

*PATHWAYS & OUTCOMES:
Tracking ESL Student
Performance*

**A Longitudinal Study of
Adult ESL Service at
City College of San Francisco**

by
**Steven Spurling
Sharon Seymour
Forrest P. Chisman**

January 7, 2008



Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy

**1221 Avenue of the Americas - 46th Floor
New York, N.Y. 20020
<http://www.caalusa.org>**



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FOREWORD

Pathways & Outcomes: Tracking ESL Student Performance is a longitudinal study of English-as-a-Second-Language services at City College of San Francisco. The report completes a trilogy of CAAL studies on adult ESL service in community colleges. It is designed primarily to help those who plan and design community college ESL programs to assess and develop effective services. It will also be useful to groups that offer adult ESL services in other institutional settings, and to policymakers and funding agencies.

Along with other publications in the series (Passing the Torch: Strategies for Innovation in Community College ESL, and Torchlights in ESL: Five Community College Profiles, **Pathways and Outcomes** is available at no charge from the website of the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy (www.caalusa.org). It can be purchased in bound form directly from CAAL (bheitner@caalusa.org).

Passing the Torch (February 2007) was the result of a major two-year study of five community college ESL programs, all nominated by a national panel for their excellence: Bunker Hill Community College (MA), City College of San Francisco (CA), College of Lake County (IL), Seminole Community College (FL), and Yakima Valley Community College (WA). Drs. Forrest P. Chisman (study director, CAAL vice president) and JoAnn Crandall (research director, University of Maryland Baltimore Campus) worked with a team of co-researchers from the five colleges studied. Passing the Torch focuses on non-credit ESL services from the standpoint of learning gains, retaining students, and bringing about transitions to postsecondary education. Among the strategies examined are high intensity instruction, learning outside the classroom, and the use of “learner-centered thematic” curricula.

Torchlights in ESL (June 2007) was written by the principal co-researchers from the five colleges at the center of the main study, under the direction of Dr. Chisman. The publication provides a deeper look at some aspects of service at the five study colleges.

Pathways and Outcomes was made possible by CAAL discretionary funds; a considerable amount of CAAL pro bono staff time and resources; and staff time, data, and computer resources generously provided by the City College of San Francisco (CCSF). Dr. Chisman was responsible for overall project direction. He developed its initial design, supervised and participated in the research and analysis, and drafted large parts of the final report. The other two members of the team are staff members of the City College of San Francisco (both research participants in Passing the Torch and Torchlights in ESL): Steven Spurling (Institutional Research Officer, Office of Research, Planning and Grants) and Sharon Seymour (former Chair, ESL Department). Dr. Spurling conducted the data analysis and had primary responsibility for interpretation of that analysis. He also played a large role in designing the study and crafting this report. Dr. Seymour contributed to the study’s design and interpretation of its findings and produced the first draft of this report and portions of the final draft. Her special insights into the

College's ESL program helped shape findings about student performance and features of the program that may have influenced it.

CAAL extends deepest appreciation to CCSF for its extraordinary assistance in making the College's staff and other resources available. **Pathways and Outcomes** would not have been possible without that help. CAAL is especially indebted to the research team for its remarkable dedication. These three authors, with their unique and extensive expertise, collaborated on virtually every aspect of the research, analysis, and report preparation. Credit for the report truly belongs to them.

Gail Spangenberg
President, CAAL

AUTHORS' EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. THE STUDY

This report presents the findings of a longitudinal study of English as a Second Language (ESL) students at the City College of San Francisco (CCSF) conducted during the summer of 2007. The study used College records to track all students who first enrolled in CCSF's credit and non-credit ESL programs in 1998, 1999, and 2000 for seven years each. In total, 38,095 non-credit and 6,666 credit ESL students comprised the "cohort" that was examined. The study's primary focus was on the persistence, learning gains, and transition to credit studies, and the success in credit courses of non-credit ESL students. It also examined various features of CCSF's ESL program that affected these variables.¹

Although, strictly speaking, the findings of this study apply only to CCSF, the authors believe they have implications for the adult education ESL field as a whole – both because CCSF's ESL program has many features in common with a great many other programs and because the College's program is regarded by many ESL professionals as "exemplary" in the way it applies the principles of English language learning. In many respects, it is both a typical case and a best case of adult education ESL in the United States.

B. OVERALL FINDINGS

Overall, the findings of this study tell a "glass half full/glass half empty" story. Non-credit students who take full advantage of the opportunities CCSF offers are outstandingly successful, both in ESL courses and in subsequent academic studies. ESL works for them as a means to meet their personal needs for greater English proficiency in everyday life and as a means of improving the skills of our national workforce through postsecondary education. But, by either measure, ESL does not work as well as it should for most students who enroll in non-credit courses, because most of these students do not persist for enough terms or attend enough hours of instruction to make significant learning gains or to cross crucial thresholds.

The gap between potential and realized outcomes is very large. Fortunately, CCSF has adopted at least some measures that can close that gap, and a careful scrutiny of both its students and its program suggest others. If some students can succeed, many others can as

¹ At CCSF, as at most community colleges, "non-credit" ESL is the equivalent of what might elsewhere be called "adult education" ESL. Courses are offered without charge and they cover the range of English language proficiency from what the U.S. Department of Education defines as the "ESL Literacy" to the "Low Advanced" levels. "Credit" ESL is a sequence of courses for which students must pay tuition. Credit courses are primarily designed to help students prepare for academic studies, although they are often used by students in other ways. In some cases, they help students gain a higher level of general English proficiency than do non-credit courses, but in all cases they focus on different applications of English language skills.

well. The challenge for CCSF and other ESL programs is to understand the potential for success, identify the factors that lead to it, and enrich programs with components that increase it.

C. MAJOR FINDINGS

The primary purpose of this report is to present and explain the data generated by the 2007 CCSF study. Many different narratives might be constructed from the data, and the authors hope that readers will delve into it and construct their own.

Because CCSF is a postsecondary institution, the following summary begins with the success of non-credit ESL students as measured by the standards most postsecondary institutions use to gauge success: achievement in academic programs. It then proceeds to examine the components of that success.

1. Academic Achievement

Only about eight percent of the students who enrolled in CCSF's non-credit ESL program from 1998-2000 made the transition to academic (credit) studies in seven years. But here is what those "transition students" achieved:

- Seventy-five percent enrolled in credit ESL, and 85% enrolled in other academic courses, usually at the same time they were studying credit ESL. In fact, they enrolled in far more credit courses than in credit ESL courses, but credit ESL seems to have been the pathway to success in academic studies for most students.
- In terms of grade point averages, percentage of courses passed, and other measures of academic success, students who made transitions from non-credit ESL equaled or surpassed both other credit ESL students and other credit students at the College.
- Twenty-five percent of transition students obtained Associate Degrees or Certificates from the College. This was three times the rate of students for whom English was their native language. In fact, credit ESL students, taken as a whole, attained nearly one-third of the certificates and half the degrees awarded to students who first enrolled in CSSF from 1998-2000.
- Transition students transferred to other two-year and four-year institutions at 70% the rate of other CCSF students during the period studied, but this may understate transfer rates, because some transition students may transfer in subsequent years.
- In short, students who began in non-credit ESL and made the transition to credit were among the College's best academic students.

2. Who Made Transitions?

Impressive as this record of success in academic studies may be, it was still the case that only eight percent of non-credit students crossed the threshold to credit studies. Who were they?

- Most of the students who made transitions began at fairly low levels of non-credit ESL and “worked their way up” to gain the levels of English proficiency they needed to meet the College’s standards for credit studies, and most began at fairly low levels in credit ESL after they had made transitions. They were students determined to achieve, and they did.
- This means they were *not* primarily students who first enrolled in non-credit ESL at a high level of English proficiency. Only a small percentage of students who began at high levels made transitions.
- Almost all transition students had attained the Intermediate level of non-credit English language proficiency or higher. About 30-40% of students who attained the High Intermediate Level and 20-25% who attained the Low Intermediate level made transitions to credit – compared to eight percent of all non-credit ESL students.
- These students had not only attained a high level of “life skills English,” but a large portion of them moved on to success in academic studies.
- One reason that so few non-credit students made the transition to academic studies was that only 19% of all non-credit students who began at low levels of proficiency attained the Intermediate level of or above.

3. Who Advanced?

CCSF’s non-credit ESL Program offers 10 Levels of courses – from ESL Literacy to Low Advanced.² Advancing levels was used by this study as a measure of learning gain, because students can only advance a level if they have mastered the skills of the level in which they are enrolled.

Sixty-seven percent of CCSF’s non-credit ESL students first enrolled at the lowest levels of English language proficiency (the Literacy and Low Beginning Levels). Which of these students were most likely to comprise the 19% who advanced to the Intermediate Level?

- Of all CCSF’s non-credit ESL students, only 44% advanced even one level during the seven-year period.

² CCSF’s ESL levels are aligned with the California Model Standards for ESL. In this summary, the six-level designation of proficiency commonly used in ESL programs is used: ESL Literacy, Low Beginning, High Beginning, Low Intermediate, High Intermediate, and Low Advanced.

- Not surprisingly, the students most likely to advance were those who enrolled for the most terms and attended the most hours of instruction. The correlation between persistence, hours attended, and level advancement is consistent and strong.
- On average, it took students who advanced a level about 100 hours to do so. This does not mean that all students who attended for 100 hours advanced – some students took more or less time to advance, and some attended for large numbers of hours and did not advance at all.
- Students who began at the lowest levels (the Literacy and Beginning levels) were more likely to advance levels and to advance more levels than students who began at higher levels, although it took them more terms and hours of attendance to do so.
- Of the College’s two major ethnic groups, Asians were more likely to advance levels than Hispanics, although it took them more terms and hours to advance in the lower levels.
- Very young students (16-19) were more likely to advance levels than other students were, and they were more likely to make transitions to credit studies. Aside from this age group, age made no difference in level advancement.
- Thirty percent of non-credit students “stopped out” (stopped taking classes for a year or more and subsequently re-enrolled). These students (stop-outs) advanced at the same rate as other students who began at the same first level, although they attended slightly more terms than did comparable students, but they made the transition to credit at lower rates – at least during the time period during which they were studied. Because of their long absences from the program (often two years or longer), more stop-outs may make transitions at some point subsequent to the time period studied.

4. Who Did Not Advance?

- Fifty-six percent of students who enrolled in CCSF’s non-credit ESL program from 1998-2000 did not advance even one level (showed no learning gain, as measured by level advancement).
- Half of these students who did not advance attended 50 hours or less of instruction over the seven-year time period studied. An additional 30% attended less than 150 hours of instruction. In addition to the students examined by this study, 13% of students who enrolled in the College’s non-credit ESL program attended eight or fewer hours.

- Thirty-eight percent of non-credit ESL students enrolled for only one term, and hence did not advance levels. Sixty-eight percent enrolled for three or fewer terms.
- Of students who did advance, 65% advanced no more than two levels.
- Although the 67% of students who began at the Literacy or Low Beginning Level advanced more terms than other students, 51% of these students did not advance even one level, 18% advanced one level, and 12% advanced two levels. As a result, 81% of these students did not advance beyond the beginning level. In part, this was because 61% of students who began at the lowest levels enrolled for three or fewer terms.
- In short, more than half of CCSF's non-credit ESL students did not advance at all, and most of those who did so advanced only one or two of CCSF's 10 ESL levels. Students who advanced were those who enrolled for a large number of terms and hours. Most students did not persist or attend for long enough to advance very far.

5. What Increases Advancement and Transitions?

This study examined several measures CCSF has in place to increase student advancement and transitions. All of them are effective. They would probably be more effective if adopted on a larger scale.

- The College has a non-credit matriculation process with three primary components – placement (using a formal placement test), orientation, and a counseling interview. In 1998-2000, these services were not available to most non-credit ESL students (particularly those who began at the lowest levels), but their availability has subsequently increased. The study found that students who received the full range of matriculation services attended somewhat more hours and terms than those who did not. Importantly, it found that most categories of students who received all three services were about 50% more likely to make transitions to credit than those who did not.
- The College also offers three “Program Enhancements” that are optional for non-credit ESL students: (a) “Focus” ESL courses that allow students to improve their abilities in a single ESL skill at the same time they are attending general ESL courses; (b) Accelerated courses that combine two levels of ESL into one course; and (c) a policy that allows non-credit ESL students to enroll in other non-credit courses at the same time they are taking ESL.

