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Exploring the Experiences of Hispanic ESL Students in ESL Programs

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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2016

Abstract

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MA, Queens College, 2009

BA, Baruch College, 2004

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Instructors of English as Second Language (ESL) at a private community college had raised concerns regarding Hispanic ESL students not developing sufficient English proficiency. The purpose of this single exploratory case study was to explore the phenomenon brought forward by ESL instructors and share the results with the ESL program and the college. The conceptual framework for this qualitative study was based on the classroom learning motivation theory suggesting that the environment in which a student is learning a new language also plays a major role in second language learning. Data collection was conducted through 3 ESL classroom observations and interviews with 15 community college students. A focus group with 7 different students was used to understand Hispanic ESL students' perspectives about their experience in the college-wide ESL program and issues students face in the ESL program. Data analysis consisted of thematic content analysis, constant comparison, and concurrent data collection and analysis until concept saturation occurred. The findings were that Hispanic ESL students were satisfied with the ESL program. Data triangulation formed 4 themes: students would like to use technology in the classroom, more instances for in-class conversation, to be corrected when they mispronounce a word, and have instructors who spoke Spanish. The recommendations include the creation of a policy to institutionalize professional development to help ESL teachers become aware of the issues that Hispanic ESL students face in the classroom in order to help students achieve English proficiency. This case study served as an example for other institutions to take the initiative learn how Hispanic ESL students perceive ESL instruction and filled the gap in research regarding Hispanic ESL students' perception of ESL programs.

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Dedication

To my mom, for making me go this far. And my sister, for proofreading once in a while.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank my doctoral chair for her support. Her guidance and patience helped me complete this project. Thank you very much and I hope future students will benefit from your expertise as much as I did! Also, thank you to Dr. McLean for your input and patience.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the experiences of Hispanic ESL students regarding the ESL program at a private urban community college in the northeastern United States. I this section I defined key terms, provided a literature review of current trends in second language learning, and pointed to gaps in research regarding second language learning. Additionally, I provided a rationale of the problem, evidence of the problem at a local level, evidence of the problem from the professional literature, the significance and the research questions guiding this study, the framework on which this study was based and the implications regarding this study.

Definition of the Problem

At this private community college, the ESL student population is about 75% Hispanic (B. M., personal communication, January 16, 2015). Despite taking the mandatory ESL classes, ESL instructors felt that Hispanic students whose native language were not English were not developing competence in English (W. M,; G. P.; A. N,; M. P.; R. C., personal communication, March 1, 2014). Hispanic, as defined by the 2010 Census Data, is an individual from any Spanish speaking country. As cited in de Lancer Julnes and Johnson (2011), the Census Bureau reported Hispanics to be the largest minority group in the United States. At the academic level, the inflow of Hispanic ESL students at the college seems to follow a new trend in immigration where in recent years international students are coming primarily from Latin American countries to study in the United States (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Accordingly, the National Reporting System (NRS,

2014) for Adult Education reports a high percentage of Latino students in ESL classes across the United States. ESL instructors at the research site had expressed their concern regarding the apparent lack of English competence from Hispanic ESL students and said that the situation has negatively affected Hispanic students because they feel lost in the classroom, and have minimum participation during class compared to ESL students from other countries (W. M.; G. P.; A. N.; M. P.; R. C, personal communication, March 1, 2014). Exploring how Hispanic ESL students experienced the ESL program at the college helped understand their apparent lack of English proficiency. The findings could help ESL instructors learn of the challenges that Hispanic ESL students face in order to better serve the Hispanic ESL community of the college.

Studies have shown that students' motivation to study English (and other subjects) diminish once individuals are in an actual educational setting (Berwick & Ross, 1989; de la Varre, Irving, Jordan, Hannum, & Farmer, 2014). Therefore, strong ESL programs are mandatory to keep students moving toward their goal of becoming proficient English speakers. As discussed by Gardner (2007) and Dörnyei (1994; 2001; 2014), a possible cause for the lack of students' motivation could be the lack of classroom learning motivation. Finn (2011) established that a positive learning experience is promoted by the right environment, learners' own experiences, and the weight of the instruction. Exploring how Hispanic ESL students at college experience the ESL program provided inside to the possible reason for the lack of English competence among Latino ESL students.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

In recent years, an increasing number of English language learners are attending college seeking to improve their English language skills (NRS, 2014; Young & Smith, 2006); and national statistics show that the enrollment of ESL students continues to grow at 9.4% rate of the total school population (Cellante & Donne, 2013). As noted by Young and Smith, although institutions that provide ESL instructions follow state content standards for teaching ESL, the standards do not indicate how ESL classes should be taught. As stipulated by the U. S. Department of Education (2014), the content standards define the outcomes of educational programs, but, as Young and Smith explained, the standards are only a foundation; a guide for institutions to develop their curricula, instruction and assessment methods, and curricula varies within a state depending on the learner population (Gardner, 2014).

Cellante and Donne (2013) noted that only four states require specific coursework from instructors of ESL, which means that the majority of institutions of higher education do not require preparation from ESL teachers; thus suggesting that some teachers might not be effectively prepared to teach ESL in higher education. For instance, in Illinois, a survey regarding early childhood programs to gauge the certifications of educators – including those serving the ESL population, conducted by the New Journalism on Latino Children, The Illinois Early Learning Council, and the Chicago's Latino Policy Forum found that half of the sample of the study (49.8%) were teaching English without the appropriate

endorsement in ESL (Bridges & Dagys, 2012). Likewise, Henrichsen (2010) referred to the large number of ESL instructors who lack professional preparation; while Chiu-Yin's (2009) found a trend in the number of untrained or inexperienced native English speaker teaching ESL. In light of the lack of a national or state uniform curriculum to teach English learners, and the lack of mandatory preparation for content area teachers on the education of English language learners, colleges and universities are free to develop their own method of ESL instruction. This project study focused on the ESL program of a private for-profit urban community college in the northeastern United States. The study gathered Hispanic ESL students' perceptions of the ESL program to explore how Hispanic ESL students at the research site experienced the ESL program. The findings of this study would help ESL instructors at the college learn the challenges that Hispanic ESL students face in order to better serve the Hispanic ESL population and help them develop English proficiency.

Although little research had been completed regarding Hispanic ESL students' participation (or the lack of) in ESL programs (Irias, 2011), the literature examined for this study suggested some possible causes that could be contributing to the lack of English competence from Hispanic students at the college. As discussed by Oxford and Shearing (1994), possible causes for this problem could be students' lack of integrative and instrumental motivation, the lack of appropriate classroom motivation, or a methodological problem. In research on second language acquisition, Gardner (1985) proposed that people have an integrative and instrumental motivation to learn a second language. While integrative motivation refers to the need of an individual to identify with the community

that speaks that language, instrumental motivation refers to an individual's learning another language to meet personal needs or goals. This study assumed that Hispanic students who enrolled in the ESL classes at the college had the right integrative and instrumental motivations to seek ESL instruction (that is why they were taking ESL classes); however, the Division of Arts and Sciences of the college needed to conduct a study to learn how Hispanic ESL students experience the ESL program in order to understand the lack of English competence from Hispanic students (as expressed by ESL instructors).

Another possible cause for the lack of English proficiency from Hispanic ESL students at the college could be related to classroom learning motivation. Dörney (1994, 2005) discussed educational factors as issues that could influence the degree of motivation that students exercise when learning a second language. For instance, Gardner (2007, 2010) proposed that educational context such as class atmosphere, the level of skills of the instructor, and the quality of the program are factors that would influence the level of motivation of ESL students when learning a second language. Even further, Alderfer and Alderfer (2011) included teaching conditions, such as the lack of professional development, as a factor that plays a role in second language learning. Conducting a case study on how Hispanic ESL students' perceive the ESL program at this community college helped learn how Hispanic ESL students view the ESL program and understand the lack of English competency from Hispanic ESL students.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

In colleges and public schools, ESL is a method used to teach English to students whose first language is not English. The concept is that teaching English to speakers of another language in an English-based environment will help students learn (and depending on age) assimilate English (Education Commission of the States [ECS], 2014). Although guidelines and theories about ESL have been written, educational institutions are free to develop their own ESL curriculum, and ESL instructors have different methods of instruction (Gardner, 2014; Young & Smith, 2006). In work regarding motivation on second language learning, Dörney (1994) discussed the importance of motivation in the ESL classroom in his theory of *learning situation* to refer to the level or type motivation ESL students experience in the classroom. According to Dörney, the class environment, the learning context, the teaching method, and even the classmates influence an individual's learning of a second language.

Because ESL instruction is not uniform across states or institutions, the method and success of such instruction varies from institution to institution. I this study I proposed to collect qualitative data about Hispanic ESL students' perceptions regarding the ESL program at a private community college in an urban community college in the northeastern United States. The data collected helped understand how Hispanic ESL students experience the ESL program of the institution.

Definitions

To better understand the key terms described in this study, the following definitions were provided from the standpoint of educational researchers and theorists.

ESL: English as a second language (Ford, Cabell, Konold, Invernizzi, & Gartland, 2012).

ESOL: English for speakers of other languages (Rhodes, 2013).

Hispanic: A Spanish-speaking person, especially one of Latin-American descent, living in the U.S. (Park & Yau, 2014).

Motivation: A concept that explains why people behave as they do (Farver, 2011).

L1: Native language (Chrabaszcz & Jian, 2014).

L2: Second language (Horng-Yi, 2014).

Latino: A Latin-American inhabitant of the United States (Olvera & Olvera, 2012).

SLA: Second language acquisition (Lui, Yu-Ju, & Jenkins, 2014).

Significance of the Study

The implementation of this qualitative case study could bring positive change in higher education. At a local level, the findings of this study could benefit the college's Division of Arts and Sciences under which the ESL Program is offered. The findings would help to understand Hispanic ESL students' perspectives of the ESL program. They would additionally assist ESL instructors to generate ideas to help understand the reasons behind the lack of English competence among Hispanic students at the research site. Because Hispanics are the largest minority in the United States (de Lancer Julnes & Johnson, 2011),

educational institutions may benefit from learning how Hispanic ESL students perceive ESL instruction in college classrooms in the United States. According to the literature, little research has been identified regarding Hispanic ESL students and ESL programs, therefore this study could help fill the gap regarding the lack of data available to identify how to reach to Hispanic students in the ESL classroom. Finally, the study may benefit all ESL students whose English language learning process will be improved by the findings.

Research Questions

Previous researchers have not distinguished the type of classroom motivation needed to engage ESL students throughout a program. Although some ESL programs seem to be more effective than others, there was still the need to investigate exactly what students want to learn when they enroll in English classes. So far, students only learn what leaders of educational institutions think students should be learning versus what students really want to learn. While it can be expected that ESL instruction varies from teacher to teacher (Young & Smith, 2006), the objective of this study was to explore how Hispanic ESL students view the ESL program in order to tackle the lack of ESL proficiency from Hispanic English learners at a private community college. The research questions guiding this study were:

1. What are Hispanic ESL students' perspectives of their experience in the college-wide ESL program?
2. What are some of the issues Hispanic ESL students experience while studying English as a second language?

Review of the Literature

Gardner (2007) referred to Krashen's (1982) differentiation between learning and acquiring a new language by emphasizing that learning a new language refers to the ability to learn the vocabulary and necessary grammatical rules to communicate with others, while acquisition refers to "making the language part of the self" (p. 12). Based on Krashen's explanation, Gardner defined learning a new language as learning vocabulary, grammatical rules, and pronunciation. For the purpose of this study, this literature review focused on Garner's definition of language learning and identified different aspects of language learning. This literature review focused on three main aspects of second language learning: the conceptual framework, motivation in second language acquisition, and factors that could interfere with learning a second language.

To find current and relevant academic and peer-reviewed articles relevant to this study, Walden University's library databases, JSTOR, and Google Scholar were used. The following Boolean combination were used to retrieve information: *Hispanics and ESL, Hispanics and second language learning, conceptual framework, conceptual framework and second language, language learning and motivation, Hispanics and ESL and motivation, Hispanics and ESL classrooms, ESL and motivation, second language and motivation, motivation theories, motivation and classroom, Latinos and lack of English, adult ESL and motivation, adult ESL learner, second language learning and barriers, ESL and interferences,* and *adult barriers and ESL*. Additionally, relevant professional books and educational websites were consulted. The majority of resources collected date from

research conducted within the five past years. Older research was also included when emphasis about a particular concept is needed and for the conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework

Dörnyei's (1994) theory of motivational conditions or classroom learning motivation in second language served as the basis for the conceptual framework of this study. Because I assumed that Hispanic ESL students respond the appropriate motivation that makes ESL students enroll in ESL classes at the college, I explored how Hispanic ESL students experience the ESL program at the research site by looking at the type of motivation that Dörney considers is needed in the classroom for ESL students to develop English competence. Dörney suggested that an individual initial motivation to learn a second language could be affected by the dynamics of the classroom. Therefore, for Hispanic ESL students, being motivated to learn a new language would not be enough because the environment in which the student is learning the new language also plays an important role in second language learning. Dörney proposed three parts to classroom motivation in second language learning that helped guide this study: (a) the first part related to the course itself (the syllabus, teaching material, and methods); (b) the second part referred to the teacher (the personality of the instructor, teaching style, and relationship with students); and (c) the last part dealt with the dynamic of the students in the classroom as a whole. These three parts constitute the basis for Dörney's theory of classroom motivation in second language learning.

Motivation for learning a second language has been a topic widely researched for decades (Dörney, 1994; Hudson, 2002; Oxford & Shearing, 1994; Richards, 1972; Rubin, 1975;); and researchers concur that motivation is the main component for learning another language. However, researchers have also found that motivation to learn a second language diminishes once individuals are in the classroom (Berwick & Ross, 1989; Miura, 2010). Consequently, classroom motivation has begun to play an important role in L2, with an increase in the role that teachers play in the classroom and the environment where language learning is taking place.

There are many reasons why people learn a second language, but the work of Gardener (1985) groups motivations in two main categories: integrative motivation (e.g., to identify with the community that speaks that language), and instrumental motivation (e. g., meet their needs and goals such as to get a job, talk to their children's teacher, etc.). However, Dörney (1994) proposed that an individual's depth of effort to learn the new language would depend not only on the extent to which the individual wants to learn it but also "the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (p. 516), which would refer to the instructional conditions or classroom motivation associated to second language learning. In education, classroom learning motivation refers to the appropriate conditions that could enhance students' success (Asiyari, 2014). Such conditions, Rhoades (2012) pointed out, comprise instructional practices that promote an individual's motivation to keep learning a second language such as teachers' relationship with students, a friendly classroom atmosphere, and connection with students' interests outside the class. For instance, similar

to Dörney's course-related component of classroom motivation, in a study of classroom-oriented motivation in L2 with 1,300 students and 27 teachers in South Korea, Guilloteaux and Dörney's (2008) concluded that one factor that keeps students motivated in learning a second language is motivation at the course level (e.g., teaching materials and how the teacher presents the subject matter).

Motivation and Second Language Learning

One of the most recognized theories of motivation in the field of second language learning belongs to Gardner (1985). According to Gardner, there is an integrative and instrumental motivation for learning another language. Integrative motivation answers to the need of an individual to identify with the community that speaks that language, and instrumental motivation has to do with meeting an individual's personal needs or goals such as learning a new language to get a job, talk to their children's teacher, etc. However, although motivation is one of the most important factors for learning a second language (Khamkhien, 2010), motivation can no longer be only thought of integrative and instrumental. For instance, the recent study of Gilakjani, Leong, and Sabouri (2012) on the role of motivation in learning and teaching English tackles the significant role that teachers have in all aspects of classroom motivation. Although it is true that in any classroom situation some students will learn faster than others and some students will stay motivated throughout the course, Gilakjani et al. also make the teacher responsible for the level of motivation that students maintain and demonstrate in the classroom.

