a place that is not my home and I don’t think that if I stay here another ten years that it will become my home. Particularly as a gay male, I think a lot of my reasons for being on the East Coast have just been the adventure of the big city. With the advent of AIDS that has changed a lot. The adventure is gone.... I found out that I have it too, and that has made it a very difficult period for me....

I decided that doing a bare necessity job in a stressful environment, I mean the city, where the adventure had gone out of things, where I couldn’t have a garden, this was not it. This was not what I wanted. I felt, and I also now feel strongly that if I were to stay here it would shorten my life. I’m definitely taking risks in leaving. I’m absolutely convinced that health insurance and disability and all the advantages here aside, that if I were
to stay, the stress of staying here would very likely move things along much more rapidly than they would otherwise progress....

Right now, I think a certain amount of cynicism about our whole society and its values makes me question the whole business of ESL. I'm also losing interest in dealing with the students because as we have grown and become increasingly successful we have a higher percentage of people whose interest is business and the TOEFL test and frankly I just don't find them interesting....

I'm sure that it's just a question of needing some fresh grist for the mill, because I don't know how I could leave a place where I've just said there is a genuine concern for setting things up effectively for people who work there and the students and go talk about going somewhere where I won't find - that's not quite fair to say. I think it is fair to say that it is rarely the case that you'll find the degree of concern that I have found here....

It may be more a function of my perspective on things, but I have the feeling that somewhere along in some golden mythical days in the past we just had more people who had broader interests. It's hard for me to really care whether I help crank out a system that permits somebody to learn English really well and then go home and more effectively oppress the peasants. I have a feeling that there's a lot of that happening. Or that I'm helping somebody from a very wealthy country be even more effective in a banking system that I'm profoundly cynical about and mistrustful of. You
have to say to yourself, how can you hold this set of values and then keep doing this job....

ESL purports to be a key, the passport for people who don’t speak English into the greater society. But if you stand back and look at the greater society and think, "Yuk." Maybe it would be better if they were just grinding off away somewhere becoming increasingly revolutionary instead of getting their own edges ground down so they will fit, so that they’ll conform and perpetuate something that, on alternate days, sickens me....

Every once in a while you just get a wave of (anger), particularly with the AIDS thing. I’m a newspaper reader. Every day now in the newspaper there’s something about the government’s response to AIDS, which I perceive as inadequate beyond expression and primarily because the disease first arose in the groups that it did. Thousands of people have died needlessly. Thousands of people might have died anyway, but for it to happen because people are embarrassed by the topic of sex. This is immoral. This is immoral....Every morning at breakfast that’s how I start my day. I get mad over the coffee. “Those damn sons of bitches. There they go again.”

...[Having AIDS] hasn’t affected my work much except in my attitude toward it. I really don’t care, but I respect the people I’m around enough to keep contributing to the best of my ability, to maintain my daily appearance here, so that they can do what they need to do. I guess I would
characterize it as a simple issue of respect. I don't care whether any of this happens, but I do care about the people who continue to care....

Right now I'm trying to deal with what I've been calling creative denial. I'm not sick. I have some pragmatic things that I have to attend to like probably writing a living will and getting that sort of business thing taken care of that everybody needs to take care of. But it comforts me to remind myself that everybody does need to do these things. Nobody knows when they're going to be hit by a car. So really things haven't changed in many respects. But I have things I have to take care of so I'm thinking about those a lot.... There are quite a few gay males in the field. I would guess that particularly in major cities it will be something that will become more obvious as people die. It's already happening.

...[Being a gay man and ESL weren't happening separately and yet they] weren't intimately connected with each other. It was certainly easy to be gay at work. I didn't ever feel like I had to hide anything. I could never have had any success in a field where I felt that way. ...I hope that even though I haven't been real politically active, I hope that I have influenced a number of people in their attitudes in my own way by simply trying to lead my life openly. I feel that a lot of people have to do that. That has been the critical problem for gay people. Unlike blackness, it is possible to hide....

I wouldn't want to suggest that all ESL teachers are totally tolerant of gayness, or maybe they're tolerant, but they're not necessarily
approving of it. However, I do think that maybe one feature of the profession is that the people who are in it are almost necessarily aware of the vast range of human difference. They're just more aware that people are real different. They deal with all kinds of differences in their jobs. They have to. Not everybody sees the world the same way....I wouldn't have ended up in ESL if it had been a profession where I had to lead [a hidden] kind of life.
Profile of Frank West

(At the time of the interviews Frank West had been teaching ESL at the high school level for thirteen years. Prior to that he worked briefly as a foreign language teacher.)

...[When I began teaching] bilingual was just getting under way. When I was substituting a lot of people would say to me, "Well, you're fluent in Spanish. Why don't you take a bilingual position?" But I really did feel that the bilingual position should be reserved for the minority teachers who were taking them. I felt a little uncomfortable picking up a bilingual position. So I was very happy to be in foreign language, that I wasn't displacing someone....

Then Proposition two and a half hit and so this time there was no choice. I still enjoyed teaching and I wanted to teach. The only thing open was bilingual and ... I found out that bilingual also meant ESL.... At that time, before the big crunch came, regular teachers, English teachers or elementary school teachers who were eligible to teach ESL didn't want it. That was one of the worst fates for people, to be assigned to the bilingual program. When any program is being set up, when any new population comes into a school, there are a lot of problems.

There was no room for the bilingual program. They were pushed into schools. So if you were teaching in a bilingual classroom you were very often teaching in a closet or in the hall or in the back part of the...
auditorium. So people fled from any bilingual assignment, but for me there was no other choice. The alternative was to get out of teaching or take a bilingual assignment, which turned out to be ESL. And that was fine for me. I was able to use the same kind of foreign language techniques....

What I found was as much as I like foreign language teaching, ESL was much more satisfying because it was so real. It was such a survival skill. With foreign language it’s nice. The students I was working with were good students. They weren’t behavior problems, but it was just another subject. I couldn’t really feel that I was giving something to students that would be really useful to them. And I don’t know about that now. Now I question that, but at the time, in teaching in junior high school, which can be a very frustrating time, and again, at that time in the public schools, many of the schools were chaotic. It seemed like what are we doing there? There are so many more important things to be done, and here I am teaching "Ici le stylo" and that kind of thing. It just seemed a little bit crazy. But teaching English to students who would be functioning in an English speaking world seemed very real, very politically correct, seemed to be the thing to be doing and a very helpful thing. So that I never looked back from then. I never thought of going back to foreign language....

[For awhile I worked in an ESL high school vocational program] and that was working with students in their particular job area and helping them to learn the vocabulary of plumbing or carpentry or those kind of things and it really opened my eyes. That was a big changeover for me and has had repercussions on the way I teach in that I was amazed at how
much the students could do.... They were coming straight from the camps or straight from Puerto Rico into these vocational settings learning what we would think of as advanced vocabulary or certainly not the vocabulary of ESL One texts. While they didn't pick up everything right away, I just could see that if things are taught in a meaningful way, the way good vocational education works out, it doesn't matter whether you start with simple words like hat and cat and fish or carburetor....

...[There was a budget crunch and layoffs]. What happened, there were teachers who had seniority in English or elementary school [who] were allowed to replace ESL teachers.... So if you had a bilingual science [certification] or a bilingual history, you were allowed to stay, but otherwise you were excess. So I had English and foreign languages, but I didn't have a subject area, I didn't have a science or a history. So I was laid off for a time, which was a few months....

I was devastated. It was a very big thing for me.... I was on the phone calling people up, talking to people, sure that this was either some big mistake or conspiracy against me. It took me a long time to realize that it had nothing to do with me at all, that a big system like this is extremely impersonal and it doesn't care how good you are or how bad you are. You're just a number and they go by the lists....

I guess what I was thinking most was, in a kind of babyish way, "This is so unfair. I'm such a great teacher. My students love me and there are so many other teachers who don't do the work I do. I never take a day
off."... And now I know, and I think I was able to see through talking them through, that I do all of those things for me.... Teaching really has to be self-satisfying. There just aren't the people, there aren't administrators who have the time or the inclination to come around and say, "Boy, that's something that you [didn't] take your sick days for this year, or that you really prepare a lesson each and every day. I guess there's just too much going on with other things....

What happened for a lot of the ESL positions, elementary people were brought in who had more seniority than ESL people. Or English teachers were brought in. So that many of them were asking on the first day of school, "What is ESL?" [They] were that far removed from what was going on and were trying to transfer their own skills, the things that they were taught or used to teaching in their classes to a teaching of ESL. So that there was a lot of stress in those first months and in that first year when people were in those positions. So hearing that was like sweet revenge in a way. "So, you see, you made big mistakes. You should have left me in that position." The other thing was though, of course was realized, it's not a revenge on a principal or on a downtown administration. It's kids who were crying on those first days of school because their teachers were giving them work that they couldn't even begin to understand....

This year I was able to book some time into the computer room [for word processing].... I was pretty satisfied with the way kids were writing. When I had them write before we used computers, the writing was all done outside of class. We would do some prewriting exercises, but the writing
was done outside of class and they brought it in to me and I would correct it the next day and give it back to them and they would go home and rewrite it again.... But what I found [with the computers] is that there's so much more interaction between the students and between the students and me while they're writing in the room, that it was worth it more than I ever expected. The writing was not only getting better, but getting longer, more full, more complex. And I had not expected any of those results from computer writing....

The other thing that's been very nice and I don't remember it happening as easily with other years that I've taught writing, is that students have gotten the idea of the writing process and I think that's about the computer, too, that they can save different drafts and they see it physically, the difference between a first draft and a second draft, whereas I think on pencil and paper, kids write and then they throw something away as they copy it, or they fix it up on the same paper. But here they're seeing their work improve and we're saving the file and we go back and compare or they'll have three different print outs and they can see the difference. There's just something about that, the physicalness, the physical holding of a paper that looks different from time to time....

I'm beginning to encourage people not to push students along as quickly as they have before.... I'm getting kids on the IV and V level that when I'm telling them to write even a paragraph or two pages, are so lost or writing so badly - I wouldn't mind if they were writing simply, but they seem to be so outside of what the English language is and how you use it to
communicate and I just think we are doing them a disservice to keep pushing them on. I think there's a lot, a big tendency, especially with Asian students, to think, "Oh well, they're good students and they'll catch up and they'll do fine." [But] they won't and they don't. What I'm saying is, "Let's make sure everyone gets a full year of ESL I and ESL II or that they really prove to us that they are really good.... I'm trying to encourage a lot more writing at the lower levels than what's been done because it seems - I want kids to be doing their oral work, but the measure of kids - a lot of these kids want to go to college and it seems that the measure of them when they get in there is writing and that's where they are falling down....

...We were having a pool of students who were failing ESL I and I just don't think that that's a natural thing to do. ESL I is, even though we were trying to move it along, it's still such elementary language that kids should be able to get through that at least on a C or D level. And if they're not, there's a problem. And the problem was that these kids were very low in their native language skills, so I thought, "Well, we really have to do something to change that."...

I had no idea what a struggle it would be and how hard it is to fill in the gaps in knowledge for students who are 15, 16 and 17 and who have had only one or two years of schooling. My thought was, back at last year, "Well, if we get these kids at their level and give them work that is appropriate to their level, then they should be able to come right up. There shouldn't be a problem." But there are just enormous problems that I hadn't encountered... There are just gaps in their education, but oftentimes
in addition to the gaps, there's the whole problem that they weren't very successful even with the education that they had.... They went to school for a couple of years, were not successful at school, so they didn't pursue it any more. So that these are kids who are coming with a lot of academic problems. It's not like they're coming off six successful years of schooling and they need to be finished off, they need to be pulled up to grade nine. These are kids who were never successful in school, so they just have the barest essentials. They can write a little bit....

There are problems of just back to old discipline kind of problems. These students have very low impulse control and when they want to throw something in the basket they're standing up to throw something in the basket. There are a couple of students who if they make a mistake half way through a paper, they want to roll up the paper and get another paper and start all over again. They are so desperate for correctness, total correctness that they can't allow themselves to make mistakes. There are students who are so used to getting F's on their tests, doing badly, that they'll be paying attention, doing fine and then as soon as I mention that we're going on to a quiz or a work sheet they turn away. Their whole body language is just very defensive and, kind of self-protective....

[I take] each day kind of on an A[lcoholics] A[nonymous] approach to it. I take it one day at a time. Some of the students have made some nice progress and overall I do think it's worthwhile. I think every class that I do, I could spend my entire preparation time. I could spend all day working just with those kids. I think that about each class, but this class in
particular, just seeing how enormous the needs are, how much material has to be developed, how each kid has to be approached in so many different ways. I think that's my other frustration. I know how much more these kids need and that I just can't do it....

[I feel like] a lifeline for a lot of the students and for the ethnic bilingual teachers as well. So that it's a nice feeling for me. I like work to be about people or to be very real life oriented, so that there's a whole part of this job that's not just about giving the tests and correcting them and giving them back, but that's about making people's lives either a little bit happier or a little bit fuller or a little bit easier. I think especially of the Asian students. They've just had a very hard time getting here, getting out of their country, and then it's rough here....

When dealing with Hispanics, I've had many Hispanics tell me, "You're different from other Anglos. You can interact with us on our level in our way." There's that whole body language business that they feel so many Americans just pull back. And I've just been so close over the years that I don't mind being up close. I touch almost as much as a Hispanic touches at this point. My wife says when I'm on the phone, if I'm talking with someone Hispanic, it's like the whole personality changes. "Even the sound of your voice sounds more excited and more alive than when you're speaking English." So that it's been nice for me to kind of be able to transcend cultures, to be a part of other cultures and not just be a local boy like all of the other local boys. I guess I like being a little different....
It can be a shock to a lot of kids when they finally leave the bilingual program. So that's a problem. I think probably the bigger problem with transitioning is the reaction from the teachers, the mainstream teachers who are saying, "What are you giving me? This kid needs bilingual." and we have to say, "He's had bilingual. He's had all that we can give him. He's all yours now." And that's hard. That's hard. That's one of the reasons when you talk about low prestige for bilingual and ESL teachers, is that oftentimes it seems like we're giving these unfinished products, that's who we are promoting, that we are transitioning kids who really haven't gotten it yet. I don't know whose fault that is. If it's something that we're doing wrong or if it's just the nature of kids that it is hard for anyone to learn a second language. There are a lot of problems with that and the commonest complaint is that these kids that we're transitioning, not all, but oftentimes, teachers feel that they should be in bilingual.

Usually what happens is the student is hanging around my room either before school or after school and says, "That teacher is so bad. I don't like that teacher." And I'll say, "Oh, Miss So and So is a good teacher. She really is good with bilingual students. She really understands." "No, I can't do it. I can't do it. The homework is too hard" and that kind of thing. So that's how it starts out. Then I will go upstairs to see Miss or Mr. So and So, and say, "What do you think? How's Tom doing?" "Oh, I've been meaning to come downstairs and talk to you about that kid. I don't think he's going to make it. That kid should be in bilingual." And I say, "Well, they're coming out of bilingual, they've already been in." So we do that kind of thing.
I like to get the guidance counselors involved because the guidance counselors will then do the counseling in the native language and make sure that there really aren’t any problems, that it really is just about the fear of homework or whatever it is. We are lucky. We have good bilingual counselors who really can seem to reassure students everything will be all right. And it almost always has turned out all right, even in terms of the kids doing fairly good work. A lot of the students who are the most frightened are kids who are honor students. They’ve been doing well and they sense that - all of a sudden they think, “I’m going to get an F if I stay in this class.” And they don’t want to fail, they want to keep their grades up....

So really the basic activities are just a log of dialoging, a lot of meeting up with a lot of people and getting everybody on the same wavelength. And I think that does help. I think that makes a difference. This is more of that kind of lifeline that may be the last thing you do for a kid is when a teacher upstairs, a teacher in a regular English class knows that there’s someone downstairs or down the hallway who’s interested in the kid....

...Every year at graduation, there’s usually a speaker from the graduating class who is chosen as the speaker because of the progress that he’s made in English. He’s an ESL speaker, a second language speaker. And it just fills my heart. Every time, it brings a tear to my eye when he says, “When I came here I spoke no English and my teachers - ” and here’s this....
student speaking fairly perfect English, and I think, "I had a part in this." There aren't many other places where it's so visible, your effect on kids, as it is with English as a Second Language.
Profile of Esther Gleason

[At the time of the interviews Esther Gleason had worked three years as a part-time ESL teacher in an elementary school. Prior to that she had worked about the same amount of time as a part-time ESL aide. She had also worked for one year teaching elementary school to native speakers and as an ESL teacher in an adult workplace program.]

"I had one year of teaching kindergarten/grade one [in the city]. I was thrilled to get such a good job, that I got it in the young grades.... It was really a very, very wonderful year. [Then we had to move.] And even though I was so happy that my husband went to law school, and I really was, I hated to give up that school and that job. It was just all so nice. So I was disappointed about that.

...[When I had my first baby] I knew I wanted to stay home at the beginning and even though it was not the greatest financially [my husband] was totally supportive. It was never, "You have to go to work." I loved being able to do that, but there were times when I was lonely....

I loved getting out of the house, loved walking to the parks, even walking to the store. I'm not the kind of person who loves to clean the house or cook, so as soon as I could go out, it didn't matter what weather it would be - [I'd] just bundle her up in an extra snowsuit and we would walk. All weather, I'd go out. So, my whole goal was to get out of the house, to take the walk, come back, give the baby a nap and go out again. That was the whole goal of the day. I loved being outside and I didn't like
being in the house unless it was really horrible out, a storm or raining or something....

It was not like I didn't want to be a mother. I didn't miss daily going to school and being a teacher. I was very happy being a mother, but I just couldn't be in the house all day. And I know teaching. I know it in my soul is a profession where you need so much energy and so much commitment that [the only way I could do it] at the beginning, was volunteer and I could choose my hours. It takes your whole soul. I am also the kind of person who can't do too much at one time. I know that about myself. When I was being a mommy during those early years, I knew that's all I could do....

[I started out in public school ESL] at an elementary school in [town] very close to my house.... [It was when there were] boat children coming in from Vietnam and Laos. It was just - emotionally we were all part of it. At school it was this real thing and I became involved with a few families of children.... These children, the biggest problem was they had no education in their own language, in their own background. And not only that, worse than that is that they were coming from backgrounds where there was horror and half their family was still there.... Their whole life was back there and everything remembered about back there was torture and pain. And some of them when they fled had horrible experiences. So when they were placed in this school, a lot of my connections with the kids at the beginning were just trying to make them feel good about being in school and helping them a little bit get experience in how to learn....
I always have a sharing time and we would share about each other's lives. And it might go after class, too, if I met them in the hall or if they were having an after school program that I was there to see. And I think that was very important, I think for them especially, that the person they met was not just going to see them between 8:00 and 8:30 to teach "is" and "are". Because they needed so much more. Just, "How are you feeling? How did it go yesterday when you went to art for the first time? How did the bus go?" We always had bus problems....

I did a lot of feelings with art work. "Draw a picture of the family that lives in your house now. Draw a picture of your house now." And then we'd learn bedroom and living room by saying, "This is where they sleep. Who sleeps on these beds?" And, of course you'd see that there were forty people in this little house.... What I also found so moving was their happy things would not be like kids in America: "when I got a bike." It would be something with people. Something that only they could appreciate. Not material things. "Seeing my mother after not knowing where she was." Something like that could be just heart-rending. Or if they would tell me when they got a letter from somebody back home and what [it] said in their letter. They would say, "Very bad. Uncle died." That kind of thing. And you just knew what they were going around with....

[I work part time]. I'm paid for, I think it's a certain amount of hours a week. I don't even know what it is.... Because I want to be part of the school, I try to go to as many meetings as I can. But I am not really paid for [any] of that kind of extra time.... My department feels that the amount
of children at the school, that between [me and the part-time bilingual teacher] that does equal one teacher and they feel, I guess, for that kind of school, that community, one teaching position is enough....

I always feel that there's not enough time, that I'm being pulled in sixteen directions. I believe it is important for me to attend every parent conference for every one of my children. I make sure I contact the [mainstream] teachers to say, please, before you sent up a conference, which takes place two times a year, check with me so I can be available at that time. I have a big part of the child's program and I want to make sure I can participate in that....

In addition to that, I have some children who are in special education situations where I have to be part of the team meetings and I write a team report. This all takes place after my time. I was telling my friend the other day - because she can't believe that being part-time I do all these things. She said, "Couldn't you write the report during school time?" I said, "Yes, but then I wouldn't see my students and I don't want to take away their time to write a report for somebody else....

[I began] an ESL certification program. It's not required, but it's possible that the legislature will require in time a piece of paper called ESL certification.... I'm proud of myself. I feel good that I am using my brain and I feel good that I'm learning and I'm especially happy to know the women [in my program] who are very different than me, all women I respect and who have been placed together. We have this relationship now
from course to course and a goal. It's very nice to have, I wouldn't call it a support group, but it's other women who are also working so hard in their lives and careers, who have similar kinds of things they go through that I go through in my life, with children, the balancing act....

There are times like Sunday. Sunday is always hard because I think the weekend should be for my family and with this class I'm taking and especially because the final is coming up, this is a crunch period. And so when it was Mother's Day and it was so beautiful out, I said, "From 1:00 to 5:00 I just have to study.... When I had to take the Sunday paper and put it over there, put it in a paper bag and saw that I didn't even--I wanted to read it. I'll never get to it.

... On the whole, though, my family has been very good about it. I think partly it's because they know that on the whole I'm very good with them. So, I think that on the whole it works, this two way thing. Luckily, one blessing in being part-time is I usually have some time to rejuvenate myself before they come home. If I was full-time I'd have no time. So although being part-time has some, lots of disadvantages, there are some advantages in that I'm able to get the teaching mommy to be finished and I can do the regular mommy and wife and friend and person after. That's kind of how it works.

... A lot of my Asian children do so well in the written tests at the end of the year, and you say, "Hey, they could be mainstreamed. Look, they've got grade level skills." Their oral language is so weak. Their confidence in
their own speaking ability needs to be encouraged... So I might just have oral lessons with them. "Tell me about the trip that you took with your class," and we will go through the whole thing in detail. "What did you see, why did you see it? How did you feel? How did you get there?" And then do this before the trip. Talk about where they're going.