The study found that 49% of non-credit students took advantage of one or more of these Enhancement options. Most students selected Focus courses and enrollment in other non-credit courses, and 25% of students who selected Enhancements selected both. Only two percent of students selected Accelerated courses, perhaps because of the limited availability of these courses. The study showed that students who selected any of these options were more likely than other students to enroll in more terms, attend more hours, advance more levels, and make transitions, and these outcomes were greatest for students

who enrolled in Accelerated courses. Eighty-one percent of students who made transitions selected one or more enhancements. The enhancements had a cumulative effect: although only 12% of students enrolled in Focus and other non-credit courses, they accounted for 34% of students who made transitions to credit.

6. What Might Be Done?

Because most of CCSF's non-credit ESL students (and most adult education ESL students nationwide) begin at quite low levels of English proficiency, they must be "willing and able" to devote a substantial amount of time (terms of enrollment and hours in class) to improve their English very much and/or to advance to success in postsecondary education. That is, they must have the personal motivation and goals to climb the ladder of ESL and they must be able to work around the responsibilities of adult life to do so. This study showed that some of CCSF's ESL students are willing and able in this sense, but most do not advance very far (or at all) in non-credit ESL. CCSF has adopted some measures to help students expand their goals and accelerate their progress, and these measures should be reinforced by the College and also examined by other programs. Although the study was an exercise in observational research, it provides the basis for informed speculation about what other measures might be adopted.

Calibrate instructional units. Many ESL programs offer only 3-6 hours of instruction per week and do not operate during the summer. At that rate, it would take even students with good attendance records several years to advance very far, and many may not be prepared to make this commitment. CCSF offers 175 hours of instruction per term, usually promotes students only at the end of each term, and does not promote them on the basis of studies during its short summer term. Thus, at most, students can advance two levels per year. Many students can probably advance more quickly, and may become discouraged. Programs should consider offering 4-5 terms of ESL per year, each providing about 100 hours of instruction and promoting students as soon as they have mastered the skills of each level in which they are enrolled. This would make it possible for students to advanced from quite low to quite high levels in a year or slightly more.

Managed enrollment. Like most ESL programs, CCSF has an "open-entry/open-exit" policy. Students can enroll in programs and drop out at any time. More ESL programs should consider a "managed enrollment" policy in which students can enter only at the beginning of each instructional unit and can be dropped for non-attendance. Programs that have adopted managed enrollment for all or some of their students believe that it encourages learners to make a stronger commitment to persistence and attendance. It also accelerates the instructional process, because teachers do not have to repeat instruction for students who enter classes at mid-term, and those students do not have to struggle to catch up with the rest of the class.

Fast-track programs. The success of CCSF's curricular enhancements suggests that many students are prepared to devote extra time to ESL if they believe it can lead to the achievement of some near-term goal, beyond simply learning more English. As a result, programs should consider implementing high intensity "fast track" programs to help

students achieve goals such as transition to postsecondary education and enrollment in vocational programs. For example, programs should consider a “pathways to college” track that would combine short-term multi-level courses meeting for a large number of hours per week with pre-collegiate orientation, and incorporate college-level English into the non-credit curriculum. “Fast tracks” of this sort could challenge and motivate students to move on to academic or vocational studies in a year or less.

Enhanced student services. The low retention rate of students who first enroll in CCSF’s non-credit program – and especially of those who enroll at very low levels – cries out for solutions that extend beyond changes in the instructional program. It calls for something this study could not accomplish – an in-depth examination of why a majority of students take the trouble to enroll in ESL, but quickly drop out.

The effectiveness of CCSF’s fairly modest matriculation services underlines the importance of enhanced guidance, counseling, and supportive services to help students understand the nature of ESL classes and the responsibilities they must assume. Above all, enhanced student services should help students understand that they can succeed in ESL and that there are benefits to success, encourage them to establish ambitious personal goals, trouble-shoot their academic difficulties, and help them overcome barriers to attendance that are created by personal problems such as work schedules and child care responsibilities. Programs should reach out to students in providing these services, rather than waiting for students to come to them. And services that encourage and support success should be provided throughout the period in which students are enrolled, not just at the time of their first matriculation.

Target success. The findings of this study indicates that CCSF and other ESL programs can identify at least some categories of students who are most likely to succeed in non-credit courses. Among these are the youngest students (those in the 16-19 age group), those who express interest in using ESL to obtain further education (such as academic studies or vocational training), stop-outs, and those who have advanced to the threshold of the Intermediate levels. Programs may wish to consider recruiting more younger and intermediate-level students as well as targeting curricular and student enhancements on students most likely to take advantage of them.

A culture of success. These and other measures are premised on the belief that many ESL students can achieve much more than they do now, and that it is a primary goal of ESL programs to help each student advance as far as possible up the ladder of English language learning. The authors believe that too often programs are so overwhelmed with the enormous demands of program maintenance that they find it hard to focus on how well they are achieving these larger goals and what they can do to achieve them better. Unless program managers, teachers, and students are joined in an enterprise that expects a high level of achievement, and unless they reinforce each other in the belief that this is both possible and necessary, the prospects of improvement are diminished. ESL programs, like any other enterprise, are most successful if they make the time and devote the energy to creating and reinforcing high expectations for everyone involved.

7. The Value of Longitudinal Research

The primary goal of this study was to use longitudinal research to improve understanding of the success of non-credit ESL students and the components that make for success. A secondary goal was to demonstrate by example the feasibility and value of longitudinal research at the program level. Most programs do not track the progress of their students for more than one year at a time. Because it takes most ESL students several years to make substantial progress, this severely limits the ability of individual programs, and of the ESL field as a whole, to understand what they accomplish and why, as well as to flag problems and build on strengths.

Virtually none of the information in this report could have been generated without longitudinal research. The authors believe it is information every program should have and should continue to generate as part of its program planning and improvement processes. It is also information that programs can use to generate funding, both for their existing efforts and for the program enhancements they need.

Programs may be reluctant to undertake longitudinal research because they believe it is not feasible or would be overly expensive. The authors of this report found that substantial longitudinal research can be carried out in a few months at a fairly modest cost, if members of the host institution's institutional research staff are centrally involved in the task. By far the most difficult aspect of the project was selecting the right template for organizing and explaining their work. The authors hope that the methods they adopted will serve as at least an initial template for other programs to consider. More importantly, they hope this study will encourage other programs to adopt longitudinal research as part of on-going efforts at continuous improvement aimed at providing students with the services they need and deserve.

Of course, longitudinal research at the program level can only be as good as the information about students that programs gather. For example, this study would have been strengthened if information about the prior educational backgrounds, family circumstances, employment, and geographic mobility of students had been available. Overall, the authors believe that the more programs know about their students, the better they can help them. Thus, if longitudinal research accomplishes nothing else, it highlights what programs should know and the importance of knowing it.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a longitudinal study of English as a Second Language (ESL) students at the City College of San Francisco (CCSF) conducted during the summer of 2007. The study used College student records to track all students who first enrolled in CCSF's credit and non-credit ESL programs in 1998, 1999, and 2000 for seven years each. It examined the enrollment trends of these and other CCSF students, but its primary focus was on the persistence, learning gains, transition to credit studies, and success in credit courses of non-credit students. It also examined various features of CCSF's ESL program that affect these variables.¹

This report is not a research monograph in the usual sense of the term. Its primary purpose is to publish and explain data generated by the longitudinal study, although it also summarizes the findings of that data and briefly discusses their significance for program design and other aspects of ESL practice. This fairly modest purpose was adopted because the authors believe that reasonable people can differ about the larger implications of findings based on only one program. But the authors also believe (for reasons stated below) that the ESL field can benefit greatly from a detailed understanding of those findings and how they were generated. As a result, this report, in some respects, is a resource document that different readers will wish to use in different ways.

A. PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The major goal of the CCSF study was to use longitudinal research techniques to improve the ESL field's understanding of some major student outcomes and program variables. A second, but related, goal was to demonstrate the value and feasibility of conducting longitudinal research at the program level and to provide an example of how it can be conducted in a cost-effective way. Understanding the importance of both goals requires understanding the distinctive contributions that longitudinal research can make to the ESL field.

1. Value of Longitudinal Research

Longitudinal research follows the progress of individual students for multiple years. In contrast, most research findings about student outcomes and program designs in the ESL field (and in many other fields of education) are based on annual reports that provide information about the progress of students for only a single year. This is largely due to

¹ At CCSF, as at most community colleges, "Non-Credit" ESL is the equivalent of what might elsewhere be called "adult education" ESL. Courses are offered without charge and they cover the range of English language proficiency from what the U.S. Department of Education defines as the "ESL Literacy" to the "Low Advanced" levels. "Credit" ESL is a sequence of courses for which students must pay tuition. Credit courses are primarily designed to help students prepare for academic studies, although they are often used by students in other ways. In some cases they help students to gain a higher level of general English proficiency than do non-credit courses, but in all cases they focus on different applications of English language skills.

the fact that, for administrative purposes, individual programs, as well as state and federal educational agencies that provide them with funding, organize most of their work by annual cycles (such as academic or fiscal years). As a result, it is natural for them to collect progress reports once a year, or in some cases at the end of each semester or some shorter period of time.

Although annual reports contain valuable information about ESL and other programs, they necessarily provide an incomplete picture of both student progress and the program structures intended to bring it about. ESL students (like most other students) are often enrolled for multiple years, and a major goal of ESL programs is to help them progress as far as they can in improving their English proficiency while they are enrolled. By themselves, annual reports cannot determine if or how programs achieve this goal. For example, they do not reveal the number of years during which students attended classes, how far they progressed during that time, or what personal variables (such as their initial level of English proficiency or hours of study) or program variables (such as the length of terms and classes or special interventions to assist students) affected their progress.

These limitations of annual data are particularly problematic in the ESL field because students often progress at different rates depending on personal factors, such as their level of English proficiency when they enter a program. As a result, a student may make limited progress in one year, but advance rapidly in the next. Also, many ESL students attend classes on an intermittent basis. In some cases they “stop-out” for years at a time before re-enrolling. The success of programs in helping them improve their English proficiency can only be determined by summing the results of their incremental enrollments over many years. Finally, annual reports segment information about student progress in ways that may be misleading. For example, a student who falls just short of completing a program benchmark and completes it in the next year may be reported as having made the same progress as a student who makes much less progress and drops out of the program after the end of the year.

2. Barriers and Methods

In short, the only way to gain a thorough understanding of what ESL programs achieve and how they achieve it is to follow the progress of students for multiple years through longitudinal research. Regrettably, this type of research is rarely conducted. In part, this is because it is not required. Annual reporting has become an accepted routine. But the shortage of longitudinal research is due primarily to the fact that it requires a special effort to conduct.

There are a number of methods for tracking students over multiple years. Many of these involve interviewing and assessing students at periodic intervals both during the time

they are enrolled in ESL programs and for some years thereafter. Studies of this sort are highly valuable, but they are very expensive and take many years to carry out.²

A simpler and more expeditious approach is to match student records from different years and interpret the findings in terms of multiple variables. That is the approach adopted by this study. Although it is limited by the types of information student record systems collect and cannot shed light on the experiences of students after they leave the program, it can provide a wealth of information about student performance that would otherwise be unavailable.

But even this approach requires substantial effort. In some cases, technical difficulties must be overcome. For example, the relevant information may be in different data bases, the program may have changed its student record system, or student identifiers may have changed over time. Some programs find it difficult to determine how many non-credit students eventually make the transition to credit studies, because the same student identifiers are not used for both programs. With some ingenuity on the part of researchers, however, these problems can often be overcome. But local programs, state education authorities, and the federal government all have limited budgets for analyzing student outcomes, and they rarely chose to invest their resources in longitudinal studies.