Renninger's (2009) model to support and promote learning proposed the input that teachers, classmates, and classroom activities contribute to keep learners motivated over a period of time. Regarding classroom activities that contribute to keep language learners motivated, Bernard's (2010) study in L2 classroom setting found that in order for students to keep motivation towards the language, students also need to be motivated about the class. For instance, Bernard found that the number of fun activities during the class where closely related to students' decisions to continue their studies the following semester. Likewise, the quantitative study of Papi and Abdollahzadeh (2012) with 741 students and 17 teachers found that the level of motivation sustained by students while learning a second language was directly related with the instructors' motivational practices in the classroom. The findings of Bernard, and Papi and Abdollahzadeh's studies suggest that a learner's motivation to study a second language alone is not enough to keep the learner engaged and motivated through the experience. As Dörney's (1994) theory proposed motivation at the classroom level is also necessary for individuals to succeed in learning a second language.

Dörney's (1994) theory of classroom motivation has been recently approached by Gardener (2007, 2010), Alderfer and Alderfer (2011) and Quentin (2009). Gardner recognized that the educational context of second language learning (quality of the program, skills of the instructors, and class atmosphere) would influence the level of motivation and effort placed by an individual in learning a second language. Similarly, Alderfer and Alderfer's (2011) research on the conditions that optimize ESL learning integrated the program (similar to Dörney's course-related component) and teaching

conditions (similar to Dörney's teacher-related component) as factors that could play a role in an individual's motivation to learn a second language and develop proficiency.

Motivation in the ESL Classroom

Dörnyei (1994) discussed motivation at the classroom level when he referred to learning situation to cover the classroom's environment, teaching context and methods, teacher's personality, and group interaction. Although Gardner (1985) and other researchers explored the importance of motivation outside the classroom (intrinsic and instrumental motivations), recently, studies are focusing on the type of motivation that Dörnyei proposed: classroom motivation. The study of Engin (2009) through questionnaires and achievement tests to understand the type of motivation that students need to learn a second language revealed that ESL learners should be properly motivated in the learning environment (the classroom); and Kaboody's (2013) exploration of seminal work regarding motivation in second language suggests that such motivation should come from the teacher. Similarly, in the study of Öztürk and Ok (2014) about L2 and classroom motivation, the reserchers found that motivated teachers as well as teachers that promote motivational behaviors are more likely to increase achievement among L2 learners.

Despite the vast research on second language learning and motivation in L2, there is little research to cover motivation of ESL students in the classroom. Some strategies for motivating L2 learners in the classroom have been analyzed by Ajideh, Rahimpour, Amini, and Farrokhi (2013), Papi and Abdollahzadeh (2012), and Sung (2013), however, more research is needed in American territory. The lack of research to cover motivation of ESL

students in the classroom drew attention to the strategies proposed by Dörney and Csize (1998) after conducting an empirical survey to collect data regarding what motivational strategies were more effective for motivating language learners in the classroom. Dörney and Csize recommend 10 strategies that teachers should observe to motivate their students, and that Dörney and Csize call the Ten Commandments for Motivating Language Learners. The most important components of those strategies are that instructors should be role models when displaying motivation as motivated teachers would motivate students; teachers should create a pleasant classroom atmosphere that promotes participation and helps fight students' anxiety; and class activities should be interesting and significant to students.

Researchers have established that for adults, learning a second language is a "complex process that develops over an extended period of time" (Connecticut Administrator of Programs for English Language Learners, 2011, p. 5). Additionally, the capacity of learning a second language would vary from student to student depending of experiences, living conditions, literacy, and culture. For instance, research has found that a student's immediate environment affects the incentive of learning another language (Chiswick & Miller, 2001). Correspondingly, Irias (2011) found that Hispanic students who live in areas of high concentration of Hispanics and with easy availability to Spanish media would have a lower incentive to develop English competence. Likewise, Altenaichinger's (2003) theory of cognitive approach argues that sufficient exposure to the second language should make the task of recalling L2 automatically. However, exposure to

English in New York City is rather voluntary as, reported by the Census Bureau (2010), New York City is the city with the highest concentration of Hispanics, which makes Spanish media readily available and the use of English within Hispanic communities minimal, if not unnecessary. As discussed in Kaboody's (2013) research on L2 motivation, the lack of exposure to the second language would prevent individuals from learning, which could be a case among Hispanic ESL students in New York City.

Interferences in Second Language Learning

Although some students learn a second language faster than others, there are some situations in and outside the classroom (some beyond the control of the student) that could influence the process of learning a new language. Rogers and Horrocks (2010) highlighted the concept of total environment to refer to the social environment and the mental world individuals create for themselves as elements that influence the learning of a second language. Rogers and Horrocks' (2010) total environment could be divided in internal and external factors that interfere or influence an individual's experience of an ESL program. Internal factors refers to personal experiences that the student brings to the classroom; while external factors "are those that characterize a particular language learning situation" (Shoebottom, 2015, para. 9), such as the curriculum, instruction method, and access to native speakers.

Krashen (1982), language acquisition theorist, developed six hypotheses regarding second language acquisition. Of those theories, the *Affective Filter* hypothesis could be identified as an internal factor that influences an individual's learning process of a second

language. Krashen identified *affect* as an emotional reaction (such as anxiety, attitude, and self-confidence) as affective variables that contribute to achievement in second language learning. Krashen argued that students of another language create an emotional *screen* that prevents learning. In the classroom, this screen (or affective filter) can be raised by anxiety (of speaking in front of others), boredom, or the student's any other emotional state. Naturally, some individuals have a stronger filter than others which is one of the reasons some people learn a second language while others cannot. For instance, a study by Gürsoy and Akin (2013) among ESL Russian students aged 10-14 found that younger children were the less anxious than older students regarding ESL. Gürsoy and Akin's study would suggest, then, that adults, as they are older, would be even more anxious about learning English because, as stated by Johnstone (2009), children have lower psychological barriers when learning. Anxiety could be categorized under one of Dörney's (1994) classroom situations that could enhance or hinder motivation in L2. As Dörney (2005) and Kunt and Tüm (2010) noted, anxiety influences development in second language learning and negatively affects achievement among ESL learners. Subsequently, Mahmod and Iqbal's (2010) comparison of anxiety levels between males and females in foreign language learning found that the lower the level of anxiety, the higher the L2 achievement (among both sexes). Also, in a study with 149 undergraduate students in their second and sixth semesters studying English, Awan, Azher, Anwar, and Naz (2010) found that anxiety, especially to speak in front of others and mispronounce words, decreased achievement in

L2. These findings support Dörney's (1994) that a classroom setting or atmosphere would influence the degree of motivation a student would place toward learning another language.

Another inference to second language learning is cognitive factors. The findings of a study to investigate the relationship between L1 literacy skills and L2 by Feinauer, Hall-Kenyon, and Davison (2013) discussed that ESL students transfer literacy skills from L1 to L2, to which Gardner (2007) identified as consolidation during language learning. In an investigation of the relationship between L1 skills in elementary school and L2 learning in high school, Sparks (2009) found that high proficiency learners in L2 had exhibited strong skills in L1 in elementary school. Likewise, the study of Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, and Humbach (2012) showed that the stronger the L1 skills the stronger the achievement in L2 because students bring their cognitive skills from L1 to L2 and they can create links. Similarly, the work of Young-Scholten (2013) identified low level of schooling in native language as a challenge to acquire competence in a second language. Hence, research finding concur that if a student did not have a solid consolidation stage in the first language, it would be harder to make any connection when trying to learn a second language. Ford, Cabell, Konold, Invernizzi, and Gartland's (2013) research on the heterogeneity in literacy development among 2,300 participants pointed to the importance of cognitive skills such as orthographic knowledge as predictors of acquiring English competence.

The literature (Asiyari, 2014; Gardener 1985; Khamkhien, 2010) has shown that students respond to certain types of motivation to engage in learning a new language.

However, research has also shown that if the appropriate level of motivation is not maintained (by the student or the environment), students become demotivated (Dörnyei, 2001; Baniasad-Azad & Ketabi, 2013; Sato, 2011; Tae-Young & Hyo-Sun, 2012). Dörnyei described demotivation as a decrease in motivation due to some external sources. Besides personal distractions that could demotivate ESL students (e.g., watching TV instead of completing an assignment), Dorney and Csizer (1998), through an empirical study designed to collect classroom data on motivational strategies, came up with three teacher-related motivational factors that could demotivate students: behavior, personality, and teaching style. Similarly, the study of Baniasad-Azad and Ketabi found teaching style a demotivation factor; and Tae-Young and Hyo-Sun's study attributed student demotivation to the teacher among other factors.

In an international survey created by Organism for Economic Co-operation and Development (2014) regarding teaching and learning, *teaching conditions* is referred to as the lack of training and professional development of instructors. The study of Yoon, Duncan, Scarloss, and Shapley (2007) conducted with 1,300 students to address the effect that professional development (or the lack thereof) had on student achievement found that even moderate professional development had a positive effect on student achievement. On a similar note, Alderfer and Alderfer (2011) considered that the lack of professional development negatively influences teachers' perceptions of what students can and cannot learn because, and, as reported in a study by Sivan and Chan (2013), teachers' expectations of students outcomes exert great influences in the amount of effort students put into a

discipline and teachers' interactions with students. Teaching conditions were also an external influence identified as a barrier to successful completion of ESL programs in the study conducted by Irias (2011) of Hispanic ESL students at different ESL program sites in Las Vegas, Nevada. According to Shirbagi (2010), ESL teachers must understand the learning abilities and motivational factors of their students in order to successfully assist ESL students in learning a second language.

The Effectiveness of ESL Programs

The U. S. Department of Education (2014) does not stipulate how ESL classes should be taught to adult learners. Rather, the Department of Education provides the outcomes of ESL programs, but institutions of higher education are free to develop their own curricula and teaching methods (Young & Smith, 2006). As Irias (2011) explained, some institutions would employ highly trained instructors while other institutions would not. Also, some ESL programs would allow instruction in the student's native language whereas other ESL programs would ban the usage of the native language in the classroom at all. Although studies have attested to the success of some ESL programs (Gampert & Jones, 2013; Roessingh, 2004), the diversity of ESL programs makes research difficult to pin point to the effectiveness of the methodology of one ESL program only. Thus, a fit-all effective ESL program is yet to be created.

Implications

Although many theories have been developed regarding what would keep students in the classroom motivated, little research had actually been conducted specifically to learn

what Hispanic ESL students find meaningful. By conducting this case study, instructors and leaders at the research site would be able to learn how Hispanic ESL students particularly experience ESL programs and understand what motivates Hispanic ESL students in the classroom to develop English proficiency. By understanding what motivates Hispanic ESL students, ESL instruction could be offered to target the college's large Hispanic population and increase English proficiency among Hispanic ESL students.

Because the results of this study will be shared with the Division of Arts and Sciences under which the ESL program operates, I will collaborate with the dean of the division to develop a professional development plan that addresses the findings of the study. First, I will recommend standardizing professional development through the creation of a policy that institutionalizes professional development for ESL instructors. Next, I will create a timeline for the creation of the policy that will include policy and program recommendations based on the findings of the study. Once a policy for professional development is created, I will move forward with the design and agenda for professional development.

Summary

The literature review suggested that students' motivation to learn a second language alone is not enough to ensure competence in the new language and classroom motivation is equally important when learning a new language (Dörney, 1994; Gilakjani, Leong, & Sabouri, 2012; Rhoades, 2014). Further research was needed to ascertain the teaching methodology and motivation techniques that would be more effective when teaching ESL

students. The first section of the study described the problem with a particular private urban community college in northeastern United States, defined the research questions guiding this study, examined the existing literature regarding the problem, and described the implications of going forward with this study. Section 2 covers the methodology that was used to conduct this study.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

Section 2 describes the methodology, participants, data sources and analysis, and potential limitations of this study. The research was in the form of an exploratory case study using qualitative data. I observed three ESL classes, interviewed 15 Hispanic ESL students, and conducted on focus group to gather the participants' lived experiences. Some limitations to the study were present but they were not substantial to diminish the overall quality of the study.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

This qualitative project study was in the form of an exploratory case study. As described in Creswell (2013), case studies explore and describe the experience of a group or situation in-depth. This study explored the experiences of Hispanic ESL students in an ESL program in a particular for-profit urban community college in northeastern United States. The study collected qualitative data because the case study focused on a small group (Hispanic ESL students at a research site) to document what that group experienced. A quantitative approach would not had been appropriate for this study because this technique summarizes finding using numerical data or seeks to test a hypothesis (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010) and that was not the purpose of this study. The intent of this particular study was to learn the perception of Hispanic ESL students regarding the ESL Program at the college, for which qualitative data was best because qualitative studies use narratives to describe data (Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, as Merriam described, qualitative studies

focus on the essence of the human experience and that was exactly what my study did; it focused on how the interviewees experienced the ESL program.

As discussed in the literature review, individuals respond to Gardner's (1985) integrative and instrumental motivations to learn another language. This project study integrated Dörnyei's theory (1994) of classroom learning motivation (the teacher, atmosphere, course content, etc.) when learning another language to explore Hispanic ESL students' perceptions of the ESL program at the college. In this study, I did not intent to generalize the findings but rather understand how Hispanic ESL students view the ESL Program.

Participants

Criteria for selecting participants. Although the college has a mixed population of ESL student from diverse nationalities and social economic status, only ESL students of Hispanic origins (regardless social economic status) were invited to participate in the study because the lack of English competence exhibited from ESL students was among Hispanic students only (W. M.; G. P.; A. N.; M. P.; R. C., personal communication, March 1, 2014). Hispanic ESL students from ESL classes were invited to participate in the study until I had 15 volunteers to conduct individual interviews and seven volunteers to participate in a focus group. I considered 15 participants for interviews to be enough to provide enough data to conduct a credible analysis and report and to achieve theme saturation (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013; Mason, 2010). I chose seven participants for the focus group because six and above is the standard number of participants for focus groups

(Morgan, 2013). During the invitation to participate (see Appendix B) , I addressed the topic of confidentiality and announced that responses would be confidential and their responses would not be shared with the teacher (see Appendix B). Before beginning the interviews and focus group, the issue of confidentiality was addressed again in more detail.

Procedures for gaining access to participants. I requested permission to conduct the study from Walden University Internal Review Board. Once approval was received from the IRB (01-12-16-0399303), I started conducting research. For the observations, I provided ESL instructors with a Consent Form asking for permission to sit in a class for 45 minutes to observe the class. To invite students to participate , I recruited students by posting flyers throughout the college asking for participants (see Appendix B). I also posted the flyers in Spanish (see Appendix C) because the participants I was recruiting were Hispanic ESL students. Additionally, I provided ESL instructors with my business card to pass my contact information along. I observed three different ESL classes at the date and time previously scheduled with the ESL instructors. Because the head of the Division of Arts and Sciences under which the ESL Program operates indicated that the college does not have an IRB, I asked (see Appendix D) and obtained written permission from the college and the Division or Arts and Sciences (see Appendix E).

Methods for establishing a research-participant working relationship. To build rapport with participants and ensure honest participation, I communicated with participants in Spanish. As proposed by Dundon and Ryan (2010), engaging in the native language of participants increases the level of trust. To ease any doubts regarding the anonymity of the

interviews, I reiterated that all responses would be kept confidential, would only be read by me, and would not be shared with instructors. I informed participants know that they were not under the obligation to answer all interview questions and they could skip questions if they wished. Also, I let participants know that if, at any moment during the interview or the focus group, the participant did not feel comfortable, the participant could end the interview or focus group and leave the room. I was also sensitive of indirect cues from participants and adjusted to the circumstances. For instance, if I saw a participant was having a hard time coming up with an answer, I asked if the participant wished to skip the question and provide an answer later.