That's another thing that I think with mainstreaming that teachers take for granted. Give a direction once or say you're going to a museum of science to see the rhinoceros exhibit or something. They might not understand all that. They need to be explained things so well and so clearly, and even after being mainstreamed the teachers need to be sensitive to that, to make sure the parents get the slips home. The child might still not be aware that this is a slip for going on the trip, and making parents aware of certain activities that take place in the school....

I have a tiny closet that I have as a room. [My administrator] said that Esther decorated it and made it look as absolutely best as anybody could make a closet look. It's not really a closet, but it's very, very small. In no way adequate for twenty children, different groups going on [at] the same time.... If I'm giving a test, if we are doing something that you must have quiet in the room, we also work in the hall, which is horrible, but we use it. So we have desks and chairs in the hall. Sometimes we have three separate groups going on. I might be working at the big table with the older kids, maybe three or four older kids doing a language activity. The [bilingual] teacher might be working with a small table in the room, working with two students on doing their social studies work.... And we
have an aide... who might be working outside with two children with language cards and playing a game, a language game....

[For the bilingual teacher and me] there was a bit of a problem at the beginning I think, getting our roles straight.... Her role is to very much speak to the regular teachers, classroom teachers to find out what they're doing in social studies and science and all that kind of stuff, and she tries, but she's there a very short amount of time during the week. So the people come to me. It seems like I'm the person who's in charge. I'm the person who is visible. I also make myself visible. I go to all the meetings. I was there three years before. This is a new program, so that people come to me. And I feel good about that, but it's a huge responsibility.... I would say now we kind of have the roles clear, but I can't say that it's working, I can't say she does all the things I think she's supposed to do, nor do I do all the things I'm supposed to do because we don't have enough time to do it. And that's the truth....

...The past few years [at the school] we had a principal, a woman who was probably one of the most, will be probably one of the most influential people in my life. I so admired her. She was so wonderful to me and took me under her wing and it was the most wonderful experience for me. I just look up to this lady and always will. She's an intelligent, hard-working, funny, wonderful woman who so encouraged ESL at the school and is just a wonderful person to work for and with....
She was so supportive. Whenever she would even see your face she could tell if you had a hard day or a good day. She was the principal during a time when we had a boy with whom we had so many problems. She was just so wonderful, so helpful as a principal to a teacher. This child lived in my room because he could not do anything in the classroom. He was a fixture in the room, disrupted every other lesson I tried to teach to anybody else, wouldn’t be able to learn himself, and this principal just kept helping me. It was so wonderful to have a person there who truly knew what it was like. Never doubted me, only tried to help or encourage me...

I remember when she came into my room to observe a lesson.... She would never not write me a little note to respond on that. “I can’t believe how Miguel is learning” or “It’s amazing to see how this child participated.” Not even particularly saying, “You’ve done a good job or a bad job” but paying attention to the children. So interested in what was happening in my room. And always this feedback. Always, always feedback. What a pleasure that was. Just great....

If I had a man principal and he had all the same qualities as she, he would not have influenced me as much as she. I see if she did it, I could do it. Also, and although I do know many sensitive men, I think I do believe that women just have a certain caring, sensitive, sweetness about them that I really respond to. It’s not like I’m an anti-man person. I like men, but I think on the whole they’re different. She is a just a wonderful combination of being soft yet being inspiring and I think the fact that she
was a woman made her that way, but also I think she influenced me more because she was a woman.

...It's not easy with the time constraints. This morning when I was working with the two bigger girls that I work with - and we have a wonderful little reading book - the two of them, and they're scheduled from 9:00 to 10:00. I just said, "God, wouldn't it be nice if I could just sit here from 9:00 to 10:00, and concentrate on them." I couldn't. At 9:30 eight little kids were coming in who have to [come] between 9:00 and 10:00 because on [that day] all the kids have gym and library back to back, and if you don't take them, then they have gym and if you don't take them, then they have library, and then they go home at quarter to 12:00....

By the time they come to the class and get ready to leave we don't even have a half hour. We have more like 25 minutes. So by the time you start anything going, they have to leave. So then it's frustrating they have to leave. And, in the middle of the class the two girls are going to come up and ask me a question and I always, always encourage that. I try to explain it to them and all the other little kids get a little antsy and you sort of lose that little lesson....

There are some teachers who think I'm a godsend and also a place to get rid of their three little ESL kids as much as I want them or could have them - 24 hours a day. There are other teachers who are very, very protective of their own schedule. If they have decided to have a movie and it happens to be throughout ESL time, there are certain teachers who might
schedule that movie for an afternoon when I'm not there, because they
want to make sure their children won't miss ESL, which would make sense.
Other teachers who want to do it at 11:00 will do it at 11:00 and my kids
will miss ESL....

I really get this sense of accomplishment when I see ESL children
participating in a [mainstream] program.... They had a special literature
unit. My kids in [that teacher's] classroom, first grade, would never have
understood any of the books she was reading or what she wanted them to
do. She told me about it and I went upstairs. I did the book with them in
the way that I know it's good to do, the language experience [approach].
They went back to the classroom after many times of rehearsing and
talking and discussing what it was about. They really participated in that
classroom project and to me it worked. That worked. That's what I like.

...I feel part of the group. The only time I feel funny, and I think about
it a lot, is when I leave [early because I'm part time]. I don't always leave
exactly on the button, but today for example I did. A good bunch of
teachers, maybe four or five, already had their lunch because lunch is
three different periods and they were outside playing. They all tease me.
"Now she's going home to have a free afternoon. Oh, do I wish I was you.
Day's over already?" And I feel guilty. That's my feeling. I say to myself
"Are you crazy?" I put in 800 hours a week and I'm [only part time], but I
feel guilty and that's the truth....
But one thing I don't do and I think it's because I think in some ways I feel guilty that I'm part-time, and one thing I don't do because of that, or at least it makes me feel less guilty is, I never take personal days. People say, "Oh come on, you'll come to New York for a weekend and take off a Monday." or whatever the case may be... And a million people I know are doing it, taking off from work an extra day. And I won't do it. I feel fine saying, "[My child] is sick. I can't come to work." or "I was sick." But to think I'm not going to school because I'm going to be with my friends, and I know full-time teachers do it and have it, but I don't give myself that luxury or whatever. And other people think I'm an absolutely crazy, stupid person....

I got jury duty notice back last summer and I said, 'I don't want to spend my summer doing jury duty....So I decided, well, I will do it over April vacation. When my husband heard he said, "What are you doing? Everybody misses school when they have jury duty. Just write down some week in November or December." I said, "I don't want to do that. I don't want to miss a whole week of school if I'm picked for the jury..." So I purposely picked jury duty for April vacation week where I knew I wouldn't miss teaching. I didn't tell anybody about it.

...I think my life is in disparate pieces. I'm a mother, I'm a wife and that definitely to me is most important. And I'm an ESL teacher. I am also a student. I'm a teacher at a school and I'm a teacher for a department. I'm a friend of friends and I'm a member of my bigger family that's spread out all over the place and that I feel obligations and responsibilities to,
writing letters and remembering birthdays. So in that way I'm in a
million pieces. Then my program is in pieces. There's the... bilingual
program, there's the ESL program. It's supposed to function as a whole,
[but] there are still pieces....

I like to be a helper, but it's exhausting. When I come home after
helping all day, especially if I've had a meeting, I need some way to
rejuvenate myself so I can then help my children and my husband and all
the other things - continue to be sensitive to my daughter and my son when
they come home with all their problems. There are some days I can't. I
have nothing left and they have to be sensitive to me. That's the only way
because when you're a helper it becomes exhausting. But I do love that. I
do like to be a helper.
Profile of Maria Winters

[At the time of the interviews Maria Winters had been teaching ESL for four years. She had taught three years in a community-based adult education program and was finishing her first year at a community college.]

[When you come from another country] you really need the language and closeness with people here to be able to get on the inside. And I think that's what I'm starting to realize that I'm offering my students. I was lucky I had that opportunity [when I lived in another country]. I think that I never would have known what I was standing in the middle of if somebody hadn't taken me inside.... I guess it was an event of kind of stripping bare or stripping away first world eyes and looking with the people's eyes. I don't think I was 100% successful or anything, but for whatever I got, it made all the difference....

[When I became interested in teaching ESL I didn't] even know if they taught how to be an ESL teacher. I had to figure out how to find out about that.... I didn't know anything. [At my college] people went to work for insurance companies or banks. Nobody went on to be a teacher for heaven's sake.... I had a friend who was a librarian and she helped me out, found out what I needed to do. [I] made a lot of phone calls to different schools to find out did I have what I needed to get into a master's program.... [When I was accepted] I packed my things, moved up - rented a car, drove up one day, found an apartment, went back down, filled up the car and moved out,
started school two or three days later. Once I knew it was the right thing to do there wasn't any hesitation....

It was a graduate school program that's very practical. I mean there are research courses and all of that, but basically from day one you're handling the materials. You start reviewing textbooks the first day. They also have classes that they set up with the community.... From your first or second week, or maybe your third week there, you were teaching in the evening. They had different levels and you tried teaching at different levels....

[When I did my student teaching] the teacher had no training, which was funny. I was her student teacher, but I did testing and placement, taught a lot of the classes from the first day, basically because she wanted to learn from me because I had had training. And she used to sit in the room and take notes while I would teach, which was the weirdest thing. I kept thinking, “No, no, you should be helping me.” That was eight long weeks but it was a great testing ground....

When I finished I just moved [here] and went through the want ads and a month later I started work in a community school.... I was fortunate to get that position because nobody knew that much about ESL then, I don’t think. So I could try different things and maybe make some policy decisions. Well, we’re based on [being] innovative, so it’s important that we constantly try new things. I tried to show new things that I had learned to other teachers and say, “What do you do? Oh, that’s great. I
never tried that. I'll try that." And that's constantly the philosophy we had. We also had a lot of tutors who worked with the students, and that was the philosophy we passed on to those tutors. Very eclectic. You use what works and you try everything....

I found [students from the community school] asking me questions that I couldn't believe they felt comfortable asking, about maybe medical problems or problems with their children or their husband or their wife.... Crazy things too, about maybe culture and life and one guy coming to class one day, one Asian fellow saying, "Well, we got a problem. I don't know what to do about grandpa." I said, "Oh really, what's the matter? He's not feeling to well?" "Well, he's dead." "Well, where is he?" "Right now he's in the living room," and this was Monday. He died Saturday....

And maybe it was more therapy than English, because I'm a real believer in acquisition. I could teach rules and all this kind of stuff until I'm blue in the face, but until they're ready to learn, they're not going to learn. So having that kind of atmosphere of let's just kind of work these things out. Having to get on the phone and call a funeral home with the language you're going to have to use is just as important as anything that was in any book....

[After a few years] I felt I had to at least explore the [other job] possibilities.... There's nobody who works as a teacher in community schools that I know of who is married and has children. It's just not a possibility.... There are certain people who... just sort of drop by the
wayside. Very good people who once they got married and had the kid, the light went on, "I can't live on $18,000 a year anymore" or "I can live in this small, cramped apartment with my girlfriend or wife or whatever, but not anymore..... I don't necessarily feel that, just for myself personally either that I need to have some swinging lifestyle, chandeliers, anything like that. But I think there has to be a certain reality too, that if you have to live in [this city] you have to have a car. And, if you're going to have children, you have to have something bigger than a studio. And if somebody's going to get sick, you'd better have a little money in the bank. And you want to keep maybe politically true to yourself and do the things you care about. I don't really know how you mediate all of that when certain things aren't valued enough.

...In the region there was no support, maybe I would even say in my organization in general. We had to work together and share the small resources that there were, but generally there was no support, no encouragement, no idea like, "Well, it's good, let's make it even better. Let's see what else we can get." It was, "Well, you're going to have to do with less."... People would write the grants. They still made the job at $9.50 an hour. They wanted somebody with a master's and they had to be trilingual, and they're only paying them $9.50 an hour. Give me a break. Why don't you write it for $12.50 an hour?...

This whole attitude permeates the human services, at least at far as ESL and ABE teaching - that you have no right to ask for anything.... I didn't see why I couldn't ask for more things. Why do I have to work in a room
with no lights? When the sun goes down we have a major problem.

Luckily I had a room with windows. I was very happy about that. But when
there are no lights in the room, nobody can do any writing at night, because
I can stand under one of the two or three lights in the room and somebody
can see me and maybe we can move the table over here so that three people
on one side of the table can write, but 11 other people can’t write....

They started studying the issue in September. I just asked [my
replacement] the other day – it’s almost the end of April – there’s still no
light in that room. Well, I see that as a lack of respect. Not just for me,
but for the students. Because as it comes to me it comes to them. If there
are no pencils for me, there are no pencils for the students....

[When I came to the community college] I knew a lot of the hassles I
had at the community school I wasn’t going to have here. I knew I could
get materials. I knew the grant would get enough money so everyone could
have a book or a pencil or some paper or whatever. I knew we’d have a
room and it would have heat. All of those basic things I knew would be
taken care of. I might have to make the phone calls myself to do it, but I
don’t mind that....

I think that the other teachers [in the grant program] and I are pretty
much on the same wavelength. We meet and talk about where are we going
to go in the next week and where are we going to go in the next month and
we come to quick agreement on what the needs are. The groups are divided
so that one teacher has a very low level, the other teacher has kind of a
medium level and I have the highest level. The lowest level are people who are maybe illiterate in [their native language], I'm not sure. I think some are, and are starting from pencil holding. The middle group maybe can form letters and write some words and maybe even say a couple of sentences where the first group has almost no oral ability. My group, the high group, maybe have some survival skills, oral skills and written skills....

So the teachers and I agree that we're maybe going to do very different things. We agree to, not disagree, but agree to go in kind of a different direction, to kind of bring people to a similar place. After a month you should be able to call in sick, but what does that mean? It might mean something very different for all three groups. But as long as there is some way they can get on the phone and say something that communicates that they're sick, that's the bottom line....

[In class we've] talked a lot, too about small talk. How do you talk to friends on the job? [My present students] have been in the garment industry with [other people from their native country] for 25, 30 years. They talk all day in [their own language]. They understand each other's meaning, intonation, everything. They have a real clear idea. Now they're going to be going into situations that are so different. So now they can chat with you about the weather for at least five minutes and maybe can talk about how they feel a little bit and what they did on their weekend and what they plan to do on their weekend, and that's as far as we've got in the three months that they've been here. But it's something. At least it's a
reaching out to somebody and if somebody tries to reach out to them they have a little bit of the tools to be able to make a new friend....

[The community college department] is a profit making thing and if they can get a bigger grant, a longer grant, they make a profit off of that.... [The program’s grant sponsors are] coming from the other end. “Well, let’s get these [students] into [job] training programs.... You have all these different people with different kinds of pressures about what the class should be, and how long the class should go and it’s kind of tough to find the middle ground. Or you have to keep saying, “Well, I’ll just go with the flow. I’m not going to get nervous about the fact that I don’t even know if I have a job in two weeks....

It’s a little bit tough because I hate to be the person who is in charge of something, that is saying to someone, “I don’t know [if you’ll have a job].” Now, maybe I say to the other teachers, “Well, you know it looks that there’s a good chance [the program won’t close], but maybe you could start looking. Or, I really don’t know what you should do.” My own interest is don’t look for anything because I’ll never find another person who can just step into this. You’re in the middle of something here. If you could continue with it, it would be great.

Whereas, maybe [the grant sponsors are] even making a call to the teacher directly. Not even telling me, telling the teacher directly, “Look for another job. And if it turns out we need someone we’ll find someone.” Well, wait a second. Who’s going to do the finding. I’m going to have to do
the finding. They're not going to find anybody. And it sends a message to that teacher that you're not really very valuable, because we can always replace you with someone. Whereas to me they may be very valuable....

[ESL teaching has] an intuitive aspect of how can I get them to express to me what they need or what they want... We did things about safety and safety equipment they might need to use in a factory or whatever. This class that I have now, I kept trying to get close to something that would emotionally touch them and it wasn't happening and it wasn't happening.... The other day I said, "Well, let me come from the other way.... [your job is] really easy. You can never get hurt, nobody ever gets hurt, has a stitch, or equipment doesn't fall on you." And they said, "What, are you kidding?" And there are sleeves getting rolled up and let me show you this finger with the needle and we started talking about all the shots you have to get along your life as a stitcher.....

And it led to a lot of things. It led to what were the problems about being a stitcher? All the eye problems and stuff. And it also led to other items that were gaps in our whole story. We'd been together three months and there were real gaps and they were then able to somehow fill in the gaps and maybe even feel better about what was happening. What do they really do? What skills do they really have? What were really the dynamics in the factory? For example, we talked about the problems on the job. Some people can't stitch red and black for a long time. Most people can't stitch red for a long time. They get a bad headache. And some people have a reaction to black as well. And who would be the person who
would change fabric with you, so that you wouldn't have to do it all day?
That was a true friend.

...I think in balance it's been a very positive experience. The [students have] taught me at least as much as I've been able to present to them. I've learned a lot about [their] culture and attitudes and their family life, their philosophies. Just their outlook on a lot of things. And I think they had a lot of really valuable things to share with me.... It's been good, too, because it's confirmed some of the things that I think are often presented that I just don't think are right.

Where I worked before, for example - the whole term of empowerment. We have to empower our students. Well, I had a lot of problems with that, because usually I've found that people who've managed to get here - I had one student who walked from [South America to California] - well, that's a pretty long walk. I don't think I need to empower him to do much of anything. He has a lot of self-motivation and strengths. That was in my other program. Well, empowerment sometimes to me takes on a racist/classist thing of how we have to present to them, to show them how to get things done or whatever. Well, maybe they have to know the cultural differences, or they need to know how you get welfare or something, but I don't know that I'd really call that - maybe it's like learning how to play the game. It's not necessarily empowerment. That's a real loaded term in my book.... [My present students] really reinforced for me that from the outside they look like they're not functioning very well, but from the inside they're functioning very well....
[ESL gives me] a chance to work with people that I find stimulating and interesting, and this may be more on the personal level, that I enjoy being in their company -- adults from different cultures, adults who have maybe - the culture thing is important, but [what is] also important [is that they're] people who have been so strong, so brave. Those are the type of people I really like to be with. They don't always see it that they're so strong or they're so brave. They just feel like somehow they failed because they're only washing dishes and they were a professor in their country. But that they took that chance I think is such a brave thing...

I feel [ESL] helps me to find a good balance between my work life and my personal life. Some of that is just an evolution of myself. When I first started working at the community school I ate, drank, walked and slept ESL for maybe the first six months on the job. I was totally obsessed by everything that I had to do, what I had to try and reading this and that.... My first thoughts when I would wake up in the morning were, "What am I going to do in class today? Are my students learning or is it acquisition or if they are only getting acquisition outside the classroom, should I be doing more grammar in the classroom because they're going to come in with questions related to their acquisition? Or should I be trying to make an acquisition atmosphere in the classroom?" All of this stuff going back and forth. Or "What can I do besides flashcards? Should I be cutting pictures out of magazines for flashcards? Should the students make the flashcards? Is that enough? Now what's the next step with flashcards?" And then you're in the shower and you've already had twelve discussions
with yourself and then, "What are we going to do with this? And maybe I should write an article about flashcards."

...A lot of my cousins are lawyers. There's a lot more respect for what they do. People sort of have this question mark about what I do. Maybe I'm just sitting around spending some time until I get around to getting a real job. And so that's a little bit hard. I think even here at the college, people see when I'm at the copying machine and it's pictures of different vegetables or something. There's an electronics guy behind me and the philosophy guy was just in front of me. At a community college it's a little more life based anyway, but nobody's making copies of pictures of celery and broccoli and bean sprouts....

There are some people who can be real methodical and organized and love to sit all evening and make lesson plans and stuff like that, keep it all in a notebook.... What that does is that doesn't allow anything from the student. That doesn't let the student have any input or any decisions on what goes on in the classroom. It's all prescribed, all defined and I guess it's just not my philosophy. I can't impose like that....

I'm a facilitator. I listen. I listen not only to what they're saying, but kind of how they're saying it. What are the things they don't have yet as far as language goes. Or it could be specific things, anything. I've got a lemon car or we all have bad cars and we don't know how to talk about our cars. I see that and I also see that when they try to tell me about their car in the beginning they also don't know prepositions, or some people have
their colors mixed up, or they don't know measurement, American measurement. So they can't say "I need that piece that's about three inches long and it's green and it screws in over here." - and all those verbs, screw, put, pull. So that kind of gives me the material I know I have to give them and they're not going to learn all of it, but what they take is what they need to get their job done. And maybe some of it is something that gets stuck in a notebook somewhere that they hold onto until they need it. But I can't say, "When the month is over you will know [these specific things]."...

I'm not the holder of the secret book - as if I come in here and I look at something that's the answer, then I go in there and I say, "Oh well, I'll give you some of it today." No, it's not like that. Here it is: What are the empty dishes on the table and how are we going to fill them? And some of the empty dishes I've brought and maybe we all realize we've brought the same dish one day."
Concluding Thoughts

The chapters that follow are thematically organized. In these chapters excerpts in the words of the participants are frequently used. In some cases those excerpts will be from participants who have been profiled in this chapter, although the excerpts will not be from the profiles themselves. More often the excerpts will be from participants who have not been profiled here. Since subsequent chapters will not refer back to the profiles themselves some of the material that relates to the chapter immediately following this one will be mentioned here.

In most of the preceding profiles the participants conveyed the feeling that they were engaged in work that was real and useful. They indicated that they felt they played a part in enabling students to acquire skills that were genuinely needed. The participants did not respond simply to the syntactic, lexical and phonological components of language but to the broad situations in which students used it. This sense of responding to real needs situated within cultural contexts was a pervasive theme among the participants and is the general topic of the next chapter.