The result is that understanding about many aspects of ESL service is incomplete, and some of the available data about it may be misleading. Programs and policymakers must rely too heavily on personal experience or inference, rather than on objective data, to understand ESL service. Many people in the ESL field realize that there are important gaps in knowledge about student outcomes that result from a shortage of longitudinal research, but efforts to fill those gaps are rare.

3. The Value of This Study

The primary goal of this study was to extend understanding of what ESL programs accomplish and how they accomplish it by conducting in-depth longitudinal research on a single ESL program: the program at CCSF. Of course, all programs are different, and there are limits to how much an analysis of any one program can add to an understanding of ESL service as a whole. However, by examining the performance of students enrolled in this one program over seven years, this study was able to ask and answer a large number of questions about ESL that have rarely been answered by objective data from any program. As a result, its findings are at the very least suggestive of patterns and trends that other programs, policymakers, and researchers should examine.

This is especially true because CCSF's ESL program is very large and well regarded. It enrolled 3,981 credit and 25,361 non-credit students in 2006, and it was identified as one of the nation's outstanding community college ESL programs by a CAAL survey of ESL

² A particularly important example of this type of longitudinal research is the Longitudinal Study of Adult Literacy, directed by Professor Stephen Reder of Portland State University, now nearing completion. Although the Portland State study does not primarily focus on ESL students, its methods are exemplary for longitudinal analysis of any aspect of adult education.

leaders conducted in 2005 (see below). CCSF was also a recipient of the 2004 Met-Life Foundation exemplary college award in recognition of the outstanding service provided by the College, and especially its ESL Department, in helping underserved youth and adults meet their educational and career goals. As a result, findings about the program may have a special significance because they show the student outcomes of a program that has implemented what many people in the ESL field consider best practices, and because they show the results of providing ESL service on a large scale.

This study also had a second goal: to show that longitudinal research on ESL programs can be conducted in a cost-effective way, and to exemplify one way in which programs can conduct it. Carrying out this study was, in some respects, a matter of learning by doing. Although it took several months to complete, the expense was not great, and the time and expense of replicating it would be even smaller. Any longitudinal research at the program level must be adapted to the special features of each program. But the authors hope that other programs will see the value of longitudinal research, as exemplified by this-study, and be encouraged to undertake longitudinal analyses of their own. They also hope that the approach adopted here will serve as an initial template for other efforts. The authors believe that longitudinal research of this kind can and should be used as an on-going program management tool. They hope the findings of this study will interest other programs in adopting it for those purposes.

B. STUDY BACKGROUND

The initial purpose of this study was to make public a large body of longitudinal research on CCSF's ESL program conducted in 2006 as part of CAAL's Project on ESL in Community Colleges, which focused primarily on non-credit ESL.³ That project began with a survey that asked more than 100 leaders of the ESL field to identify those colleges in different parts of the country that provide "exemplary" ESL instruction. Five of the colleges nominated participated in the project. Each of the five colleges contributed information about a great many aspects of its ESL programs including data about the effectiveness of those programs in producing various student outcomes – such as persistence, learning gains, and transition to credit studies. The principal CAAL researchers for that project (Forrest Chisman and JoAnn Crandall) asked each of the colleges to track student outcomes on a multi-year basis. All of the participating colleges did this in some fashion, but limitations on resources as well as aspects of their program structures presented most of them from conducting very extensive longitudinal research.

CCSF was one of the colleges that participated in CAAL's ESL Project. Because College leaders at CCSF took a special interest in the project, they made a significant in-kind contribution of staff time to analyze the performance of all students enrolled in credit and non-credit ESL from 1998-2005 in terms of a large number of variables. The result was a unique and extensive body of data (eventually reduced to 70 tables) that led to a great

³ Details about the nature of this study as well as its findings can be found in: Forrest P. Chisman and JoAnn Crandall, *Passing The Torch: Strategies for Innovation in Community College ESL* (New York: Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy, 2007).

many valuable findings – some of them unexpected. In fact, the data and findings generated by this research were far more than could be used by the CAAL project, although some of the findings were published in both the final report of that project and in a separately-published profile on CCSF’s ESL program.⁴

CAAL and the CCSF researchers who were involved in the 2006 analysis believed that it would be valuable to publish all of the longitudinal research findings that analysis had generated, and to extend the analysis to variables that had not been examined. Because those findings existed only in the form of data tables, this would have entailed organizing and interpreting the tables, as well as conducting limited additional analysis to examine other variables of interest.

In the spring of 2007, CAAL committed to publish the 2006 data in this way. It quickly became apparent, however, that the research plan should be modified. A main reason was that the 2006 analysis had tracked the progress of all students enrolled in credit and non-credit programs over a six-year time period. This meant that some of the students studied were enrolled for the full six years and others were enrolled for as little as one year. As a result, the educational experiences of students included in the 2006 study differed, and it seemed likely that many of the students had not been enrolled long enough for their performance to be evaluated by a longitudinal study.

For these reasons, the research team decided to track the progress of students first enrolled in ESL at CCSF in 1998, 1999, and 2000 for seven years each. The year 1998 was selected as the starting date because student records starting in that year were most readily available, and the length of the analysis was extended to seven years, because of the availability of data for 2006. Three years of students were studied to diminish the possibilities that unknown factors in any one program year would bias the findings.

This decision meant that the study would have to conduct a completely new analysis of the variables investigated in the 2006 effort plus additional variables not previously examined. This report contains the findings of that analysis.

1. Methodology

Organization of the study. The research team began by developing an initial outline of the major student outcomes that should be examined. These were enrollment patterns, persistence, learning gains, transitions to credit studies, and success of non-credit students in credit courses. The outline also identified the variables affecting each outcome that should be analyzed (such as the level of English proficiency of students when they were first enrolled and the number of hours they attended classes). The outcomes were organized as chapters in the report that would be produced, and the variables affecting them were organized as a set of data tables that would help to explain each outcome.

⁴ See Sharon Seymour, “City College of San Francisco” in *Torchlights in ESL: Five Community College Profiles* (New York: Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy, 2007).

The initial outline relied heavily on the 2006 study in selecting the variables that should be analyzed. That study had shown that a number of factors were closely related to each of the major outcomes. These variables were selected for the 2007 study and augmented with additional variables that the 2006 study suggested might also show important relationships. Some of these additional variables were incorporated into the chapters on major student outcomes. Other additional variables were organized into separate chapters (such as the effects of “stopping out” and various aspects of the CCSF program designed to increase learning gains).

Finally, the research team defined the characteristics of the cohort of students who were first enrolled in CCSF’s ESL program in 1998, 1999, and 2000 that would be tracked for seven years.

Both the initial outline and the definition of the cohort changed in large ways and small as findings emerged during the course of the study. Changes were also made to the research team’s initial plans based on experience about how the analysis could most effectively be conducted and presented. In most respects, however, the 2007 study followed the plan established by the initial outline.

Data analysis. Based on that outline, Steven Spurling of CCSF augmented the software code written for the 2006 CAAL study. This was an extensive program written in SAS, which was based on similar code used to construct CCSF’s Decision Support System (DSS). Since DSS extracts started in 1998, it was fairly easy to use that as a starting point to elaborate and illuminate the enrollment patterns and success of non-credit ESL students. It was only necessary to link the DSS extracts to academic history files in order to determine who was new to ESL non-credit in the 1998-2000 time period.

When it came time to analyze the relationship between variables, SAS was used both for the descriptive and analytical interpretation. SAS multiple-variable cross tabulations were exported to EXCEL where they were turned into pivot tables. The pivots were investigated for important relationships. Where these were found, they were copied to Word files for display in the report. In addition to the descriptive analysis, SAS data analysis procedures were used to investigate multiple variables and their interactions. These procedures were the “catmod” procedure to investigate dichotomous variables and the “glm” procedure (general linear model) to examine continuous variables. The main advantage of using these procedures over simple descriptive ones is that the researcher can investigate multiple relationships simultaneously. Although the output from these procedures is cited only a few times in this report, the procedures directed further investigations using descriptive methods. The findings from these investigations are contained in the following chapters.

Nearly all research findings discussed in this report are statistically significant, if only because of the large numbers of students underlying each variable. More importantly, there is practical significance to each finding that should be given serious consideration by ESL practitioners. Each finding indicates relationships that have consequences for understanding how ESL programs function and how they might be improved. Although

the meaning of the numbers must be inferred, and the issue of causality is always difficult in observational research, the relationships that are presented are significant in this practical sense.

Limitations. Any longitudinal analysis based on student record data is inherently limited by the data that student records contain. Variables that might be important for explaining student outcomes cannot be examined unless information about them is contained in student records. Fortunately, CCSF's student record system contains a large amount of information about the College's ESL students. But the College does not collect information about certain key variables. For example, as will be noted in subsequent chapters, it does not collect information about the prior education of its non-credit students.

More importantly, student record data at CCSF and elsewhere does not contain information about the geographical mobility of students – whether or not they left the College's service area within the timeframe covered by the study. As a result, it is impossible to be sure if certain outcomes (such as how long students persist in programs) are due to student characteristics (such as motivation or personal goals), aspects of the program's design, or simply the fact that students moved to a different area. As Chapter 4 will discuss, there are reasons to believe that the effect of geographical mobility on the findings of this study are fairly small. However, there is no way to be certain, and this limitation must be acknowledged at the outset.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that all social science research is limited by the data it can collect. It is never possible to obtain information on all of the variables that might affect human behavior. The most that any research can do is analyze the relationships between a limited number of variables and base its findings on the results. Thus, this study is no more flawed by the fact that it cannot assess all of the variables that might be of importance in understanding the performance of ESL students than are any other studies of education or other subjects examined by social science.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the absence of information about key variables that might shed more light on the study, if only to encourage other researchers (and those who might benefit from research) to gather that information. With regard to research on ESL student outcomes, the authors believe that colleges should gather data on the prior education of their non-credit students, because this would help them to better understand both the needs and performance of these students, whether through longitudinal analysis or other means.

They also believe, for the same reasons, that colleges should contact at least a sample of students who have stopped attending classes for several terms to determine their location and other reasons for their absence. There are a number of low-cost methods for doing this, such as contacting students at their last known address, accessing Unemployment Insurance records, or distributing postcards to a sample of all students at the end of each term and paying those who return them at regular intervals a nominal amount. None of these or other methods would produce completely accurate information about student

absences, but they would shed some light on the subject and be a useful addition to analyses based on existing student record data.

2. Presentation of the Research

A large part of this report consists of statistical tables, together with explanations of how to read them and interpretations of the information they contain. In many research monographs, tables or charts are used to illustrate or reinforce findings. In contrast, the statistical tables presented here are the building blocks of this report. This is because they contain the data generated by analyses of student records on which the findings of this report are based, and the discussions of them show how the authors generated those findings.

Presenting the results of data analysis in this way places readers in the middle of the research process. It allows them to scrutinize both the results of data analysis and how it was used. Many research reports either relegate the results of data analysis to an appendix or present the relationship of that analysis to student outcomes (or other dependent variables) in terms of regression coefficients. In contrast, tables that show the relationship between analyses of student records and student outcomes are at the heart of this report. The authors chose to construct the report around an explanation of the tables that constitute its building blocks for several reasons.

First, the findings of any research depend on the variables that are analyzed. There are far more variables that might effect student outcomes in the ESL field than this or any other study could investigate. As a result, the authors wished to make the variables they selected and the ways in which they analyzed them as transparent as possible.

Second, the strength of the relationships between the variables analyzed and student outcomes differs, and some of the differences depend on how the primary data (student records) are analyzed. The findings of this report express the conclusions of the authors about how strong and significant different relationships are. But these are matters on which reasonable people can differ. As a result, the authors chose to present the data on which their findings were based so that readers could form their own opinions.

Third, this study generated far more information about the factors affecting student outcomes than could be explored in this report. Many of the tables contain data that could be interpreted to lead to further findings or suggest directions for additional research. The authors wished to present this data as a way of encouraging readers to explore relationships they did not discuss and to pursue further investigations.

Finally, as discussed above, a primary purpose of this study was to demonstrate at least one way in which longitudinal research on ESL programs can be conducted. To achieve this goal, it was necessary to explain the various steps in the research process and the reasoning behind them in more detail than might otherwise be required.