Measures for ethical protection of participants. I adhered to the guidelines learned during the course provided by the National Institute of Health Office of Extramural Research to learn how to protect human participants during research. Accordingly, the identity and responses of all participants were kept confidential. Participants were given an Informed Consent Form explaining the voluntary nature of the study, their participation, potential risks and benefits of the study, the questions that would asked during the interview and focus group, and how the privacy of the study and their responses would be kept. The form also included contact information about me, the researcher, and Walden University's IRB office. During the interviews, participants were reminded that participant's responses were confidential and would not be shared with their instructors. Participants were also informed that they were free to retire from the study at any time if they wished so. The Informed Consent Form was first reviewed and approved by Walden

University's IRB. Because the main problem of this study was Hispanic ESL students' lack of English competence, the Consent Form was also available in Spanish so students could read the Consent Form in their native language.

This study did not pose any risks to participants' safety besides the minor discomfort that might have incurred from participating in an interview or focus group. No compensation of any type was provided for participating in this study. Any identifying information regarding participants such as names were deleted or masked with aliases for the final presentation after this study has concluded. After five years of this study has passed, all data collected and associated with this study will be destroyed.

Data Collection

Data were collected by the usual means of data collection for case studies: class observations, individual interviews, and a focus group (Merriam, 2009). Observations showed a mixed population of ESL students from different nationalities with Hispanics forming the larger group of ESL students. Instructors displayed different motivational strategies consisted with Dorney's (1994; 2001) motivational theory for second language learning in a classroom. The observations provided insight to the dynamics of the class and how instructors and students interacted (Walls & Samuels, 2011). For instance, I observed the verbal and nonverbal rapport that took place between teachers and students when instructors elicited participation from students even if the student did not volunteer to answer; while other instructors would ask a question and wait for a student to raise their hand to answer. As constructivists presume that there are multiple realities (Creswell,

2009), one would assume that each Hispanic ESL student would experience the ESL program differently. Therefore, the use of observations in this case study helped learn which pedagogical practices in the classroom seemed to better encourage and motivate Hispanic English learners. I could see that students responded differently when the instructor took the initiative to ask a particular student a question. For instance, when the instructor asked a question to all students in general, students would remain silent waiting for somebody to answer; but when the instructor called on a particular student to participate by calling out the student's name, students seemed to feel more confident to speak and participate in the classroom.

According to Turner (2010), interviews are a more personal form of research than questionnaires because the interviewer has the opportunity to probe and ask for follow up questions. The interview questions for this study were open-ended to allow participants to "contribute as much detailed information as they desire" (p. 756) and express their viewpoint and experience. The interviews achieved that purpose. When I asked the questions on the Interview Protocol Form students provided answers of different lengths. Sometimes, the student would be very brief in their response so I would ask a follow up question to have the student elaborate. Other times, the student provided a lengthy answer that allowed me to better understand their point of view.

The third method of data collection took place in the form of a focus group. Focus groups have an advantage over interviews because they encourage participation from people reluctant to speak on their own or that feel they have nothing to say and encourage

participation (Leung & Savithiri, 2009). Through the focus group, I learned about the needs, perceptions, and preferences of Hispanic ESL students regarding the ESL program. During the focus groups, students shared their experiences regarding the ESL program and how they felt about a particular class; they felt at ease and interacted freely with each other.

Instrumentation. I observed three different ESL classes for 45 minutes each. Observations followed an Observation Protocol (see Appendix H) developed for use in classroom evaluation of language classes at [redacted] University. Penn's observation checklist is not copyrighted and copies are available online and through various departments. I called Penn's Language Center at [redacted] and was given permission to use the form (see Appendix G). During the observations, field notes were kept in which quotes and other factual information were noted. The observations helped in seeing how instructors and students interacted and what type of ESL pedagogy was used. For instance, some instructors would use a lot of hand gestures and jokes to elicit participation, while other instructors would use a more conventional approach to teaching. The interviews consisted of eight open-ended questions derived from the literature review (see Appendix H). Interviews lasted about 30 minutes, were recorded through an audio recording device, and notes were taken on a notebook. To ensure that Hispanic ESL students understood the questions, the interview took place in Spanish (see Appendix I).

The focus group, used to generate qualitative data and generating information on collective views (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008) was also conducted in Spanish. The focus group lasted 60 minutes and the session was recorded through an audio

recording device. The guiding questions for the focus group were tailored from the literature review (see Appendix J), and what I observed in the classroom through the class observations. Through the focus group, I saw the different approaches that students took to the questions as a group rather than each participant individually. As a whole, the feedback of students who participated in the focus group drew, unanimously, latent issues on how Hispanic ESL students viewed ESL instruction. The group also reported mixed feelings regarding the level of motivation received in the classroom.

Procedures and process for data collection. Data collection was in the form of class observations, 1-on-1, semi-structured interviews, and a focus group. Once instructors agreed to have the class observed, I scheduled a time with three different ESL instructors to observe an ESL class for 45 minutes and followed the Observation Protocol (see Appendix F) developed by [redacted] University to evaluate instructors of other languages. Observation notes were kept in the 'Notes' section of the Observation Protocol. The instructors and I had agreed that I would just be an observer (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015); therefore the day of the observation I arrived to the classroom and sat in the back of the class. The instructor introduced me and stated my purpose in the classroom and asked students to act as if I was not in the room.

Invitations to participate in interviews and the focus group were extended to Hispanic ESL students after IRB approval. I posted flyers throughout the college (see Appendices B and C) asking for participants, and I provided ESL instructors with my business card to pass my information along. Within two days of posting the flyers to recruit

participants, I received responses to participate in the study by emails to my personal email account and telephone calls to my cellphone. The interviews and focus group were scheduled according to students' convenience and were conducted on site, in the study room in the college's library. I had previously spoken with the librarian to ask for permission to use the study room located in the library.

Interviews and focus group were recorded and translated. I transcribed responses on a Word document. The Word document helped me keep track of the number of instances that same words or concepts were used in a response to compare them. By constant comparison, concepts emerging from the interviews and the focus group were compared to look for relationships between concepts until I reached concept saturation. Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. As soon as I conducted an interview, I would go home to translate it review it, and code it (by giving it a number). I provided initial codes (later on modified) to begin the process of categorizing the data (Vaughn & Turner, 2016). The codes were derived from the recurrence of specific words that came up during data translation. While reviewing, I would make memos and summaries making sure to include non-verbal clues. Themes were generated when similar ideas expressed by participants were brought together into a single category. In this step, I took a quantitative approach in order to form a hierarchy of codes and be able to group them into themes. As I read each interview and focus group data, I highlighted the instances when a concept or word was brought up (e. g., motivated by teacher). Then, I made a tally to keep track of the number of times such words were used. The same procedure was followed for the focus group. Before

beginning the interview and focus group, participants were given a copy of the Interview Protocol in English (see Appendix H) and Spanish (see Appendix I) and Focus Group Protocol in English (see Appendix J) and Spanish (see Appendix K) so they could also read the questions and have a better grasp of what would be asked and the topic to be discussed. After the interviews and the focus group were transcribed, I went over the observations notes to see if what I had observed had been brought up by participants.

The role of the researcher. I was employed by the college as an adjunct of Information Literacy until January 2015. Information Literacy is a core class that every student pursuing an associate's degree must take in order to learn research skills to complete their academic assignments. My being previously employed by the college did not have any effect on students' responses because I never taught ESL. Additionally, students in the ESL Program cannot take Information Literacy classes because they are not pursuing an associate's degree but taking independent ESL classes. By the time this study took place, I was no longer employed by the college for three or four semesters; therefore, there was little possibility that I would have had any previous interaction with the possible participants of this study. I did not recognize any of the students who participated in the study and students did not show any indication of knowing who I was.

Data Analysis

I took an inductive approach to data collection (Thomas, 2006) to condense raw textual data into a brief summary. Data collection and analysis were completed concurrently; as information was collected (through interviews, observations, and focus

group) the data collected were also analyzed to start forming an idea of what is going on (Merriam, 2009). Data collected through interviews were translated, deconstructed into individual units and assigned a category; then, the codes were sorted looking for themes by constant comparison (Bazeley, 2009). By engaging in constant comparison analysis, I looked for salient indicators of categories and coded them; I then compared the codes to find consistencies and differences. Because this was a small case study, the assistance of qualitative data analysis software would have resulted in more trouble than what is worth; however, Microsoft Word assisted in organizing and maintaining data. The following steps summarize the analytical process used to analyze the data:

1. Translate each interview;
2. Carefully read each interview several times looking for major themes, and recurring patterns;
3. Code all interviews and look for words that emerged more frequently;
4. Chart the codes by theme so that I could compare students' responses. At this point, I noted that similar themes from students' perspectives emerged;
5. Grouped each major theme that emerged into similar clusters to reduce redundant themes. Table 1 below offers an overview of the themes that emerged into a gathering of qualitative evidence.

Credibility. To increase the validity and credibility of the study, a report for each interview was created and compared to look for consistencies of data obtained (Creswell, 2013). To ensure I gathered honest opinions and that participants' responses reflected what

they truly felt about the topic, I refrained from providing any opinion about the topic, and I was aware of any nonverbal clues that I might send that could influence participants to provide responses that seemed more socially desirable. To ensure that students behaved and acted normally, the instructors and I had previously agreed that students would not be informed of the real nature of my presence in the classroom. Before the beginning of the class, I entered the room and sat in the back; as students started arriving, they inquired about my presence and the instructor told them that I was there to observe the instructor for a class project. I used member checking at the end of the study by inviting Hispanic ESL students who participated in the interviews and focus group to read the transcriptions of the interviews and focus group to validate the data and establish that I captured what they intended to say. The feedback was by phone and email.

Discrepant cases. Discrepant cases are documented in the descriptive analysis (Creswell, 2009; Maggin, Briesch, Chafouleas, Ferguson, & Clark, 2014). I looked at the transcriptions of the interviews and field notes taken during observations for differing or disagreeing evidence. No discrepant data was found. Collectively, Hispanic ESL students seemed to experience the ESL program in similar ways.

Limitations. Limitations are weaknesses or potential problems associated with the study and it benefits the researcher to identify such limitations in advance (Creswell, 2013). There was some risk that participants may had felt obligated to participate or to share only positive information. Obligation to participate is particularly possible for ESL students who might have felt that what they shared during the interview could be shared with their

current instructor. Feeling obligated to participate might have posed barrier in the study because it would difficult the collection of honest information and perceptions. To diminish the perception that students were obligated to participate, I verbally reiterated that all responses would be kept confidentially, were to be used in a study to complete a doctorate program and would be, in no way, shared with students' instructors. I pointed out to the anonymity of the interviews (that no names were collected) to assure students that they had nothing to fear and that students' responses would only be read by the me. I also reiterated that if the student did not feel entirely comfortable with the interview, the student was free to opt out of the study immediately. I provided an opportunity to ask any question they might have had regarding the anonymity of the student's participation before and after the interview. Another limitation of this study could be in the focus group because participants might feel reluctant to speak freely in front of others (Morgan, 2013). However, this focus group did not involve any invasion of privacy. To diminish the limitation to speak freely, focus group was conducted with participants that shared a common background and were interested in the same topic.

Data Analysis Results

Interviews were conducted with 15 Hispanic ESL students, three different ESL classes were observed, and one focus group with seven participants was conducted. All Hispanic ESL students that participated in the interviews and focus group were invited to take part of the study based on the selection criteria previously outlined in this project study. Interviewed participants consisted of ten female and five male Hispanic ESL students, and the focus group participants consisted of five female and two male students. All participants expressed to be taking ESL classes in order to get a better paying job.

One of the research questions that guided this study was: What were Hispanic ESL students' perspectives of their experience were in the college-wide ESL program? I found that students were satisfied with the ESL classes they were taking but that there were specific notions that Hispanic ESL students would like to have implemented in the ESL program. The specific suggestions that students provided for the ESL program helped answering the second research questions of this study regarding some of the issues that Hispanic ESL students experience while studying English as a second language. At the same time, the answer to this research question became the main base for the emerging themes of this study. Through the interviews, the focus group, and class observations, I found that some of the issues that Hispanic ESL students faced in an ESL program had to do with the lack of technology in the classroom and students desire to have more in-class conversation so they would have more instances to practice English. Because at home Hispanic ESL students' family only spoke Spanish, they felt that they could not practice

English or did not have somebody to practice English with; thus having more in-class conversation would help them practice and achieve English proficiency. Also, Hispanic ESL students would like more feedback from instructors, especially when it comes to correcting their English pronunciation. During the interviews and the focus group, students recounted limit class participation because they were not sure of some pronunciations and they said that instructors did not correct them when they mispronounced a word. Lastly, students reported that they would prefer instructors who spoke Spanish because there were concepts and verb conjugations that they would better understand if explained in Spanish. Following is a detailed discussion of the findings.

Observations. Observations of three separate ESL classes showed a mixed student body from different nationalities with Hispanics forming the larger group of ESL students. During observations, teachers displayed different motivational strategies consistent with Dorney's (1994; 2001) classroom motivational theory for second language learning. As I followed the Observation Protocol (see Appendix G), I could observe that instructors would introduce the day's topic before starting each class and would review what was covered in the previous class. Instructors seemed well prepared and divided their attention among students appropriately. Instructors also asked questions and picked on reluctant students to participate. Audio-visual materials were not used during my observations; instruction was guided by the textbook. The classroom atmosphere was open and accepting. Students could ask for clarification or repetition and instructors provided them. Instructors also seemed to be sensitive to students' difficulties to understand what was

being taught and sometimes would ask if somebody could translate in their native language when noticing that a student had difficulties understanding. In one of the classes, students were broken up into groups to work on an assignment; sufficient time was given to students to complete the assignment. Overall, instructors provided constructive feedback during class and the relationship between instructors, students, and peers was healthy.

Interviews and focus group. During interviews and the focus group, participants reported mixed feelings regarding the level of motivation received in the classroom to learn English. During both the interviews and the focus group, students expressed their desire to have instructors who spoke Spanish, played movies in the classroom, and provided more in-class conversations. Participants said felt motivated in the classroom because they got along with peers and instructors were concerned about their learning. One way that students felt that instructors motivated them in the classroom was by asking questions and trying to explain concepts when students reported not to understand what was being taught. Data from the interviews and focus groups indicate that students were satisfied with the ESL program and felt motivated at different intervals.

Data Collection, Analysis Procedures, and Emerging Themes

Data collection and analysis took place continuously as I observed the classes, interviewed students, and conducted a focus group over the course of three months from January 2016 to March 2016.

Data Collection

Observations. Permission to observe the classes were previously obtained from the instructors. I spoke with the instructors verbally about the nature of the study and once they agreed to participate, I emailed them the Consent Form for them to sign. I then scheduled to observe three different ESL classes for 45 minutes each. Observations took place before conducting interviews and the focus group because I wanted to observe the class without having any particular input from students on what to look for. The instructors and I agreed that students would not be informed of the nature of my presence in the classroom so they could behave as normal. I entered the classroom before the class started and sat in the back. Once students started arriving, they inquired about my presence and the teacher just told them that I was there to observe.

I could observe that students seemed at ease in the classroom. Some students would willingly participate while others remained silent. The majority of students were Hispanics and they would sit close together, ask each other questions in Spanish, and make little jokes about their English pronunciation. Students from other nationalities would participate in class discussions but kept quieter regarding interacting with each other. Unlike Hispanic students, students from other nationalities did not form a group to sit together and make jokes with one another.

Interviews. I posted flyers (see Appendix J) around the college to recruit participants for the study. A total of 15 Hispanic ESL students volunteered to participate in the interviews. Participants received an email describing the purpose of the study, the

process, and the Consent Form for them to read and sign. In the email, I emphasized the voluntary nature of the study and that participation would be kept anonymous. Once participants agreed and confirmed their willingness to participate, I scheduled the one-on-one interviews. Interviews took place in a private room in the library. Before beginning any interview, participants were given the Consent Form describing the voluntary purpose of the study and process to sign in case they had not already done so. Voluntary participation was emphasized on the flyers, by email, on the Consent Form, and before the interviews took place. Interviews lasted between 20 and 30 minutes and two to three interviews were conducted per day and spaced two to four days apart. As soon as an interview was conducted, I would translate and code it looking for emerging themes. I used a field notebook to record personal thoughts and take notes besides using a sound recording to record the interviews. On the notebook, I would make annotations about the body language used by the interviewee and facial expressions.