The wide variety of backgrounds that participants drew upon in responding to their students’ needs is also part of the discussion of the following chapter. That variety is evident in the profiles. Marylin Villard had been an English teacher, Frank West a foreign language teacher, Esther Gleason an elementary school teacher and Frederick Haussman’s training had been in linguistics. Maria Winters was the only one of the five who
was specifically trained in ESL before entering the field. When Winters was a student teacher she found that her supervising teacher was learning from her. Marylin Villard was on the other end of a similar experience, an event that sent her back to graduate school.

Most of the participants in this study indicated an awareness of the powerful forces of culture. This awareness was often implicit rather than explicit in the things they said, but Frank West commented on it directly when he talked about being able to transcend cultures and about serving as a lifeline for both students and bilingual teachers. Many of the roles that participants assumed were prompted by their awareness of the acculturation processes that their students were experiencing.

The part that participants played in facilitating the acculturation processes of their students meant different things to different individuals. The views of Frederick Haussman and Maria Winters indicate two differing reactions. Of all the participants, Haussman gave the least overt sense of pleasure in meeting student needs. He was discouraged that within his program student needs had acquired an exploitative quality and he even questioned whether meeting needs was better than letting them fester and produce revolutionaries. Maria Winters, on the other hand, saw in her students the power to pursue many options, but also the need for the practical tools that would enable them to utilize this power.

The profiles make it evident that the participants were not a monolithic group who expressed a single version of any theme. They were
a collection of people with individual life stories who had the ESL teaching profession in common. Out of their lives and out of their work a number of predicaments arose that connected them to each other and spoke to issues in the profession. These issues are treated in the thematic chapters that follow.
CHAPTER 5
RESPONDING TO STUDENT NEEDS

Introduction

The teachers who participated in this study were a diverse group who possessed a common aim: to respond to the needs of their students. In order to respond to student needs they drew upon a number of resources: cultural awareness, an appreciation of their students, an engagement in the processes of acculturation and nurturance and a utilization of skills in language and teaching. The participants derived satisfaction from using these resources and from the feeling that they were responding to real and immediate needs.

The satisfaction that the participants derived from responding to student needs reveals a source of strength in ESL teaching. Their experience also highlights problematic areas of ESL teaching. For example, embedded in nurturing behavior and the facilitation of acculturation are issues of dominance and subordination. Connected to the participants' integration of experiences in language and teaching is a somewhat diverging and specialized view of ESL teaching that is embodied in the training programs and certification procedures of the profession as a whole. The experience of the participants indicates that sources of strength in ESL teaching can also be sources of problems.
Their own qualities of cultural awareness were important characteristics in the study participants. They provided an orientation that helped them to see their students' needs and to focus upon them. For many participants cultural awareness was prompted and encouraged by their encounters with their students. For some it was rooted in experiences of cultural discontinuity that had occurred in their own lives. Louisa Henning was a high school teacher who brought a high degree of cultural awareness to her work. She was a participant whose parents had been immigrants to the United States and English had been a second language in her home. She was aware of connections between her own experience and that of her students.

I can relate to a lot of the kids... the newly arrived immigrants, because in many ways it was the same for me. I can remember my parents being the same way with [me]. When my parents first arrived my sister was not allowed to go out of the house and could not attend football games, could not attend basketball games, couldn't do anything with the school....

These kids end up living two different cultures. The school is demanding one culture of them: follow the rules and regulations and everything else, come to dances—when in reality the parents are saying, "You just go to school and come back home and that's it. You're not allowed to go to dances." There's the conflict that goes on. All my upbringing was like that."  

Louisa Henning
The kind of cultural awareness that Louisa Henning had developed came from cultural discontinuities that she herself had experienced, but even participants who reported little personal discontinuity in their lives displayed this quality. Their cultural awareness played a part in another attitude that was widespread among participants: the pleasure and sense of privilege that they gained from their encounters with their students. On many occasions participants mentioned the richness that their students had added to their own lives and the enjoyment that they derived from their associations with them. As Marylin Villard, a university level teacher said, "I think that many of the people I meet in the class are more interesting than the people I generally know." Underscoring this, she added, "I know lots of interesting people."

Linda Montagna, a community college teacher, commented in the same vein. She had enjoyed teaching both children and adult native speakers, but she observed that the people were what gave ESL teaching a different kind of satisfaction. "It's just the kind of people that you're dealing with. Different cultures are stimulating, exciting. The students themselves - they show a real compassion for one another in the classroom." Margaretta Candis, like other participants, admired her students' courage. "You have to respect somebody's courage for leaving. For a lot of the Vietnamese people it was just a matter of pure survival, but it takes a lot of courage to pack up your family and relocate to a totally strange land, strange language, strange culture." Candis made her comments with a personal awareness of what it was like to be a stranger, having experienced it herself.
Qualities of cultural awareness and an appreciation of their students were characteristics that were consistent with the participants' abilities to look beyond language and take a broad view of their students' needs. This breadth of view helped them to become facilitators of the acculturation process, teachers who focused not just on language, but on the ends for which it was used.

**Facilitating Acculturation**

To be facilitators of the acculturation process meant that the participants looked not just at the language that their students needed but at the goals toward which the need was directed. They didn't talk about their students' needs for syntax and vocabulary, but rather their need to recover from the trauma of immigration, to learn the ways of school, get jobs or write acceptable papers in mainstream courses.

The participants' awareness of the acculturation process was an important element in their work. It prompted them to become more than mere "purveyors of a linguistic code" (Eskey, 1976, p. 163). This does not mean that the participants did not focus on language or organize lessons around language. Nor does it mean that culture became the subject of their classes, although this happened. To say that they were facilitators of the acculturation process is to say that they adopted an attitude in which they saw their work in terms of its cultural context and as something that was directed at ends that went beyond language.
In a related examination of ESL teachers as cultural transmitters in a Canadian community college, Defoe (1986) has noted that informants found language and culture to be inseparable although they generally organized classes around language. She found that the teachers she interviewed did not consciously organize their activities as transmitters of culture. Nor did the participants in this study describe themselves as facilitators of the acculturation process. It was an attitude that was more often a frame of reference. Joan Nelson was a middle school teacher who expressed this frame of reference in a series of lessons that she planned during a period when she was working in an adult, community-based program.

"I worked with adults for possibly three to four years and grew to love the people probably as much as the job. I found that unlike working with natives I learned as much or more than I felt my students were learning from me.... Once they had the ability to communicate their experiences they would share not only the trauma of coming to this country and how they escaped from either Laos or Vietnam, but they also shared their cultural [and] social activities, their means of survival there, the kinds of homes they lived in, the foods that they ate, the way in which they prepared their foods.

That led into so many different experiences. One, for example, knowing that one of their basic foods is fish and that several of the people had been picked up by the police for fishing without a license or having too many hooks on their line and unfortunately thereby committing offense number such and such in the fish and game department handbook, we decided to work with the fish and game department.

[We] had an officer, I don't know if he'd be called a warden perhaps, from that area do a three-part series with the adult Southeast Asians.... When it came to having a three-part series they were in tune with their needs and they brought pictures of fish and asked some of the literate Laotians and Vietnamese to identify these fish in
their own language. We made up charts with the translation of the fish and then the officer was able to, on a projector, point out and let them know that certain fish were not to be caught or [would] be illegal.... We concentrated on what the various laws were there because it was extraordinary how complex the handbook is as to the months and if you're upon a stream or river and the width and breadth of the whole water.

Then the last session we went fishing. That was a nice sharing. We had a fly rod and a couple of the men demonstrated for the two men from the fish and game department their method of filleting a fish, which didn't surprise too many of us, was far superior to anything they had ever seen before. That was just one experience that was nice and I think a real nice point of it was that one of the fellows, I believe it was a Laotian man, had been picked up for, I believe, fishing without a license. They confiscated his pole, so this third session the officer was able to track the pole down and returned it to him."

Joan Nelson

Joan Nelson was fortunate that she could build her lessons on a response to genuine needs, needs that her students also felt. To observe this is to realize how frequently teachers in general lack this luxury and how often they are faced with the difficulty of trying to utilize sound pedagogical practices in situations where students feel no need and see little use for the knowledge involved. Responding to real needs and seeing tangible results are pleasures denied to many workers and time and again the study participants made it clear that they appreciated this aspect of their work.

Responding to student needs and becoming facilitators of acculturation can produce problems as well as satisfactions. It is difficult to know what the correct methods are of fostering acculturation. This issue has been taken up by Elsa Auerbach (1986) who has warned
against the dangers of "a process of acculturation in which one set of norms is superimposed on another, rather than a selective process of integrating the old and the new" (p. 424). Auerbach contrasts a selective and integrative process of acculturation favorably with the cultural imperialism of the early twentieth century Americanizers, whose excessive advocacy of the American way of life was so extreme as to equate the use of toothpaste with proper American citizenship. (McClymer, 1982).

Certainly, a selective process of acculturation appears preferable to cultural imperialism, but it is sometimes hard to know when one becomes the other. Alongside the excesses of the Americanizers one can also find historic examples of people who worked with immigrants in ways that were not overbearing (Cordasco, 1976). The line between facilitation and imperialism is hard to draw. In their awareness of their students' acculturation processes, the participants sometimes spoke of the need for students to get off welfare or to combat injustice. These perceptions could reflect similar student and teacher assessments of need, but they may also reflect a perpetration of teachers' goals upon students. Even a notion such as "empowerment," supposedly free of the taint of cultural imperialism, can be problematic. Community college participant Maria Winters was aware of this.

"Some people... are saying, "By empowerment we mean assisting our students." But I think a lot of that initial feeling was that the students didn't know how, and "I'm going to show you how, oh incapable student that I have." I always had a real problem with that.
I think that students are very empowered, but in this society, I don't know what the word is, they're disenfranchised or something. It's an economic and social reality that they don't have the power, and neither do most of us, to bring about any great change. But it's basically that they just don't know our cultural games here. They need to find out how to get day care. That doesn't mean that they're not empowered."

Maria Winters

One solution to the tension between acculturation and cultural imperialism would be for ESL teachers to abandon any engagement in the acculturation process. Bronwyn Norton Peirce (1989) has urged a different view, suggesting instead that teachers adopt a "pedagogy of possibility" (p. 403) that provides students with options in the acculturation process. James Gee (1988) has argued that for language teachers to see themselves in anything other than an acculturating framework is self-delusion. However, he adds that facilitating acculturation is a risky business.

Enculturation is a double-edged sword. As far as language is concerned, being enculturated often involves socialization into dominant, mainstream values. This involves various degrees of complicity with values and ways of behaving that may conflict with one's other social identities (whether defined by social, ethnic, or cultural group or by gender). Failure to enculturate can involve various degrees of marginality with concomitant loss of "social goods." The problem is deep and, I argue, actually embedded in the very nature of language, literacy, discourse and society.... (p. 220)

In further developing his argument Gee compares language teaching to the making of vampires, since language acquisition, like vampire creation, makes a new person. He claims that the only way to teach language to a person who really needs it "is to 'bite them' (enculturate them) and hope
they do not bleed to death" (p. 221). Any profession that is involved in the business of biting people and hoping that they don't bleed to death is engaged in delicate work.

Nurturance

The participants often responded to their students' needs in a nurturing fashion, a response that encompassed a wide variety of behaviors. Although nurturance is sometimes associated with women, it occurred among male participants as well as female. Most participants engaged in some sort of nurturance, but attitudes towards it varied and included dislike, burn out and resentment. For many participants, however, nurturance seemed an important and indivisible part of their personalities.

In the context of this discussion nurturance has a broad meaning. It closely parallels Stockwell's (1980) notion of an educational broker, a person who supplies information, counseling and other supports. The teachers in this study spoke about helping their students understand such things as future course requirements and social drinking customs in the United States. They talked with students about difficulties in their encounters with Americans or in their relationships with their families. Some of this behavior had primarily an informative content and some of it had an emotional content, but all of it has been classified as nurturance.
Nurturance was frequently a result of personal inclination. As community college teacher, Lyn Bergman commented, "I think [being in a helping role] is absolutely necessary in my life. I know that about myself. That's when I'm happiest, when I'm in some sort of position where I feel like I'm in a service job. I have relatives who are in business and, to me, I can't understand how they get any joy out of selling ten million barrettes."

Nora Yancey, an elementary school teacher, was another participant in whose work nurturance played a powerful part.

It's not necessary for me to get involved in sending someone to camp, delivering furniture, delivering clothes, getting involved with people's lives, but this type of work sort of lends itself to these things. When I get real tired at times [I regret the involvement], but I feel now that if I were to drop dead tomorrow, that my life has been a very fulfilling one. I do feel that as I'm getting older that it's more of a drain on my energy level, but that's the way I choose to do it....

Nora Yancey

Nora Yancey engaged in nurturance partly because hardships in her own life had made her aware of need in others. However, nurturance was not shaped by personal motivation alone. It was also influenced by external factors such as the resources available in the community at large or within educational institutions. If a school or college had counselors and support offices a participant could share the load with these other agencies. If an immigrant group had been established in a community for some time, it would have English speaking members who could take newcomers to doctors, job interviews and government offices.
The kind of nurturance offered by participants was affected not only by the surrounding environment, but also by their position within that environment. Thus it sometimes varied within the careers of single individuals, being more prevalent when they were in one to one relationships with their students and less so if they were moving into administrative positions and had fewer contacts with students. Louisa Henning, a high school teacher, noticed this.

In the beginning I wore every kind of hat: the role of the teacher, the role of the friend, the role of the counselor, the role of the doctor. I literally called doctors, called immigration offices, you name it, I did it. One, primarily because I was [in] the role of the teacher and these kids would come in with their problems and, two, because I was a tutor so I would have a one-to-one relationship with them. That has now changed totally. I don't know what's going on [with] any of them.

Louisa Henning

Nurturance could also have a political expression. Participants sometimes saw ESL teaching as part of a general commitment to building a better world and linked their work to other types of political action. Sometimes this aspect of nurturance was expressed within the abstract framework of social justice and sometimes it appeared in more concrete efforts. Mike Donahue, for example made it a point to be available to his students so that he could cushion the racist and elitist attitudes that he sensed on his community college campus.

The students feel [racism]. It shows in a number of things. We sort of know that when the students are going to be on campus, those of us who speak Spanish are going to make sure that, if at all possible,
we're available. We also know that they're going to come to my office. They're going to look for me if they've got a problem. They're going to network the system. They're going to come to the people they know they can trust rather than take chances in the place as a whole.....

Mike Donahue

There were many types of nurturance and participants expressed a variety of attitudes toward it. The most common negative reactions centered on the fact that nurturance was an activity that could be consuming of time and emotions. Time was an issue partly because the participants' work involved many activities for which they received no recognition. Time, noted elementary school participant, Don Blumer, was an issue for schools as well as teachers. He pointed out that in a poor community such as his, the school had become a nurturing agent. "School in a poor area has to provide breakfast and free lunch and this and that. The school has to worry about programs about alcohol and drugs and sexual awareness. Roles that are important, but where are you going to fit in all these workshops or meetings?"

In another setting, Seidman (1985) has noted the dilemma that nurturance can pose in community college settings. Like ESL teachers, community college faculty frequently work with students who are coping with difficult life situations and they can become involved in student situations to the point of having little time to devote to the intellectual effort that must fuel their work. Seidman advocates a differentiation between the role of teacher and helper, pointing out that both teachers and students are undermined if teachers take up student problems that they cannot hope to effectively influence.
Ryan (1987) takes up the same theme from a different perspective, noting that high school teachers whose attention is directed primarily toward their students' problems may, by defining their students in terms of those problems, unconsciously make them victims of low expectations. Gibson (1988), in an ethnographic study of Punjabi youngsters in a high school setting, recorded reports that ESL teachers were overprotective of their students. Paul Green, a university teacher, felt that he had seen a similar quality among his colleagues, particularly women.

ESL is an ancillary helping profession. I know all these women who are ESL teachers who just go doe-eyed over foreigners, how vulnerable they are. They like being one caring conduit with the harsh world and all that kind of stuff. I like the students O.K., but I sort of think of them as just being students. I may be misperceiving this all, but I don't think so. There's a very sharp climate of altruism in it, but there's also this kind of dependency relationship. I suspect that some ESL teachers really enjoy an opportunity to nurture on the job.

Paul Green

Paul Green's belief that some ESL teachers enjoy nurturance was borne out in the experience of many participants, but they did not seem to cultivate dependency relationships. One participant for whom ESL teaching had powerful nurturing component was a person who had overcome difficulties in her own life with personal toughness, and she urged that same fighting spirit upon those she helped. Several participants reported that students or colleagues accused them of being harder on their students than mainstream teachers. The participants in this study did not appear motivated by a desire for dependency; they
seemed to assume that they were making a difference. At the same time, nurturance is a behavior that needs to be accompanied by a high degree of self awareness.

Among the problematic aspects of nurturance are issues that are also apparent in facilitating the process of acculturation. A person involved in either activity is obliged to walk a fine line between facilitating and dominating. Furthermore, an engagement in either nurturance or enculturation results in little garnering of prestige. In professional societies, for example, plenary speeches and journal articles are not solicited from those whose reputations are built on these activities.

This is somewhat ironic in view of the fact that nurturers and caregivers, traditionally parents, have throughout history been the most consistently effective of language teachers. Although the caregiving role in language, particularly as it is performed by mothers, has been honored in the expression 'mother tongue', to be a caregiver in our society is not generally to be in a place of honor. Caregiving places the person who offers nurturance in a position of power in relationship to the one being nurtured, but little else in the way of power or status accrues to those who nurture. In taking on nurturance the participants were also taking on the ambiguous power relationships that go with it.
Utilizing Skills in Language and Teaching

The qualities of cultural awareness and appreciation of their students that the participants brought to their work combined with their facilitation of the acculturation process and their nurturing approaches to form a constellation of behaviors that centered on a response to student needs. Their response to student needs was built on more than this, however. The participants were teachers and, specifically, they were teachers of language. Skills in language and skills in teaching were also resources that they brought to bear in responding to student needs.

Language and teaching were the specific areas in which participants had received their training. However, it should be noted that not all of them had been trained in each. The participants came to ESL from diverse specialties (see Appendix B). Not all of them had specific training in ESL and their backgrounds included foreign language, elementary school teaching, and English for native speakers. They had often ended up in places very different from those in which they had started out, but they did not usually feel that the connections between their experiences were illogical. When participants moved from English literature or French language teaching to ESL they brought their experiences with them and built upon them in an integrated way. The term integration is used in this discussion to refer to the participants' ability to synthesize diverse experiences in language and teaching into their ESL teaching. These diverse experiences often involved other disciplines and they could additionally include a variety of educational levels.
Diversity was thus integrated in terms of subject matter and in terms of the level of teaching. Linda Montagna was a community college teacher who saw teaching as the integrative thread that held together experiences in various subjects ranging from elementary school to the community college. She commented, "You can't have an experience without carrying some of it with you and the fact that I started out as an elementary school teacher I think has helped me tremendously at being a college level teacher." Mike Donahue, was a participant who saw language as the connecting link in his experiences. He said, "I am a foreign language teacher, first and foremost. That's what I call myself. I don't call myself a professor; I don't call myself an ESL teacher. I call myself a language teacher. To me it's language." The kind of integration expressed by Montagna and Donahue was also evident in Paul Green's comments on teaching.

I find that you [can] make anything interesting if you're actually interested in it yourself and think it's important for other people to know about it and communicate well.... Certainly what I do best of all is teach. I've taught lots of things and it doesn't really seem to matter much what I'm teaching. I seem to be able to do it and enjoy doing it.... In teaching it's possible to communicate that fundamental idea that everything is of interest and there's a way to find out about it.

Paul Green

Although the participants approached language and teaching in a way that enabled them to tie together experiences in a variety of settings, the ESL teaching profession as a whole has been moving in a slightly different direction. It has been working to establish not so much that teachers can
adapt other experiences to ESL, but to demonstrate that ESL teaching is a unique and separate specialty. To this end teacher education programs have been established along with state certification standards for public school teachers. All of this has been done with a view to achieving professionalism.

Professionalism was something that participants valued. Margareetta Candis, for example, had worked as city-wide program coordinator for ESL in the public schools and commented of her tenure in that position, "I guess the thing I feel proudest of was that I felt that there was an upgrade in the level of professionalism." Later on, working in a university setting where she had few trained colleagues she commented, "I feel professionally lonely sometimes.... I would like to be in an environment where there are other people who are very good and who are interested in the field so that you get more the collegiality of the association, learning from other people who are interested in the field."

In their desire for professionalization and their integrative approach to language and teaching, the situation of the participants highlights a dilemma in ESL teaching. Professionalization generally demands that some sort of measuring take place and that measuring is usually designed to differentiate rather than to integrate. All of this is complicated by the fact that the establishment of ESL teacher education programs and certification standards has lagged behind the need for teachers. In the public schools a number of the participants had been working as ESL teachers, sometimes for years, prior to the push for certification.
Because of this situation some participants entered teacher education programs after they had become experienced ESL teachers. To do this often required personal sacrifices, but many found the experience worthwhile. Joan Nelson returned to school to earn a master’s degree in ESL and felt so strongly about the value of her program that she still maintained networks with fellow students, even at the cost of long distance telephone bills. She valued the professional frame of reference that she shared with these people, not just their friendship.

Louisa Henning was a participant who reported a different experience. She had begun teaching ESL when there few training programs available to her. By the time she enrolled in a master’s program she had been teaching ESL in the public schools for five years and felt that she had more experience than some of her professors. She finally concluded that she “was bringing more to the classroom than the [university] teacher.” In the end she was left with the unpleasant sensation that the exercise had been primarily a monetary transaction whereby the degree had brought her a salary increase and her tuition payments had enriched the program in which she was enrolled. Marjorie Butterfield, also a secondary school participant, expressed an anger that grew from acquiring an expertise that was then not recognized in the certification procedures of the field.

I learned by trial and error and that’s also the reason why I’m very angry about the way they ran the certifications, because that’s what the state did. It came and sat in my classroom because I was touted as being one of the better teachers. And then to have them, after ten years of sitting in my classroom and gleaning my material, taking home reams of this stuff - not just me, other teachers like me. Then
they tell me, 'Oh, God, now you're going to have to go and take ESL classes and learn how to teach ESL.' I was really ripping...