This way of presenting research findings makes the reader a partner in the research process. It invites readers to follow the reasoning that led the authors from data to findings step by step, and to understand the basis for their conclusions as well as the limits of their findings.

The authors are aware that this may be an invitation that many readers will not wish to accept. We have tried to make the material included in the statistical tables and the explanations of them as lucid as possible, but there were limits to how much this portion of the report could be simplified. The large number of tables and the large number of variables they analyze require a narrative that some readers may find challenging. For those readers who do not wish to accept this challenge, this report summarizes the findings and their implications in several ways, as indicated below.

C. ORGANIZATION: HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

1. Chapters

This report contains 10 chapters. Chapter 1 (“Context”) describes the nature and dimensions of CCSF’s ESL program and its relationship to other programs at the College. It provides background information that is essential to understanding the analysis that follows. Chapter 2 explains total enrollment trends at the College from 1998-2006 over the last seven years as well as enrollment trends in credit and non-credit ESL. It highlights the effects of changes in ESL enrollment on enrollment at the College as a whole. Chapter 3 defines the cohort of students first enrolled in ESL in 1998, 1999, and 2000 that form the basis for the analyses in all subsequent chapters. It explains why the cohort was defined in this way as well as possible limitations that the definition places on the study’s findings.

Chapters 4-7 contain the major findings of the study. Each of these chapters shows the relationship between selected variables and the student outcomes with which the study is primarily concerned. Chapter 4 examines the persistence rates (the number of terms enrolled in ESL) of members of the cohort and analyzes factors that are associated with persistence. Chapter 5 examines the learning gains of members of the cohort (defined as numbers of levels of ESL completed) and analyzes factors associated with differences in learning gains. Chapter 6 shows the rates at which members of the cohort made the transition to credit studies and the factors associated with different transition rates. Chapter 7 shows the success in credit studies of non-credit students who made the transition to credit courses.

Chapters 8-10 analyze a number of factors not examined in Chapter 4-7 that are related to the student outcomes discussed in those chapters. Chapter 8 shows the relationship between “stopping out” (long breaks in attending ESL classes) and persistence, learning gains, and transitions. Chapter 9 shows the relationship between matriculation services provided by CCSF and these student outcomes. Finally, Chapter 10 examines the relationship between three program enhancements CCSF has adopted to improve students performance and major student outcomes. The three enhancements are ESL Focus

Classes that allow non-credit students to study only one of the core ESL skills at a time, accelerated courses that combine the study of two levels of ESL in one semester, and CCSF's policy of allowing ESL students to enroll in non-credit courses outside ESL.

2. Organization of the Chapters

All the chapters in this report (except Chapters 1 and 3) are organized so that they can be read independently of each other and so that readers with different levels of interest can explore the subjects they discuss in various levels of detail. Each chapter begins with a "Background" section that explains aspects of CCSF's ESL program that the reader must understand to follow the analysis in the chapter. Next, each chapter contains a "Major Findings" section for the chapter and some of the implications of the findings in a concise form. This is followed by an "Analysis" section that presents and explains the data on which the major findings are based and also contains some secondary findings. Each chapter also contains a "Discussion" section," which discusses some of the major implications of the analysis for understanding the outcomes of CCSF's ESL program and for its program design.

3. How to Use This Report

The authors do not believe that most readers will wish to read this report from cover to cover. As stated above, the report is, in many respects, a resource document. The sequence of chapters and their organization are intended to help readers with differing interests use the report in different ways. For example, readers who are primarily interested in the report's overall findings can read only the Executive Summary or the "Major Findings" of chapters that are of interest to them. Readers who have a special interest in the topics covered by one or more chapters can read as many sections of those chapters as they wish. Readers with a special interest in implications of the report for program design can read only the "Discussion" sections of any of the chapters.

We hope that readers will select the portions of the report that are of greatest interest to them and not be discouraged by either the report's length or the complexity of some of the analyses that may not meet their needs. We also hope that everyone with an interest in gaining a deeper understanding of ESL service and of means by which both that service and research on it might be improved will be rewarded by some aspects of the report.

In short, this report is organized to facilitate "browsing" by the reader, both among and within chapters. This means that it inevitably contains a certain amount of redundancy. The authors have attempted to keep this to a minimum, while still constructing chapters and sections of chapters that can be read independently of each other.

Finally, there is one way in which this report should *not* be used. It should not be used to assess the overall quality of CCSF's ESL program. The authors believe that few if any other ESL programs have been subjected to such in-depth scrutiny. As a result, there is no way to know how CCSF's program would compare to other efforts if they were. Data from CCSF were used to investigate aspects of ESL service that have seldom been

examined. But a fair evaluation of the College's program would require more than data on outcomes. It would also include an assessment of the College's financing, the state and federal policies under which it operates, the characteristics of the community it serves, and many other factors.

CHAPTER 1

**OVERVIEW OF ESL PROGRAMS
AT CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO**

A. THE COLLEGE AND ITS STUDENTS

1. CCSF Services

The City College of San Francisco (CCSF) is located in San Francisco – California’s fourth largest city, with a population of nearly 800,000. San Francisco is a diverse city with substantial Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic/Latino communities. It is also a graying city with a median age approaching 45. According to a CCSF poll in June 2005, over one third of the residents of San Francisco have taken classes at CCSF and 72% have friends and family who took classes through the College.⁵

CCSF offers both credit and non- credit programs. In most California communities, adult education (including ESL) is provided by the K-12 system but in a few communities, including San Francisco, it is provided by community colleges. In 2005-2006, CCSF served a total of 91,423 students. Of these, 47,002 were credit and 44,421 were non-credit. The ESL Department is the largest department at the College. In 2005-2006, it served a total of 30,265 students – 33% of the total CCSF enrollment. The non-credit (adult education) ESL program is the largest non-credit program at the College. In 2005-2006, there were 25,959 non-credit ESL students – 58% of all non-credit students. The credit ESL program is the eighth largest credit program at the College. In 2005-2006, 4,306 credit ESL students were enrolled – 9.2% of all credit students.⁶

2. ESL Student Profile

The College’s ESL program serves a wide variety of ethnicities but the most prominent are Asian and Hispanic. In the 2005-2006 academic year, 58.2% of non-credit ESL students who reported their ethnicity were Asian/Pacific Islander and 36.4 percent were Hispanic/Latino, with 13.3 percent unknown. In the credit program, 69.7% of students who reported their ethnicity were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 17.0% were Hispanic, with 1.2% unknown. Non-credit students were an older population than credit students. Nearly 60% of the non-credit students who reported their age (5.3% were unknown) were age 35 or older. Twenty-seven percent of those reporting were age 50 or older. In the credit program, nearly 75% were under 34 years old.

The majority of ESL students in 2005-2006 were women, in both credit and non-credit programs. In non-credit, 59.1% of the students who reported their gender (16.4% unknown) were women, whereas 62% of the credit students were women (2% unknown).

⁵ CCSF 2006 Accreditation Self Study (October 2005).

⁶ Data taken from the CCSF Decision Support System in May 2007.

The majority of students in both credit and non-credit programs attended day classes only, but evening and weekend classes were also popular. In non-credit, 55.3% attended day classes only, 23% attended evening only, 5.1% attended weekend only, and the rest attended a combination of day/evening/weekend. In credit, 64% attended day only and 22.9% evening only, and the rest attended a combination of day/evening/weekend.

CCSF does not systematically collect information on the prior educational backgrounds of its non-credit students. As a result, the educational background of 71.9% of non-credit ESL students is unknown. However, based on the College's research, it appears that non-credit ESL students were less educated than were credit ESL students. Of those whose educational background was determined, 21% had not graduated from high school, 15.3% had a high school equivalency, 9% graduated from high school in the United States, and 4.4% have an Associate or higher degree. In credit ESL, of the 74% reporting, 13.2% had not graduated from high school, 57.1% had a high school equivalent, 25.6% had graduated from a U.S. high school, and 4% had an Associate or higher degree.⁷

B. THE ESL DEPARTMENT

1. ESL is a Mission of CCSF

ESL is a separate academic Department at CCSF, headed by a Department Chair. In recent years, it employed about 240 instructors, about half of whom were employed full time. It had a total annual budget of about \$15 million.

The Department Provides English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction to meet City College of San Francisco's mission statement:

“CCSF provides educational programs and services to meet the diverse needs of the community:

- Preparation for transfer to baccalaureate institutions
- Achievement of associate degrees of arts and sciences
- Acquisition of career skills needed for success in the workplace
- Lifelong learning life skills, and cultural enrichment
- Active engagement in the civic and social fabric of the community, citizenship preparation, and English as a Second Language
- Completion of requirements for the Adult High School Diploma and GED
- Promotion of economic development and job growth”⁸

2. Location of Classes

CCSF offers classes at 12 major sites (ten campuses and two other sites) and at more than 100 other rented sites in different neighborhoods of San Francisco. Non-credit ESL classes are offered at eight of the campuses (Alemany, Chinatown/North Beach, Evans,

⁷ Data taken from the CCSF Decision Support System, May 2007.

⁸ CCSF 2005-2006 Catalog.

Downtown, John Adams, Mission, Ocean, and Southeast) and at off-site locations connected to those campuses. Credit ESL classes are offered at three campuses: Ocean, Downtown and Mission. The largest non-credit ESL programs are at the Chinatown/ North Beach and Mission Campuses, which serve the Asian and Hispanic populations respectively.

3. ESL Programs Offered

The following programs are offered:

- *Non-Credit ESL* - The non-credit ESL program offers 10 levels of instruction, (from literacy to low advanced, using California Adult ESL Model Standards level designations.⁹) The curriculum focuses on life skills. (See “Non-Credit ESL Program Characteristics” below for details on the types of courses offered.) In fall 2006, the non-credit program offered 522 sections of 76 different ESL courses.
- *Credit ESL* - The credit ESL program offers seven levels of English for Academic Purpose courses (High Beginning to Superior, using California Pathways level designations.¹⁰) and, as of fall 2006, English for Health Professionals courses. (See “Credit ESL Program Characteristics” below for details on the types of courses offered.) In fall 2006, the credit ESL program offered 144 sections of 19 different courses.
- *Institute for International Students* - This intensive program is designed to serve students on a foreign student visa who are preparing to enter a U.S. college. It served 238 students in the 2004-2005 academic year. The program is administered separately from the ESL Department, but it is closely related. Instructors for both the Institute and the Department are hired from the same pool. Many foreign students who enroll in the Institute subsequently enroll in the College and take credit ESL courses.

C. NON-CREDIT ESL PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

1. Purpose

Non-credit ESL courses are designed to give students proficiency in English to find employment, continue their education, and to function successfully in the culture and society of the United States. Survival skills are stressed. In the general ESL courses, emphasis is on fluency and communication in all four language skills – reading, writing, speaking, and listening (comprehension of spoken English). Course descriptions for the

⁹ California State Department of Education, “English-as-a-Second language Model Standards for Adult Education,” 1992. Available at: <http://www.otan.us/webfarm/emailproject/standard.pdf>

¹⁰ California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, “California Pathways: The Second Language Student in Public High Schools, Colleges and Universities”. Available at: <http://www.catesol.org/pathways.pdf>.

Low Beginning Level 1 and High Intermediate Level 8 classes give a picture of the range of skills taught.

In Level 1, students develop language skills and a general understanding of the content in simple written and spoken English. They practice language for daily survival, learn how to participate in common social exchanges, and learn to copy and print simple sentences. In Level 8, students develop the skills to understand essential points of discussions or speeches in special fields of interest and to communicate about a variety of topics using appropriate syntax. They read authentic material on a variety of topics and write brief compositions about previously discussed topics.

2. Courses Offered

Non-credit ESL courses are offered free, and they are “open-entry/open exit”. This means that students can begin attending any time during the term if there is space available in a class and they can stop attending at any time without penalty.