Focus group. The focus group was conducted with a different set of participants who had not taken part in the interviews. Seven Hispanic ESL students (five females and two males) volunteered to participate. The focus group followed the guidelines previously established in the proposal of this study. I placed flyers around the college asking for participants for the focus group and stating the anonymous nature of the study. After I had seven volunteers for the focus group, I emailed them with detail explanations regarding the nature of the study and the Consent Form for them to review and sign and bring it to the focus group. The day that the focus group took place, I explained again the anonymous

nature of the study and gave them the Consent Form to sign if they had not already done so. We sat in a circle around a table to enable them to see and hear each other; I used numbers to identify students so I labeled each seat at the table as 1, 2, and so on. I introduced myself and the study, and guided the discussion asking questions from the discussion guide on the Focus Group Protocol form. To break the ice, I asked them to introduce themselves without using their real names, they could use a pseudonym or the number assigned on their seats. I took notes to capture what was expressed and took notes on the tone of the discussion and non-verbal clues when students were speaking. After the discussion was finished, I went home and immersed in a familiarization process with the data through review, reading, and listening. I then translated the recorded material, organized and indexed the data for easy retrieval and identification, identified initial themes, and explored the relationship between the interviews and focus group.

Data Analysis Procedure

I pursued three levels of analysis: (a) thematic content analysis, (b) constant comparison, and (c) concurrent data collection and analysis (Batdi & Batdi, 2015; Kuper, Nedden, Etchells, & Shadowitz, 2010). By constant comparison, concepts emerging from the interviews were compared to look for relationships between concepts until I reached 'concept saturation.' The thematic analysis of the data took place in the following stages:

Familiarization. For the observations, I prepared a preliminary summary of what was observed according to the notes taken on the Observations Protocol form. For the interviews, as soon as an interview was conducted, I would go home, review, and translate

it into English. While reviewing the translated transcript, I would make memos and summaries in the margins to make sure to include any important non-verbal clues. For the focus group, I followed the same process as I did for the 1-on-1 interviews. After the interviews and focus group were translated, I went over the observations notes to better familiarize myself with the data and look for instances of what participants expressed during interviews and focus group and started looking for emerging themes.

Organization. Data from the observations were organized as soon as the observations were conducted to look for emerging themes. I filled out the Observation Form and wrote on the margins and back of the form any reflective thoughts I had while observing the classes. When I reached home, I went through the notes and highlighted what I thought were key notes and important observations to later compare them with the interviews and focus group findings. For the interviews, data were organized by giving each interview a code (a number). All translations were then collected in a table in one Word document. Pages were numbered and notes written on the margins regarding reflective thoughts on the interviews as I read them. The translated and transcribed documents were compared with the notes I had taken during the interviews in order to fill it in with my notes regarding the face expressions or nonverbal clues I had noted and jotted down during the interviews. Focus group data were organized in a similar way to interviews' data.

Coding. I provided initial codes (later modified) to begin the process of categorizing the data (Vaughn & Turner, 2016). The codes were derived from the

recurrence of specific words that came up during data translation. Once all data were coded, I examined all data within a particular code with the help of a word document to search for occurrences of certain terms such as “play movies,” “more conversation,” or “speak Spanish.” Appearances of these terms were counted by keeping a tally. Next, I grouped the answers from the data to count their occurrences, organized the terms into a hierarchical structure and clustered them into emerging themes.

Themes. Themes were generated when similar ideas expressed by participants were brought together into a single category. During this step of data analysis, I utilized a quantitative approach in order to form a hierarchy of codes and to be able to group the codes into themes. As I read each interview and focus group data, I highlighted the instances when a concept or word was brought up (e. g., motivated by teacher). Then, I made a tally to keep track of the number of times such words were used. In this manner, I developed initial themes based on the frequency of repetition and then created a chart to organize them. Final themes were set upon the number of students that that showed concern on a particular code. For instance, 14 out of 15 students interviewed expressed their desire to have more technology in the classroom; thus, ‘technology in the classroom’ became a final theme. The same process was done with the focus group. The four themes that emerged during this study were: (a) students would like more instances for class participation, (b) students would like to be corrected when they mispronounce a word, (c) students would like more technology in the classroom, and (d) students would prefer to be taught by instructors who speak Spanish.

Charting. I created case-charts of the data to easily read across the entire set of data. Charts were made by category and then themes. For example, for the Theme Chart, I drew an 11-column table. The first column was for the code (interview number) and each subsequent column was titled by a theme (e. g., motivated by teacher, motivated by peers, etc.). I then went over the transcribed documents looking at the highlighted text and re-reading each transcription looking for instances where students said they felt motivated by the teacher or peers. I would then mark the pertinent column on the table with a 'yes' or 'no' to indicate the answer.

Data Analysis: Interviews

Once the four stages of data analysis were completed for each data set of the interviews a table was drawn to gather all data together and examine the data. As I first read the data now gathered in one single document, I highlighted key words that seemed to answer the interview questions. These key words became initial codes and later on assisted in finalizing the themes. After using Kolb's (2012) approach to open-coding (just highlighting, examining, comparing, and noting similarities) three interviews, I decided to use initial codes for the rest of the interviews derived from the recurrence of similar words used in those interviews. Using these codes (and adding new ones as more data were translated and cross examined) I coded the remaining data from the interviews.

Once all interviews were coded, I examined all data within a particular code with the help of a word document to search for occurrences of certain terms such as "play movies," "more conversation," or "speak Spanish." Appearances of these terms were

counted by keeping a tally. Next, I organized the terms into a hierarchical structure and clustered them into emerging themes, then created a theme-chart to organize and establish the final themes. Following I then went over the observation notes to compare the themes that had emerged to what I had observed in the classroom. For example, one of the themes was the desire of students to use technology in the classroom. Interestingly, I noticed during the observations that technology was not used in the classroom. By comparing my observation notes with the emerged themes I was able to confirm and validate the final themes.

I took an inductive approach (Thomas, 2006) to analyze the data coded from the first set of interviews focusing on the research questions that guided this study. I found that the lived experiences of interviewees seemed to be related to one another. As an example, a particular wish of participants during interviews was that movies were played during classroom. During the 1-on-1 interviews I asked for suggestions for the ESL program and one of the answers I received from participants was desire to watch movies in the classroom. I grouped the answers that expressed student's desire to watch movies in the classroom to count their occurrences (Table 1) and 'more technology in the classroom' became an initial theme. Another example is the desire of students to have more in-class conversation, which is what Horst (2010) referred to as *incidental vocabulary acquisition*-which is learned in the classroom through student's interaction. Because 14 out of 15 interviewees (Table 1) said that they wanted more instances to practice English in the classroom and to have "less writing and more talking" (Participant 5, personal

communication, February 19, 2016) ‘more in-class conversation’ became another initial theme. Table 1 below was important because it helped me understand and arrange the final themes that emerged from the interviews.

Table 1

The Hispanic ESL Student Experience

Code	Number of Times Used
Student felt they received motivation from the instructor in the classroom	11
Student felt motivated by the classroom environment/peers	14
Student expressed the desire of having technology in the classroom (movies/audio)	12
Student felt they need more in-class conversations and instances to practice English	10
Student felt classes needed to be more interesting and fun	8
Student felt they need teachers who speak Spanish	9
Students felt they wanted more in-class feedback from instructors (e.g., correct pronunciation)	4

The four themes that emerged from analyzing the interviews were: (a) students would like more instances for class participation, (b) students would like to be corrected when they mispronounce a word, (c) students would like more technology in the classroom, and (d) students would prefer to be taught by instructors who speak Spanish. I found that the codes for these themes emerged multiple times as I initially coded the data. As I coded each interview I saw a pattern emerge, therefore making the process deductive as I settled for the final themes. As I selected phrases that captured what the participants wanted to

convey and kept count (see Table 1) I found that the participants' experiences were similar to one another.

From analyzing the interviews, I could deduce that participants seemed to feel that motivation in the classroom was basically their responsibility. When I asked what kept them motivated in the classroom, participants did not point out any motivation technique used by the instructor but referred to what they personally did to feel motivated in the classroom. I could deduce that students felt that, since they were the ones who needed to learn, they had to pay attention and it was up to them to find motivation to learn. For example, Participant 1 said to feel motivated every day because the participant came to live in this country, therefore the need to learn and Speak English, "I think that I need to learn English to make more money" (personal communication, February 8, 2016). Participant 5 felt that in order to keep motivated to learn English it was "important to be in a class where students were friendly and interacted with others" (personal communication, February 10, 2016); while Participant 6 felt that all classes were the same: "it is all the same, you know? I took classes in another place before and it is all the same" (personal communication February 18, 2016). Similarly, Participant 14 described a typical ESL class as "we come in, we sit, we pay attention, and the teacher teaches. We write something sometimes…" (personal communication, February 16, 2016) as to indicate that classes were the same every day. A popular answer regarding how the felt motivated in the classroom was "I pay attention" (Participant 2, personal communication, February 16, 2016); but participants could not provide specific examples of motivation. However, Participant 7 spoke of the

need of using “real experience instead of things that are old and do not relate to you” (personal communication, February 18, 2016) for classroom motivation.

During the interviews, while Participant 4 expressed concern with the accent of the instructor and said not to be able to understand him, the rest of interviewees were not concerned with the accent of instructors from different nationalities but the desire of having instructors that spoke Spanish; “you can’t understand anything [the instructor] says. They need to have a teacher that speaks Spanish, like you. Because I don’t know what [instructor] says! We all laugh because is hard to understand [instructor]” (Participant 4, personal communication, February 10, 2016). Similarly, other participants expressed their preference of having instructors who spoke Spanish so they could have a better grasp of what was being explained. After this analysis, ‘instructors who speak Spanish’ because a final theme. Although Participant 3 felt that the instructor did not do enough in the classroom other than “talk and talk” (personal communication, February 8, 2016), and that instructors needed to be more approachable during and after class, in general, I found that participants felt that they were motivated to learn by the instructors because teachers asked questions and would provide explanations when asked for clarification.

Students also shared the desire to have more in-class conversation so they can practice speaking in English. As Participant 12 said, “I speak Spanish at home, at work, and everywhere, you know? This is the only place where I can practice my English” (personal communication, February 24, 2016). Because 10 out of 15 interviewees expressed their desire for more in-class conversation, ‘more in-class conversation’ became an initial theme

while analyzing the interviews and then a final theme when all data was analyzed together. In addition to wanting more instances to Speak in English during class, another theme that surfaced was the desire of students to be corrected by the teacher when they pronounced a word wrong. “I don’t talk much in class because I don’t know how to say it in English and sometimes I say something wrong and we laugh. I wish the teacher would correct me but [instructor] doesn’t” (personal communication, February 22, 2016). Similarly, Participant 8 said that he though teachers did not correct them when they said something wrong because teachers though students would get offended; “but I don’t care,” he said. “If she corrects me I learn how to speak better” (personal communication, February 18, 2016). I found that students were open and willing to be corrected in the classroom when they mispronounced an English word; in fact, they expected instructors to do so but were surprised that teachers would not openly correct their pronunciation during class.

In summary, during the analysis of the interviews, I found that the majority of participants said to be satisfied with the ESL classes but felt that more could be done to improve the classes. I also asked interviewees for suggestions for the ESL classes and participants were very specific about what they wanted in the classroom in order to learn English. This particular list of suggestions is integrated with the list of themes that emerged from the findings and answers to one of the research questions that guided this study.

Data Analysis: Focus Group

The focus group took place after I conducted the 1-on-1 interviews. After I had gathered seven new participants, I emailed them from my personal email account to

confirm the day and time of the focus group. I recruited the seven participants for the focus group from volunteers that answered the advertisement I posted in the college in the form of flyers (see Appendix J). I recruited seven new students to have a different group of participants for the focus group from the students that participated in the 1-on-1 interviews. The focus group also took place in a private room of the library at the college after I had previously asked permission to use the private room for the focus group. All seven participants were present. The discussion took place in Spanish and it was translated into English and then transcribed for analysis. During my analysis, I found that participants in the focus group expressed similar ideas as interviewed participants.

During the focus group, participants exhibited ease upon entering the room and were chatting among them in Spanish before the session began. Once the discussion began, students started talking all at the same time and laughing when participants said something similar. Students also mentioned the instructors they liked and disliked by name and recommended to each other who to take the next class with. As the discussion progressed, it turned out that students had shared similar instructors and would make comments about who was a good teacher and who was not. Participants would show expressive body language when making comments regarding the need to play movies in the classroom and for instructors to speak Spanish. In data analysis, Sayre (2001) referred to semiotic as a tool to interpret and analyze non-verbal clues from participants such as shoulder shrug or nodding. Through this analysis technique, I found that when a participant agreed with another participant's opinion they would nod or wave their hand in an affirmative way to

indicate that they shared the same point. As with the 1-on-1 interviews, I used a quantitative method to determine the frequency that certain concepts were mentioned and draw a table to compare the occurrences of phrases or key words. I then draw a different table to compare the answers of both interviewees and focus group participants (Table 2). This table was important in comparing the answers of interviewees and focus group participants in order to establish the final themes.

Table 2

The Hispanic ESL Students Focus Group Experience

Code	Times Mentioned	Times Mentioned (Interview)
Students were satisfied with ESL classes	6	11
Students felt motivated in the classroom by other students	5	13
Students felt motivated by the teacher	5	10
Students liked the environment	5	0
Students suggested the use of more technology (movies, CD, etc.) in the classroom	5	14
Students suggested more in-class conversation/practice	6	14
Students suggested classes to be more interested/fun	4	6
Students suggested more real-life content	4	0
Students suggested to be taught in Spanish (native language)	5	9
Students suggested more feedback from teacher	4	4
Students suggested different text books	2	3

The focus group data provided insight into participants' own experiences as Hispanic ESL students. The focus group allowed me to understand the participants' perspectives regarding the ESL classes they were taking. The focus group helped answer the research question of how Hispanic ESL students experienced the ESL program. I found that all participants of the focus group were satisfied with the ESL classes they were taking at the college. I found that exploring the response of the focus group's participants was like translating the responses of interviewees all over again because responses were quite similar. Participants in the focus group also said to be taking ESL classes in order to get a better job or make more money; overall, participants felt motivated in the classroom because instructors would always ask questions. Because the focus group participants also expressed their desire to have ESL instructors who spoke Spanish for them to better understand new concepts and how to conjugate English verbs, 'instructors who speak Spanish' became a final theme. Likewise, students also expressed interest in having more audio-visual activities in the classroom (e. g., playing movies or listening to songs) because students felt that by watching movies or listening to audio CDs or speeches they could develop "an ear" for English (personal communication, March 1, 2016). Therefore, 'technology in the classroom' also became a final theme.

As I analyzed the focus group's data, I also kept count of the codes as they appeared and saw a pattern emerged; thus making the process deductive as I settled for the final themes. As I selected phrases that captured what the participants wanted to convey and kept

count, I found that the participants' experiences were similar to one another. For instance, it turned out that some students had shared the same instructors, and participants expressed the same ideas when I asked for suggestions for the ESL program. I organized the terms found during data analysis into categories and then grouped them into emerging themes; I then created a theme-chart to organize and establish the final themes. I also compared the findings of the focus group with my observations in order to add validity to the themes. For example, one of the final themes was to use technology in the classroom, and when I went over my observations I could see that I had noted that technology had not been used in the classroom.