Marjorie Butterfield

The kind of predicament that faced participants like Marjorie Butterfield will diminish as certification procedures and training programs remain in effect and teachers pass through them before they enter the field rather than having to return to them after years in practice. In the end everyone will probably benefit. Teachers will gain a stronger sense of mastery and competence, students will receive better instruction and the profession as a whole will command a respect that will give ESL teachers a voice in determining policies and working conditions that affect them.

At the same time the experience of the participants indicates that sources of strength that logically should work together to support ESL teaching can also work at cross purposes. Even though professional standards may benefit everyone in the long run, it is hard for teachers who have integrated a wide variety of experiences in language and teaching and who have developed a personal expertise when they are told, in effect, that they are inadequate. This is particularly difficult if, like Marjorie Butterfield, they have been a source of knowledge for those who then assert their power to measure them.

The integration of experiences in language and teaching that characterized the participants was not an isolated phenomenon, but part of the broader integration that enabled them to respond to the needs of their students by bringing together characteristics of appreciation and
cultural awareness, nurturance and the facilitation of acculturation. These qualities were a foundation upon which their work rested, something that gave them strength and carried them forward. Without the satisfaction that they derived from responding to student needs it would be difficult to explain how teachers who often worked in circumstances that were frequently very difficult were able to persevere in their work and take pleasure in it.

Summary

The participants in this study drew upon a variety of qualities in order to respond to the needs of their students: cultural awareness; an appreciation of their students; an engagement in the processes of acculturation and nurturance; and skills in language and teaching. Using these resources in order to respond to the real and immediate needs of their students was a source of satisfaction to them.

At the same time it is possible to see difficulties in this generally satisfying process. Facilitation of the acculturation process can spill over into cultural imperialism and it is difficult to tell when one becomes the other. Nurturance, which took a variety of forms in the participants' experience, is complicated by an ambiguous relationship to power. Finally, the personal integration of experience that the participants described stands somewhat in opposition to a trend toward specialization evident in the profession as a whole. In spite of these difficulties, the ability of the participants to gain sustenance from their response to student needs is a
source of strength in ESL teaching and it will be important to examine future developments in the field in terms of the way in which they either enhance or endanger this source of strength.
CHAPTER 6

THE EFFECTS OF PERIPHERAL STATUS WITHIN INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

The participants in this study occupied a peripheral status within their institutions. Although they were situated outside the mainstream of their schools, colleges and universities, their goal was to move their students toward that mainstream. One effect of this was to involve them in a series of sorting procedures that began with the entrance of students into ESL programs and their progress through them. This process culminated in mainstreaming, the ultimate sorting procedure and a time of stress for both students and teachers. Because of their focus on the mainstream, relationships with mainstream teachers and programs were important to participants.

For participants in the public schools, mainly at the elementary school level, the management of relationships with the mainstream was particularly difficult because of the scheduling problems that arose when they pulled their students out of mainstream classes. Additional effects of peripheral status occurred primarily in higher education. Here participants were affected by problems of poor employment conditions and the unwillingness of some of their institutions to grant credit for ESL courses.
The position of the participants within their institutions was tied to the fact that many of their ESL programs were sponsored by larger programs that also occupied peripheral status. At the public school level they were usually located in bilingual education programs. In higher education they were often located in departments of continuing education or developmental studies. The participants expressed conflicting attitudes toward the programs that sponsored them: some were supportive of continuing education, developmental programs and bilingual education whereas others had reservations about these sponsors.

Relations with the Mainstream: Sorting and the Stress of Transitions

Sorting is a fundamental process of institutional academic life. Subject matter has to be divided into classes and students have to be divided into groups that fit the classes. Because of their peripheral institutional status the sorting procedures that engaged participants focused ultimately on an interface between ESL and the mainstream. Participants had to move their students into, through and out of ESL programs and into mainstream activities. The first stage of this sorting process occurred within ESL programs themselves.

Ideally ESL programs were supposed to admit students to the proper level, enable them to move smoothly from beginning courses to advanced ones and finally out of the program altogether. Time, money and shifting
student populations were all factors that stood in the way of the ideal and several participants expressed the need for better coordinated ESL programs. A number of participants were engaged in activities to reorganize and improve their programs. Pamela Champlain, who worked on program reorganization at the community college level, talked about some of the difficulties that affected this.

We had one teacher teaching one section of a course one way and using one set of materials, another teaching a section of the same course in a very different way and we were finding as a result that there wasn't a lot of communication, wasn't a lot of linkage in the different sections of the same courses....

Because most of the ESL faculty are part-time at the college (there are only two full-time ESL faculty and all the rest are part-time) a lot of things have fallen by the wayside: all the things that needed to be developed, to further expand upon the ESL program and make it better - things like sitting down and developing objectives. We'd never had the time to do that before. Everybody's running around doing their teaching, having to leave campus.

Pamela Champlain

Developing the kind of coordination that Pamela Champlain was striving for was difficult. The problem stemmed not just from constraints of time and money. There also seemed to be a continual search for the right speed. It was hard to know when students were moving too slowly and when they were racing ahead, acquiring the surface features of the language, but not integrating it into an understanding of the whole system. One way of trying to match the elusive nature of language acquisition to program stages was through testing.
Testing was a visible sign of the sorting process. Students were tested as they entered ESL programs, moved through them and graduated from them. Although testing was not always the responsibility of participants, it often was. Public school teachers described ongoing evaluative tests that were squeezed into corners of their busy days. At the college and university level participants talked about testing situations that involved mass exams for students and mass grading sessions for teachers.

The tests that accompanied the sorting process were sometimes stressful for participants simply because of the physical chore of getting them done. When they marked the rites of passage into the mainstream they became part of the mental and emotional stress associated with that process. David Wheatley, a university level teacher whose students needed to pass a series of exit tests in order to enter mainstream classes, talked about the continuing mental presence of these tests. “They monopolize what I do, my lesson plans, my course outlines, everything.” The strain of tests that moved students into the mainstream was described by Marylin Villard, a university level teacher.

They’re always totally despondent if they don’t succeed [in our qualifying exams], even if you’ve told them ahead of time. It’s terrible to fail an exam. I [myself] am totally despondent if I don’t do well. And particularly if you come from a very achieving culture, it’s very difficult.... Some of the students have come here from various governments and they’ve come over thinking that they’re ready to begin very advanced university work and they’re not. So there’s
depression about that. And some of the students, to begin undergraduate work in the university have to pass all of our tests.... Lots of students have enormous pressures. I think I personally have come to terms with it. It used to be that... if my students didn’t do well for whatever reason, I would feel upset. I think generally I feel that I really do the very, very best I can and that not everyone is going to succeed. Sometimes I worry about students, but it doesn’t take over my life.”

Marylin Villard

Marylin Villard was conscious that it wasn’t just the student’s success, but also that of the teacher which created the tension that occurred as the sorting process reached the point of mainstreaming. As community college participant Lyn Bergman noted, “Your reputation is on the line with your students.” A teacher like Bergman was always conscious that her major function was to prepare students to meet the demands of mainstream teachers and aware that mainstream colleagues judged the teacher as well as the students.

Accompanying the concerns of teachers was the steady drumbeat of student anxiety, an anxiety that existed in elementary schools as well as at the university level. Diana Landry, an elementary school teacher, liked to see students mainstreamed before they were old enough to be afraid of the process.

I’d rather see a student being transitioned in first or second grade because if they make a mistake they don’t feel badly about it. [They say], “I’ll get it right the next time.” But when they start going from third, fourth, fifth and sixth they don’t want to go into the English speaking class because they’re afraid they’ll make a lot of mistakes.
They think people are going to laugh at them, so they'll say, "I don't even want to do well on the test. I don't care about the test. I'll just check anything off, circle anything."

Diana Landry

The task of sorting their students through ESL programs and into the mainstream was stressful for the participants and for their students. The process became more complicated when participants found themselves working with students who had little experience in formal academic learning situations. Linda Montagna was a community college participant who was familiar with the sometimes discouraging results of that process.

Sometimes as I go back over all this, I think maybe we are coddling [our students] too much. Maybe we do too much for them, but on the other hand if we didn't do all of this we would lose most of the students, we really would. They just wouldn't make it. But maybe that's the big problem, the transition from our classes where they're used to having a lot of help and a lot of support to a class where they are expected to be totally independent and on their own. We're hoping that we can get [the teachers that they get after ESL] to be a little more sympathetic, a little more helpful.

Maybe we're just whistling in the dark. Maybe the kinds of students that we get are just never going to make it. They don't have the right background. How can you possibly take a student who perhaps quit in the third grade, had all of the time span to go back, and put them in a college situation and expect them to do well in college? Is that realistic? And add to that a language barrier. So maybe we're just beating ourselves for nothing. The ones that we do get that do have
good backgrounds, who are able to go on, maybe we just don't concentrate on that enough. Maybe we don't think of the successes enough.

Linda Montagna

When ESL teachers like Linda Montagna try to facilitate the mainstreaming of students who have limited academic preparation they are essentially being asked to help those students jump over years without schooling. It is hard to know when this can be done successfully. Collier (1989) has reported that even when they have a formal academic background public school children who are working in a second language can require from five to seven years to reach a 50% level of competence in standardized tests of most school subjects except for math and specific types of language arts.

The ease with which students are sorted into the mainstream is affected not just by their academic preparation, but also by attitudes that are held in the community at large. Sometimes participants felt that those attitudes reflected an elitism and occasionally an outright racism. Marjorie Butterfield was a high school teacher who had been obliged to deal with the latter.

I've had teachers in the beginning who absolutely came to me and told me, "Don't put that dirty spic in my class." Now the only good thing about that was in those days I had the ability sometimes to pick what English class the kid did go into so that I could avoid putting one of my kids in a class with a teacher who at least was honest enough to say she hated every Spanish kid. I was going to kill a kid if I did
that.... Everything I'd done for that kid would have gone down the tubes. So at least she was honest with me. Today the prejudice is there but it's under the surface.

Marjorie Butterfield

Marjorie Butterfield was aware that the prejudice which had been blatant in the early years of her high school teaching still existed, although in less obvious forms. Her comments reflect observations made by Penfield (1987) who noted that in a survey study of mainstream teachers, all comments made about Hispanic students were negative. For many participants, however, co-ordinating with mainstream programs did not mean having to combat racism. Sometimes, as Linda Montagna said, it was a matter of hoping that mainstream teachers would better understand the plight of ESL students. On a number of occasions participants described personal and ad hoc efforts that they made to smooth their students' transitions into the mainstream. Elementary school teachers talked about trying to monitor their students' progress through informal conversations in which they served as a resource and reminded mainstream teachers of common difficulties. In higher education ESL teachers often tried to interface with next layer of developmental courses into which their students moved.

The participants' comments about relationships with the mainstream reflected not only a need for better bridges to mainstream teachers, but also the need for both ESL and mainstream teachers to understand how the very individualized nature of language acquisition is translated into progress through the mainstream. Both of these issues have been taken up in studies of content courses for ESL students in higher education. Such
content courses are centered on subject area studies such as science or social studies. Language learning is planned to take place in conjunction with the learning of the content subject. ESL teachers sometimes teach these courses themselves or teach them in partnership with mainstream teachers.

Studies of combined language and content courses have shed some light on what actually happens to students after they are sorted into the mainstream. Hirsch (1988) has noted that the poor grades of ESL students in college mainstream courses were one reason for developing an ESL tutorial program as an adjunct to content courses. Guyer and Peterson (1988) have observed that most international students either dropped out of or failed a college geography course before it was turned into a course aimed at simultaneously fostering language and academic skills. Smoke (1988) has documented the tendency for mainstreamed ESL students to avoid courses with writing assignments, to withdraw from advanced courses and to postpone taking courses in their major subject.

In an ethnographic study of students from Punjabi families attending a California high school, Gibson (1988) has also drawn attention to the fact that there is a great deal to be learned about the English language development of non-native speakers in mainstream classes. She noted although the Punjabi students compiled over-all records that reflected academic success, even those who had taken all their schooling in English suffered limitations in their ability to use academic English.
A complex scaffolding of sorting structures was one manifestation of the peripheral status that the participants occupied within their institutions. They looked for ways to mesh with the mainstream and for a better understanding of the process as a whole, but found few resources upon which to draw. Within the mainstream they often encountered a lack of awareness or elitist attitudes. One remedy to the absence of institutional supports was to try to fill the gap with their own efforts. The difficulties which faced participants at all levels were further aggravated by scheduling difficulties that were primarily specific to the public schools and by problems of employment conditions and ESL course credit that were primarily specific to higher education.

Special Problems of Peripheral Status
In Public Schools: Scheduling

Participants in the public schools faced a special difficulty: that of scheduling their classes conveniently with those of the mainstream. High school teachers were often helped in this by their school's central administration, although one middle school teacher described continuing personal struggles with the scheduling tangle. At the elementary school level, however, this problem was a daily presence. Elementary school teachers were usually working in pull-out programs which meant that they had to pull their ESL students out of larger mainstream or bilingual classes. This inherently difficult scheduling problem was further complicated by changing enrollments among ESL students.
In order to create and schedule a class, elementary school ESL teachers had to engage in a complex negotiating process with other teachers. That process sometimes resulted in mismatched classes that could include a sixth grade child with substantial English language proficiency and a beginning level second grade child. Elementary school participant Don Blumer described how this negotiating process combined with unstable enrollment patterns to produce a difficult situation.

It's the same every year. There will be two new [students arriving on] October 15th and those are beginning students and there are some that almost could go into a regular class, but not really and they'll come November 10th, and one will be Haitian and one will be Chinese and so there's no rhyme or reason because it's not a very systematic thing....

At the beginning of the year I'll go to all the teachers and then I'll try to coordinate a schedule. And they'll say, "Well, I have the bilingual seventh grade. If you'll take them the first period that's good for my schedule. And I'll say, "Well, I was taking two sixth grade Vietnamese boys and one seventh grade Chinese boy, O.K., I'll put them in with your class and there will be seven Hispanics [with the three Asian students]. So that's how that class will get set up....

[Sometimes a teacher takes the attitude] "Well, sure, I'll make the decision. We'll dump the kid in with you on Tuesday." My program isn't a dumping ground. My [program] is a real pertinent part of the school and I do some good things with them, so I don't want it to be looked at as a dumping ground."

Don Blumer

Don Blumer, like other elementary school teachers, tried to create his classes logically, but sometimes there were no good choices. There were many factors that limited the choices, but at the root of the problem was
that ESL was a peripheral program in the participants’ schools. The central activity of the school was identified with mainstream teachers. When ESL teachers pull out pupils from a mainstream or bilingual teacher's class they interrupt the teacher's classroom time. Both Dan Lortie (1975) and the Boston Women’s Teachers’ Group (1986) have noted the importance of that time to classroom teachers.

Esther Gleason, an elementary school participant, was also conscious that classroom teachers guarded their class time and sometimes felt as though she posed a threat to them. “Sometimes I feel I’m invading…. It’s always sort of being on guard because they have a million support services that are coming after them, and all these pull-out programs and after awhile [they say], 'God, I can't work without my kids being pulled out. I want to do a science lesson where everybody's going to do an experiment and for me to do it is this major thing.' So I understand, too. I try to show them that I understand their predicament.” While Gleason appreciated the position of other teachers, that didn't lessen her own difficulties in scheduling. As she said, “You need more than a computer to do this... It can't be done well.”

It is difficult to be engaged in work that can't be done well and the public school teachers who tried to untangle the knots in their classroom schedules expressed their frustration with this situation. The study participants who worked in higher education did not comment on problems of this type, but suffered from another set problems that involved credit for ESL courses and poor employment conditions.
Problems of Employment Conditions and ESL Course Credit in Higher Education

The peripheral institutional status which affected participants in higher education was different in some of its aspects than that experienced by their counterparts in the public schools. When elementary school teachers struggled to schedule their classes they were at least in real face-to-face contact with the classroom teachers from whom they pulled their ESL students. In higher education, participants conveyed a sense of wrestling with more remote structures. Paul Green, a university level teacher, described the functioning of these structures.

[The university treats us] with a certain climate of disdain. [Examples of this are] the fact that they won't give us tenure, the fact that they won't regard us as an academic department, the fact that our courses aren't credit courses and the fact that we have to make two dollars for every dollar that we spend. That's true, two hundred percent profit we have to show. Other departments don't even come close to that. A university doesn't decide whether or not it's going to have a philosophy department, but by virtue of being a university it has a philosophy department, whereas an ESL department I think is seen principally as a money spin around, a support apparatus.

We're out of the mainstream of the university which means that we don't sit in the faculty senate, we don't sit on administrative committees and so we're out of the loop on almost everything. So stuff happens to us that we have little or no control over. We have administrative control over what happens within our department. We don't have any power base in the university. People from the English department become assistant deans or directors of schools or things like that, where we, by virtue of our not being integrated into the academic structure of the university don't have power bases, don't
have the opportunity to accumulate power bases and so when the university says jump we've got to jump and we don't get to tell anyone else to jump.

Paul Green

The kind of peripheral status that Paul Green described particularly affected participants in the areas of employment conditions and credit for ESL courses. The problem of credit for ESL courses also affected one high school teacher, but this issue was more prevalent among participants in higher education. Credit is the coin of power in colleges and universities, the commodity that the institution bestows in return for tuition paid and effort spent. For a participant to teach a course that grants no credit creates a sense of being in a professional limbo, a fact that was noted by university level participant David Wheatley.

"It gives me a sense of ambiguity because we don't give grades and our classes are not in credit. The students come to class and they're required to come to class. They don't get a grade and they don't get credit for it. All that counts is the final exam, since they're given an entry exam and if they don't pass the entry exam they're told they have to take ESL classes. So they take the ESL classes and they take another exam and whether they can pass or not is not based on class performance, it's based on that exam. The students are paying a lot of money. They pay almost as much as they do for academic courses, yet they're not getting any credit for it."

David Wheatley

The kind of predicament that David Wheatley faced may be in the process of improving for ESL teachers in higher education. The national professional organization has passed a resolution urging institutions of
higher education to grant credit for ESL courses and a recent survey (Fox & Byrd, 1988) indicated that most respondents to a national questionnaire worked in programs where credit was granted. At the same time, the survey report noted that differing structures in U.S. higher education, and particularly the uncertain place of ESL within those structures, combined to produce variations in the type of credit offered. For example, some institutions offer credit, but only for the purpose of enabling students to remain enrolled and receive financial aid. This kind of non-degree bearing credit was reported by two participants in this study.

One reason that credit wasn't granted for many of the participants' ESL courses was that they were often sponsored by broader programs and departments that did not offer credit. Another common characteristic of these departments was that they didn't hire faculty on the same basis as the rest of the institution. A number of participants in higher education spoke about being hired as part-time workers without benefits and with only last minute notice as to whether they would have any work at all. Margaretta Candis, a university teacher, had experienced this difficulty.

When I started [teaching here] I was part of the regular college. I was in a regular college department. At first it was one department and then it was another because they weren't quite sure where to put me. Then I guess one of the Deans investigated and realized that in most schools ESL is not actually inside the college. It's considered an extra. So they made the change by putting it into [continuing education]. To me it's symbolic. I've seen a significant change in the level of professionalism with which it is regarded. People aren't hired with quite as much care....
It's a small program, but I think it hasn't been very close because a lot of policy is very unclear. It's not been clearly laid out exactly who will teach from one semester to the next. There's no permanence for anyone at all. We're paid by the hour and we find out right before the beginning of the semester whether we'll teach or not and how much....

I think the terms stability and stimulation might be mutually exclusive. I feel sure if stability were the only thing, I would just go back to public schools in the area and apply as an ESL teacher. That is still the most stable job in the field. If you're an ESL teacher or a bilingual teacher, working in the public school system, you have a steady income. You have benefits, you have tenure. You have the plusses of a teaching job with summers off and a flexible schedule. From my observations that is the most stable place to be, if that's what you're looking for....

Margaretta Candis

Although Margaretta Candis felt that employment conditions were somewhat stable in the public schools, the uncertain situation that she described in higher education could be devastating to participants. Because enrollments were often uncertain they sometimes did not know if they would have a job. When they did have work it was often part-time work, a situation which could lead to the physical and emotional fatigue of juggling more than one job and a lack of benefits such as health care and retirement. In spite of Candis's sense that public school teachers had better employment conditions, they too experienced some instability. Two of the study's public school participants had been unemployed for a period, partly because of the way in which seniority and the newness of ESL programs interacted in times of cutbacks.
Peripheral institutional status was something that affected the study participants at all levels, but those in higher education had special difficulties to overcome. They were victims of an institutional structure that they had little power to affect and their colleges and universities were often sufficiently large and remote that they couldn't remedy their structural isolation with the kind of face to face contact that public school teachers had with their mainstream colleagues. The strain of low paid, part-time work was debilitating and when no credit was offered for their courses it served as a continual reminder that they lacked respect.

Conflicting attitudes toward Institutional Sponsors

The problems that the participants experienced did not arise simply because their ESL programs were peripheral to the institutions in which they worked. The larger programs that sponsored ESL often occupied the same outside status. Sometimes participants felt a strong allegiance toward the bilingual, developmental or continuing education programs that had jurisdiction over them. On other occasions they did not support these sponsoring programs. The participants' reactions to their programmatic sponsors underscores specific problems that arose in relationship to those sponsors and it also highlights a division in ESL teaching between those who feel allied with their sponsors and those who feel antagonistic toward them.

Frank West was a participant who felt a great warmth toward the high school bilingual programs of which he had been part. He felt that this
opinion was shared by those who moved into bilingual education from other programs and noted that bilingual programs had an esprit that other departments seemed to lack.

Even though I'm in an ESL slot, there's no ESL department. You teach under the umbrella of the bilingual department. And I'm in [this school system] because I have a bilingual certificate. If I didn't have a bilingual certificate I would have been lost in [the last] big layoff.... I'm always championing the bilingual kids as the best students in the system.