Most of the non-credit ESL courses are a semester in length (about 18 weeks) and meet for 10 hours a week (180-hour courses). In addition, courses of five-hours a week (for about 18 weeks) are offered (90 hours/semester). Some courses of 2.5-hour a week (45 hours/semester) are also offered, mostly on weekends. Instructors follow course outlines approved by the state Community College Chancellor’s Office. As noted, because the program is open entry, students can enter at any time during the semester if space is available. On average, non-credit ESL students attend 110 hours per semester.

CCSF offers the following type of non-credit ESL courses:

- a) *General ESL courses*: These courses have integrated listening/speaking/reading/writing curricula. A few are intensive courses that offer two levels of curriculum in one course (for example Intermediate Low 5/6 Intensive). These courses are designed for students who wish to move more quickly through the program. General ESL courses are designated “ESLN” courses at CCSF.
- b) *Focus ESL courses*: These include courses that focus on a single skill (such as listening or writing), computer assisted language courses, and courses that focus on a specific topic, such as Current Events. Focus courses are designated “ESLF” courses.
- c) *VESL courses*: These include general job preparation courses (such as Social Communication and Career Exploration) and courses that prepare students for specific vocations – such as Communication Skills for Janitorial Workers and Communication Skills for Health Workers. VESL courses are designated “ESLV” courses.
- d) *Literacy courses*: Literacy courses in English are offered for students who are pre-literate, non-literate, or semi-literate in their native language and have few or no

English skills. These are designated as the lowest level ESLN course. A Spanish language literacy course (which provides development of literacy skills in Spanish and is designed for students with less than five years of schooling in their native country) is offered at the Mission Campus. This is classified as an ESLF course.

- e) *Citizenship courses*: These courses provide preparation for the U.S. citizenship test. These are designated “ESLC” courses.
- f) *Bridge courses*: These include courses in introduction to computers and keyboarding and are designed to prepare students to enter business courses at the College. These are designated “ESLB” courses.

Most non-credit ESL courses are leveled courses. This means they provide instruction at different levels to students with different levels of English proficiency. However, some courses are multi-level. These take various forms. They may include up to four levels of classes (for example ESLN 1-4 or ESLN 5-8), or be an ESLF (Focus) class in which many levels of students can enroll (for example, “English Through Song Lyrics,” in which anyone at Level 3 or above can enroll).

3. Features of ESLF

Because this report focuses on a study of a cohort of students enrolled in ESLN and/or ESLF courses at CCSF, it is important to understand how the ESLF courses are similar to and differ from the ESLN courses as well as the rationale for offering these courses.

Curriculum. The curriculum in the majority of ESLF courses focuses on *one* of the four skills that are taught in the ESLN courses (reading, writing, speaking, or listening), whereas the curriculum in ESLN courses focuses on all four language skills.

An underlying assumption about second language learners is that they may have uneven language skills. For example, a student may demonstrate advanced speaking skills but only intermediate writing skills. Thus, CCSF offers focus courses in each separate skill for Beginning and Intermediate Level students (there are no single skill focus courses for Advanced Level 9) to give students the opportunity to take courses in the skill(s) in which they are weakest or wish to improve. In addition, ESLF courses in pronunciation and conversation are offered and a few in specific topics such as Current Events.

Length. The ESL Department determined that focus classes do not need to be as long as general ESLN courses. So, whereas most ESLN courses are 10 hour a week courses, most ESLF courses are for 5 hours a week, although a few 2.5 hour a week ESLF courses are offered, primarily on weekends.

Scheduling. ESLF courses are offered to meet student needs for classes at different times of the day, and the times at which they are offered make it convenient for students to take both ESLF and ESLN. For example, campuses typically offer daytime ESLN classes that meet for two hours per day starting at 8 am, 10 am, 1 pm and 3 pm. They

offer ESLF courses that meet for one hour per day at 12 pm. Therefore, these courses are bracketed by ESLN courses in terms of scheduling.

Two-level classes. Most ESLF courses are two-level – for example, Beginning Low 1 and 2 Speaking, or Beginning High 3 and 4 Listening. For purposes of this study, these two-level courses are coded as one level, using the lower of the two levels. For example, ESLF Beginning Low 1 and 2 Listening are coded as a Level 1 ESLF course. Any ESLF course that was more than two levels is considered a multi-level course, and in this study it is coded as a “no level” class.

Enrollment. Many students enroll in both ESLN and ESLF courses and most often they enroll in them concurrently. Of the ESLF courses included in this study, the most commonly offered are Listening and Speaking courses at the Beginning Levels. For example, in Fall 1998, 11 sections of Beginning Low Listening and 3 sections of Beginning Low Speaking were offered. One section of Beginning Low Reading and two sections of Beginning Low Writing were offered. At the Intermediate Levels, the distribution of ESLF leveled courses was more even.

4. Enrollment in Non-Credit ESL

In Fall 2006, 76 different ESL non-credit courses were offered, although some were different lengths of the same course (for example a 180-hour version and a 90-hour version of Level 1). Twenty-three general non-credit ESL courses, 5 literacy courses, 18 vocational ESL courses, 24 focus courses, 3 citizenship courses, and 3 bridge courses were offered.

Duplicated enrollment figures for non-credit ESL courses for fall 2006 were:

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------|--|
| • ESL Bridge | 1,036 | (24% Beginning Level, 76% Intermediate Level) |
| • ESL Citizenship | 2,243 | (93.3% Beginning, 6.7% Intermediate) |
| • ESL Focus | 5,285 | (72% Beginning, 28% Intermediate) |
| • ESL General | 20,706 | (66.7% Beginning, 32.3% Intermediate, 1% Advanced) |
| • ESL Literacy | 2,595 | (100% Beginning) |
| • Vocational | 1,438 | (64% Beginning, 36% Intermediate) ¹¹ |

5. Admissions

Anyone 18 years of age or older can enroll in free non-credit classes at CCSF, with the exception of those on F1/F2 and B1/B2 visas.¹² Most students enrolling in ESL classes take an ESL placement test as part of the matriculation process. Students are pre-screened by Admission and Enrollment staff and/or Placement Testing staff. They are exempted from the placement test if they are determined to be at the Literacy Level and not able to

¹¹ Decision Support System, CCSF Office of Research Planning and Grants.

¹² F1 visas are short-term foreign student visas, and F2 visas are for the dependants of F1 visa holders. B1 visas are business visas, and B2 visas are for tourists.

complete the test. They are also exempted if they are determined to be at the lowest Beginning Level and can be placed directly in Level 1.

Students who take the ESL placement test may also receive orientation and counseling. The number who do so varies from campus to campus based on the availability of these matriculation services. At locations where only one or very few non-credit ESL classes are offered, none of these services may be available and the teacher enrolls the student directly into the class. (Further information about these matriculation services is provided in Chapter 9.)

The College, individual campuses, and the ESL Department advertise the availability of ESL classes, but the majority of students learn about them through word of mouth.

6. Placement

The College uses locally developed tests in reading and listening to determine the level of non-credit ESL at which students are initially placed. These tests undergo a rigorous validation process at CCSF and are approved by the state Community College Chancellor’s Office. CCSF does not have correlations between its ESL placement tests and nationally developed tests. However, CASAS and TABE test scores that are correlated with the levels CCSF offers provide a frame of reference:

<u>CASAS Levels</u>	<u>CCSF Levels</u>	<u>CASAS Reading</u>	<u>TABE Reading</u>
Literacy	CCSF ESL Literacy	150-180	
Low Beginning	CCSF ESL 1, 2	181-190	
High Beginning	CCSF ESL 3, 4	191-200	
Low Intermediate	CCSF ESL 5, 6	201-210	
High Intermediate	CCSF ESL 7, 8	211-220	461-517 (4-5.9 grade)
Low Advanced	CCSF ESL 9	221-235	518-566 (6-8.9 grade)

7. Advancement

Instructors are responsible for making decisions about when students have satisfactorily achieved objectives of a course (as specified in the course outline) and are ready to be advanced to the next level. Instructors evaluate student performance in class on a daily basis. In addition, department-wide tests in Listening and Reading are administered at the end of each semester to students enrolled in Levels 2, 4, and 6. Listening and Reading tests are augmented by an oral interview and writing sample to determine whether Level 4 students are ready to move from Beginning to Intermediate courses. All these department-wide tests are designed to assess whether students have mastered the content of courses at each level, as specified in the course outlines (which are based on the state ESL Model Standards).

Although most of College’s funding for non-credit ESL comes from the State of California, the College also receives federal funding under the provisions of Title II of the Workforce Investment Act. To meet the reporting requirements of Title II, the ESL

Department administers CASAS tests to students in all ESLN classes that meet 10 hours per week. Instructors do not use the results of these tests when making promotion decisions, because CCSF's ESL curriculum is aligned with the state Model ESL Standards, not the CASAS tests.

D. CREDIT ESL PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

1. Purpose

Credit ESL courses at CCSF are designed to help students develop academic language skills and strategies and prepare them to be successful in academic college coursework. Course outlines must meet state requirements for credit courses and are approved by the state Community College Chancellor's Office. In credit ESL, language skills instruction is integrated with academic tasks and content.

The lowest level core reading/writing/grammar course provides an introduction to pre-college reading materials and practice in writing simple academic paragraphs and reports, as well as High Beginning Level vocabulary and grammar study. The highest-level reading/writing/grammar course focuses on advanced academic reading skills with an emphasis on critical reading of expository prose and practice in various forms of composition and research necessary for college work. It pays special attention to the development of grammatical accuracy and a college writing style.

2. Courses Offered

Unlike non-credit ESL courses, credit courses are neither free nor "open-entry/open exit." Students pay tuition and fees on a unit cost (credit hour) basis – although this is refundable in certain circumstances. Students usually can enter only at the beginning of each term, and they can be dismissed due to no-attendance. Those who are dismissed ("dropped") usually forfeit their tuition and fees. Classes are graded, but there is no penalty for failing, except that a student must take the course again (and incur more cost) if they wish to continue in the credit ESL sequence.

All credit ESL courses are semester length (about 18 weeks), but they meet for differing numbers of hours. Nineteen credit ESL courses are offered, twelve of which are non-degree applicable and seven of which are degree applicable. CCSF offers the following types of credit ESL courses:

- *Integrated reading/writing/grammar:* These courses are designated ESL 110 (Low Beginning) through ESL 170 (Superior). All credit ESL students are required to take these reading/writing/grammar courses, beginning at the level in which they are initially placed by the Department's matriculation process (see below). ESL 110-170 courses meet between three and six hours per week plus lab time, depending on the course. (See chart below.) ESL 82, a three-hour-per-week course roughly equivalent to ESL 160, has been phased out, but it was offered during the time frame of this study.

- *Listening/Speaking:* Depending on placement test results, students may also be required to take three-hour-per-week listening/speaking courses. These are designated ESL 112 (High Beginning) through ESL 142 (High Intermediate).
- *Elective courses:* Elective courses are offered in pronunciation, accent improvement, advanced speaking and pronunciation, advanced listening and reading, intermediate and advanced editing, and grammar review.

Most credit ESL courses are offered at the Ocean Campus, where most CCSF credit programs are located. A few are offered at two other campuses. In fall 2006, 144 sections of 19 credit ESL courses were offered. Duplicated enrollment figures for credit ESL courses for fall 2006 were:

<u>Required R/W/G courses</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Hours/Week</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
ESL 110	6	6	71
ESL 120	6	6	232
ESL 130	6	6	377
ESL 140	6	6	478
ESL 150	5	5 lecture/1 lab	482
ESL 160	4	4 lecture/1 lab	158
ESL 82	3	3	217
ESL 170	3	3	41
Total			2,056

<u>Required Listening/Speaking courses</u>			
ESL 112	2	3	62
ESL 122	2	3	158
ESL 132	2	3	215
ESL 142	2	3	160
Total			595

<u>Elective courses</u>			
ESL 20	6	6	32
English for Health Professionals			
ESL 49	2	3 lecture/1 lab	81
Pronunciation			
ESL 66	3	3	16
Advanced Listening and Reading			
ESL 75	2	3	99
Intermediate Editing/Grammar			
ESL 79	3	3	221
Advanced Speaking and Pronunciation			
ESL 85	2	3	63
Advanced Editing/Grammar			
Total			512

3. Admissions

Anyone 18 years or older may enroll in CCSF credit courses and does not need to have a high school diploma or GED. Students who enroll in credit courses for the first time and those who have dropped out and wish to be readmitted are required to participate in the credit matriculation process. This includes submitting an application, taking a placement test, receiving an orientation, meeting with a counselor and registering for classes. Students may be excused from the assessment, orientation, or counseling components under certain conditions.