I found that participants in the focus group were satisfied with the ESL classes they were taking, therefore making their English learning experience a positive one. Most participants said that the ESL classes were "okay" although the classes could be better. When students said that the ESL classes were 'okay' I asked for suggestions for the ESL program. Students were strongly opinionated regarding what they would like to have in an ESL class such as "playing movies in the classroom," and "more conversation in class," (Participant 3, personal communication, March 1, 2016). These answers helped me establish the four themes that emerged during this study and provided the answer to the second research of what were some issues that Hispanic ESL students faced in an ESL program.

Participant 2 shared that "you need to make an effort and do your part to learn" (personal communication, March 1, 2016). When I asked for clarification about this

statement the students said that “teachers teach what they are supposed to but it is up to you to learn” (personal communication, March 1, 2016). At the comment by this student, a little discussion stirred regarding how much learning is up to you and how much learning is because of the teachers. During the discussion, Participant 4 introduced the idea of having instructors who spoke Spanish and the rest of participants joined the conversation regarding the benefits of learning English with instructors who spoke Spanish. However, Participant 6 said that it was better if the teacher did not speak Spanish because “that way you are forced to learn English” (personal communication, March 1, 2016).

In summary, the experiences of the focus group were similar to the interviewees. They shared similar ideas and concerns regarding ESL instruction. Focus group participants were very vocal and expressive which could be because they were sharing in a group rather than one-to-one (like the interviews). I did not see any participant to be shy or draw back but everybody participated in the discussion providing ideas and suggestions.

Data Analysis: Observations

During observations, I would just watch the class and take notes on the Observation Protocol form. I was not looking for anything in particular because I had not conducted any interviews prior to the observations to avoid developing pre-conceived ideas regarding instruction. Once the interviews and focus group data were decoded and analyzed, I went back to my observations notes and looked at it from a different perspective: looking for instances of what students had shared during interviews and focus group. I found that, for example, during interviews and focus group, students had expressed their desire to be

corrected by the instructor when they mispronounced a word. During my observations, I could see that instructors provided tactful feedback to students but would not correct students when they mispronounced a word. Also, during the interviews and focus group students expressed their concern with the lack of technology in the classroom and. Coincidentally, I noticed during the class observations that technology was not used during any of the classes.

I could also observe that students used the social strategies discussed in the study of Kashefian-Naeeini and Maarof (2010) to learn; that is, they would pair up and sit close together to cooperate with each other in the learning process. In short, my class observations were helpful in validating some of the student's concerns regarding ESL classes. The observations also helped me better understand the experiences of Hispanic ESL students in typical ESL class.

Overall, by constant comparison analysis (Fram, 2013; Kolb, 2012) I was able to code and analyze the data simultaneously. I first compared the answers within the set of interviewees and then the interview answers with the answers from the focus group. By comparing the data, I could learn that interviewees and focus group participants experienced the ESL program in similar ways. For instance, interview and focus group participants could not describe a day when they felt motivated in the classroom; participants expressed to be taking ESL classes in order to get a better paying job; participants showed mixed feelings regarding the level of motivation received in the classroom from the teacher, their peers, and the environment; and they expressed the same

suggestions that could be implemented to the ESL program. Lastly, I compared the set of both answers (interviews and focus group) with my observations to validate the findings.

Emerging Themes

After data analysis took place according to the steps mentioned above, I was able to establish the four themes that emerged in this study. I found that the four themes that emerged from the interviews and focus group seem to be similar and interrelated where the student was experiencing something either related to the teacher, the classroom setting, or the peers. These are the four themes that emerged from this study:

- Students would like more class participation (e.g., instances for practicing English in the classroom). Although students felt that instructors gave them opportunities to practice English in the classroom, I found that students would like more in-class conversation and less in-class writing. Participants said that ESL classes focus too much on writing rather than speaking and what they really needed was to speak English, not necessarily write it.
- Students would like more feedback from instructors, especially regarding pronunciation. I found that students would like to be corrected by the teacher when they mispronounced a word. Students were pleased with the feedback received from instructors, but what they wanted more. What they really wanted was to have their pronunciation corrected. Participants expressed their desire for the teacher to correct them when they said something wrong rather than let them go on speaking imperfect English.

- Students would like more technology in the classroom (e.g., watching a movie or listening to music or speeches). Students said that midterms and final exams were computerized but other than that, they did not use technology in the classroom. Participants felt that if they were able to watch movies or listen to music in the classroom they would learn more English.
- Students would prefer ESL instructors who spoke Spanish. Students said that they would be able to learn English better if the instructors spoke Spanish because there were many concepts and verb conjugations that they did not understand regardless of how much the instructor tried to explain. They said that if the instructor spoke Spanish, the teacher would just give them the translation and they would know exactly what the word meant rather than take a guess.

Credibility

The last step in the data analysis process was to establish credibility of the analyzed data and themes that emerged. Credibility was established using peer debriefing to clarify meaning and basis for interpretation. I recruited four Hispanic ESL students to participate in member checking to make sure that I had captured what they wanted to express (Creswell, 2008). Students provided feedback by email and I documented such feedback accordingly. I also used peer examination by employing a doctorate level classmate from Walden University as a peer examiner to verify that the findings reflected the experiences of participants. Triangulation allowed to validate the data through the cross verification

from observations, interviews, and focus group. I found that a relationship existed when it came to the experiences of the interviewees and focus group participants.

Conclusion

Section 2 covered the data analysis process and how the emerging themes of this study where established. First, class observations were analyzed followed by the analysis of the interviews and lastly the focus group. Once all three sets of gathered data were analyzed, I compared the findings and established the emerging themes. In short, there were notable revelations from interviewees and focus group participants regarding how Hispanic ESL students experience ESL instruction. For instance, both the interviews and focus group participants shared similar viewpoints regarding students' desire to be taught by an instructor who spoke Spanish. According to participants, they have not always had instructors who spoke Spanish, but when they had, they felt that they understood better and were able to better grasp English grammar and concepts. Such finding coincides with the study of Chrabaszcz and Jian (2014) regarding the role of the native language in English teaching suggests that having an instructor who speaks the native language of students would facilitate English learning and acquisition. Therefore, in this study, the qualitative design used to explore Hispanic ESL students' perspectives of ESL programs offered a depth of data that could not have been achieved by quantitative means. The main contribution of the individual interviews and focus group conducted during this study was the convergence of the lived experiences of Hispanic ESL students studying English as a second language. The research also provided a deeper understanding of how Hispanic ESL

students experience English language learning that can be used in further research. The following section lays out the project and implementation used in this study.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

This qualitative case study explored the perception of Hispanic ESL students regarding the ESL program of a private urban community college in northeastern United States. Students' responses indicate that Hispanic ESL students are somewhat motivated in the classroom because some teachers motivate students to learn; however, students expressed their concern regarding some learning issues that they would like to see addressed in an ESL program. The analysis of the data yielded four emerging themes that cover the issues that Hispanic ESL students experience and that should be taken into consideration in order to help Hispanic ESL students develop English proficiency. The themes found in the study are the need to incorporate technology in the classroom, provide more instances for in-class conversation, have instructors who speak Spanish, and correct students' English pronunciation. However, in order to address these issues, instructors would need to learn and become familiar with them. One approach to make instructors aware of the challenges and issues that Hispanic ESL students experience in the classroom is by providing professional development to address these issues. The objective of this project is to create a policy that would institutionalize professional development to help ESL instructors become familiar with the issues that Hispanic ESL students face in the classroom. This project will detail the steps needed to create a policy designed to implement professional development for ESL instructors in order to improve Hispanic ESL students' learning.

Rationale

The purpose of this project is to create a policy that formalizes professional development (PD) for ESL instructors at the college as a tool to become familiar with the issues that this study found Hispanic ESL students face in an ESL program. PD is a powerful tool that can provide guidance for ESL teacher and embed them with the best techniques to promote learning (Gaible & Burns, 2005). Creating this policy for PD would ensure that ESL instructors have the support needed to update their teaching practices and deliver instruction that is student-centered. This case study, along with professional research, supports the idea that motivation in the classroom is essential for learning a second language (Asiyari, 2014; Dörnyei, 1994; 2014; Finn, 2011; Gilakjani, Leong, & Sabouri, 2012; Öztürk & Ok, 2014; Rhoades, 2012;). Therefore, it is vital that the college supports ESL teachers in learning what practices would best motivate Hispanic ESL students in the classroom.

Review of the Literature

The literature review was conducted based on the following two questions: what practices would best support professional PD for ESL teachers? And, what practices would better motivate Hispanic second language learners in the classroom? The answers to this question would serve as recommendation for future the policy implementation for ESL teachers' professional learning. This section discusses the search strategies used to answer the research question, professional learning for ESL instructors, and an understanding of creating a policy.

Search Strategies

SAGE Premier, ERIC, and Education Research Complete education databases were accessed to gather peer-reviewed articles for information regarding professional development for ESL teachers. Google Scholar was also used to find additional information regarding policy development in community colleges. The following Boolean combination were used to retrieve information: *ESL teacher and professional development, ESL teacher support, college ESL teacher preparation, college ESL teacher support, professional development and community college*, and *professional development practices, Hispanics and second language and motivation, Hispanics and second language learning, ESL and motivation, motivation and second language, language learning and motivation, second language motivation and classroom, motivation and classroom, movies and second language, technology and second language learning, technology and ESL, movies and ESL, ESL and in-class conversation,* and *ESL language acquisition*.

Forty-one current peer-reviewed articles were retrieved, the majority accessed through Education Research Complete. The search results indicate a gap in the implementation of PD for faculty, thus the need for this project study to create a policy that makes PD mandatory for ESL instructors at the college where this research took place. The scarce findings regarding best practices for teaching English to Hispanic ESL students indicates that more research needs to be done on this subject to better serve Hispanic ESL students.

Professional Support for ESL Teachers

Although the adoption of policy benefits educational institutions because it helps establish outcomes and standardize faculty support, many small community colleges still have not adopted the policy of institutionalizing professional development (Wallin, 2007). As a result, many teachers do not have access to emerging best practices to teach and engage ESL students (Samon & Collings, 2012); in other instances, the support ESL teachers receive is inadequate (Newman, Samimy, & Romstedt, 2010). Therefore, establishing a policy to make professional development mandatory and regularly available is a step in bringing resources to ESL instructors to help them do what they love to do: teach English. As discussed by Schechter and Qadach (2012), policy making promotes student learning and benefits the institution as a whole. Therefore, implementing a policy for professional development would ensure that instructors periodically receive the support and academic input they need in order to better attend to the needs of the students they serve.

The benefits of regularly engaging in professional development are many. Professional development, as stated by Abbot and Rossiter (2011) provides a venue for social learning and advancement in the field of practice; and, as discussed by Gökmenoglu and Clark (2012) professional development supports teachers' knowledge and skills. Samon and Collings (2012) argued the contradiction of the vast availability of many effective methods to work with English language learners but the fact that only few teachers have access or knowledge of such methods. Professional development, as defined

by Khan (2012), is a "process for enhancing capabilities […] in terms of pedagogical skills and content knowledge" (p. 89). Developing new skills and honing old ones is what makes high effective teachers; and, as the study of Samon and Collings showed, high effective teachers have a positive outcome and significant impact in students. Khan also argued that the quality of the education that students receive depends on the quality of the teacher. Therefore, professional development, as discussed by Alderfer and Alderfer (2011), is essential to reach the methods that would help enhance the effectiveness of ESL teachers.

In a study to learn the effectiveness of professional development among English teachers in Taiwan, Luo (2014) found that participants felt that professional development helped them see what practices other teachers used and how other instructors handled similar issues in the classroom. Main, Pendergast, and Virtue (2015) saw professional development as a meaningful strategy to increase teachers' confidence in their teaching methods and improve students' learning and efficacy. Bendickson and Griffin (2010) consider professional development fundamental for student success. While Manner and Rodriguez (2010) observed the fact that most ESL teachers graduate with a lack of appropriate field experience, Khan and Chrishti (2012) pointed out the reality that, usually, instructors teach the way they were taught to do so in college. However, as time passes, students' needs change and it is necessary to learn new methods to meet those needs. Therefore, it is necessary to help instructors to revise their teaching skills and learn new emerging methods of reaching students. Even more, the study of Owens, Pogodzinski, and Hill (2016) found that many teaching practices reflect "the hypothetical priorities" (p. 202)

of stake holders and school leaders rather than the working experiences of teacher and the learning experiences of students. As covered in Mizell (2010), due to increasing challenges regarding classroom management, instruction, curriculum, school culture, etc., educators need extra support to face those challenges; and such support comes in the form of professional development. However, and as addressed by Luo (2014), this literature review has found significant gaps in existing support and services for ESL teachers. Community colleges are aware of the need of providing professional development to their faculty; however, institutions differ in their approach to offer such support, thus, professional development in community colleges is often rare (Wallin, 2007).

The research results of this literature review show that educational institutions must embrace, facilitate, and increase accountability of educators' development if they want to have high effective teachers. For example, Khoule, Patch, Schwartz, and Slyck (2015) documented LaGuardia Community College's project *Taking College Teaching Seriously* which was online professional development designed to enhance teaching and learning in the areas of Math and English. Because PD took place online, teachers worked asynchronously guided by a coach. The project, as noted by Khoule et al., was a success. Teachers were able to identify their educational practice, exchange notes, ask questions, receive feedback, and even keep a journal. In terms of teaching, participants felt better prepared and with a better vision of their own teaching practices after taking part in the project.

Likewise, a study to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development conducted at the University of Chicago at Illinois found that professional development have a positive impact on career advancement, increasing communication skills, and fostering relationships (Zueger, Katz, & Popovich, 2014). Attesting to the necessity of professional development for ESL teachers is the study of Abbot, Dunn, and Arberdeen (2012). Seeking for educational changes that would benefit not only ESL learners but also improve instructors' teaching practices, Abbot et al. created a series of professional development workshops that were beneficial for both teachers and learners. The workshops resulted in the professional growth of teachers and ESL students increased English language proficiency. Lastly, the study of Colarossi, Maltzman, Parisi, Rudisel and Weiss (2011) of atypical learners in the classroom showed how professional development for instructors can improve academic outcomes.

An investigation on the impact of professional development for ESL teachers carried by Newman et al. (2010) cited the inadequacy of current support for ESL teachers, the need for professional development, and accessibility. The researchers found that ESL teachers are aware of their lack of training and want further help to learn how to incorporate new materials in their lessons. However, attending and participating in professional development is difficult and time consuming. Thus, practical means to deliver professional development is needed in order to attain commitment and participation. As established by Perry and Hart (2012), English language learners "represent the fastest growing sector of adult education in United States" (p. 110); therefore, it is crucial that

English language educators learn the challenges and needs of that population. Professional development for established ESL teachers would help in providing the knowledge needed to reach this population, and such development could be in the form of training, workshops, seminars, conferences, certification programs, online training, or conferences.

Establishing Professional Support

Higher education institutions are responsible for producing productive knowledge and providing students with instructors capable of delivering such knowledge effectively (Khan & Chishti, 2012). However, there are lack of connections for teachers to participate and receive professional development (Howard & Gullickson, 2013, as cited in Smylie, 2014). Professional development, however, does not need to be in the traditional sense of the concept. In fact, the use of traditional models for professional development could be an obstacle and limit engagement and participation (Camacho, 2015). Khan (2012) for instance, called for two types of professional development: formal and informal professional development. Formal professional development would be in the line of attending workshops or meetings; while informal professional development could be watching a webinar, watching television, or reading professional publications in the field. Following Khan's idea, professional development, then, could be in the form of online support and instruction, mentoring, team meeting, conferences, workshops, seminars, and classroom observation, just to name a few (Mizell, 2010).

For instance, the impact of attending conferences to enhance the practice of teaching English as a second language is covered in Borg's (2015) report to the British

Council regarding the benefits of attending English Language Teaching (ELT) conferences. Borg gathered data through interviews and questionnaires of attendees to ELT international conferences between 2011 and 2013. Respondents said to have benefitted (and strongly benefitted) from attending the ELT conferences in the form of learning changes in English teaching practices, becoming aware of what was happening in the practice around the world, and learning new classroom management and motivational techniques, among other benefits.