At all the schools I've been in, people will always say the bilingual department, and remember that's including ESL, is always the best. I'm sure there are different ideas about that, but it seems that many times the people that I've met in different buildings that teach ESL or teach bilingual have been very welcoming, warm people who are interested in teaching, who like teaching, who like the students, so that those people have become my closest friends.

Frank West

Although Frank West was a participant who was very supportive of bilingual education and had warm relations with his colleagues in that department, Marjorie Butterfield was a participant who had substantial reservations about some aspects of bilingual education. Like West, Butterfield's opinions grew out of specific encounters she had had as a result of being situated in the bilingual education department.

The parents are sometimes really pressed into putting the kids into the bilingual program. One administrator got very angry with one of us, not me because she didn't catch me at it, but she caught another gal who was explaining the rights of the parent, which by the way we
have to do by the law. You have to explain this. But she felt...that we were letting too many parents get away with saying no. She felt we were literally encouraging parents. Well, we weren't.

But if a parent said to me, who spoke very good English, I might add, "Yes, my child only speaks Portuguese, but I don't want him to learn Portuguese here. I want him to learn English. I don't want him in the bilingual class." I would say two things. "Here are the results of your child's test. It's obvious he's going to have a little bit of a tough time because he doesn't speak much English. But sir, you do not have to put him in here. If you don't wish your child in, you must write a letter that states, "I've seen the results of the tests. I realize that, but I do not wish my child to be serviced under the bilingual program." Then they cannot deny putting the kid in the mainstream.... I try to help them because that's fair. Why should I force a parent who really feels this way to put the kid in a bilingual program?"

I understand why the state [ instituted the bilingual program]. In some respects I don't resent it. The only thing I resent about it is when the class that is offered in the native language is not equal to a mainstream class. In other words, if you're going to teach Algebra I in Khymer, that Algebra I class should be the same content as the Algebra I class in the mainstream, and it's not. That I resent.... On the other hand we're not blaming those bilingual teachers that are teaching the academics like Algebra. Many times the kid gets into that class and he cannot multiply and he's supposed to be taking Algebra I. So [the teacher] had to water down his class. But the problem is, that child gets a grade in Algebra I. Gets an 85. My god, he's going to go to Algebra II and he flunks miserably because he really doesn't know it. Then the math teacher says, "See, we told you so. These kids don't learn anything." That's why I get upset.

Marjorie Butterfield

Frank West's enthusiasm for his bilingual program and Marjorie Butterfield's doubts about some aspects of hers establish the presence of differing attitudes among participants, not the philosophic correctness of the programs themselves. As Butterfield noted, it is not a failing of
bilingual education that students who can't multiply and divide don't become ready for Algebra II in one year.

However, the presence of problems as well as the absence of them affected participants' attitudes toward sponsoring programs. A sense of conflict also arose when bilingual education programs hindered the participants' efforts to place their students in appropriate classes. Hakuta (1986) has indicated that the attitudes of ESL teachers toward bilingual education may be shaped by cultural background, but for the teachers in this study they seemed predominantly affected by the way in which bilingual programs interacted with participants' ability to carry out their work. Not all public school participants had strong feelings about bilingual education; what was notable was the range of attitudes.

The same mixed pattern of reservations toward and support for sponsoring programs existed in higher education. Two participants who felt strongly about the mission of their sponsoring developmental programs also reported a sense of hostility toward these programs from other faculty. Mike Donahue was a participant who felt a combatative support for his sponsoring department, the developmental education department of a community college.

"[There are people] who don't see it our way, who tend to be elitist, and who feel that college is for those who 'meet up to the standards.' And they're forever after us for lowering the standards or offering empty credits - which sounds like empty calories - and that sort of thing.... They basically don't want to shift their styles, so they're
shifting their students to us, which automatically guarantees our
growth until such time as we return the students to them, prepared
for what they wanted from them in the first place."

Mike Donahue

Although Mike Donahue strongly supported his sponsoring
program, he rejected the notion that the department was remedial.
He objected to the label partly because it implied that a student had
been taught something once already and needed to have the skill
brushed up. He noted that his department often dealt with students
who were not reviewing old material, but learning for the first
time. Marylin Villard, a university level teacher, also rejected the
remedial label, but for different reasons. She felt that it unfairly
represented both students and their ESL teachers.

"I usually sort of assume that we're respected and then I come across
people who just - I don't know who they think we are, that we're the
tutoring center or some remedial program, who have no awareness of,
no understanding of what we do.... I really don't think that we should
be linked. I think we do a different thing. I don't disrespect people
who teach in those services. I'd like to learn from some of those
people. I think we do some of the same things, but I sort of don't like
to be with what is almost considered to be a social service like
welfare service, when, in fact, I think we have as much expertise as
somebody who's teaching in Economics 101. I think we're just as valid.
It depends upon who is teaching these things. If, in fact, they're using
graduate students to tutor in writing, I don't put us on the same level
as these people. I'd like people to know that we are all very
experienced and we're all very well qualified....

I think we are as academic as anyone in teaching a language, and
anyone teaching in the English department or certainly in the writing
department. I think that we have subject matter to teach, and I think
that we are knowledgeable enough to have analyzed it. I think there's a body of knowledge. I think that there is theory and methodology. And I think that makes us very academic.”

Marylin Villard

Marylin Villard was reacting partly toward a linkage that has been previously mentioned, that which ties ESL to caregiving. Villard felt that her training, expertise and experience as well as that of her colleagues justified academic recognition for the ESL program. She resented being looked upon as a social service rather than an academic department. Yet caregiving of some sort is bound to crop up when teachers are engaged in the business of language acquisition and acculturation. The social service connection is a logical outgrowth of the nurturing component in ESL. In fact, among the participants Villard stood out as one who was particularly willing to help students. Yet she didn’t want to be penalized for that and to have her very substantial academic credentials ignored.

The teachers who participated in this study were often located in ESL programs that were part of larger peripheral programs that have aroused political, emotional and theoretical controversy. On the societal level, the argument that often surrounds these controversial programs frequently revolves around different levels of willingness to accommodate non-mainstream students in educational institutions. This was not evident in the participants’ comments. Participants resented their students’ outside status as well as their own.

The participants’ attitudes toward their programmatic sponsors cannot be added up and counted as a vote either for or against these
sponsors. What does seem apparent is that the ESL teachers in this study were isolated from the mainstream by two barriers: the marginal situation of their own programs and also that of their sponsors. It seems likely that conflicting attitudes such as those expressed by the participants will prevent the profession as a whole from taking unified action to fight its way through these two layers of isolation.

Summary

The participants in this study were usually situated in ESL programs that had peripheral status within their institutions. That status had a number of important effects. It meant that although participants were outside the mainstream, much of their effort was directed toward the mainstream. This involved them in a series of sorting procedures that moved students into and through ESL programs. The most stressful point in this process came when students were transitioned into the mainstream. The participants engaged in personal, ad hoc activities in order to smooth the mainstreaming process, but both their experience and supporting literature revealed a need for better coordination between the mainstream and ESL programs as well as a broader understanding of what actually happens to students during this process.

For elementary school teachers peripheral status was reflected in the problems of working with mainstream teachers to schedule their classes. For participants in higher education it resulted in a situation where their
courses lacked credit and they themselves often lacked stable, full-time employment.

At the public school level the participants' ESL programs usually fell under the jurisdiction of bilingual education and in higher education they were frequently sponsored by developmental programs and departments of continuing education. The conflicting attitudes that participants held toward their sponsoring programs points to difficulties that ESL teachers will have in establishing the kind of institutional alliances that could alleviate the problems of peripheral status.
CHAPTER 7

THE ACTUAL WORK OF TEACHING ESL

Introduction

The actual work of ESL teaching was affected by issues outside the classroom as well as within it. For example, a number of the study participants had substantial programmatic responsibilities, something that required a balancing of skills and energy between the classroom and administration. Within the classroom itself they faced numerous pedagogical issues, two of which recurred frequently. One of these was the difficulty of working with widely varying groups of students. Often this variety included a substantial number of students who had little academic preparation, an issue that is connected to problems of racism in institutions and communities. Another pedagogical issue that participants faced was the need to help their students acquire writing skills.

The environment of participants' classrooms also revealed issues in ESL teaching: the physical environment often reflected a disparagement of their work by the broader institution and the emotional environment raised the issue of protection in ESL teaching. The study participants did not generally appear as proponents of a single teaching methodology or linguistic theory. Although some participants expressed enthusiasm for
particular pedagogical methods, in general they reflected a range of concerns and approaches.

The Assumption of Programmatic Responsibilities

In order to assure that their teaching could take place, many of the study participants had to take on the administrative responsibilities that provided support for their programs. Thus their energies were often divided between teaching itself and programmatic tasks such as recruitment, supervising, coordination of resources, personnel relations, committee meetings, curriculum development, and varieties of paperwork.

A combination of factors contributed to the participants' assumption of programmatic responsibilities. It often occurred because they had been the ones to create their programs and in the course of doing so had assumed administrative as well as teaching duties. Programmatic responsibilities were also related to their status within institutions and the lack of other individuals or agencies committed to making ESL work. The assumption of programmatic duties occurred most often in small programs where a single ESL teacher was, in fact, the program. When participants had programmatic responsibilities, the teaching and administrative duties of their work sometimes required them to utilize different skills.

Louisa Henning was a high school teacher who found that her administrative role was requiring new skills in which she was getting little guidance. Henning had developed the ESL program in her school and
had taken on increasingly administrative roles until finally she was spending half of her time on teaching and half on administrative tasks that extended to the bilingual program as a whole. She felt that she had entered a different stage of her career and found many aspects of it difficult.

My role has been divided [into] co-ordinator part-time, teacher part-time. Three teaching periods, one preparation period and the other three hours are coordination time. It's so hard to be half and half because we have a rotating schedule. Trying to set up appointments.... it's just mind boggling. I come home and I'm physically exhausted....

I have been a classroom teacher for "X" amount of years and this is on the way up, if you want to call it that. I think people do get knocked around quite a bit until they shape up. I guess I'm in the process of being shaped up and it hurts. It hurts when you care so much about the program.

Louisa Henning

Louisa Henning found her job difficult partly because it required her to utilize new skills in a setting where others didn't seem to share her concern for ESL and partly because it created a tension between teaching and administering. Isobel Waksman encountered the same tension when a shortage of funds led to a proposal for her and another teacher to serve two schools. "We would be more of supervisors. We wouldn't have as good contact with the teachers, the parents, the kids. We would be just driving back and forth, planning, going to meetings and not really teaching."
The assumption of programmatic responsibilities produced another tension, the unclear lines of authority that some participants faced. Maria Winters, a community college teacher, noted the ambiguities of administering her grant funded position.

I feel like I have to be kind of a filter or a monitor or maybe even some kind of a wall, even, because everybody has a different opinion about who the students are, including the students themselves, and everybody has a different idea of what these people should be doing and when they should be doing it, and of course I have my own philosophy as well. And that's probably been a little bit tougher than I thought it was going to be.

Maria Winters

The unclear lines of authority that participants described are to some extent symptomatic of the unclear structure of power encountered by teachers in all disciplines who work in institutions of formal education. Teachers strive to exercise independence in their classrooms but, to the extent that they are controlled by the larger institution, they become bureaucrats rather than professionals (Simpson and Simpson, 1969). Although there are tensions inherent in programmatic responsibilities the participants often enjoyed the work and appreciated the fact that it made possible the existence of the classrooms in which their actual teaching was done.

Linda Montagna, a community college teacher, was one of those who enjoyed administration and who realized that her programmatic duties made her teaching possible. She was also aware that she was assuming an
extra, unpaid task. Although she had full responsibility for her program, she got no financial compensation for her administrative work. "I still have all my classes. I'm teaching a full load... I'll probably continue to do it until I stop enjoying doing it. I realize the value of the program. In a way I feel flattered that they feel that I'm competent enough to do it. I have received enough verbal praise to know the job is being done competently, so I continue to do it."

Particularly in cases where ESL programs are too small to have a paid administrator, programmatic responsibilities often become an unacknowledged part of ESL teaching. Such responsibilities may be personally gratifying and are worthwhile in terms of enabling classrooms to function, but when they are unrecompensed labor they become one more straw in the growing bundle of voluntary duties that ESL teachers assume.

The Classroom Problem of Teaching Disparate Student Groups

Within their classrooms the participants often had to work with a wide variety of students. For most participants it was a given that their students would come from different cultures. Other factors also contributed to variety in the classroom. For example, the scheduling difficulties that afflicted elementary school teachers contributed to diverse classrooms. Nora Yancey described how one of her classes was affected by this.
I have sixth and seventh graders and I do a variety of tasks with them. And then I have in that group a second grader who doesn't understand anything. Sometimes she can be very demanding while she's in that group, because I'm doing work with the sixth and seventh graders and I have work on the side for her. [She is in that time period because] that's the time the teacher wanted her to be out.

Nora Yancey

Participants were also affected by unstable enrollments among their students. For teachers in higher education this was often the result of the intense pressures that their students faced. It can be time consuming simply to survive in a strange culture and students sometimes dropped out of classes. Public school teachers were affected by the enrollment patterns that resulted from the migration patterns of students' families. Anna Ramirez described what this did to her classes.

I teach ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth [grades]. They're all mixed in the classrooms.... In Puerto Rico the students would stay the whole year. Maybe one or two or three would withdraw, but here I have constantly new students and others leaving. So it's pretty difficult in the sense that I've taught so much a semester and then a new student comes in and they don't know anything at all.... In fact, I just had three last week and they're going to keep coming in until the last day of school....

Some of them are here, of course, not on their own free will. Just because their father found a better job over here or better opportunity here, and they really miss their homeland. A lot of them really miss it. And I think that has to do also with their learning ability. If they're not happy here then they don't care and they won't try as much.

Anna Ramirez
In addition to noting the psychological effect that enrollment patterns had Anna Ramirez also commented that the continual influx of new students would be easier to handle if she had the aide to which she was entitled. However, she noted that aides were poorly paid and hard to come by, so she had to handle the situation herself. Nora Yancey also observed that her situation was eased if there was another teacher in the room. Although these logistical problems helped to create the variety in participants' classrooms they were not the only factors that produced it.

Diverse classrooms also arose because similar levels of English caused students to be placed together who had very different levels of experience in formal academic institutions. Sometimes classes included students who had substantial prior experience of academic work and needed merely the English language in order to make their knowledge transferrable. Other students in the same class might have a surface similarity in their level of English but very little familiarity with academic settings. Gretchen Antilles, a college level teacher at the time of the interviews, described a class she had taught at the community college level where this problem was apparent.

It was a class of 25 students from various language backgrounds and cultures that didn't mix very well. Semi-literate people, people who were rank beginners and lots of false beginners, people who had been here for years. Russian Ph.D.'s, a Cambodian woman who I believe was literate in her language but she was truly a beginner.... I didn't have the background for that kind of work. I hadn't had a methodology course. I'd had lots of theoretical linguistics, but no applied
linguistics at all, and what would have served me best would have been some grammar school open classroom kinds of techniques.

There were a couple of situations where the more educated students got angry at the other students. There was one near physical fight, screaming battle where the students got up in the classroom and they were standing up and... screaming at each other..... The Russian immigrants had come pretty much protected. They'd been sponsored by temples and they were going through their own problems. They had left family members behind that they would never see again and might even run into political problems and that sort of thing, so they were suffering, too. But they did have sponsors, wealthy sponsors, who were taking care of all kinds of details and they knew that once they learned the language they were shoo-ins for jobs... because they were well educated. The Hispanics didn't have that sense of purpose or hope. Even if they did master the language they still didn't [have the education to] know how to do anything. They were very different groups, totally different goals and values, everything....

Gretchen Antilles

The problems of academic disparity that Gretchen Antilles described are often related to societal inequities that face students. As she noted, culture and class have a great deal to do with the type of academic experience that a student has. One way of getting around the difficulty of working with students who have academic experience and those who lack it is by putting the students into different classes. Such a solution could come to resemble the tracking structures that have been utilized with native speakers in high schools where students of supposedly higher and lower ability are separated into fast and slow tracks. These arrangements often reflect class divisions in the broader society and help to lock students into a permanent underclass. The extent to which ESL teachers can avoid this kind of solution will be directly related to their ability to
draw upon classroom techniques that enable them to effectively work with disparate student populations.

Racism and ESL Classrooms

Gretchen Antilles observed that one of the big differences between the two groups of students in her class was their sense of purpose and hope. Whether or not that sense of hope can exist in students depends to some degree on the climate in the surrounding society. A number of participants commented on the presence of ignorance, elitism and racism around them. Louisa Henning noted that in the town where her high school was located there was "a big stigma attached to the Puerto Ricans.... [The people here] have a lot of small town, provincial attitudes." At his community college Mike Donahue also talked about the presence of racism and elitism.

There's institutional racism to begin with. There's been a tolerance [of it] in offices that I'm aware of - the one I'm aware of because it cost somebody a job, I'm happy to say - a supervisor in charge of an office permitted a clerk to be the brunt of the students' anger and racial remarks and said nothing, did nothing....

Students are tested - not by us because we don't over the summer. Students are tested. Hispanic students are routinely sent down to the off-campus sites, the presumption being they're Hispanic, they should go to an off-campus site and learn English. Oriental students they usually refer to home campus without regard to the level of the
English and the courses offered and the place it's offered. I've got to call that racism. It runs through around here.

Mike Donahue

The study participants did not share the kinds of racist and elitist attitudes that Donahue described and they combatted them vigorously. However, patterns of race and class in the surrounding institution and community could eventually come to affect them because of the way it affects their classrooms. The relationship between the classroom and the community has been widely examined. Shirley Brice Heath's (1983) discussion of the ways in which class and community backgrounds affect children's understanding of school language takes up one aspect of this problem.

Jim Cummins (1986), who has paid particular attention to the interaction of societal attitudes and the schooling of minority language children, has stated that specific changes in these attitudes are needed in order to make schools work for second language students from groups which have been in a "dominated" position in relation to the majority population. His recommendations include: 1.) incorporating the minority language and culture into the school program 2.) encouraging minority community participation as an integral part of schooling 3.) promoting interactive learning and intrinsically motivated use of language and 4.) making those who test students also advocates of the students. If recommendations such as those of Cummins are successfully implemented they could eventually alleviate the disparities in the student populations taught by ESL teachers.
As has been noted, the participants gained strength and confidence from the sense that they shared similar goals with their students and were responding to genuine needs that their students felt. If racism in the surrounding society, or any other cause, undermines students' abilities to acquire English, it will also undermine ESL teachers' feelings that they can meet their students' needs. It will thus attack an important source of strength in ESL teaching and perhaps turn a student-teacher relationship built on a sense of shared mission into the adversarial kind of relationship experienced by teachers in many other disciplines.

This would be especially unfortunate in the ESL classroom because of the possibility that particular language groups could become the focus of adversarial relationships. A number of participants noted that their Hispanic students were often the group that had the greatest problems in acquiring English. Ultimately the social climate that is largely responsible for producing the problems of the Hispanic students could lead to their becoming a target for blame. This was not something that appeared among the participants; they defended all of their students against the prejudice of the broader community. However, ESL teachers who do this may not be aware of the extent to which they are defending themselves as well as their students. The racism that is devastating in the lives of ESL students has the power to deliver a second blow to ESL classrooms: the creation of adversarial relationships between teachers and students.
Teaching Writing Skills

Situated as they were in academic institutions, the participants were conscious of the skills by which these institutions measured their students. On many occasions writing appeared as an academic measuring stick that affected their teaching. At the elementary school level the focus was often on the literacy skills of both reading and writing since they are such are large part of the elementary curriculum, but beyond the elementary level writing itself was a particularly visible issue. Marjorie Butterfield, a high school teacher, described the importance that she attached to writing and some of the problems that it created for her.

I make them write a great deal. I make them write probably almost a theme every ten days. I understand in the college division [track] they don't write or rarely write, even on their tests. It's hard for me to understand this, but college mainstream classes give the kids fill in the blanks, true and false type of questions rather than essay. Now I know why that's done. It's done because it's a heck of a lot quicker to correct....

But it's appalling to know that, and the kids will tell me that. They'll say, "They don't ever make us write." But when they get to college they have to write. Besides, whether they're going to college or not they have to write. I spend a great deal of time at home, much more than the average teacher I would think.... I average six hours of sleep and that's not a lot. Weekends I do a little better. Sometimes I curse myself and say, "Why did you give this assignment? Now you have to correct it." I will correct everything they write.... For a bilingual teacher or an ESL teacher, many times the error - the kid doesn't
know. It's not enough to mark the error because he doesn't know what it should have been so you have to rewrite.

Marjorie Butterfield

Marjorie Butterfield was concerned about writing because she saw it as a hurdle that her students would have to face later down the road. For teachers in higher education that hurdle was often real and immediate. After leaving ESL programs their students frequently faced institutional composition exams and almost always participants were concerned about their students' abilities to carry out writing assignments in their mainstream classes. Some participants were discouraged by their inability to find a way to teach writing that would enable their students to overcome those hurdles. Even a participant like community college teacher Lyn Bergman, who loved writing and loved to teach it, worried about what would happen to her students after they left her ESL classes.

In teaching writing you are trying to communicate to somebody that you're not just spewing out facts. You are trying to reach in deeper to express a point of view.... And students get thrilled about it. I have a paper right here that this woman wrote for me today. She gave me a first draft and it was a page.... We looked at the stuff, line by line, specifics and details that she could bring out and then she wrote this. Actually, it's the final draft, she wrote another draft. It was just immeasurably better and she could sense it. She knew it.... "I can't believe that I wrote so much in English," she said. "A few months ago I would never have guessed that I could write this much in English." She was proud.

...I have students who come to me who are taking... the mainstream English class and I'll help them with different papers and ideas - I won't write their papers for them, but I often have them come to me at least for their first two or three papers until they get on their
Lyn Bergman was aware of the power of writing to unlock meaning in a student's life. Other participants shared this awareness, often through having their students write journals. Journals, like other forms of writing, involved the kind of time consuming teacher responses that Marjorie Butterfield described. Along with its excitement, however, writing often represented an undercurrent of stress for the participants. Not only was it a source of personal power, it was also an expression of the institution's power to measure ESL students and find them wanting. How that power should be exercised was sometimes a puzzle. Caroline Turmelle, a university teacher, reported what she told a group of mainstream teachers who were grading an ESL composition paper as part of university testing requirements.