4. Placement in Credit ESL

Students who wish to enroll in credit ESL courses must take credit ESL placement tests. These tests are primarily administered at the Ocean Campus, where the majority of credit courses are offered.

The ESL Department uses locally-developed placement tests. Students take multiple choice grammar and listening tests and provide a 30-minute writing sample. These tests undergo a rigorous validation process at CCSF and are approved by the state Community College Chancellor's Office. ESL instructors read the writing samples and, based on their evaluation of the writing, confirm that the student should be placed in the level indicated by the multiple choice test scores, or adjust the placement up or down one level (or in rare cases two levels). In some cases, they may also recommend that the student be placed in an English Department course that requires a higher level of English proficiency than is taught in the highest level ESL course. If this evaluation process determines that a student's English proficiency is below the standard required for the lowest level credit ESL course, the student is referred to non-credit ESL courses.

5. Advancement

In credit ESL, as in non-credit, instructors are responsible for making decisions on whether a student passes or fails a course. Their decisions are based on whether the student achieves the objectives of a course as specified in the course outline. Teachers evaluate student performance by course assignments, quizzes, tests, compositions, and other means. For ESL 110-170, they also use the results of locally-developed tests in reading, grammar, and writing, administered at the end of the semester. Course outlines recommend that these final tests should be 25% of the grade a student receives for each credit course. The final tests were first used in Fall 2002.

6. ESL Courses Meeting Graduation Requirements

The highest-level credit ESL composition course, ESL 170, presently meets the College's graduation requirement for written composition. The graduation requirement will change to English 1A in Fall 2009.

ESL students seeking an AA or AS degree or certificate from CCSF, if they are not interested in transferring to a four-year college, take ESL 170 (or ESL 82) to meet the College's graduation requirement for Associate degrees. ESL students who wish to transfer to a four-year college in the University of California system must complete freshman composition, English 1A, before transferring.

Most credit ESL students complete English 1-A by taking a sequence of courses in the English Department. In most cases, they must successfully complete ESL 160, the prerequisite for English 93, and then complete English 93, English 96, and finally English 1A. But students may also take the English Placement test at any time to place higher in this course sequence.

7. Articulation

Non-Credit to Credit. A major focus of this report is the transition of non-credit ESL student to credit studies. As a result, it is important to understand the relationship between non-credit and credit courses at CCSF.

There is no formal articulation between non-credit and credit courses at the College. Students who wish to enroll in non-credit courses complete the non-credit matriculation process, which for ESL students usually includes taking the non-credit ESL placement test. Students who wish to enroll in credit courses complete the credit matriculation process, which for ESL students includes taking the credit ESL placement test.

However, CCSF has various systems to facilitate the transition from non-credit to credit ESL. Counselors at the major campuses where a large number of non-credit students are enrolled offer one-hour Steps to Credit Workshops several times a semester. Attendance at these Workshops ranges from very few to over 20 per workshop. The workshops explain what credit courses are, the reasons for taking those courses (to obtain a degree/certificate, a job, transfer, or self-improvement), the credit vocational training programs CCSF offers, how to enroll in credit courses, and information on financial aid/scholarships. Counselors are available to assist students in understanding and completing the approximately one-month credit matriculation process: completing the application, taking the placement test, attending orientation, making an appointment with a counselor, and registering for classes.

Students who wish to pursue a degree or certificate can take either the credit ESL or the English Department placement test. Non-native speakers who identify themselves as English dominant (mostly those who have lived in the United States for a long time) are more likely to choose to take the English placement test and enroll in courses offered by the English Department. Counselors and staff of the admissions and enrollment offices try to direct students to the program that seems most appropriate for them.

Most non-credit ESL students who make the transition to credit courses enroll in credit ESL, but students are not required to complete the credit ESL sequence before enrolling in other academic or vocational courses at the College. In fact, most credit ESL students take other academic/vocational courses concurrently with credit ESL (See Chapter 10.)

Aside from credit ESL, the credit programs with the highest enrollment of students who at one time took non-credit ESL are: Physical Education, English, Business, Math, Learning Assistance, Social Science, Child Development and Family Studies, Computer Networking and InfoTech, Health Science, Behavioral Sciences, and Biological Sciences.¹³

Transition from non-credit ESL to other non-credit courses. It is important to understand the relationship between non-credit ESL and other non-credit courses at CCSF, because (see chapter 10 of this report) enrollment in other non-credit courses increases the chances that non-credit ESL students will transfer to credit.

There is no formal articulation between non-credit ESL and other non-credit programs. Non-credit ESL students do not need to complete the ESL sequence of courses before enrolling in other non-credit courses at the College, although many courses have an ESL advisory of at least ESL Level 5 (Intermediate Low).

Over 25% of students who start in non-credit ESL also take other non-credit courses at CCSF. The most popular other non-credit courses for non-credit ESL students are offered by the Business Department. College research shows that 14.9% of students who start in non-credit ESL also take non-credit business courses. About 6.5% of non-credit ESL students take courses through the Transitional Studies Department, either to get a GED or high school diploma, or to continue to develop their language skills.

The Business Department offers a wide variety of non-credit courses that provide training in use of computers (microcomputer labs, spreadsheets, internet, etc), such as courses in word processing, office technology, and small business. The Department also offers non-credit certificates in such areas as office technology and small business. As a result, ESL students can obtain a substantial amount of vocational education in business without enrolling in credit programs or in the College's vocational ESL courses (ESLV).

The Transitional Studies Department offers 21 non-credit courses for students who have not had a chance to complete or advance their education, generally due to lack of a high school diploma. The Department offers three course levels of adult basic education – ABE Basic, ABE Intermediate, and GED/High School Diploma. Transitional Studies also offers some vocational courses to prepare students for employment, entry into job training programs, or further college study. Some courses offered through the Transitional Studies Department have a CASAS or TABE test score or ESL level advisory. In 2004-2005 3,317 students took courses in this Department; 30% of them were from non-credit ESL.

Some non-credit ESL students take non-credit courses in more than one non-credit area. College records indicate that 6.4% take Business plus courses in another non-credit area,

¹³ Steven Spurling, "Summer 98-Fall 05 Research Report," CCSF Office of Research Planning and Grants, Spring 2006.

and 4.2% take courses in Transitional Studies plus another non-credit area. Non-credit ESL students are probably more likely to learn about and take courses through other non-credit departments when these courses are offered at the same campus where they are studying non-credit ESL.

CHAPTER 2

ENROLLMENT

A. BACKGROUND

This chapter describes the enrollment trends of all students enrolled at CCSF and all ESL students enrolled at the College over a nine-year period from 1998 to 2006. (Chapter 3 will describe the characteristics of a sub-set of the College's ESL students on which the longitudinal analysis in subsequent chapters is based.)

To understand the enrollment trends described in this and other chapters, it is essential to understand the distinction between ESL students that this report designates as "new" and those it designates as "continuing." This distinction is necessarily abbreviated in footnotes to the tables in this chapter. In abbreviated form, "new" ESL students are any students who enrolled in credit or non-credit ESL for the first time during the year indicated. "Continuing" ESL students are students who were enrolled in ESL during the year indicated within the same division (credit or non-credit), *and* who had been enrolled in ESL in some previous year in that same division. Students who move from one division to the other (e.g., from non-credit to credit ESL) are considered new students in the division to which they moved, even though they are continuing at the College. Other students enrolled at CCSF (those not enrolled in ESL) are designated as "new" and "continuing" using a similar classification system.

These short definitions do not include all aspects that bear on how new and continuing students were calculated as they affect the enrollment numbers in this report, which may be of interest to some readers. Thus, a more complete explanation of this distinction can be found in the "Definition" section at the end of this chapter.

B. MAJOR FINDINGS

- ESL is the single largest department at CCSF and is a major source of the College's total enrollment. From 1998-2006, 34% of all enrollments, 58% of all non-credit enrollments, and 10% of all credit enrollments at CCSF were in ESL.
- Total College enrollment was about the same in 2006 as it had been in 1998. Total ESL enrollment declined by 12% from 1998-2006. Both total College and ESL enrollment peaked in 2001-2002 before declining.
- Total *non-credit* enrollment for both the College as a whole and for ESL declined from 1998-2006, but the percent of decline was smaller for the College as a whole (7%) than for ESL (9%). Total *credit* enrollment for the College as whole increased by 7% from 1998-2006, but it declined by 26% for ESL.
- The College as a whole and its ESL program have been more successful retaining continuing students than enrolling new students. The decline in new enrollments

accounts for the decrease in non-credit enrollment for both ESL and the College as a whole from 1998-2006. The decrease in new non-credit ESL enrollment accounts for 79% of the decrease in total ESL enrollment and 74% of the decrease in non-credit enrollment at the College as a whole. A large portion of this decrease in new non-credit enrollment was due to a decrease in the number of new students enrolled in the largest ESL program, General Life Skills (designated ESLN).

- From 1998-2006, the vast majority of non-credit ESL students (78%) were enrolled in ESLN. The smallest numbers of students were enrolled in Vocational ESL (ESLV) and ESL Bridge courses (ESLB). Enrollment in Vocational ESL increased the most over the nine years (by 170%). Enrollment in Citizenship courses (ESLC) decreased the most (by 36%).
- From 1998-2006, a majority of *credit* ESL students first enrolled in the three highest credit levels. Except for credit Level 2 (ESL120), all credit levels experienced declines in enrollment, and the three highest levels experienced the sharpest declines in both percentage and numerical terms. In *non-credit*, the vast majority of students first enrolled in the Literacy Level and in the four Beginning Level courses (Levels 1-4) of ESLN and ESLF. Enrollment in some non-credit levels increased, and enrollment in other levels declined. Declines in Beginning Levels 1-3 accounted for 74% of the fall in non-credit enrollment.
- By far the largest ethnic group of students enrolled in both credit and non-credit ESL from 1998-2006 was Asian (51% of total ESL enrollment). The next largest was Hispanic (29%). In credit, declines in enrollment occurred in both these ethnic populations over the 9-year period, while non-credit enrollment by both these ethnic populations was about the same in 2006 as it had been in 1998. There were major declines in enrollment in both credit and non-credit by students from other ethnic groups (e.g., White, Black, Filipino) that made smaller contributions to total enrollment.
- Considerable differences existed between ages of students in credit and non-credit. In credit, over half of students were under 30, and the largest age group was the 20-24 group. In non-credit, over half of students were over 30, and the largest age group was the 50+ group. These age differences did not change substantially over the 9-year time period.
- Although most of the findings in this chapter and the responses required to address particular issues they raise (see “Discussion”) are specific to CCSF, they have important implications for other ESL programs:
 - *All programs should examine the percent of their students at different proficiency levels to ensure that they are providing appropriate services. The available evidence suggests that in most adult education ESL programs, as at CCSF, a majority of students are enrolled at the lowest levels of English proficiency. Programs should monitor the progress of low-level students with*

special care, because these students will have to advance multiple levels to attain the English skills needed to meet the challenges and benefit from the opportunities of American life.

- *Likewise, all programs should examine multi-year enrollment trends, and in particular the ratio of continuing to new students. This ratio gives a partial indication of problems in persistence that should be addressed. All programs should also examine enrollment trends in different types of ESL services to determine whether some of these should be expanded or improved. In particular, they should examine the demand and need for vocational ESL: (VESL) programs.*
- *Finally, all programs should gather comprehensive demographic information (including information of prior education levels) about their adult education ESL students. And they should adopt procedures to estimate how many students leave their service area and what the characteristics of those students are. Programs should use demographic profiles of their student body and demographic trends to determine whether they are reaching all sectors of the population in need of ESL service with appropriate types of instruction. And they should determine the extent and nature of the unmet need for ESL in their areas.*

C. ANALYSIS

1. Total College Enrollment Trends

Table 2.1 below presents annual enrollment at CCSF for all credit and non-credit students from 1998-2006. Between 1998-2006, the largest total enrollments at CCSF were in 2001 and 2002 (103,701 students and 104,220 students, respectively). But total enrollment in 2006 was about the same (91,783) as it had been in 1998 (92,110). Total enrollment declined by 12% (12,279 students) from 2002 (the year of highest enrollment) to 2006.