Newman et al. (2010) pointed out the importance of taking into account teachers' willingness to participate in professional development. Therefore, PD would require the commitment and emotional involvement of both instructors and the institution collectively (Petras, Jamil, & Mohamed, 2012). As stated by Owens et al. (2016), professional development is most effective and successful when it is regularly offered and the content is relevant to participants. For instance, to increase teachers' participation, professional development could be offered online. Cho and Rathbum (2013) conducted a case study of professional development given online. The researchers developed a series of online programs that provided opportunities for attendees to engage in professional development at their own pace and then apply what they learned in the classroom. The findings of the study showed a larger response and active engagement to online professional development than traditional PD. Likewise, the study of Khan and Chishti (2012) attest to the effectiveness of online professional development as the online delivery of information accommodated those who could not attend traditional PD. Additionally, Zepeda (2012)

proposed that if professional development is tied to certification, teachers' participation would be more relevant and meaningful.

Another venue for professional development would be in the form of digital video. Manner and Rodriguez (2010) examined the utility of Project LEAP (Leading Exceptional Annual Progress) professional development initiative for ESL teachers through the use of digital video to share "classroom strategies with other professionals worldwide" (p. 33). Lastly, Petras, Jamil, and Mohamed (2012) refer to considering teachers themselves as co-authors of their PD which, as per Petras et al.'s research, is a practice that has had great success in other institutions. ESL teachers at the institution could be invited to research best practices for ESL teaching and co-deliver professional development.

While Chelsey and Jordan (2012), and Stock and Ducan (2010) called for mentoring as a form of professional development, Ying (2013), proposed a collaborative PD mode in order to increase participation and eliminate barriers. Collaborative PD, Ying concluded, would make teachers responsible for their own learning and that of their peers. Likewise, the study of Kazempour and Amirshokoohi (2014) regarding the perception of instructors collaborating in professional development found that teachers felt "appreciated," and "empowered," when asked to collaborate. Lastly, El-Deghaidy, Mansour, Aldahmash, and Alshamrani (2015) noted that asking instructors to collaborate in PD would make teachers be seen as "mediators and agents of change" (p. 1581).

Best Practices for ESL Teaching

There are many ways to support and motivate language learners in the classroom. This section of the literature review provides specific ideas to better serve Hispanic ESL students. The research of these strategies derived from the suggestions of participants in the study and the emerging themes found during data analysis.

Technology in the classroom. Many public schools and institutions of higher education no longer object to the use of technology in the classroom and have started using laptops, tablets, desktops, projectors, and other mobile devices in the classroom (McClanahan, 2014). Studies regarding the effect of technology on learner's motivation, engagement, and involvement in the classroom link the importance of connecting the ESL instruction to the student's needs and interests outside the classroom to promote engagement and motivation (Condelli, Wrigley, & Yoon, 2009). Technology is a form to connect learner's experiences with classroom instruction because technology "brings the real world into the ESL classroom via multimedia support" (McClanahan, 2014, p. 23). Also, as previously discussed, Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis refers to the importance of lowering learner's anxiety to speak in another language in the classroom, thus making lessons fun through technology is a way of accomplishing that as technology can offer sources (pictures, sound, etc.) to help the ESL student place learning within a meaningful background. For instance, students could download a translator application to their devices that would also provide pronunciation; thus, lowering a student's anxiety to

mispronounce a word in the classroom. Also, images can provide nonverbal clues that help students understand the meaning of what they hear (Nisbet & Austin, 2013).

Playing movies or music in the ESL classroom enhances pronunciation, "trains the ear," and provides a varied language experience as the study of Mei-Ling (2012) found. The amount of English words that ESL students need to learn could be overwhelming and only a small percentage of new vocabulary can be directly taught in the classroom (Nisbet & Austin, 2013). However, instructors can maximize vocabulary instruction by playing movies, music, or using smart phones or tablets in the classroom. According to Graves' (2009) to effectively learn vocabulary in another language, learners need to be exposed to a variety of vocabulary sources. A case study conducted to examine the usefulness of playing feature movies (DVDs) among second language learners in a Turkish university revealed that playing movies in the classroom helped language learners improve language competency, increase fluency, learn vocabulary and authentic expressions, and use the language in different social settings (Tuncay, 2014).

As explained by Tuncay (2014) and King (2002), movies provide exposure and access to real language usage (slang, colloquialism, etc.), real life contexts, and different native speakers' voices and accents. In general, movies motivate ESL students because they show a story rather than a lesson that needs to be learned (King & Saxton, 2010). At the same time, however, teachers should choose interesting movies that students will find thrilling rather than boring. To do this, for instance, the instructor could make a list of movies that students would be interested in watching and choose the appropriate ones.

Additionally, closed captions could be enhanced during the movie which would help students see the written English words in addition to hearing it. An experimental study of among Iranian English Foreign Language (EFL) learners to examine the effects of using closed captions during English movies revealed that closed captions are effective when helping language learners assimilate and increase linguistic verb knowledge (Pasban, Forghani, & Nouri, 2015).

Teaching in students' native language. In their study, Chrabaszcz and Jian (2014) regarding the role of the native language when learning English suggests that teaching students in their native language would facilitate English learning and acquisition. As explained, when ESL students are taught in their native language, students can relate certain aspects of L1 to L2. Likewise, in a study of research done with adult ESL learners in the US-Mexico Borderlands, Huerta-Macias and Kephart (2009) found that, even if minimal, the use of native language during English learning is a very significant instructional tool because it facilitates the acquisition of L2. For instance, although instruction is provided in English, instructor can quickly switch to Spanish to provide a translation of a word or phrase, especially if the concept of the word is unknown in the native language because the students have not experienced it the native language yet.

Conversation groups. Horst (2010) argued that writing is not an effective method for ESL students to acquire the vocabulary they need as many of the words used when writing are not found or used when speaking. Therefore, as found in the study conducted by King and Saxton (2010), more instances for in-class conversation among students would

provide vocabulary acquisition. Second language conversation groups, the term used when students form small groups in the classroom to talk among each other, allows students additional practice of the language and to participate in conversations similar to what they would encounter outside the classroom (D'Amico, 2015). In their study, King and Saxton observed that group conversation provided more and better opportunities for language use and acquisition. Likewise, the exploratory study of D'Amico regarding second language interaction in conversation groups revealed that learners challenge themselves to be understood and engage in natural conversation, thus developing more proficiency in the language.

Lastly, the exploratory study of Ziegler et. –al. 2013 regarding the learning opportunities for second language learners found that conversation groups provide more opportunities for learning and for students to acquire native-like vocabulary because conversation groups offer more opportunities for conversations drawn from real-life experiences. From these studies it can be seen that conversation that flows naturally in groups are beneficial to second language learners. As stated by D'Amico, even students who do not actively participate in the conversation would still benefit by just listening in.

The objective of this project is to create a policy for professional development designed to improve the practice and teaching methodologies of ESL instructors. It will specifically address the need of ESL instructors to participate in professional development that will consist of practices specifically taken from the learning experiences of Hispanic ESL students at the college. The study of Msomi, van der Westhuizen, and Steenekamp

(2014) found that teachers respond better (in terms of attendance and confidence to request leaves to attend PD) when professional development is stipulated by policy. Therefore, this project will take onto creating a policy that standardizes professional development for ESL teachers at the research site. The implementation of this project could be carried out as soon as the findings of this study are shared with the Division of Arts and Sciences under which the ESL Program of the college operates. I will volunteer as a facilitator to assist the Division in reaching out to ESL instructors to participate in such policy. I will write a detailed proposal for the policy including timeline and execution (Appendix A). The resources needed to develop this proposal would be time and commitment from volunteers to create this policy.

Potential Resources and Existing Support

The success of this project will primarily depend of the support provided by the college's administration for the Division of Arts and Sciences to provide and accommodate time and space for policy creation. The Division's Chair Person will make a schedule to accommodate instructors' schedules so that ESL instructors who volunteer in developing the policy can participate. Additional support to can be offered online through the college's long distance learning portal.

Potential Barriers

As Newman et al. (2010) mentioned the importance of taking into account teachers' willingness to participate, I foresee as a major barrier to get adjunct instructors to take additional time to meet to lay out the foundations of the policy for professional

development considering that they are part-time faculty and are not on campus full-time. As Abbott and Rossiter (2011) explained, scheduling, delivery mode, and administrative support would impact to the successful implementation of any school activity. I particularly consider that if the college provides compensation for their time and attendance, lack of participation would be reduced to a minimum. Another possible barrier could be the college's lack of funds to pay outside personnel to conduct professional development once it becomes policy. I will look for low cost and possible free workshops if funds become an issue. Or, as Petras, Jamil, and Mohamed (2012) suggested, invite instructors at the college to be co-authors. Alternatively, the professional development could be offered online to save on expenditures.

Although some instructors may feel they do not need to participate in the creation of a policy for professional development because they might feel that their teaching methods are up to date, I, as the facilitator, will explain the benefits of formally establishing professional development as a mean to support ESL teachers. Since the findings of the study will be previously shared with ESL instructors, I expect little reluctance to participate. However, I will ensure that each instructor understands the benefit of creating this policy to help old and new ESL teachers be at par with current trends to motivate Hispanic ESL students in the classroom.

Project Evaluation Plan

The development of a professional learning policy for ESL instructors is intended to help ESL instructors become familiar with the needs of Hispanic ESL students and what

current strategies and practices would motivate language learners in the classroom. I will provide participants in with a feedback form at the end of each session to gather insight on the usefulness of the sessions and learn what could have been done better. I will then create a guide and share with participants to provide continuous improvement based on the evaluations outcomes in order to make the most out of each next session.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

Project Strengths

The strength of this project is that the creation of this policy will consist of practices arising from the learning experiences of Hispanic ESL students as collected in this study. Therefore, the policy will be designed to improve the practice of ESL teaching to promote student learning. A policy for professional development will provide ESL instructors with a regular mean to receive academic support and enhance their instructional skills. This project provides the Division of Arts and Sciences with a strategic approach to formalize professional development for ESL instructors. Once professional development takes place, it will need to be formalized with the president of the college and, especially, ESL instructors. Lastly, the target of this policy is limited to ESL instructors but this policy could serve as a model to be implemented by instructors in other academic departments.

Project Limitations

The limitation of this project is primarily rooted in the fact that the ESL program only has two full-time instructors; thus, the entire program is composed of adjuncts. As adjuncts, instructors are not obligated to engage in professional development, thus making participation an issue. My intentions are to address the problem with the chairperson of the division and propose that adjuncts get some type of monetary incentive to attend the workshops. As suggested by Jaschick (2008), financial compensation is an incentive for many adjuncts to meet required professional development hours. An example could be

Valencia Community College in Florida where adjuncts are offered a salary increase for every 60 hours of professional development completed (Jaschick, 2008).

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The findings of this study and further recommendations for ESL instruction support the idea that educational stakeholders have the moral imperative of finding multiple ways of ensuring that English language learners receive quality instruction. Such commitment to education requires on-going professional development to all ESL instructors in the profession. The literature review and the study findings provide guiding information of best ESL practices to be implemented with Hispanic ESL students. ESL instructors will have a better chance of meeting the expectations of Hispanic 0ESL students if they have the support to understand the complexity of the needs of the population they teach.

Recommendation

To improve the likelihood of success to implement this policy, the college would require an investment in the necessary resources, create a culture of open communication among all members involved in creating this policy, and provide a supportive environment. Providing ESL teachers with professional development would live within the college's based education funding allocation. Current research and the results of my own case study show that having ESL instructors that meet the needs of Hispanic ESL students would increase students' English proficiency. Therefore, stakeholders could encourage the creation and development of opportunities for learning and academic growth, and

encourage and support the development of learning communities among ESL teachers across campus.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

Scholarship

During this journey, I have learned that research is a long, cumbersome and repetitive process. I have also noted that there is a big difference between the published research articles I have read and the project study that I conducted. As a practitioner, I found the process repetitive and redundant. The same concept (e.g., analysis of self as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer; data collection, access to participants, data analysis…) had to be covered and explained over and over at different stages. At this level, I expected things like the 'research strategy' section to be taken for granted. I felt as if I was in a library class where I had to list the databases and key words searches that I would use to find articles. However, I found that I can complete any academic task I want to accomplish. I learned that, although I can complete any academic task that I want to accomplish, being a scholar is not as rewarding as I thought it would be. Even worse, I have discovered that we are in this profession because we are passionate about teaching and learning but the monetary benefit is little and slow to show up. As a scholar, I feel that changing to another profession would be a waste of time, therefor I will find a way make this degree work in order to repay my student loan.

Project Development and Evaluation

The development of this project gave me the opportunity to strengthen my research skills. I also feel that I have now a better grasp on writing a literature review. Conducting interviews and the focus group gave me a chance to practice these techniques for gathering qualitative data. I feel that I have developed the initial skills necessary to engage in conducting formal research to get a job as a researcher, mentor a dissertation, or be part of a dissertation committee.

Leadership and Change

I have always seen myself as a leader and this project study confirmed it. All past jobs I have performed required me to lead and implement change. This journey has strengthen those skills and better prepared me to take influential roles in higher education and my community. As a practitioner, I learned that I can accomplish any task that I set my mind to. I enjoyed conducting research, and I confirmed that I have a natural ability to engage participants. I also learned that I have a natural love and talent for research and this could be something to look into in the future as a possible career.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

This project would have a positive impact on social change because it covers different ways that policy development can be implemented to establish professional development for ESL teachers. Additionally, it covers how commitment and participation can be elicited during policy creation and professional development as well. The suggestions offered in this project can be used in any community college looking to create

a policy to establish professional development not only to ESL instructors but teachers in general.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

As the literature review showed, there are significant gaps in existing support and services for ESL teachers. The research results show that educational institutions must embrace, facilitate, and increase accountability of educators' development. More research is needed to fully understand the extent of support available to ESL teachers in community colleges. Continuously, research needs to be conducted to study different methods for professional development and what practices would best motivate teachers to participate and benefit of such development.

Conclusion

Finding multiple solutions to support ESL instructors in higher education continues to be a challenge. However, as stated by Rutz, Condon, Iverson, Manduca, and Willett (2012), professional development improves teaching practices and, as a result, students learn more. The findings of this study support the idea that educational leaders in charge have the obligation of finding ways of ensuring that faculty is educationally supported and that instructors teach at their maximum capacity. This commitment requires intentional on-going professional support for instructors. The findings in the literature review for this project provide guiding information on how to create and deliver professional development that meets the need of each instructor.

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Appendix A: The Project

Professional Development Best Practice Policy: A Guide to Institutionalize Professional Development for ESL Instructors to Improve Hispanic ESL Students English Proficiency

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October 2016

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Executive Summary

Institutions of higher education have the ethical responsibility of providing faculty and adjunct instructors with the instances necessary to develop professionally. Research has shown that students' needs change over time; therefore it is necessary for instructors to be up to date with best practices to engage learners in and out of the classroom. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the lived experiences of Hispanic ESL students regarding the ESL program at a private community college in an urban city in northeastern United States. At this private community college, the ESL student population is about 75% Hispanic (B. M., personal communication, January 16, 2015), and despite taking the mandatory ESL classes, ESL instructors felt that Hispanic students whose native language were not English were not developing competence in English (W. M,; G. P.; A. N,; M. P.; R. C., personal communication, March 1, 2014). Therefore, exploring how Hispanic ESL students experienced the ESL program at the College helped understand their apparent lack of English proficiency and the challenges that Hispanic ESL students face in the ESL program. Class observations, individual semi-structured interviews, and a focus group were used to collect data.

The findings of the study show that students were satisfied with the ESL classes but felt that more was needed in order to develop English proficiency. The four themes that emerged during this study were: (a) students would like more instances for class participation, (b) students would like instructors to correct their pronunciation, (c) students would like more technology in the classroom, and (d) students would prefer instructors

who spoke Spanish. During data collection, the recommendations gathered from participants guided the project of this study.