I agreed the student shouldn't pass, but not because of the language problems, because the ideas weren't good. I said, "So when you're reading a student paper, you may see grammar problems. You see grammar problems in a native speaker's paper. You do not fail a student because there are language problems unless those language problems are so significant that they impede your understanding of the ideas. If the ideas are good and there are language flaws,
certainly that shouldn't hold the student back. Language development takes a long time.

Caroline Turmelle

Caroline Turmelle suggested one way for measuring the writing of ESL students, but that she was called upon to make the suggestion in a university testing situation is indicative of the difficulty that both ESL and mainstream teachers have in applying this academic yardstick. The study participants' concern with writing is mirrored by a scholarly concern with ESL writing (Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1982, 1983) that has been recently prominent in the literature of the field. Much of this concern focuses on the issue of a process approach to writing versus a product approach to it. The experience of the participants could not be taken as a referendum on this issue, but it did endorse writing as a serious area of concern.

The ESL Classroom Environment

In participants' comments about their work they described two important aspects of the classroom environment: the physical environment and the emotional environment. The physical environment of their classrooms was symbolic of the low status of their work. The emotional environment was symbolic of its protective nature. Some of the participants were interviewed at their place of work and the physical environment of their setting was readily apparent. In institutions of higher education, for example, the ESL program was sometimes not even on the main campus, but perhaps upstairs and over a commercial building.
some distance away from the bulky grandeur of the main buildings. Participants at all levels were able to describe physical environments that were less than ideal.

**Elementary School**

The area that I was working in was on the stage. The stage in the all purpose room definitely was not suitable for teaching ESL students... [It] certainly was not a quiet atmosphere, because the all purpose room means just what it means - all purpose. It was quite difficult. The discipline was difficult. There was fistfighting. [They were] distracted by the scent of the food and they were hungry all the time.... Name it and it was there - whatever they had. The police department would come with the safety bicycle test and it was out there. The bicycles were there. Try to keep students away from the bicycles.

Diana Landry

**University**

The classroom spaces are under the [control] of various academic departments and so we get them when they don't need them. We get the ones they don't want. They're all over the place.

Paul Green

**Middle School**

The (ESL) room is long and narrow. It was actually part of the adjacent classroom which is now occupied by the bilingual teacher. I would say he has approximately two thirds of it and I have the one third. There's a wall which divides those two rooms. On the other side of me is a small instrumental practice room, so at any given point in time we are trying to be heard above trumpets blaring and flutes serenading us at the same time. Sometimes it can be distracting, there's no doubt about it. Other times it works in a
positive way. Whatever noises I hear, whatever's going on can often be brought into whatever I'm doing in the classroom, so it's turned into a humorous and hopefully positive learning experience.

Joan Nelson

Community College

They give us what's left over here, and then when there is no room they'll give us classrooms in another building. I want to tell you, some of the classrooms they have given have been really horrendous. And then in addition to that we had an experience where in some of the other buildings, in the older buildings, they set up temporary classrooms. There isn't any complete wall. In other words it only goes half the way. So, if you're doing a class you can hear what the other class is doing. And we have had teachers in other disciplines come out and shout down [the ESL] teachers - totally rude, telling them to be quiet. How do you teach a conversation class without speaking? Telling them they were being interrupted and then have all the students in his class laughing at the foreign students. Just bad business.

Linda Montagna

Classrooms located in storefronts or hallways and programs situated away from the main campus marked the low status of ESL teaching. In spite of this visible disparagement, participants often commented that the emotional environment of the ESL classroom was warm and safe, a setting suitable for the frightening and disorienting aspects of language learning. In this sense the classroom was symbolic of the protected emotional environment that ESL provided for students. The participants were in the position of providing protection, but at the same time they were trying to prepare students to get along without that protection.
In phrases scattered throughout their interviews many participants indicated that an important part of what they accomplished was made possible not by theory or technique, but simply by the provision of the ESL classroom itself as a safe haven. They talked about the camaraderie of the class and the sense that everyone was in the same boat. Linda Montagna described her efforts to create a reassuring classroom at the community college level.

I try to create the right atmosphere in the classroom, an atmosphere where they are not going to feel threatened, where they feel comfortable, where they feel if they make a mistake it’s not going to be a big calamity, where they can get to know each other as friends and feel comfortable with one another so that if they have to speak in another language no one is going to laugh at them. If we laugh we laugh together. If you create the right atmosphere, you create a place where people feel good about coming back the next day.

Linda Montagna

A number of participants also indicated that they were engaged in sustaining the kind of protected environment that Linda Montagna described. Marjorie Butterfield talked about having her high school students give speeches in class so that they could become accustomed to doing this while still within the safety of the ESL class. Diana Landry talked about covering her elementary school students' textbooks so that other students could not see that they were using one that was much lower than their age level. Margarettta Candis, during a period when she worked
with younger children, noted that "in the smaller classroom the student is more apt to speak up."

Thus a significant feature of teaching in ESL classrooms is simply the existence of the classroom itself. Margaret Gibson (1988), in an ethnographic study of Punjabi students in a California high school, noted their appreciation of the protected environment of the ESL classroom. At the same time she also pointed out that they felt resentment when protection became overprotection, isolating students from the mainstream. For the students in Gibson's study that problem was solved when ESL students were allowed to stay in high school longer than other students so that they could move out of the protection of ESL and into the mainstream. Participants in higher education reported that the practice of offering non-degree credit for ESL courses was used in a similar way, to maintain students in school with financial aid until they could be mainstreamed. It appears that one way for the protected environment of the ESL classroom to be effective is to match it with appropriate institutional structures.

 Thinking about ESL Teaching and Making it Work

The study participants did not represent any single theoretical or methodological viewpoint. Although some participants felt an allegiance to particular methods, the classroom behavior that they described indicated that in general they practiced a variety of teaching techniques. They were thoughtful about their work, but seldom doctrinaire. One issue
that prompted comment from a number of participants was the problem of teaching grammar - its importance and the question of whether or not it could be effectively imparted through teaching. Gretchen Antilles, a college level participant, was troubled by this problem.

[The students] are mastering the isolated grammar forms, but they are not getting them into the writing as far as I can see. They’re not. There is something missing in getting the transferral thing, understanding discrete grammar items to actually producing them spontaneously. This is always a problem. It’s not unique to our program but it’s something that is bothering me a lot....

What seemed to come through in some of [the] content based presentations [at the TESOL convention] was that if you get the students exposed to enough material, there’s a lot that they can learn intuitively and with certain guidance in the way that you give them the material and a lot of focused practice. But what hit me was maybe a course called grammar is just something fossilized. Maybe what I’m doing is all wrong. It doesn’t mean that it’s not doing them any good, but maybe the approach is not the way to go. And that’s very uncomfortable because it means throwing everything out the window, renaming the course and experimenting with something totally new and different.

Gretchen Antilles

At the root of the problem with grammar described by Antilles lies the deeper issue of whether language is learned better by focusing on the language itself or by focusing on some other topic so that the language learning is a by-product of that. Essentially this is the distinction between learning and acquisition enunciated by Krashen (1981) and several participants expressed it in those terms. One participant got around the problem in an interesting way. Paul Green, a university level
teacher, taught his students grammar without believing that the subject matter itself did them any good.

Teaching grammar is O.K., but it's not necessarily any better than teaching biomedical ethics. What students need is meaningful input in the target language. So I think of my grammar classes as being subject area classes where the students are learning English through using English to learn something. The subject they happen to be learning about is grammar.... Most of them are convinced that by learning grammar they're going to learn English. So by teaching them grammar you take advantage of that affective filter, even though you and I know that teaching grammar probably isn't going to [work] in the absence of other factors.

But because they believe it's useful to study the grammar of English they attend. They listen. They pay attention. They do their homework. Whereas if I were teaching biomedical ethics they might very well not see the relevance of it and might not cling as tenaciously to it and not attend as deeply to classes and work and stuff. It's kind of a fraud.

Paul Green

The participants in this study raised questions that they couldn't completely answer and which have not been definitively answered by the profession as a whole. Their continued questioning indicated an intellectual interest in their work and related that interest to what they did in the classroom. Sometimes, as in the issues involving grammar, their interests reflected concerns that have been prominent in the scholarly literature of the field. On other occasions they made classroom observations that have not been well developed in the literature. For example, Caroline Turmelle, a university level teacher, was primarily interested in teaching writing. Her work in that area had led her to make
observations concerning the similarities of teaching English to native speakers and to non-native speakers.

ESL can mean a lot of things, probably different to everyone, but the more and more I teach, the more and more I see myself as teaching writing and it wouldn't matter what their first language was or their writing skills were. I wouldn't, in fact, teach writing that much differently to ESL or non-ESL students.... I guess the distinction for me is starting to blur. I think I could teach writing to any level of students easier than I could teach ESL to any level of ESL students. So if they phased out ESL composition altogether, I'd be more likely to pick up a composition course for native speakers than I would to pick up a grammar course for ESL.

Caroline Turmelle

In contemplating the gray area of teaching English to native speakers and non-native speakers Turmelle was aware that she was looking at something that was not well researched in the field. She contemplated the possibility of doing research in this area herself at some point. Participants like Turmelle indicated that language and classroom experience prompt lively minds to go in many directions.

The same breadth that characterized the participants' thought processes also characterized their descriptions of classroom activities. The participants engaged in a variety of activities. This variety is visible in the following descriptions of what some of them did to make ESL teaching work in their classrooms.
**Elementary School**

Sometimes I’ll have a plan and then change my mind on the spur of the moment. [Today] I took out of my pocketbook three compacts with three mirrors. Everybody had to come in and draw themselves. Originally they didn’t like the idea because some felt that they couldn’t draw, and then I made figures on the board and showed them how poorly I drew. So they had nothing to worry about. Two at a time, every two would share one mirror and then they had a fabulous time drawing themselves. And when they finish drawing themselves they’re going to make a story to accompany what they drew.

Nora Yancey

**High School**

I took speech. I took drama. Since I like those things, I like my students to do it. Some of them are pretty shy, some of them won’t do it. But the majority will and it makes the class exciting and interesting. I like my classrooms to be fun.” ...I try to speak English completely. Just English.... If they’re all Hispanics I can sometimes write a translation on the board of what I’m trying to say, a word. Sometimes it’s very difficult for me to act out a word, like maybe, “ought to”. They don’t know the meaning of “ought to”. How am I going to act out “ought to”?

I used to talk to them in English, even in the cafeteria, because I want them to learn. If they’re not talking English with a friend, at least talk with me in English. And they – some of them got upset. “Why don’t you speak Spanish? You know Spanish. You’re Puerto Rican, you should be proud of it.” They say that to me. I told them ”I love my language. I speak Spanish at home, but I want you to learn English.” But then, I’ve got to a point where maybe they are right. I can leave the classroom for English, but if I’m in the hallways or in the cafeteria, I started speaking Spanish.... I’ve started speaking Spanish if the person is Hispanic, English if the person doesn’t speak Spanish. Their faces just smile, they just smile. I guess they felt insulted because I wouldn’t speak Spanish to them.

Anna Ramirez
Community College

You are going to have [the students] where they live because the commitment to learn a language puts them in an extremely uncomfortable position - when you force them to work with another language. So I try not to force that. I'll try to keep them mildly off balance in class, but not get them really uncomfortable. Mlylly off balance. Because if you give them a structured situation where they can control the structure, you give them enough time and they will translate. So you push so they can't translate. I like to arrange a class in a big open square where I can get down in their face and say something in English. And they know I'm not going to move on to the next guy until I get a response, so that forces a response. And then I'll try to put them in a situation that they've got to deal in English....

So you come up with exercises that force them to think in English. Numbers are a good one. How much is one and one? The other one is, what do you call your relatives. What do you call your sister's brother? Of course, they think about that - my brother. And, of course, you sit there and you see the ones locking on. The ones that are locking on are the ones who are thinking in English. The ones who aren't locking on are the ones who are fighting the translation.

Mike Donahue

In general, the sense that emerges from the thoughts of the participants and from their classrooms is one of language as the impetus for and the vehicle of mental and verbal activity. As they carried out their work the participants expressed methodological allegiances, but neither methods nor allegiances dominated their comments. What their work reflected was a conscious attention to language, an ability to initiate classroom activities that built on language and a thoughtfulness about what they were doing and why they were doing it. The participants were people who thought about ESL teaching and tried to make it work.
Summary

The heart of the participants' work was in the actual teaching of ESL. Their descriptions of this role revealed issues that are likely to be widespread in the profession as a whole. The difficulty of carrying out both teaching and programmatic responsibilities will affect a large number of teachers who work in small programs where they have have to wear at least two hats. Particular pedagogical issues such as the teaching of writing and the difficulty of working with disparate student groups are likely to arise in many ESL classrooms. The connection between racism and language learning is an underlying issue in the society as a whole.

Understanding the ESL classroom as a protected environment helps to explain how one aspect of ESL teaching works. Being aware of the physical environment of many ESL classrooms helps to illustrate the unsupportive atmosphere that underlies much of the work that must be done in ESL. In carrying out this work the participants revealed themselves as people who were generally thoughtful about language and able to express that thoughtfulness in classroom activities.
CHAPTER 8

GENDER ROLES: INDIVIDUAL AND PROFESSIONAL DILEMMAS

Introduction

ESL teaching is a job done primarily by women. In recent surveys conducted within professional organizations (Blaber and Tobash, 1989; Krueger and Prince-Nam, 1987) the respondents have been from 70% to 80% female. In spite of this preponderance of women, gender as a scholarly issue has been almost invisible in the literature of the field. It was visible, however, in comments made by the participants, particularly those who were women and who had assumed responsibilities for the home and child care.

Gender was a factor in classroom roles and it was a force that affected participants’ understandings of their students’ predicaments. Gender affected the perspectives that male as well as female participants had on their work. Although issues of gender have not been fully explored in the literature on ESL teaching they have been examined in other contexts. A particularly relevant feature of that literature relates to professionalism and the willingness of society to grant that status to predominantly female occupations.
A relationship was apparent between gender and the roles that participants assumed in the classroom. A number of participants noted the multiplicity of the roles that ESL teaching evoked, but the role of mother was mentioned with notable frequency. Gretchen Antilles was a college level teacher who felt stretched thin by her private responsibilities as a mother and by the fact that her work responsibilities as a teacher also involved her in mothering roles.

One thing about working with ESL students is they are in some ways much needier than other students, particularly first semester. The first semester they arrive they go through so much culture shock and autonomy shock.... I mother my students. It's a role that I think is very important in society. Sometimes people do need to be mothered and ESL students are a group that need tender loving care. They need sensitivity. And I think that, but I resent the fact that that's not valued in society, just as I resent the fact that child rearing and caring for children is not valued in this society.

Gretchen Antilles

Gretchen Antilles felt devalued because a large part of what she did in both her private and her working life received little public recognition. At one point she noted that if she were designing high technology weapons for the purpose of killing people she would receive both pay and prestige. In a slightly different vein Marylin Villard, a university level teacher, also noticed the presence of gender roles in her work. When she first began
teaching ESL in a community based program she used to bring a coffee pot to class, something she didn’t think a man would do.

Villard wasn’t sure how to evaluate her gesture. Initially she described herself as motherly, but later reconsidered. “I was feeling that I had to be a hostess as well as a teacher. Maybe it isn’t a mother. Maybe it really is that whole business of, if somebody comes to your house you have to serve something. Maybe it was that. I’m not quite sure of what it was. In fact, it was a very nice thing to do and turned out to make it a very informal setting which was very nice.”

Barbara Hillyar Davis (1985) has talked about the difficulties of gender roles that spill over into the classroom. As a teacher in feminist classrooms she has analyzed the conflicts that face an instructor who simultaneously assumes the roles of “sister-peer and professor” (p. 248). She comments that female teachers who assume the classroom roles of wife or mother are by implication asking the students to assume the roles of husband or children.

At some point in her career Villard stopped bringing a coffee pot to class, but she didn’t look back on her previous behavior as inappropriate. One can see an element in all language acquisition that justifiably connects to the kind of nurturing relationships assumed in the concept of mothering. Our understanding of language is in part built upon studies of mothers and their children (Bruner, 1983). The caregiving and protective aspects of ESL teaching have been noted in earlier chapters of this study.
and some of the issues that have arisen in these contexts are also germane to the image of mothering.

Gender and the Predicaments of Students

Gender roles affected students as well as participants. Joan Nelson was a middle school teacher who encountered gender related issues in the lives of her students. This encounter was complicated by the fact that the culture of her students reflected attitudes toward women that she didn't share. Nelson felt that the cultural milieu of her students required respect, in spite of its differences from her own view.

Being aware of [the students'] cultural identity, knowing the differences in which they live, I think [it] is important to recognize that their home life is different than the school situation. The materials for American kids, including ESL materials, will sometimes strongly emphasize the equality of the two sexes and [for] the long standing male professions, the text has a female gender. Again, I think it's [important] to provide the opportunity for them to see that this is the direction that Americans are headed, yet have a respect and understanding that this is not, in fact, the way it is in their homeland. Nor is it likely to be a choice for them in their lifetime.

A recognition of this would prevent me from really strongly encouraging and even so much as pushing a young girl into her continuing her education or graduating from high school, knowing that this particular girl is perhaps two years beyond the marriageable age in her culture and that if she chose not to look for a mate or accept a marriage proposal she may, in fact, spend the rest of her life somewhat chastised or alone. So there are just some very important differences as well as some important similarities. The more
knowledge one has of the people, the background and what they bring to the new country, the more helpful it will be in a teaching situation.

Joan Nelson

Joan Nelson faced dichotomies in her own culture’s encouragement of advanced education for women and student cultures that encouraged early marriage. Another perspective on the interaction of culture and gender roles in students’ lives was described by Isobel Waksman. Waksman had come to the United States from Eastern Europe and had been an ESL student before she had become an elementary school ESL teacher. When she was an ESL student she had been aware of conflicts between the gender roles in her country and gender roles in the United States. The difference had angered her.

I felt the way women were treated [in the U.S.] was just ridiculous. I wasn’t used to being treated as an object. That was something I was experiencing directly. The majority of doctors at home are women. A lot of engineers are women. To doubt that or to see somebody who is, say, an electrical engineer as a pioneer was very new to me. But what was painful to me was seeing the images shown in women’s magazines and on T.V., that a woman, a professional woman has to be also attractive and slim and perfectly dressed and all that. I think that wasn’t so relevant, and just put additional stress on people. I’m not saying I didn’t have any images myself. I’m part of this very images oriented culture. I was raised with a TV and magazines. But it was bothering me a lot.

Isobel Waksman

Coming to terms with gender roles in a new society can present both teachers and students with poignant dilemmas and many gray areas of decision making. Margaret Gibson (1988) has described the difficulties
faced by young women immigrants from the Punjab who do not wish to be assimilated into the mainstream of U.S. culture, but who want more freedom than their parents are ready to allow. Situations like this may often put ESL teachers in the position of seeking one thing for themselves while accepting something different for their students.

The cross-cultural elements of gender roles are not limited to female students. Mike Donahue, a community college teacher, described his interactions with male students who were experiencing new gender roles.

I usually take a little trouble to tell my Middle Eastern males that they have got to learn that if a female is your teacher and she says no, that is just as final as if I tell you no.... I would hear "I have been dismissed academically, put on probation, or I can't do this or [was] refused this. What are you going to do about it?" I said, "Who did that?"
"Well, Mrs. So and So did that."
"Well, [she] is a member of the staff and she can't change my grades and I can't change her grades. The point is they had to come back to a male to find out the female could do these things. They have always come back to me and [I've] said, "Wait a minute. Let's get the basic relationships. She's the Dean. She's my boss. I'm not her boss." I had to tell them no. Hearing no from a pair of trousers was fine and hearing no from a skirt, it didn't mean the same thing.

Mike Donahue

Whether new gender roles are being worked out by male or female students, they are part of the larger issue of acculturation that faces ESL teachers. Differing responses to that dilemma have been seen here. Mike Donahue's students could not function in their new academic culture
without abiding by rules that placed women in positions of power. Donahue had no hesitation in telling them to use those rules. Joan Nelson was dealing with a situation in which the rules were unclear and she chose to respect her students' cultures.

**The Domestic Division of Labor and ESL Teaching**

Participants who were mothers found their professional life affected by the gender roles reflected in their domestic choices. Women who assumed the duties of childcare found that the job was both all consuming and not consuming enough. Ironically, the consuming quality of childcare was best described by a man. Perhaps the vivid quality of the description stems in part from the fact that the role of primary caregiver for children seldom falls to the male parent. Contrary to tradition, Paul Green assumed this role, an event that occurred concurrently with a series of personal tragedies.

"I think taking care of the kid was what [got me through those rough times] mostly, because that's a very difficult thing to do. The time and mental effort that I might have otherwise put into what was happening to me - I just didn't give it that much thought. What I gave thought to was how I was going to carry all the groceries, the baby, the car seat. Why don't I have a clean bottle? I was racing the kid to childcare, racing myself to work, doing my teaching, picking up the kid and going home. Doing all this struggle with the kid, there wasn't time for me to cogitate on [everything] so by the time I had some leisure to do so it had been blunted.

For many years I was the only caregiver and then became the principal
caregiver. When you have a baby, when you’re alone, you can’t pop across the street for [a paper] without wrapping the baby up and carrying 15,000 different things.”

Paul Green

Societal roles can be situationally altered when individuals such as Paul Green take on non-traditional tasks, but the persistence of tradition is strong. An indication that tradition persisted in the lives of the participants came in the comments of Maria Winters who, at the time of the interviews was contemplating the possibility of having a child. That possibility led her to consider part-time work in ESL, a consideration that implies the expectation that she would assume the major responsibility in childcare.