Total enrollment was about the same in 2006 as in 1998, but there were significant changes in the composition of that enrollment. Between 1998 and 2006, credit enrollment increased by 7%, while non-credit enrollment declined by 7%. Because the number of students enrolled in credit and non-credit was about the same, these percentage changes led to almost no net change in total enrollment.

The decline in non-credit enrollment was entirely due to a decline in the number of new students. Although non-credit enrollment of continuing students (students who had previously been enrolled) remained the same in 2006 as it had been in 1998, enrollment of new students decreased by 19%. Because there were fewer new than continuing students in each year, this differential in the percentage of new and continuing students accounts for the 7% decline in non-credit enrollment. That decline would have been greater if continuing student enrollment had decreased.

The effect on total enrollment of the rates of change in new and continuing student enrollment was also apparent in the credit division. From 1998-2006, new student enrollment in credit remained about the same, but continuing student enrollment increased by 11% – leading to the net increase of 7% in credit enrollment. This increase in total enrollment would have been smaller if continuing student enrollment had not increased by as much as it did.

Taken together, these findings lead to the conclusion that the College appears to have been more successful in retaining students who were already enrolled (an increase in credit and no change in non-credit) than in attracting new students (no change in credit and a decrease in Non-Credit) from 1998-2006. This effect is most apparent in the Non-Credit division where the number of new students declined.

Table 2.1 Annual Enrollment at CCSF, 1998-2006

Academic Year	Credit		Credit Total	Non-Credit		Non-Credit Total	Grand Total
	New	Continuing		New	Continuing		
1998	15989	28406	44395	17628	30087	47715	92110
1999	16507	28928	45435	17989	30971	48960	94395
2000	17214	30036	47250	17854	31973	49827	97077
2001	19282	31867	51149	18473	34079	52552	103701
2002	18983	33536	52519	17034	34667	51701	104220
2003	15309	32340	47649	15818	32440	48258	95907
2004	15336	31908	47244	14527	31287	45814	93058
2005	15256	31746	47002	14520	29901	44421	91423
2006	16035	31559	47594	14229	30118	44347	91941
Grand Total	149911	280326	430237	148072	285523	433595	863832
% Change from 1998	0%	11%	7%	-19%	0%	-7%	0%

- Enrollment figures include all students who have a minimum of eight hours enrollment at the college in non-credit or enrolled in any credit course.
- The “Total” category includes both continuing and new students who were enrolled in any classes during the summer, spring, or fall of the year.
- The “New” category includes any student who enrolled in any class at CCSF for the first time during the summer, spring, or fall of the year.
- The “Continuing” category includes all students who had been enrolled in any class at CCSF prior to the year indicated.

2. Total ESL Enrollment Trends

Table 2.2 presents annual ESL enrollment for 1998-2006. ESL is the largest single Department at CCSF. Comparing this table to Table 2.1, it is apparent that ESL makes a large contribution to College enrollment, particularly in the Non-Credit Division. In total, 34% of all enrollments at CCSF, 58% of all non-credit enrollments, and 10% of all credit enrollments from 1998-2006 were in ESL. The highest ESL enrollment was in 2001 (5,140 credit and 31,039 non-credit students, respectively.) The 2006 ESL enrollment (29,342) was the lowest in the nine-year period.

The trends in ESL enrollment were somewhat different from those for enrollment in the College as a whole. Total ESL enrollment declined 12% (3,920 students) from 1998-2006, whereas total college enrollment was about the same in 2006 as it had been in 1998. There were declines in enrollment in both credit and non-credit ESL, whereas credit enrollment increased for the College as a whole and non-credit declined.

In percentage terms, credit ESL enrollment fell more than non-credit enrollment from 1998 to 2006. There was a 26% decrease in ESL credit enrollment, compared to 9% in non-credit. In contrast, credit enrollment increased by 7% at the College as a whole, and non-credit enrollment decreased by only 7%. In numerical terms, the decline in non-credit ESL enrollment was almost twice as large as the decline in credit – 2,515 in non-credit compared to 1,405 in credit. Hence, in numerical terms, the decline in non-credit enrollment accounted for 64% of the decline in overall enrollment in ESL and 68% of the decrease in non-credit enrollment at the College as a whole.

Furthermore, this decline in non-credit ESL enrollment was almost entirely due to a decline in new non-credit students. This is demonstrated by the fact that, although enrollment of *continuing* non-credit students decreased by a tiny number (10 students) from 1998-2006, enrollment of *new* non-credit students decreased 23% (2,505 students). This differential of 2,505 students (plus the decrease of 10 continuing students) accounts for the decline in non-credit ESL enrollment.

In contrast, the percent of *both* new and continuing credit ESL students decreased by 26% from 1998-2006, and the decrease in new credit students (607 students) was slightly smaller than the decrease in continuing students (798). But, these changes in credit enrollment had little effect on the relative number of *all ESL* students who were new and continuing in 2006 compared to 1998. This is because the decrease in the number of new credit students was only slightly smaller than the decrease in the number of continuing students. It is also because both numbers were much smaller than the decrease of 2,505 continuing non-credit students from 1998-2006.

Combining credit and non-credit enrollment, new students decreased by 3,113, whereas continuing students decreased by 808 between 1998-2006. Decreases in new student enrollment accounted for 79.4% of the decrease in total ESL enrollment during this time period. These decreases also accounted for 74% of the decrease in non-credit enrollment for the College as a whole.

These trends lead to the conclusion that, like the College as a whole, CCSF's ESL program was more successful in retaining existing students than in enrolling new ones. And like the College as a whole, this decline in the proportion of new students was primarily due to a large decline in new non-credit enrollment. This means that the decline in new ESL non-credit enrollment had a major effect on both total enrollment in ESL and at the College as a whole.

Table 2.2 Annual ESL Enrollment, 1998-2006

Academic Year	Credit		Credit Total	Non-Credit		Non-Credit Total	Grand Total
	New	Continuing		New	Continuing		
1998	2317	3069	5386	10745	17131	27876	33262
1999	2193	2982	5175	11067	17391	28458	33633
2000	2143	2800	4943	11282	17955	29237	34180
2001	2318	2822	5140	11593	19446	31039	36179
2002	2176	2940	5116	10334	19796	30130	35246
2003	1859	2829	4688	9592	18448	28040	32728
2004	1831	2757	4588	9202	17668	26870	31458
2005	1705	2538	4243	9116	17090	26206	30449
2006	1710	2271	3981	8240	17121	25361	29342
Grand Total	18252	25008	43260	91171	162046	253217	296477
% Change from 1998	-26%	-26%	-26%	-23%	0%	-9%	-12%

- Enrollment figures include all students who have a minimum of eight hours enrollment at the College in non-credit or who took any credit course.
- The "All" category includes both continuing and new students who were enrolled in any classes during the summer, spring, or fall of the year.
- The "New" category includes any student who enrolled in any ESL class at CCSF for the first time during the summer, spring, or fall of the year. The "Continuing" category includes students who enrolled in any ESL class at CCSF prior to the year indicated.

3. ESL Contribution to College Enrollment

Because ESL is a major source of students for the College (34% of all enrollment from 1998-2006),¹⁴ it is a matter of some concern when ESL enrollment declines. Table 2.3

¹⁴ In fact, the total contribution of ESL to College enrollment was undoubtedly greater, because some ESL students enroll in classes outside ESL either during the period of time in which they are taking ESL classes or subsequently. See Chapters 7 and 10.

presents CCSF enrollment compared to ESL enrollment for each year from 1998-2006. Credit ESL enrollment dropped from 12% of the total College enrollment in 1998 to 8% of the total in 2006. Non-credit ESL enrollment was 58% of total Non-Credit enrollment from 1998-2006 but dropped to 57% in 2006. As a result, non-credit ESL enrollment was a fairly constant percentage of total non-credit College enrollment, whereas credit ESL enrollment declined as a percentage of total credit enrollment.

Table 2.3 Annual CCSF Enrollment Compared to ESL Enrollment, 1998-2006

Academic Year	Credit			Non-Credit		
	All College	All ESL		All College	All ESL	
	Number	Number	% of All College	Number	Number	% of All College
1998	44395	5386	12%	47715	27876	58%
1999	45435	5175	11%	48960	28458	58%
2000	47250	4943	10%	49827	29237	59%
2001	51149	5140	10%	52552	31039	59%
2002	52519	5116	10%	51701	30130	58%
2003	47649	4688	10%	48258	28040	58%
2004	47244	4588	10%	45814	26870	59%
2005	47002	4243	9%	44421	26206	59%
2006	47594	3981	8%	44347	25361	57%
% Change from 1998	7%	-26%		-7%	-9%	

-Enrollment figures include all students who have a minimum of eight hours enrollment at the College in non-credit in a year or enrolled in any credit course.

4. Enrollment Trends by Type of Non-Credit ESL Courses

Non-credit ESL offers five different types of courses: ESLN (General Life-skills), ESLF (Focus ESL), ESLV (Vocational ESL), ESLC (Citizenship ESL), and ESLB (ESL Bridge). Students sometimes enroll in more than one type of ESL course, which results in duplicated enrollment figures.

Table 2.4 describes duplicated enrollment figures for all ESL students from 1998-2006. As the Table shows, the vast majority of the non-credit ESL enrollment was in ESLN (General Life-skills). ESLN accounted for 78% of all ESL duplicated enrollment from 1998-2006. The second largest enrollment was in ESLF (Focus) classes (22% of total duplicated enrollment). ESLC (Citizenship) enrollment was the third largest (6% of total

enrollment). ESLV had the smallest enrollment over the 9-year period (4.6% of total duplicated enrollment).

Enrollment in ESLN, ESLC, and ESLB decreased from 1998-2006. ESLC enrollment declined the most – by 36% from 2,525 students to 1,623 students. ESLV (Vocational ESL) showed the greatest increase in the nine-year period – from 683 to 1,844 students (170%). ESLF also showed an increase during this period – from 5,423 to 6,996 students (9%).

The decline in new student enrollment was dramatic for all types of classes except ESLV. In numerical terms, the decline in ESLN enrollment was by far the greatest – 3,309 students, and ESLN had the second largest decline in percentage of new enrollment (29%), exceeded only by ESLC.¹⁵

Nevertheless, the large size of enrollment in ESLN (78% of all duplicated ESL enrollment during the 9-year period) and its large percentage decline in new student enrollment suggest that a decline in new ESLN students was the primary reason for the decline in new ESL students and its consequences mentioned above.

In contrast, the enrollment of continuing ESL students increased in all non-credit courses, except ESLC. This is consistent with the finding that the decline in non-credit ESL enrollment is almost entirely due to a decline in new student enrollment.