The interview and the focus group data were triangulated with the observations. The coding process began inductively and four main themes emerged from the data analysis. Participants reported mixed feelings regarding motivation to learn English. Students felt that instructors were encouraging and were doing a good job to motivate them to learn, but they wished the College hired better instructors as students felt the teachers that the College currently had employed were too old and used old teaching methods. Based on students' feedback, the recommendations in this study proposed the creation of a policy to institutionalize professional development for ESL teachers in order to help them become familiar with the issues that Hispanic ESL students face in the classroom, and what practices would best motivate Hispanic ESL students to become proficient English language speakers. This study informs social change as a tool of understanding the needs of Hispanic ESL students by creating a policy to establish professional development to help ESL teachers meet the needs of Hispanic ESL students in order for Hispanic ESL students to achieve English proficiency.

Background

Analysis of research regarding the motivation of Hispanic ESL students to learn English revealed a gap in research regarding Hispanic ESL student in general. Additionally, research indicates that there are many challenges present for Hispanic English language learners. The support that ESL teachers receive directly impacts the

efficacy and ability of Hispanic English learners to become proficient in the language. Research also indicates that policy exists regarding providing professional development for ESL instructors in community colleges but that it is up to each educational institution to decide the frequency and quality of such service.

Existing Problem and Supporting Literature

The supporting research suggested that motivation in the classroom is of supreme importance for students to develop English proficiency (Engin, 2009; Gilakjani, Leong, & Sabouri, 2012; Kaboody, 2013; Khamkheien, 2010; Öztürk and Ok, 2014; Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012; Renninger, 2009) because students' motivation to study English decrease once students are in the classroom (Berwick & Ross, 1989; de la Varre, Irving, Jordan, Hannum, & Farmer, 2014). Therefore, strong ESL programs are mandatory to keep students moving towards their goal of becoming proficient English speakers. A review of educational policies regarding professional development showed a direct link between professional development and increase efficacy of ESL students (Arberdeen, 2012). The research also indicated some variations to traditional professional development that would lead to more participation (Borg, 2015; Mizell, 2010; Petras, Jamil, & Mohamed, 2012). For instance, professional development does not need to be in the traditional sense of face-to face interaction, professional development could be watching a webinar, an online conference, mentoring, and teen meetings just to name a few (Khan, 2012; Mizell, 2010).

Importance of Professional Development

Alderfer and Alderfer (2011) and Abbot and Rossiter (2011) noted that professional development increases the effectiveness of ESL teachers as it provides a venue for social learning and advancement in the field of practice. Furthermore, Zueger, Kats, and Popovich (2014) noted the positive impact that professional development has for ESL teachers as it helps increase communications skills and foster relationships. Likewise, the study of Abbot, Dunn, and Arberdeen (2012) found that professional development was beneficial for both teachers and learners as a series of workshops implemented in the study resulted in the professional growth of teachers and ESL students increased English language proficiency.

Research shows gaps between teachers' preparation and the ability to meet the needs of diverse learners (Chelsey & Jordan, 2012; Wang & Ha, 2012); and an investigation on the impact of professional development for ESL teachers carried by Newman, Samimy, and Romstedt (2010) cited the inadequacy of current support for ESL teachers, the need for professional development and accessibility. The study of Newman, Samimy, and Romstedt found that ESL teachers are aware of their lack of training and want further help to learn how to incorporate new materials in their lessons. As noted by Young and Smith (2006), educational institutions provide ESL instructions by following the state content standards for teaching ESL; however, the standards do not indicate how ESL classes should be taught. Therefore, educational leaders and ESL instructors develop their own curricula and instruction methods (2014). Sometimes, the ESL instructional methods that instructors utilize are outdated; and in some instances, ESL instructors are not

prepared to teach ESL or do not have the appropriate ESL teaching endorsement (Bridges & Dagys, 2012; Chiu-Yin, 2009; Henrichsen, 2010). Therefore, professional development is a tool to bring ESL instructor up to date with the latest strategies to engage ESL learners in the classroom. However, balancing professional development with the work schedule of ESL instructors has shown to be difficult and time consuming. Thus, practical means to deliver professional development is needed in order to attain commitment and participation. As established by Perry and Hart (2012), English language learners "represent the fastest growing sector of adult education in United States" (p. 110); therefore, it is crucial that English language educators learn the challenges and needs of that population.

Creating a Policy for Professional Development

Establishing a policy for the professional development of ESL teaches could be a prospective strategy to improve ESL teaching. As noted by Whipp (2013), sometimes the demand in in teaching ESL is more than what the teacher has been taught or prepared to handle; therefore, established professional development would provide the support needed. As expressed by Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2014), although policy exists regarding the necessity of professional development, it falls within each institution to make it a reality; therefore, the lack of support for ESL teachers is usually common in higher education institutions (Luo, 2014; Sharif & Cho, 2015). Likewise, the study of Hoover and Erickson (2015) found that there is a current a lack of professional development and limited resources for ESL teachers. However, when professional development is indeed offered,

Zhang, Parker, Koehler, and Eberhardt (2015) found that "there is a lack of understanding about what teachers need for improvement" (p. 471). Consequently, a policy that makes professional development mandatory and lays out what needs to be covered during professional development (e.g., the needs of Hispanic ESL students as expressed by participants of this case study) would help ESL instructors develop the knowledge needed to address ESL students' learning challenges.

Overview of the Study

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore Hispanic ESL students' experiences in an ESL program at a community college in an urban city in northeastern United States.

Study Design

This qualitative project study was in the form of an exploratory case study because case studies explore and describe the experience of a group or situation in-depth (Creswell, 2013), and the goal of this study was to explore the experiences of Hispanic ESL students in a private urban community college in northeastern United States.

Purpose of Qualitative Research

In this study, qualitative data was collected because the purpose of the study was to document what Hispanic ESL students experienced while taking ESL classes. For this reason, a qualitative design was the best method of collecting data because qualitative studies use narratives to describe data and focus on the essence of the human experience (Merriam, 2009).

Study Participants

For the study, only ESL students of Hispanic origins (regardless social economic status) were invited to participate because the lack of English competence exhibited from ESL students was among Hispanic students only. Fifteen Hispanic ESL students were

invited to participate in 1-on-1 interviews, seven different Hispanic ESL students were invited to participate in a focus group, and three different ESL classes were observed.

Research Questions

The two research questions guiding this study were:

- What are Hispanic ESL students' perspectives of their experience in the college-wide ESL program?
- What are some of the issues Hispanic ESL students experience while studying English as a second language?

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collections consisted of 1-on-1 semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and the observation of three different ESL classes. Participants signed a form of Informed Consent in both English and Spanish. Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. I took an inductive approach to data analysis. Interviews and focus group were recorded and translated, and transcribed with the assistance of a Word document. By constant comparison analysis, concepts emerging from the interviews and the focus group were compared to identify relationships between concepts until I reached concept saturation. After the analyzing the interviews and focus group data, I reviewed the observation notes to determine whether key observations had been brought up by participants during the interviews and focus group.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1

What are Hispanic ESL students' perspectives of their experience in the college-wide ESL program?

The findings of this study found that Hispanic ESL students were satisfied with the ESL classes they were taking at the college. However students felt that ESL instructors could make some changes to the program in order to strengthen the ESL program.

Research Question 2

What are some of the issues Hispanic ESL students experience while studying English as a second language?

The findings revealed that Hispanic ESL students experienced the following issues when studying in an ESL program:

- Students did not watch movies in the classroom.
- Students would like ESL instructors who speak Spanish.
- Students did not practice enough English during class.
- Instructors did not correct students' pronunciation in the classroom.
- Students expressed to want more relevant and current events information in the classroom.

Participants expressed the desire to watch movies during class as students felt that watching movies would help them develop English proficiency. Students specifically said that they would like to read about current events rather than old poetry or irrelevant short

stories that sometimes ESL instructors made them read. Participants said to sometimes be at loss with some English idioms and verb conjugations; students felt that if the instructor spoke Spanish they would grasp English idioms and concepts better. Students expressed to want to have more instances to speak English in the classroom and complained that ESL classes focused too much in writing and, while writing was acceptable, what Hispanic ESL students were really looking for was to speak English, not necessarily write in English. Lastly, students felt that many times while speaking English in the classroom, students would mispronounce a word but the instructor did not correct them. Students expressed the desire to have their English pronunciation corrected in the classroom by the teacher to make sure that students knew the right pronunciation of a word.

Recommendations

The development of Professional Development Best Practice Policy emerged as a result of the four themes created during the data analysis of this study. The College needs to create a policy that institutionalizes professional development for ESL instructors. The recommendation of the Professional Development Best Practice Policy consists of three areas of focus:

- Call to action
- Action steps and time line
- Meeting agenda

Table 3

Professional Development Best Practice Policy: Recommendations

Call to Action
• Audience: Chair Person of the Division of Arts and Sciences under which the ESL Program operates, ESL Instructors, President of the College. • Literature Support: Murley, Gandy, Sublett, and Kruger (2014); Rodesiler and McGurie (2015); Rutz, Condon, Iverson, Manduca and Willet (2012); Thabisile and Dlamini (2015); Varvariguou, Creech, and Hallam (2012).
Action Steps Recommendations
• Present findings of this study to Chair Person of the Division of Arts and Sciences under which the ESL program operates and propose policy implementation. • After approval from Chair Person, present findings to president of the College. • After approval from the president of the College, establish relationship with Director of Professional Development to develop policy. • Invite ESL instructors and other staff to take part in the policy creation. • First Meeting: Introduce findings of the study; create a turning point and strategies. • Second Meeting: Review literature related to best practices in ESL. • Third Meeting: Review policy creation as a potential component of continued ESL teacher support.

- Fourth Meeting: Formalize policy creation and select a subcommittee for policy writing and review.
- Fifth Meeting: Write first draft of policy.
- Sixth Meeting: Share last draft of policy with appropriate parties.
- Seventh Meeting: Director of Professional Development makes recommendation to the president of the College to create procedures and secure funding.
- Implement policy and procedures.

Meeting Agenda Recommendations

- Meeting 1: Developing the purpose of the policy.
- Meeting 2: Review findings of this study and other literature related to best practices in ESL.
- Meeting 3: Introduction to policy creation.
- Meeting 4: Formalize policy creation.
- Meeting 5: Writing first policy draft.
- Meeting 6: Share final policy draft and components of professional development.
- Next Steps: Director of Professional Development communicates the decision of the president of the College to ESL teachers.

Implementation Plan

To establish professional development for ESL teachers through the adoption of policy, the College would be required to invest in the resources necessary to support ESL teachers. Professional development would be permanent and offered, at least one professional development, every year. Current research and the results of my own case study support the idea that providing ESL teachers with academic support, embedded in the form of professional development, leads to more effective and successful teaching and learning. Professional development, however, does not need to be in the traditional sense of the concept (face-to-face). The following are some recommendations of how professional development could be offered to ensure participation and engagement.

Professional Development Formats

Professional development can be offered online, in a blended method, as online conferences, webinars, or as a mentoring program. Borg (2015) attested to the impact of attending conferences to enhance the practice of teaching English as a second language in a report to the British Council regarding the benefits of attending English Language Teaching (ELT) conferences. Online professional development, on the other hand, could increase teachers' participation. For instance, Cho and Rathbum (2013) offered a series of workshops as online professional development that resulted in increased participation and active engagement of faculty. Additionally, online professional development would accommodate those who cannot attend in person (Khan & Chishti, 2012).

Chelsey and Jordan (2012) proposed mentoring as a form of PD to help teachers meet the needs of students; while Manner and Rodriguez (2010) examined the value and utility

of digital video, and Petras, Jamil, and Mohamed (2012) suggested inviting faculty to be co-authors of professional development and collectively involve the entire faculty in their own academic advancement. Lastly, the institution could partner with the technology department to provide faculty with support for learning new technologies needed to supplement teaching (Rodesiler & McGurie, 2015).

Professional Development Best Practice Policy: Call to Action

Audience:

- Chair Person of the Division of Arts and Sciences under which the ESL Program operates
- ESL Instructors
- President of the College

Call to Action:

Higher education institutions are responsible for producing productive knowledge and providing students with instructors capable of delivering instruction effectively. Therefore, the College should utilize all resources to ensure that high quality ESL teaching takes place. Rutz, Condon, Iverson, Manduca, and Willett (2012) noted that students learn more as educators improve their teaching methods through professional development. As per instructors who participate in professional development, they gain more knowledge, improve performance, and increase competence (Thabisile & Dlamini, 2015).

Varvarigou, Creech, and Hallam (2012) found that professional development is an opportunity to learn new practices and concepts, enhance teachers' confidence, and even to create, discover, and share lesson plans that can be used in the classroom. Furthermore, Rodesiler and McGuire (2015) shared a very important aspect of professional development at the institutional level when said that it "comprise a dynamic environment for applying inclusive teaching strategies that promote learning" (p. 29). Lastly, Murley, Gandy, Sublett,

and Kruger (2014) found that through professional development, faculty created a ‘support group’ that they could reach out to at any time.

Table 4

Action Steps and Timeline: Policy Procedures to Support ESL Teachers

Month	Activity
July 2016	• Present the findings of this study to the Chair Person of the Division of Arts and Social Sciences under which the ESL program operates and propose the creation of policy to establish professional development.
August 2016	• Submit findings of this study to the president of the college and ask for 1 year ESL Development led by the Director of Professional Development to review the current support offered to ESL teachers and create recommendations for potential policy and program revisions.
September 2016	• ESL Development convened and approved by the president.
October 2016	• Meeting 1: Developing the purpose: Creating a turning point and strategies.
November 2016	• Meeting 2: Review findings of the study and other literature related to best practices in ESL. • Meeting 3: Review policy creation as a potential component to continued ESL teacher support.
January 2017	• Meeting 4: Formalize policy development; subcommittee’s selection (policy writing and program review).
February 2017	• Meeting 5: Writing first draft of possible policy language and review possible components for ESL teachers’ professional development.
March 2017	• Meeting 6: Share possible final policy draft and components of professional development.
April 2017	• Meeting 7: Director of Professional Development makes recommendation to the president of the college to create procedures and secure funding.
May 2017 –	• Implement policy and procedures.

June 2017

Table 5

Policy and Program Recommendations Meeting Agendas

Category	Activity		
Purpose	Meeting 1: Developing the purpose: Create milestone indicators and potential resources		
Agenda	5:00 – 6:00 pm 6:00 – 7:00 pm	Introduction Review Project Study	Director of Professional Development
Next Steps	Individual article reading and meeting preparation		
Purpose	Meeting 2: Review findings of the study and other literature related to best practices in ESL		
Agenda	5:00 – 6:00 pm 6:00 – 7:00 pm	Review supporting literature Continue review literature and share findings	Director of Professional Development
Next Steps	Individual article reading and meeting preparation		
Purpose	Meeting 3: Review policy development as a potential component to continued ESL teacher support		
Agenda	5:00 – 6:00 pm 6:00 – 700 pm	Review previous meeting and approach policy development Continue discussion on policy development	Director of Professional Development
Next Steps	Extend invitation to possible committee members		
Purpose	Meeting 4: Formalize policy development; subcommittee's selection (policy writing and program review)		
Agenda	5:00 – 6:00 pm 6:00 – 7:00 pm	Review previous meeting and formalize policy development Selection of subcommittee	Director of Professional Development
Next Steps	Invite subcommittee members to next and subsequent meetings. Brainstorm possible components for professional development components		
Purpose	Meeting 5: Writing first draft of possible policy language and review		

	possible components of possible components for ESL teachers' professional development		
Agenda	5:00 – 6:00 pm 6:00 – 7:00 pm	Subcommittee: Writing first draft of possible policy language Review of possible components for ESL teachers' professional development	Director of Professional Development
Next Steps	Draft formal proposal and prepare for next meeting. Write up professional development components		
Purpose	Meeting 6: Share possible final policy draft and components of professional development.		
	5:00 – 6:00 pm 6:00 – 7:00 pm	Review of previous meeting and share final policy draft Formalize component of ESL professional development	Director of Professional Development
Next Steps	Prepare presentation for the president of the college		
Purpose	Present policy proposal to the president of the college		
	5:00 – 6:00 pm	Meet with the president of the college	Director of Professional Development
Next Steps	Director of Professional Development communicates the president's decision to ESL teachers		

Project Evaluation and Other Considerations

For the implementation of this policy creation, I will provide participants in the meetings to create the policy with a feedback form at the end of each session to gather insight on the usefulness of the sessions and learn what could have been done better. I will then create a guide and share with participants to provide continuous improvement based on the evaluations outcomes in order to make the most out of each next session.