“I think that in a way [ESL and motherhood] are a good match for a number of reasons, as far as schedules go and all that kind of thing. You can do ESL part-time, you can do ESL full-time. Maybe I’m even getting to the point where I could do [motherhood and] ESL full-time because if I’m doing similar things to what I did before, I’m getting up enough bank of experience that I don’t need to go home and work for five hours to correct papers and prepare....

Maria Winters

Maria Winters contemplated part-time work as a solution to issues of child care and this solution had been at some point adopted by all but one of the participants who was also a mother. It is ironic that Winters was considering that possibility in view of the fact that she had engaged in a difficult personal fight to secure a decent, full time position in ESL. The assumptions of Winters can be contrasted with those of Mike Donahue, a
male participant who became a parent in an earlier period. When Donhue contemplated parenthood, it was the breadwinning role rather than the caregiving role that he thought about first.

[My wife told me] she was pregnant. I said, "Whoa, time to get cracking here, get serious." So I went to see my counselor and said, "What can I graduate in like, fast, because I had been five years in undergraduate school at this point. I had credits and everything. He looked it over and said, "Have you ever thought about majoring in Russian?" I said, "No, not really." He said, "You can finish in one year." I said, "Oh, Hallelujah!" He said, "They are hiring Russian teachers now." I thought, "Now, that sounds good." So I signed up and went bang, straight at it.

Mike Donahue

Neither Maria Winters nor Mike Donahue could be labeled traditionalists and yet underlying the assumptions of each were traditional societal patterns in which women assume the responsibilities of childcare. Biology makes women mothers, but their assumption of the social role goes beyond biology. Researchers looking at the issue from widely differing perspectives (Chodorow, 1978; Rossi, 1985) have seen connections between mothering and the relational characteristics of women. Whatever it is that makes women take on the duties of mothering, the resulting domestic division of labor has helped to produce a significant social phenomenon, the sex segregation that characterizes the U.S. workplace.
Sex Segregation in the Workplace and Professionalism in ESL Teaching

The domestic division of labor helps to create sex segregation in the workplace (Tilly, 1985) and contributes to the gendered character of occupations like ESL teaching. Once an occupation becomes predominantly female it is marked by other characteristics. Bose and Rossi (1983), in a study of the status rankings of different occupations, have noted that work done primarily by women has an average prestige rating 12 points lower than work done primarily by men. The effects of sex segregation in the workplace has important consequences for women: lower pay, less retirement income, less on-the-job training, less long term occupational mobility and perhaps greater job stress and a lesser share of power within marriages (Reskin and Hartmann, 1986).

It is difficult to establish a straight line relationship between sex segregation in the workplace and ESL teaching, but the fact that it is a primarily female occupation means that it will be affected by the domestic choices that particularly affect women, especially childcare. The fact that part-time work is advantageous for women who have assumed primary childcare responsibilities has ramifications for all ESL teachers, no matter what their sex or childcare responsibilities. Employers may not be persuaded to offer full-time work and higher salaries to ESL teachers if they can get part-time teachers at lower salaries. If there are always women who need work that they can combine with child care there may always be a supply of part-time teachers. The solutions to this predicament are societal as well as professional.
The need for societal solutions also affects the long standing drive for professionalism in ESL teaching. Participants carried out their work in a society that has shown a tendency not to regard work that is done primarily by women as professional (Apple, 1986). Throughout this dissertation ESL teaching has been referred to as a profession. This word is used partly for convenience and partly to honor ESL teachers' long struggle for that status. However, it is a term that sociologists try to define with some degree of precision and it has a series of problems related to it.

The question of who is entitled to professional status was early examined by Flexner (1915) who pointed out the problems that arise when everyone from doctors to trapeze artists refer to themselves as professionals. Etzioni (1969) has observed that the boundary that separates the professional and non-professional is unclear, but notes that its presence is partly established by the ability of people on either side to correctly place themselves and others in relation to the boundary. He notes that problems may occur when a group designates itself professional and that a sense of anomie may develop growing out of a suspicion that something has been claimed that is not warranted.

Etzioni also observes that when a group seeks professionalization it runs the risk of dividing itself since high status members will tend to separate themselves from the rest as they draw close to crossing the boundary into professionalism. The result of this will be a weakening of
the group as a whole. Marylin Villard, a participant working at the university level, made a perceptive comment on the notion of splitting off

...One of the things that bothers me about [ESL happened the other day]. I went to see a play after class and on the way home I gave a ride home to a friend who had met me there and a friend of hers whom I didn't know. She let me know that her husband was an adjunct professor at [our university] and also a trustee and she asked me what I did there. I said I taught English to foreign students and foreign faculty and somewhere along the way she said, "Oh, you teach English as a second language" as if to say, I can't explain it, but it was sort of lower on the social scale than her husband teaching dumb old accounting. I just had that feeling. It wasn't up there with teaching French or teaching philosophy and I almost started to explain and excuse and I just kept quiet because I realized what I was doing. Instead of saying "I teach English as a second language" I had made it sound a little more glamorous. I sort of socially elevated myself.

Marylin Villard

In the incident that she recounted, Marylin Villard considered trying to split herself off from the low status associated with ESL teaching. Splitting off could occur in ESL teaching and if the analyses of at least one sociologist are correct it is possible that the majority of those who split off would be male members of the profession. Jeff Hearn (1982) has studied the development of professions and concluded that it has been a process with a long history in which males have taken over the societal roles of females. Thus the ministering that women performed in the reproductive and emotional spheres of ancient agrarian communities has evolved so that the mid-wife, priestess and wise-woman of earliest history have become the male doctor, clergyman and lawyer of the present day. He asserts that the female "semi-professions" of today are
undergoing the same transformation and that when they become professions they will also become male. He analyzes the process noting that the establishment of professional codes, a current goal in ESL teaching, is one step on the way to male takeovers.

The introduction of professional codes into the semi-professions may increase the status of individual women, but in its wake brings the practical problem of career continuity, dual roles, dual career families and so on. Most importantly, however, the establishment of professional codes contributes to the possibility of more men entering the ranks. The acceptance of masculinized version (sic) of behavior in dealing with emotionality not only makes such jobs more appealing in themselves to men, but also increases their status in the market. Thus indirectly they become 'more acceptable' to men as careers. The entrance of men into women's semi-professions has been seen in nursing, social work and teaching. Once in men are available, of course, to enter the more prestigious jobs (p. 194).

What Hearn has done is to describe a splitting off scenario similar to that postulated by Etzioni. In the situation that Hearn describes, the split along the lines of status is accompanied by a split between male and female. Such a scenario is not impossible to imagine in ESL teaching. In fact, Alastair Pennycook (1989) has asserted that such a split already exists in second language education, dividing high status primarily male academics from lower status primarily female teachers.

Participant Paul Green indicated that perhaps some opportunities for male splitting off exist in ESL. He felt that being a male in a profession dominated by women had both advantages and disadvantages. "I don't feel
I'm very good at networking in ESL because I'm odd. It certainly has its benefits and it's a lot easier to get noticed. Male nurses become administrators faster than female ones do overwhelmingly."

Blaber and Tobash (1988) in an employment survey of the TESOL organization touched upon this issue when they noted a category of respondents to their questionnaire that they labeled "leaders". This group was composed of officers of the organization and it was one of only two groups in which there were more male than female respondents. This was also a group in which a high percentage of respondents held full time positions. These findings would indicate that, in spite of the female composition of ESL teaching, men may be represented out of proportion in prestigious positions, something that could lay the groundwork for a splitting off action.

There are other measurements that help to assess the relative positions of males and females in the ESL profession. One would be in the number of males and females who have been presidents of TESOL, the ESL professional organization. A count of this group reveals 13 males and 10 females. Another way in which males and females in ESL might be measured would be in authorship of work that is highly regarded in the profession. In an article (Haskell, 1987) in which 22 ESL teacher trainers were asked to pick the 10 most important books for ESL teachers, 34 entries appeared more frequently than any others. Of these entries 20 were attributed to male authors and 13 to female. In all of the categories above, men outnumber women. However there is an important category
associated with expertise in which women predominate and that is the articles in TESOL Quarterly. In the years 1986, 1987 and 1988 there were more women than men authors of featured articles in this professional journal. The relative percentages were 61% for females and 39% for males.

Some of the theories of professionalization discussed above and some of the figures compiled regarding male and female distribution in ESL teaching suggest that it would be possible for the drive toward professional status in ESL to result in male dominance. If such a split were to develop males might become identified with the technical culture of ESL teaching and females with the personal culture.

However, it seems more likely that the aspect of gender that will be most troubling to the profession will not be a male/female split within the profession but rather a general tendency for everyone in the profession, both male and female, to suffer from society's hesitancy to grant professional status or expertise to work that is done primarily by women. As Michael Apple (1986) has written: "women's work is considered somehow inferior or of less status simply because it is women who do it" (pp. 57-58).

**Male Perspectives on ESL Teaching**

Men also do the work of ESL teaching and some of the men who participated in this study expressed interesting male perspectives on the profession. Men in ESL are in the minority and both Paul Green and Frank
West commented on this. They noted how their minority status was brought home to them in professional meetings where workshops often had only two or three men among a room full of women. Frank West, who had a lifetime commitment to teaching, had observed the gendered composition of the profession at an early age.

From the minute that I stepped into a school, I knew that that was for me. I always wanted to be a school teacher, from first grade, from my earliest memory.... I think for a long time I was thinking of being an elementary school teacher, because I was in elementary school. Somewhere in high school I thought, "No." I think what's interesting is, in elementary school I was in a parochial sister school and so I liked it, but when I got to high school it was also a parochial school, but with priests. I think I thought, "Oh, this is where a grown up man belongs, so I'll be a high school teacher."...

[ESL has] been an attractive field for women, so that I do have a lot of women friends through that.... I'm comfortable with women, to the point that I'm probably more comfortable with women than with men, especially in terms of teaching. I find a lot of men don't have the same attitude toward teaching I do. A lot of men would rather be doing something else and they are teaching because they kind of fell into it or they like the summer off. I like the summer off, too, but it's not my main focus of teaching. So that it works out pretty well for me that it's a lot of women who are my fellow teachers.

Frank West

Frank West had an appreciation of the women who were frequently his colleagues. Paul Green shared Frank West's appreciation of the serious attitude that women had toward teaching. At the same time he was aware that the female composition of his profession was one reason for its low
status and this was something that was beginning to anger him. Like Frank West he loved teaching, but he missed male companionship.

Being an ESL teacher is a pink collar ghetto job and it has traditionally been and still to a large extent is done by women and gay men and as such it has all the disadvantages that the discrimination against women has created in other jobs like nursing and secretarial work. It's something that's tremendously undervalued and underpaid and I'm just kind of sick of being undervalued and underpaid....

The plusses of it are that women take their work seriously in a different way than men do. Some of us seem to be more earnest about it. When I meet these white guys in suits from the rest of the university, as the administrator types, they seem kind of crass and low and underhanded and treat what they're doing as a game. Whereas women seem less prone to do that...

I think being a man in a predominantly female profession I always kind of feel otherly. It mostly influences me in the sense that I feel that I get less collegiality out of it than I would out of an area that would have more men in it.... Because my homelife is fairly constrained I just miss male company in the ways of being with men.  

Paul Green

Paul Green noted that there were many gay men in ESL teaching and this assessment was shared by Frederick Haussman, a participant who was gay and whose profile appears in Chapter Four. In Haussman's life it was possible to see how the pain of social discrimination interacted with the difficulties of ESL teaching. He was fired from a job overseas because he was gay. When he returned to this country he was glad to settle in a large city where he was able to pursue his lifestyle openly, but found that the salary of an ESL teacher and the part-time structure of jobs in higher
education made it difficult to live in that setting. Although his present job was a welcome change from his part-time experience "piecing together junk work" he felt that the stresses of that job would hasten the progress of AIDS, with which he has become afflicted.

The tragedy of Haussman's story does not permit conclusions about the situation of other gay men who work in ESL, but it indicates that to the extent which the profession is able to establish good working conditions and continue to convey a respect for a variety of cultural choices it will make conditions better for gay men - and for all of its members. Haussman's view of the importance of acknowledging sexual identity parallels current principles in ESL teaching that encourage students to acknowledge and value more than one culture.

Summary

Gender was a force in the lives of the participants. It was a factor in classroom roles where the social role of mothering was frequently seen as part of ESL teaching. Participants also encountered gender roles in the lives of their students, occasionally highlighting a conflict between the teacher's values and the student's culture.

The traditional domestic division of labor has had an historic legacy as well as a personal legacy in terms of the choices made by participants with primary childcare responsibilities. Attitudes toward work that is done primarily by women indicate possible negative effects that the
profession will encounter in its efforts to earn an acknowledgement of expertise and professional status. Males, as minority members of the profession, have perspectives on ESL teaching that are affected by gender, some of which indicate specific dilemmas for gay men.
CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study has sought to understand the experience of ESL teaching from the teacher's vantage point. It has done so in the belief that in revealing their own experience, individuals illuminate the issues of their work - the problems that affect it and the strengths that sustain it. The study initially set the background for an exploration of the teacher's vantage point by examining the climate of uncertainty in which ESL teaching takes place. In moving on to look at the actual experience of teachers a richer and deeper understanding of ESL teaching developed.

This richer and deeper understanding revealed that the ESL teachers who participated in this study drew upon important strengths. They also faced substantial obstacles. Many of these obstacles can be traced to a single theme: exclusion. The study participants faced problems of professional exclusion and these problems were accentuated by issues of language and gender. They also suffered from institutional exclusion, a situation that was further complicated by the societal exclusion experienced by their students.
The Implications of Professional Exclusion: Issues of Language, Caregiving and Gender

The study participants were teachers who were affected by their exclusion from power and professionalism. Professionalism has been sought in ESL teaching because it promotes better instruction, but also because it helps to redress the low status of ESL in academic institutions. It has been previously noted that professionalism is a term that sociologists try to use with some care, although it is not easy to pin down in precise terms. It is not possible to use the term with a great degree of rigor in ESL teaching because it has to embrace a range of work that covers elementary school to the university. People who work at various levels within that range have different rankings on measurements of prestige and professionalism. The term is used in the following discussion to refer to the desire of ESL teachers to be accorded some of the accoutrements of professionalism: a recognition of their skills, an entitlement to decent working conditions, a chance to have a voice in determining their own position within their academic institutions and a degree of power in determining the direction of the institutions themselves.

Because of its linkage with power, it is no surprise that professionalism in ESL teaching has been tied to qualities that, in this society, connote power: expertise and specialization. In spite of this, the experience of the participants revealed that their behavior was frequently characterized by qualities that are not not associated with expertise,
specialization or power. One example of this is that the participants often
did not appear as people who were employing exclusive practices
unavailable to those in other specialties, but rather as people who had
been in other specialties themselves and who were able to draw upon
those specialties in their ESL teaching. They took an approach to their
work that enabled them to integrate past experiences in other fields of
teaching, language and language learning.

The kind of integrated approach that the participants displayed may
not reflect traditional notions of specialization, but it is highly
consistent with a concept of learning and teaching often referred to as the
whole language approach, something that is gaining ground in work with
first language learners and just becoming felt in ESL (Rigg, 1990). Whole
language approaches are not a set of pedagogical techniques as much as
they are an understanding of how language is learned and used in a variety
of settings that range from pre-school to adult education.

With very young children, for example, a whole language approach to
literacy would treat the learner as a whole, a child who acquires a
knowledge of the purposes of literacy in many settings, not just in school
(Taylor, 1983). Whole language approaches to skills such as reading
consider the whole learning context in which the skill takes place
(Cochran-Smith, 1984). Whole language approaches also would encompass
views of writing such as those that involve the composing process of
college ESL students (Zamel, 1982, 1983).
The wholistic nature of these approaches supports the integrated views of teaching and language adopted by participants. The experience of the participants indicates that concepts of whole language and whole learners need to be accompanied with an appreciation of whole teachers. The teachers who participated in this study were individuals who approached language teaching based on experiences that were part of their whole lives, not something that occurred simply in the context of the ESL classroom.

Whole language approaches may result in an academic climate that offers support for the integrated view of language and teaching displayed by participants. Such approaches could permit ESL teachers to integrate their experiences in language and teaching in a way that provides status and connotes specialization. This would have the advantage of permitting ESL teachers to claim an expertise that offers substantial congruence between their own personal synthesis of experience and the technical culture of their specialty.

The terms "personal synthesis" and "technical culture" have been used to by Dan Lortie (1975) to describe two aspects of public school teaching. Lortie has urged teachers to give more attention to developing a technical culture. The experiences of the participants in this study indicate the importance using personal synthesis to inform the technical culture.

One way in which personal synthesis could inform technical culture would be by changing the fragmented way in which language is treated in
the colleges and universities that educate future ESL teachers. In these institutions, language is divided up among many departments: foreign language, psychology, linguistics, communications, education, English and writing. It is too much to expect for all these departments to be brought together under one umbrella, but there should be a greater effort to develop interdisciplinary undergraduate courses that tie together the general understandings of language that unite all language-related study.

The existence of such courses would permit ESL teachers who come to the field from a variety of disciplines to have a shared background in language. One logical concomitant of this would be to encourage teacher education programs in ESL to be offered primarily at the graduate level. This would enable commonalities in language to be examined at the undergraduate level and the aspects of language specific to ESL to be taken up at the graduate level. Such a development should have the beneficial side effect of prompting researchers and teacher educators to more systematically consider just what aspects of language are specific to ESL.

This study has pointed out that the participants were people who integrated their diverse experiences in language and teaching as they carried out their work in ESL. Portraying them in this fashion has not been done to rob them of expertise. Although their training was in diverse areas of language and teaching, the participants in this study had specialized knowledge in these areas and the background of many included graduate degrees in ESL. They were people who had a technical culture. What is being urged here is that the technical culture of ESL teaching, as
it is developed and defined in public codes and standards, be congruent with the broad features of the personal syntheses that are created in the actual experience of ESL teachers.

Ultimately a technical culture of ESL teaching that is congruent with personal syntheses will have to incorporate into it some aspect of caregiving. In the long run, concepts of expertise and professionalism in ESL teaching are likely to be more viable if they take into consideration the caregiving aspects of the work. This is in spite of the fact that in the world of professionalism that ESL teachers hope to join caregiving does not carry much clout.

How to reconcile the low status of caregiving with a search for the high status of professionalism presents a dilemma for ESL teachers. If they divorce themselves from caregiving they run the risk of losing psychic rewards and of perhaps being less effective language teachers. If they maintain the linkage with caregiving, they are faced with an uphill battle to change the way in which caregiving is regarded in the larger society. However, the greatest long term rewards will probably be gained from the uphill battle.

Caregiving, whether it comes in the form of emotional support, cultural know-how, or the protected environment of the ESL classroom is likely to remain a large, and for many, a rewarding component of ESL teaching. ESL teachers should believe in the caregiving aspect of their own experience and they should express this belief by studying it.
Affective variables that contribute to the emotional climate of language acquisition have been recognized as an important element in that process. Krashen (1982) has stated that most studies that have examined affective variables deal with factors that fall into three categories: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. In many cases the caregiving components of ESL teaching relate to these affective variables and ESL teachers can contribute to the study of them.

ESL teachers should seize the opportunity to better understand an activity that is important to them. They need to systematize their knowledge of how caregiving contributes to language learning. They need to know when there is too much of it and when there is too little of it. Most of all they need to be able to incorporate caregiving into their teaching in ways that are advantageous to students without being destructive of the teacher's own time and energies.

Systematic study of the caregiving component in ESL teaching is the most likely way to incorporate it into definitions of professionalism. At the same time, the problem is complicated by the association of caregiving with women and the excluded position that women have occupied in relationship to power in general and professionalism in particular.

The bond between caregiving, low status and work done primarily by women has been explored by Michael Apple (1986). In his study of public school teachers he notes that when a predominantly female profession
places a continued emphasis on caregiving it can represent both a victory and a loss. It represents a victory in that it is an appropriate response to lived experience, but a loss in that it perpetuates "categories that partly reproduce other divisions that have historically grown out of patriarchal relations" (p. 49). Apple notes that what are needed are "ways that maintain the utter importance of caring and human relationships without at the same time reproducing other elements on that patriarchal terrain" (p. 52).

Apple is aiming at something that enables predominantly female professions to retain the caregiving qualities that are associated with women and at the same time permits status and acknowledgement of skill. However, he notes a societal unwillingness to accord professional recognition to work that is done primarily by women. It should be noted that individual women can gain status if they enter a high prestige male profession (Bose and Ross, 1983). However, professions that are predominantly female have a limited ability to confer status on their members. ESL teaching is a predominantly female profession and both male and female members suffer from its limited ability to confer status.

It is easier to analyze the interaction of gender, caregiving and status than it is to outline the steps that might actually change that interaction. In Britain, in 1986, a women's group called "Women in TEFL" held its first conference with one of the avowed aims of the group being to improve the status of women teachers of EFL and ensure equal opportunities for the promotion of women (Florent and Walter, 1989). Such a course of action
might work for women in the United States. Although both men and women suffer when ESL teaching lacks status, it may be that women, as those who are most intimately involved in the interaction of gender, caregiving and status, will have the greatest motivation to work for change.

It is hard to recommend specific courses of action that will permit the interactions between women, caregiving and gender to be turned to the advantage of the ESL teaching profession. There are some obvious solutions such as greater opportunities for women in the workplace and child-care options that would alleviate the effects of the domestic division of labor. However, such solutions could improve the overall situation of women without either affecting the status of predominantly female occupations or ensuring that the concepts of caregiving become consistent with prestige in society as a whole.

The association of caregiving and women affects ESL teaching because it is an association that society makes. However, that is not the basic association. In ESL the connection that is ultimately significant is the one between caregiving and language acquisition. The gendered associations of society complicate this fundamental connection, but they do not govern it. Some aspect of caregiving seems to be connected with language acquisition, at least to the point of maintaining the human connections that form the milieu for language use. How much caregiving is necessary in language acquisition, how much is enhancing and how much is counterproductive is something that needs to be considered not because of the connection between caregiving and women, but because of the
connection between caregiving and language. The caregiving experience that so many women possess may play an important role in the exploration and provision of caregiving in language acquisition, but it is not the governing factor.