The implementation of this project would have a positive impact on social change because the delivery covers different ways that a policy can be implemented to establish professional development for ESL teachers. Additionally, implementation covers how commitment and participation can be elicited during policy creation and professional development as well. The suggestions offered in this project can be used in any community college looking to create a policy to establish professional development not only to ESL instructors but teachers in general.

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Appendix B: Flyer to Recruit Volunteers for the Study (English version)

Busco participantes para un estudio

Mi nombre es Raynelda y busco estudiantes de origen **hispano** que esten tomando classes de **ESL** para un estudio acerca de cómo ven los estudiantes hispanos de ESL las clases de ESL.

Necesito voluntarios para entrevistar y para un grupo de enfoque.

El estudio es confidencial y no tiene nada que ver con esta Universidad.

Si está interesado me puede contactar al **(917) 937-1235** ó por email a raynelda.calderon@waldenu.edu

Appendix C: Flyer to Recruit Volunteers for the Study (Spanish version)

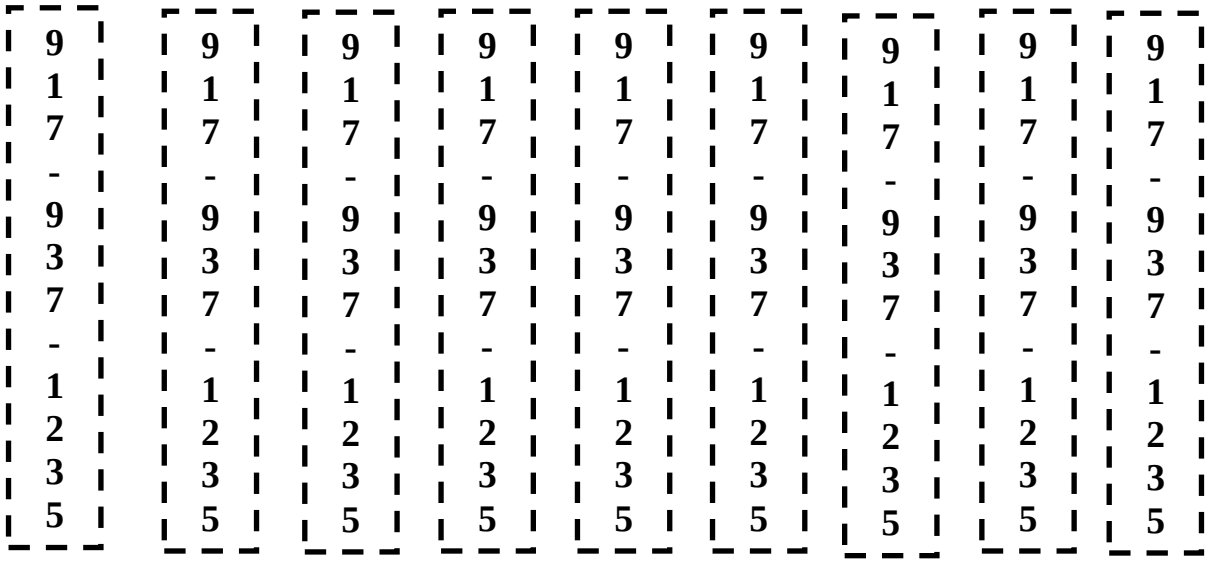
Busco participantes para un estudio

Mi nombre es Raynelda y busco estudiantes de origen **hispano** que estén tomando clases de **ESL** para un estudio acerca de cómo ven los estudiantes hispanos de ESL las clases de ESL.

Necesito voluntarios para entrevistar y para un grupo de enfoque.

El estudio es confidencial y no tiene nada que ver con esta Universidad.

Si está interesado me puede contactar al **(917) 937-1235** o por email a raynelda.calderon@waldenu.edu



Appendix D: Request to Conduct Study

Sir,

I am currently a Doctor of Education (Ed.D) student at Walden University. My doctoral study requires a capstone project that examines an educational problem within a local setting. For my capstone project, I would like to interview ESL students to collect data on their perceptions of the ESL Program.

In order to conduct this project, I am required to obtain your written permission. This written permission must include authorization to conduct the study, authorization to conduct on-site interviews, and verification that there is no internal Institutional Review Board (IRB) within our organization. This permission must be written on official letterhead and will be submitted as part of my proposal package to Walden's IRB. Walden's IRB will review my proposal to ensure I meet ethical research standards governed by U.S. Federal regulation(s). Failure to supply your letter, as part of the package, will result in proposal denial, and I will receive no credit for course completion.

In line with ethical research practices, all data obtained throughout the course of this study will be safeguarded. No personal information will be collected from participants and pseudo names will be used to refer to participants and the Institution. According to <Psuedo Name>, even with these safeguards, a disclaimer is required. Mirroring the verbiage found in <Psuedo name>, the following statement will be included in my study, "DISCLAIMER: The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the institution."

Choosing this subject is solely academically motivated. Please let me know if you have any question or concerns regarding this request. I appreciate the help you've already provided, and I look forward to receiving your permission to proceed on this academic journey.

Very Respectfully,

Raynelda A. Calderon

Appendix E: Letter of Cooperation

July 1, 2015

Dear Raynelda Calderon,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled "A Case Study of Hispanic ESL Students' Perceptions of the ESL Program at a Private Community College in [redacted]" within [redacted] College. As part of this study, I authorize you to interview Hispanic ESL students, conduct focus groups with Hispanic ESL students, observe ESL classes, ask ESL instructors to participate in member checking, and share the results of the study with the ESL department. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: allow you to approach Hispanic ESL students to conduct interviews and focus groups, use a designated area or classroom to conduct said interviews and focus groups, and interact with ESL instructors. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Authorized Official
ESL Department

Appendix F: Observation Protocol

This form has been developed for use in classroom evaluation of language classes at [redacted] University.

Language Classroom Observation Form

Class: ———————————— # of students: ————————

Date: ————————————

Rating Scale

4 - *Outstanding*; 3 - *Good*; 2 - *Fair*; 1 - *Poor*

A. PREPARATION

1. The instructor had a clearly discernible lesson plan. 4 3 2 1

2. There was an appropriate balance of structured and open-ended/communicative activities. 4 3 2 1

3. The exercises and activities were introduced in context. 4 3 2 1

4. The plan was geared toward real/authentic language use. 4 3 2 1

B. LANGUAGE USE

1. The instructor used the target-language in the classroom appropriately and effectively. 4 3 2 1 / NA

2. Use of English was appropriate to student needs. 4 3 2 1 / NA

C. LESSON PRESENTATION

1. The lesson was presented effectively and clearly. 4 3 2 1

2. The activities/exercises chosen to achieve the objectives were effective. 4 3 2 1

3. There were smooth transitions between activities. 4 3 2 1

4. The time allotted for activities was appropriate. 4 3 2 1

5. The amount of teacher talk and student talk was appropriate. 4 3 2 1

6. The type and amount of teacher feedback was effective. 4 3 2 1

7. Cultural instruction was integrated into class activities. 4 3 2 1

D. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

1. The use of small groups/pair work during each activity was appropriate. 4 3 2 1

2. The seating arrangement facilitated learning. 4 3 2 1

3. The use of audio-visual & tech materials was effective. 4 3 2 1

4. The instructor divided his or her attention among students appropriately. 4 3 2 1

5. Student participation was on task. 4 3 2 1

E. CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE

1. Student participation was active and lively. 4 3 2 1

2. The class atmosphere was warm, open and accepting. 4 3 2 1

3. The instructor was sensitive to students' difficulties and abilities. 4 3 2 1

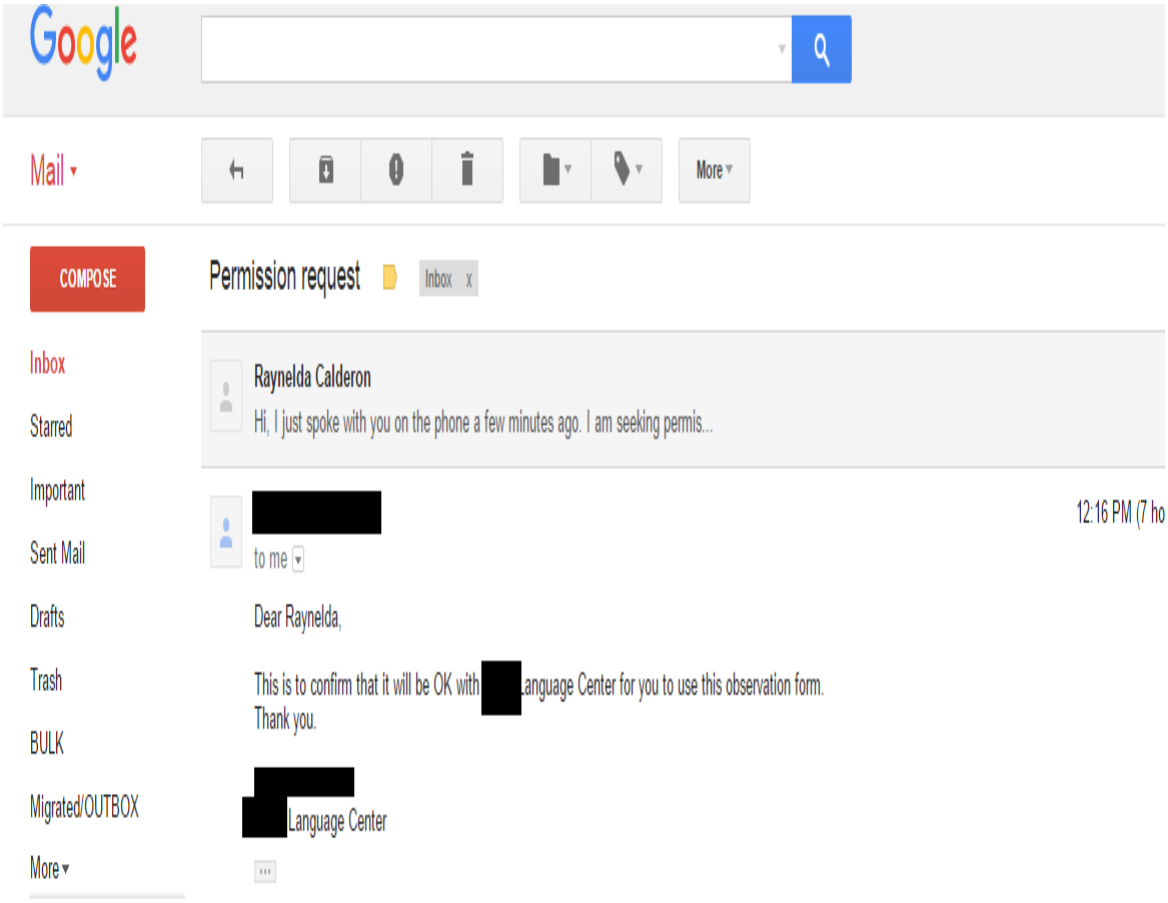
F. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

1. Use of technology (video, audio, web materials) was appropriate given the material being presented. 4 3 2 1

2. Use of technology was particularly creative, i.e. it accomplished something that could not have been done as easily with other media. 4 3 2 1

3. Use of technology is limited in the classroom, but used appropriately outside the class (e.g. for email, drilling, background, etc.. 4 3 2 1

Appendix G: Permission from [redacted] to Use Evaluation Form



Appendix H: Interview Protocol (English Version)

Question 1: Can you tell me what motivated you to study English?

Question 2: Think about being in one of your ESL classes here on campus, what motivates you in the classroom?

Question 3: How do you keep motivated during a class to learn English?

Question 4: How does the teacher motivate you during class?

Question 5: How does the classroom environment motivate you to learn English?

Probe question: Could you describe a typical ESL class where you feel motivated?

Probe question: Overall, what is your perception of the ESL classes that you are taking here at the College?

Question 6: From your point of view, what would help improve the ESL classes you are taking?

Appendix I: Interview Protocol (Spanish Version)

Pregunta #1: ¿Me podrías decir qué te motivó a estudiar inglés?

Pregunta #2: Imagínate que estás en una de las clases de inglés aquí en la Universidad y dime, ¿Qué te motiva en el aula?

Pregunta #3: ¿Cómo te mantienes motivada durante la clase para aprender inglés?

Pregunta #4: ¿Cómo te motiva el profesor para aprender inglés?

Pregunta #5: ¿Cómo te motiva el ambiente del curso a aprender inglés?

Pregunta de sondeo: Me podrías describir una típica clase de ESL en donde te sientes motivado?

Pregunta de sondeo: En sentido general, ¿Cómo ves el programa de Inglés de la Universidad?

Pregunta #6: Desde su punto de vista, ¿Qué ayudaría a mejorar el programa de ESL?

Appendix J: Focus Group Protocol (English version)

Welcome,

My name is Raynelda Calderon and we are here to talk about your experience in the ESL program here in the college. This information will not be shared with anyone at the college. The information is part of my requirement to complete a doctorate in education at Walden University. I asked for your participation because you all are Hispanics and ESL students.

There is no right or wrong answers. You can share your thoughts and say whatever you are thinking respectfully. Remember, I just want to learn your experiences taking ESL classes. Please turn off your cell phones and don't have side conversations. At the end, I will provide you with a blank sheet for you to write anything you would like to share but didn't do so during the discussion. Please do not write your name on the paper. I will ask you a question to start the conversation and feel free to express your thoughts.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. What motivated you to study English?
2. What are some things that motivate you in the classroom?
3. What are some issues you perceive could influence your learning English?
4. What do you like about the ESL classes?
5. What would you add or change to the ESL classes?

Appendix K: Focus Group Protocol (Spanish version)

Bienvenidos,

Mi nombre es Raynelda Calderon y estamos aquí para hablar sobre su experiencia en el programa de ESL en esta escuela. Sus respuestas no serán compartidas con nadie, solo yo tengo acceso a ella. Este grupo de enfoque es parte de mi obligación para obtener un doctorado en educación de la Universidad de Walden. Les pedí su participación porque todos son Hispanos y están estudiando Inglés en esta escuela. No hay respuestas correctas ni incorrectas. Pueden compartir lo que sienten sin miedo siempre y cuando sea con respeto. Recuerden que solamente yo tengo acceso a sus respuestas y estas no serán compartidas con la escuela.

Por favor apaguen sus teléfonos celulares y no tengan conversaciones paralelas. Al terminar, les voy a dar una hoja en blanco para que escriban cualquier idea que tengan y que no hayan tenido tiempo de expresar. Por favor no escriban sus nombres en el papel. Les voy a hacer una pregunta para dar inicio a la conversación y siéntanse libres de expresar su opinión.

¿Tienen alguna pregunta antes de comenzar?

1. Vamos a empezar compartiendo qué les motive a estudiar inglés. ¿Qué te motivó a estudiar inglés?
2. ¿Cuáles son algunas cosas que te motivan en el aula?
3. ¿Qué factores tú crees podrían influir a que aprendas inglés?
4. ¿Qué te gusta de las clases de inglés?

5. ¿Hay que te gustaría añadir o cambiar de las clases de ESL?

Appendix M: Certificate of Completion

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Raynelda Calderon** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 06/29/2014

Certification Number: 1496709