Furthermore, caregiving is not an activity that is limited to women. Male participants in this study also performed caregiving roles. When a male teacher gave immigrant men tips on American barroom behavior, he was providing a type of care just as the female teacher did who told a pregnant student where to buy a crib. The protected environment of the language classroom performs a caregiving function in ESL whether it is a woman or a man who teaches in that classroom. Masculine sounding terms in language acquisition, terms such as communicative competence, schemata or scaffolding can embody some caregiving concepts.

As set forth here caregiving has broad parameters. Its presence in language acquisition has been noted, but neither the minimum that is necessary nor the maximum that is desirable has been defined. These parameters need to be searched out. The linkage of caregiving and women may complicate the search, and the territory may be unappealing because on the surface it seems to threaten traditional notions of professionalism. Ultimately those traditional notions will have to bend and that is seldom easy or fast, but in the end English language teaching will be better for it and ESL teachers will benefit from earning their status on a basis that endorses their experience.
Most of the difficulties that the present study has uncovered do not yield to simple solutions. The warning of Hearn (1982) that occupations become professional as they are taken over by men is a case in point. It is possible that such a development could occur in ESL teaching. By the same token, if more men were encouraged to enter ESL teaching, and if other occupations also adopted this integration of the sexes, there would be diminished sex segregation in the American workplace and fewer of the deleterious effects that accompany it. If this were to occur, however, it would mark the reversal of a phenomenon that has been stable since 1900 (Reskin and Hartmann, 1986) outlasting many significant changes in the workplace. Like other suggestions presented here, altering the gendered composition of ESL teaching involves complicated relationships to deeply rooted societal practices.

There are few simple answers in this study because the questions asked have not been simple. How will a predominantly female occupation gain status in society that doesn’t recognize skill in work done by women? How will work that contains a large component of caregiving come to be acknowledged as professional? How can people who integrate broad general backgrounds into their work earn recognition in a society that honors specialization rather than integration? One thing seems certain. To answer these questions ESL teachers have to move beyond the kind of professionalism embodied in traditional training procedures, program evaluation and certification standards. They have to find ways of redefining the standards themselves to incorporate the personal knowledge that grows out their own lives and work.
ESL teachers need to learn how to seek the same options for themselves that they are urged to foster in the acculturation processes of their students, options that promote choice within power structures. Just as learners need to acquire a second language without becoming unquestioning victims of the power structures embodied in that language, ESL teachers also have learn how to seek status without becoming victims of a power structure that defines professionalism in ways that do not reflect their own experience.

ESL teachers who are acquiring the tools of power in the broader society are like the ESL students described by Bronwyn Norton Peirce (1989) who are acquiring the tools of language. To the extent that both students and teachers learn that these tools, while useful, have been "historically and materially constructed to support the interests of a dominant group within a given society" they will be able to stand back from them critically and create new perceptions of self and social roles and as well as "possibilities for change and growth in their society" (p. 407).

An extrapolation of Peirce's analysis suggests that ESL teachers need to fight their battles on two levels: on a level that utilizes the tools that are available in existing social and academic arenas and on a level that utilizes a knowledge of life experience to help reshape those arenas. The search for recognition through professional standards represents a battle fought on the the first level. The whole language movement represents a
bridge between the two levels. When whole language approaches to teaching are advanced in the public arena of scholarship, ESL teachers can expect to gain traditional types of status. However, when whole language scholarship incorporates the life experience of teachers themselves, then the battle moves to another level and the terrain on which it is fought changes shape.

Changing the shape of the public arena will be particularly necessary where difficulties in ESL teaching are related to patterns of exclusion that have affected women. Alastair Pennycook’s (1989) recent attack on methodology as the product of a patriarchal structure of knowledge is indicative of the extent to which reshaping may have to go. The same kind of reconsideration of basic premises will be necessary in order to make caregiving a component of professional status in ESL teaching. The suggestions made here for a more systematic study of the role of caregiving in English language acquisition constitute only a small step toward reshaping notions of professionalism. However, the effects of that step will be magnified if it is made jointly by both ESL teachers and mainstream teachers.

The Implications of the Institutional Exclusion of ESL Teachers and The Societal Exclusion of ESL Students

One reason why ESL teachers need to work jointly with mainstream teachers to study the role of caregiving in English language acquisition is so that both can come to a better understanding of what aspects of this
behavior can be extended into the mainstream. Caregiving should be seen by both mainstream and ESL teachers not as a matter of good hearted intentions but as an element of language learning that can be understood and utilized in order to promote the success of second language students who move into the mainstream.

ESL and mainstream teachers need to work together to understand not just the effects of caregiving on the careers of ESL students in the mainstream, but the whole process of mainstreaming itself. They need to learn how the perennial educational problem of meeting standards is acted out in the careers of ESL students after they enter mainstream classes. The participants in this study wanted their students to meet institutional standards, but their understanding of how this was actually accomplished in the academic careers of ESL students was handicapped by a lack of interaction with the mainstream. Participants did not want to send what secondary school teacher, Frank West, called "unfinished products" into the mainstream. At the same time they recognized that some part of the finishing process occurred outside of ESL programs and in the mainstream itself.

In spite of the participants' sense that the language acquisition of their students continued after mainstreaming, and in spite of the clear need for mainstream teachers to become adjuncts of ESL, there were few institutional mechanisms that enabled participants to work together with mainstream teachers in order to help ESL students meet institutional standards. At the public school level Penfield (1987) has suggested that
one remedy for this is for teacher education programs to require that mainstream teachers take at least one course in dealing with second language students and that ESL teachers need to receive training in how to teach mainstream teachers to meet the needs of students with limited proficiency in English.

Another way of providing mechanisms to bring together ESL and mainstream teachers is through content courses that are jointly taught by mainstream teachers and ESL teachers. However, the time consuming nature of the coordination required between mainstream and ESL teachers in order to conduct content courses (Guyer and Peterson, 1988; Benesch, 1988) indicates that even if mainstream and ESL teachers come together to offer these courses, institutions will need to make time and money available for planning and teaching. It may be tempting for school administrations not to do this, but rather to rely on the willingness of ESL teachers to carry the burdens of interface on their own shoulders.

Carrying institutional burdens on their own shoulders was a visible predicament in the participants' experience. In addition to their bridge building efforts with the mainstream, the assumption of programmatic and administrative responsibilities were another example of extra work that participants often performed. One problem with taking on unacknowledged responsibilities is that they can become unconsidered as well as unacknowledged. Administrative work should be done with a consideration of its consequences and these consequences should be weighed in teacher education programs.
It is in teacher education that planning for the future logically takes place. It is possible that in the future, programmatic responsibilities in ESL teaching will be very different from the kind of start-up activities that originally helped to propel many of the study participants into administration. Future ESL teachers may need to exercise skills in altering existing programs rather than in creating new ones. The time to ponder these issues effectively is when the philosophical foundations for action are being laid. The role of administration in ESL teaching would be a highly appropriate topic for discussion at the graduate level of preparation if ESL courses, as suggested above, were organized so that language was treated in an interdisciplinary way at the undergraduate level and in its specialized aspects at the graduate level.

At all levels of ESL teaching, both those in ESL and their colleagues in the mainstream need to give attention to the larger problem that underlies the issues discussed here. That is the question of whether ESL teachers should be trying to compensate for their institutional exclusion through the assumption of extra duties. In order to do this the participants often exercised a variety of skills that should have placed them well up in the hierarchy of their institutions, but instead their actions usually went unrecognized and unrecompensed. It is unfortunately possible to see how suggestions for improving their situation could be subverted by the time honored solution of avoiding real changes and merely adding to the burdens of already overworked teachers in both ESL and the mainstream.
There is at least one area in which co-ordination with the mainstream can be achieved without great expenditures relatively simply: that is in the granting of credit for ESL courses. ESL teachers are on record as supporting this through the national professional organization. In advocating credit for their courses ESL teachers need to remember that it is not the hours of credit that count, but rather the ultimate effect on ESL students.

Gibson (1988) has described a high school situation in which the granting of credit for ESL students permitted them to accumulate enough credits to graduate without ever having taken a mainstream course. In order to solve this problem students had to be permitted to remain enrolled in the high school long enough beyond the normal period of attendance to complete mainstream as well as ESL courses. The lesson here is that the granting of credit for ESL courses has to be accompanied by institutional structures that make it worthwhile.

Most solutions designed to integrate the mainstream and ESL will require more time and money than does the granting of credit for ESL courses. Time and money will be needed if ESL teachers and mainstream teachers are to work together to enhance the success of ESL students in the mainstream. If ESL teachers are to continue to perform the double duty of teaching and administration then time and money will be required to see that both jobs are done well. Whether these resources become available will be influenced by the degree to which the broader society, which helps to create institutional attitudes, is committed to alleviating
not only the exclusion that faces ESL teachers, but to alleviating its deeper cause, the exclusion that affects ESL students.

The educational exclusion of second language students is one aspect of two long-standing debates in the United States. One debate concerns the economic and social choices available to people from minority cultures. Another debate concerns the obligations of the United States to foreign countries and their peoples. The kind of resources that are made available to ESL programs are partially a reflection of the philosophical and practical course of these debates.

If legislative action cuts back the funding that supports ESL programs, then it indicates a willingness to perpetuate the exclusion of ESL students. If school administrations choose to put their funds and efforts into other areas and not into ESL, then they too give a low priority to ESL students. If political action groups seek to decree English by fiat rather than by making real educational opportunities available to ESL students, then they too perpetuate exclusion. The society as a whole needs to change the priorities that are reflected in the shortfall of support given to ESL programs.

It has been particularly noticeable in this study that a large measure of the exclusion that affects ESL students is directed at Hispanics. The comments that participants volunteered regarding prejudice in institutions and communities, the results that materialized from a survey of mainstream teachers (Pennfield, 1987) and national figures on school
Liberated education is, for ESL teachers, not an abstract concept, but rather an urgent need to know how to create lessons that engage both students who have had little formal education and students who have had substantial experience and success in those settings. Here again teacher education programs will need to provide resources for the classroom. Teacher educators need to disseminate and augment knowledge about co-operative learning, process writing approaches, whole language literacy techniques and other pedagogical techniques that promote effective work in classrooms with diverse student populations.

Not all the problems related to the need for a better institutional integration of ESL speak to a need for a commitment from outside. The kind of conflicting attitudes that participants felt toward their institutional sponsors should also prompt an inward look. Most of the study participants worked in ESL programs that fell under the jurisdiction of larger programs that occupied a peripheral status in their academic institutions. In higher education this meant that they often were sponsored by continuing education or developmental education programs.
and in the public schools it meant that they were usually part of bilingual education programs. There were some participants who felt very supportive of these programs and some who did not express supportive attitudes.

To the extent that these conflicting attitudes are widespread, it will be difficult for ESL teachers to establish strong institutional alliances. In instances where teachers do not feel allied with their sponsoring programs, they may have to negotiate with their institutions from a relatively isolated position. In such cases the self-study guide developed by the TESOL organization may help them. Although this was not the original purpose of the guide, the description of its genesis and purpose given by Fox and Wintergerst (1989) indicates that it could be used in that way.

In the early 80s TESOL professionals were concerned about employment conditions, especially part-timers working under deplorable conditions. As ESOL programs of uneven quality were springing up, TESOL professionals realized the need for standards to differentiate quality programs from others.... The CPS [Committee on Professional Standards] also considered that the core standards could be used, for example, to work for academic recognition by raising the esteem in which ESOL programs [were] held or lobbying school districts for resources and trained teachers for ESOL programs. Most of all, the Committee wanted to emphasize that TESOL is an academic discipline, that its teachers are professionals, and that they should be treated as such by their institutions. (p. 11)
The self-study guide developed by TESOL is a useful instrument to help ESL programs improve themselves no matter what the state of their relationships within institutions. However, it would be particularly valuable for programs that were isolated from their logical institutional allies. A certain amount of isolation will probably always affect ESL programs. Since they are placed in different departments in different educational institutions across the nation it will probably always be difficult for them to adopt any sort of unified stance across the profession. In a imperfect situation, the TESOL self-study guide is a practical approach to overcoming low institutional status.

Although practical considerations may prompt ESL teachers to work in isolation to overcome their institutional exclusion, such isolation should not be cultivated. To overcome the obstacles that face them, ESL teachers must work to reorganize the social structures that create those obstacles. The same social structures create obstacles for other peripheral institutional programs and wherever a bridge can be built to those kindred programs it should be constructed and kept open by frequent use. The kind of deep seated change required to support ESL programs is best sought in the company of others who need the same changes.

Sources of Strength in ESL Teaching

The teachers who participated in this study faced obstacles and exclusion. On the other hand, they were supported by a substantial source of strength. They were reinforced in their work by the sense that they
were responding to the real and critical needs of their students. Not only were they rewarded by their sense of dealing with things that were vital and tangible, they also gained great pleasure out of the resources upon which they drew in order to meet those needs. They enjoyed bringing a cultural awareness to their work and having students who interested them and whom they appreciated. They liked being involved in the process of acculturation and for many of them nurturing activities were an important part of their lives. Perhaps most of all, the skills in teaching and in language upon which participants drew in order to meet student needs were rewarding in and of themselves.

The strength that the participants gained from responding to the needs of their students is significant. It differentiates them from workers in many other fields who are remote and alienated from their work, unable to feel that they are producing something tangible and worthwhile. It also differentiates them from teachers in other disciplines who often have to prepare their students for a future that seems unreal to the students themselves.

Without awareness of this source of strength the profession will not be able to protect itself against the forces that may undermine it. The obstacles to ESL teaching described above have many debilitating effects. From the point of view of the teachers themselves one of the worst possible effects would be the creation of adversarial relationships between them and their students, a sense that goals were no longer shared and that ESL teachers were not able to meet the needs of their students.
One of the problems for ESL teachers is that their sources of strength are frequently intertwined with problems. It has been mentioned previously that they are often stretched thin by their programmatic responsibilities and the burden of liaison work with the mainstream. At the same time, these elements of their work have a positive side. Dealing with the many facets of their programs was often exhilarating for the participants and contact with the mainstream can have the same invigorating effect. Michael Apple (1986) has talked about the dangers of confusing proletarianization and professionalization. ESL teachers need to be careful that in the search for professionalization they do not become proletarianized, defining their work in terms of narrow skills that are susceptible to control by others. It will not necessarily enrich them to be removed from programmatic responsibilities and liaison work. What they need is time and compensation adequate to cover the full scope of the job they do.

Final Thoughts and Implications for Other Research

It seems appropriate to summarize some final thoughts about the predicaments of the study participants by drawing upon images from language. Language is a force that both shapes and is shaped by the relationships that people have with the world around them (Ellis, 1987). ESL teachers are engaged in shaping and being shaped by their surrounding world. Their primary focus has recently been on efforts to shape
themselves and, like language learners, they have been molding themselves to a powerful culture, a culture that values professionalism.

This has been and continues to be a worthwhile endeavor. It helps to produce better instruction and greater institutional bargaining power. However, such efforts do not change the exclusionary contexts in which ESL teaching takes place. To change these contexts ESL teachers will have to go further and work to shape the world around them. They will have to help redefine the concept of professionalism so that it can include both women and men who are working in predominantly female occupations. They will have to build an understanding of the role of caregiving in second language acquisition and an acknowledgement of the whole language experience of teachers as well as students. They will have to work with non-ESL teachers to create a mainstream that offers ESL students genuine options.

This reshaping of the milieu in which ESL teaching takes place is something quite different than conducting a public relations campaign to advance the professional standing of ESL teachers. The larger question is whether the two efforts can proceed at the same time and whether they can serve each other. This should be possible. For example, the scholarship that contributes to professionalism also contributes to critical thinking about a new order (e.g. Clarke and Silberstein, 1988; Peirce, 1989; Pennycook, 1989). ESL certification standards, although they are aimed at establishing an ESL specialization, do at least to some degree acknowledge the breadth inherent in the actual experience of ESL teaching.
Ideas about teacher education are beginning to reflect a desire to understand how future teachers understand their own personal growth as teachers (Richards and Nunnan, 1990).

One of the best ways that ESL teachers can both utilize traditional power structures and simultaneously alter them is by building upon a knowledge of their own experience. The experience of the participants in this study, for example, revealed a common ground in which needs for traditional sources of power such as professionalism co-existed with a need to reshape those traditional sources of power to more nearly match existing behavior. It revealed strengths that support teachers in non-traditional ways, even while they seek traditional rewards.

There is a need for continued study of the experience of the individuals who are directly involved in ESL. Qualitative research methods can be utilized in order to do this and the methodology of this study would be useful in additional research. It could, for example, be used to expand the knowledge gained from the present study by including the community based settings that were not part of this work. The work of the present study could also be expanded to include a larger number of ESL teachers and a participant pool drawn from a different geographic area. The research method of the present study could also be used to include interviews with ESL tutors, volunteers, administrators and teacher educators. It would be highly profitable as a vehicle for understanding the experience of ESL students.
Future research needs to seek the insider's view, making personal experiential knowledge available to contribute to and reshape public bodies of knowledge. ESL teaching is a changing experience that defies permanent capture in codified terms. However, in spite of its elusive nature, it can be explored in the stories of those who do the work. It will be possible for us to conduct these explorations as long as we are able to draw upon the stories of teachers, remembering that teaching and stories go hand in hand for all ages and through the ages.
APPENDIX A

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM
WRITTEN CONSENT FORM
THE WORK OF ESL TEACHERS: A STUDY THROUGH PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERVIEWS

I.
My name is Sarah P. Young (Sally). I am a graduate student in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Massachusetts. I am a student in the Bilingual/Multicultural Program and I am specializing in English as a second language. I am asking you to participate in a study which will provide the material for my doctoral dissertation. The subject of the dissertation is the experience of ESL teachers working in Massachusetts educational institutions. I plan to talk to ESL teachers working in elementary schools, middle and secondary schools, community colleges and four year post-secondary institutions. In public reports of the pilot project and the dissertation, neither the specific location nor the participants will be mentioned by name. This is done to protect anonymity.

In carrying out this study I want to learn about the experiences that ESL teachers have had prior to becoming ESL teachers, their experiences working as ESL teachers and the meaning that they make of these experiences. I believe that the experiences of the study's participants and the meaning that they make of them will be a vital source of information for individuals who want a better understanding of the profession of teaching English as a second language. I feel that this understanding of the profession is important to people both inside and outside the ESL teaching profession.

I have already conducted a pilot study in which I have interviewed four ESL teachers. The material from these interviews will be used in conjunction with sixteen additional interviews. You will be one of those sixteen participants.

II.
I am asking you to participate in this study. I will conduct three, ninety minute interviews with you at intervals of about three days to a week. The first interview will center on your life history, especially as it relates to your becoming a teacher of English as a second language. The second
interview will center on your present experiences as you carry out your work. In the third interview I will ask you to reflect on the meaning that you make of these experiences. While these questions will provide the structure of the interview, my intent in the interviews is not to seek answers to specific questions but rather to stimulate discussion of your stories and a focusing on your experiences within the framework these questions provide.

III.
The interviews will be audio-taped on a cassette recorder and a written version of the interviews will be made. This will be done on a computer or typewriter and some of it will be done by a typist other than myself. I anticipate that materials from your interviews will be used in the following instances:

A. My doctoral dissertation
B. Written publications
C. Presentations to groups interested in English as a second language or research methodologies
D. Instructional purposes

In all written materials and oral presentations in which I may use materials from your interviews, I will use neither your name, names of people close to you nor the name of the place where you are teaching. All proper names that could provide a clue to your identity will be changed or inked out on transcripts, although they will be seen by the typist whom I hire to type the transcripts.

IV.
While consenting at this time to participate in these interviews, you may at any time withdraw from the actual interview process.
V. Having consented to participate in the interview process and having so done, you may withdraw your consent to have specific excerpts from your interviews used in any printed materials or oral presentations if you notify me within three weeks of your final interview. I will not offer you a chance to edit the final work.

VI. In signing this form you are agreeing to the use of the materials from your interviews as indicated in III. If I were to want to use the materials from your interviews in any ways not consistent with what is stated in III, I would contact you to get your additional written consent.

VII. In signing this form, you are also assuring me that you will make no financial claims on me for the use of the material in your interviews.

VIII. In signing this you are thus stating that no medical treatment will be required by you from the University of Massachusetts should any physical injury result from participating in these interviews.

I, ____________________________________________________________

have read the above statement and agree to participate as an interviewee under the conditions stated above

______________________________
Signature of Participant

______________________________
Date

______________________________
Interviewer
APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION
### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Participants</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Participants in Pilot Interviews</th>
<th>Number of Participants in Subsequent Interviews</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Age

- Under 30: 3
- 30-50: 15
- Over 50: 4

### Undergraduate Training

- Primary Undergraduate Training in English: 7
- Primary Undergraduate Training in Foreign Language: 7
- Primary Undergraduate Training in Education: 3
- Primary Undergraduate Training, Other: 5

### Master's Degree (Some participants had more than one.)

- In ESL (including as a subspecialty of another discipline such as linguistics or education)
  - degree less than 5 years old: 3
  - degree more than 5 years old: 2
- In Linguistics: 2
- In Bilingual Education: 2
- In Education: 5
- In Foreign Language: 2
- In English: 3
- Other: 1
- In Progress
  - ESL: 2
  - Other: 1
  - Doctorate (Linguistics): 1

### Bachelor's Degree

- 3
Institutional Level at which Participants Taught

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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
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<th>Males</th>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary &amp; Middle School</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Community College</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-year Institution</td>
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<td>3</td>
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Geographical Distribution of Participants within the State of Massachusetts

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Boston Area</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities under 20,000 population</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities 20,000-60,000 population</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities 60,000-100,000 population</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities (not Boston) over 150,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Experience in ESL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>3 years or less</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-10 years</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 10 years</td>
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</table>

Employment Conditions (some participants fell into more than one category)

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<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed at more than one place</td>
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</table>


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