¹⁵ Note that the decline in new ESLN duplicated enrollments in Table 2.4 is greater than the total decline in all new ESL enrollments in Table 2.2. This is because “new enrollments” in Table 2.4 are new to the classes indicated, whereas they are new to *any* ESL class in Table 2.2. Hence, in Table 2.4, some students were new to ESLN, but not new to ESL, because they took another ESL class prior to enrolling in ESLN. The same logic applies to the numbers of new and continuing students in all the classes displayed in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Non-Credit ESL Enrollment by Subject, 1998-2006

Academic Year	ESLN Enrollment			ESLF Enrollment			ESLV Enrollment		
	New	Continuing	Grand Total	New	Continuing	Grand Total	New	Continuing	Grand Total
1998	11516	14156	25672	3945	2478	6423	295	388	683
1999	11754	14382	26136	4101	2473	6574	338	534	872
2000	11822	14996	26818	4157	2650	6807	389	837	1226
2001	11876	16334	28210	4930	3125	8055	479	1285	1764
2002	10414	16926	27340	4585	3672	8257	398	1268	1666
2003	9438	15760	25198	4329	3887	8216	469	1272	1741
2004	9037	15216	24253	3760	3847	7607	539	1214	1753
2005	8995	15000	23995	3807	3583	7390	613	1394	2007
2006	8207	15008	23215	3327	3669	6996	418	1426	1844
Total	93059	137778	230837	36941	29384	66325	3938	9618	13556
% Change from 1998	-29%	6%	-10%	-16%	48%	9%	42%	268%	170%

Academic Year	ESLC Enrollment			ESLB Enrollment		
	New	Continuing	Grand Total	New	Continuing	Grand Total
1998	1353	1172	2525	1187	349	1536
1999	1255	1182	2437	1238	316	1554
2000	1238	1003	2241	1565	452	2017
2001	1196	1123	2319	1235	541	1776
2002	1069	1187	2256	1058	511	1569
2003	853	1075	1928	1001	410	1411
2004	894	949	1843	917	429	1346
2005	926	708	1634	910	454	1364
2006	824	799	1623	933	419	1352
Total	9608	9198	18806	10044	3881	13925
% Change from 1998	-39%	-32%	-36%	-21%	20%	-12%

-ESLN=general ESL, ESL V=Vocational ESL, ESLC=Citizenship ESL, ESLF=Focus ESL, ESL B=Bridge ESL
 -Enrollment figures include all students who have a minimum of eight hours enrollment at the College in non-credit or enrollment in any credit course.
 -Duplicated enrollment counts student enrollment in all types of classes. So, for example, a student who is enrolled in two types of classes, such as ESLN and ESLF, is counted twice.

5. ESL Enrollment Trends by Level

The level of English language proficiency of CCSF's ESL students is obviously an important variable in describing enrollment in the College's ESL program. In non-credit ESL, level of proficiency can most easily be described by looking only at ESLN and ESLF students – who comprised the vast majority of all Non-Credit ESL enrollments.¹⁶

Table 2.5 describes the level at which all credit and Non-Credit ESL students were enrolled during each academic year from 1998-2006. More specifically, it shows the ESL level of each student in the first term during which they were enrolled in ESL during each year.¹⁷ The top portion of the Table shows the numbers of *non-credit* students to whom a level could be assigned (most ESLN and ESLF students).¹⁸ The bottom portion of Table 2.5 describes the first level of all *credit* ESL students who were enrolled in the courses indicated. These credit courses (the core Reading/Writing/Grammar courses) were all single level and comprise the vast majority of credit ESL enrollment. Students not enrolled in any of these core-leveled courses but enrolled in other credit ESL courses are represented in the “No Level” row. These students are excluded in the calculations below. In both tables, levels are listed in ascending order of English language proficiency.

Non-credit. Table 2.5 shows that, over the 9-year period, 84% of all non-credit ESL students in single-level courses (those to whom a level could be assigned), were first enrolled during each year at the Literacy Level (represented as Level “0” in this and subsequent tables) and Beginning Levels (represented as Levels 1-4). Sixty percent were enrolled at the three lowest levels (Literacy and the Low Beginning Levels 1-2).¹⁹ The level in which largest number of students enrolled during all nine years was Level 1.

¹⁶ This is because most (but not all) ESLN courses are “single level” courses – Literacy Level and Levels 1-9. Most ESLF courses are two-level courses. They are offered at the following levels: Beginning Low (CCCSF Level 1 and 2) Beginning High (CCSF Level 3 and 4) Intermediate Low (CCSF Level 5 and 6) or Intermediate High (CCSF Level 7 and 8.) That is, most classes in ESLN and ESLF enroll (and provide instruction to) students who are at the same level of proficiency. In contrast, most ESLV, ESLC, and ESLB are “multi-level” courses. Classes in these courses enroll (and provide instruction to) students who are at different levels of proficiency, for example, combining Beginning Low and Beginning High together. As a result data is not readily available on the proficiency levels of students in these programs.

¹⁷ This distinction is important, because many students were enrolled in more than one ESL level during any given academic year.

¹⁸ These are listed as levels 0-9 with ‘0’ being the Literacy Level. For purposes of this study, ESLF courses that were two CCSF levels were coded as the first of the two levels. So, for example, ESLF Beginning Low courses (CCSF Levels 1 and 2) were coded as Level 1. Those to whom a level could not be assigned (students in ESL courses other than ESLN and ESLF, and the limited number of students in those courses enrolled in multi-level classes) are listed as “No Level.”

¹⁹ These percentages are slightly lower if the “No Level” students are included in the calculations. That is, if the percentage of students enrolled in Levels 0-4 are calculated as a percentage of all students to whom a level could be assigned plus all “No Level” students, the percentage is 72%, and if the percentage of students enrolled in Levels 0-2 is calculated in the same way, the percentage is 52.5%.

Enrollment in Level 1 ranged from a high of 9,585 students (36% of students to whom a level could be assigned) in 2001 to a low of 6,861 (31% of students to whom a level could be assigned) in 2006.²⁰ The level in which the smallest number of students enrolled was the highest non-credit level, Level 9. (Note that no figures for ESL 9 are available before 2001, because that was the first year in which the course was offered.)

Overall, there appears to be no systematic pattern of increase or decrease in enrollment among non-credit levels in percentage terms. The percent of students enrolled in both Literacy and Level 8 increased significantly (by 20% and 31%, respectively), while the percentage of students enrolled in Level 3 and 6 significantly declined (by 21% and 31%, respectively).

It is important to note that while the number of students enrolled at the Literacy Level increased by 20% over the nine years, the percentage of students enrolled in almost all of the other Beginning Level courses declined. Together with Literacy, these were the levels in which the overwhelming majority of non-credit ESL students enrolled. Level 1 enrollment declined by 13%, Level 2 by 16%, and Level 3 by 21%, whereas Level 4 increased by 4%.

In numerical terms, the declines in each of Levels 1-3 were larger than for any other levels of non-credit ESL. They totalled a decline of 2,436 in non-credit ESL enrollment. In total, the decline in all other levels was only 846. Thus, the declines in Levels 1-3 accounted for 74% of the decline in levels that lost enrollment from 1998-2006.

Although the declines in Levels 1-3 were augmented by declines in other levels and offset by increases in some levels, these numerical declines in Beginning level courses were largely responsible for the decline in total non-credit ESL enrollment discussed above.

Credit. Table 2.5 shows that credit enrollment had a different pattern. In all years, a majority of enrollment was in the higher-level credit ESL classes – ESL 140, ESL 150, and ESL 160/82. In 1998, 68% (2,878) of all credit students enrolled in the classes listed in Table 2.5 were enrolled in these advanced classes, and in 2006, 64% (2,149) of credit students enrolled in the classes listed enrolled at these levels. In total, from 1998-2006, 67% of credit students first enrolled in higher-level courses each year.²¹ The relative number of students in these three advanced classes varied over the three years, but the difference in enrollment between them was at most a few hundred students, and often less. In all years, the number in the highest-level class (ESL 160/82) was lower than the number in the other two higher-level classes (ESL 140 and 150).

²⁰ These percentages change to 31% and 27%, respectively if the “No Level” students are included in the calculations.

²¹ If these calculations include “No Level” students, the percentages become 53% and 54%, respectively.

Table 2.5 ESL Enrollment by First Level with Year from 1998-2006

Non-Credit

First ESL Level	Academic Year										Percent Change from 1998
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
0	2501	2602	2987	3065	2786	2751	2722	2855	3007	25276	20%
1	8047	8393	8885	9585	9171	7970	7537	7519	6961	74068	-13%
2	3633	3684	3475	3653	3619	3379	3378	3349	3047	31217	-16%
3	3710	3630	3654	3803	3663	3481	3311	3140	2946	31338	-21%
4	2183	2044	2058	2300	2312	2224	2250	2066	2260	19697	4%
5	1708	1614	1511	1605	1515	1512	1786	1735	1478	14464	-13%
6	1130	1240	1107	1105	1015	1075	917	899	781	9269	-31%
7	893	839	849	838	849	1013	883	747	818	7729	-8%
8	198	241	264	291	397	217	151	144	260	2163	31%
9				191	162	92	110	102	122	779	
No Level	3873	4171	4447	4603	4641	4326	3825	3650	3681	37217	-5%
Grand Total	27876	28458	29237	31039	30130	28040	26870	26206	25361	253217	-9%

Credit

First ESL Level	Academic Year										Percent Change from 1998
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
0 (ESL22)	56	47	67	100							
1 (ESL110)	166	165	142	139	289	216	176	161	159	1613	-4%
2 (ESL120)	394	410	346	372	476	507	449	429	436	3810	11%
3 (ESL130)	762	723	762	810	907	796	756	653	600	6769	-21%
4 (ESL140)	859	862	888	960	1010	963	952	868	761	8123	-11%
5 (ESL150)	1099	1030	947	1038	975	874	864	837	750	8414	-32%
6 (ESL82/160)	920	889	779	719	816	730	798	737	638	7026	-31%
No Level	1130	1058	1012	1002	643	602	593	558	637	7235	-44%
Grand Total	5386	5175	4943	5140	5116	4688	4588	4243	3981	43260	-26%

-The "No Level" students in credit ESL were those enrolled in credit courses other than the core Reading/Writing/Grammar courses, designated as Level 0-6.

-The "No Level" students in non-credit were those enrolled in non-credit programs to which a level could not be assigned (ESLV, ESLB, and ESLC) plus those enrolled in multi-level ESLN or ESLF courses, and a small number whose final level of enrollment was below their first level of enrollment.

-ESL 22 was offered in 1998-2000, but was discontinued in Fall 02.

6. Ethnicity and Age of ESL Students

Ethnicity. Table 2.6 describes the ethnicity of all students enrolled in CCSF's ESL program for the nine-year period, 1998-2006. Asians comprised the largest ethnic group in both credit (67% of all credit enrollment) and Non-Credit (48% of all non-credit enrollment). Hispanics comprised the second largest group (16% of total credit enrollment, and 32% of total non-credit enrollment).

The percentage of students from each of these ethnic groups was fairly close to these overall percentages in each of the 9 years examined and did not vary greatly from year to year. The percentage of Asian enrolled in non-credit ESL increased steadily from 46% in 1998 to 50% in 2006, and the percentage enrolled in credit ESL increased from 64% in 1998 to 69% in 2006 – with a brief dip from 68% in 2002 to 67% in 2003 and 2004.

The percentage of Hispanics enrolled in non-credit ESL increased from 28% in 1998 to the 33%-34% range in 2000-2003, declining to 31% in 2004, and reaching 32% in 2005-2006. The percentage enrolled in credit ESL rose from 15% in 1998 and 1999 to the 16%-17% range from 2000-2006.

In terms of numbers of students, from 1998-2006 the number of Asian *decreased* 1% in non-credit ESL and 20% in credit ESL. The number of Hispanics *increased* 1% in non-credit ESL and *decreased* 18% in credit ESL. Overall, the ratio of Asians to Hispanics changed very little over this time period.

However, the rates of increase and decrease in the enrollment of Asians and Hispanics differ from the rates of change in the total ESL population in Table 2.2 – where non-credit enrollment decreased 9% and credit enrollment decreased 26%. This difference cannot be accounted for by changes in the numbers of members of these ethnic groups enrolled in ESL. That is because those numbers were almost the same for non-credit enrollments in 2006 as they had been in 1998, and for credit ESL, they declined at a lower rate than did total ESL enrollment. Nor can they be explained by changes in the percentage of members of each of these ethnic groups enrolled in credit and non-credit ESL, because those percentages increased over the 9-year period.

Instead, the differences are primarily due to major decreases in the number of members of other ethnic groups enrolled in ESL (such as a 65% fall in non-credit enrollment by White/Non-Hispanics). These decreases in other ethnic groups changed the ethnic composition of CCSF's ESL population. They accounted for a large part of the decrease in non-credit enrollment, and a significant part of the decrease in credit enrollment. In short, CCSF's ESL enrollment was much more dominated by Asians and Hispanics in 2006 than it had been in 1998.

Table 2.6 ESL Enrollment by Ethnicity, 1998-2006

Non-Credit											
Ethnicity	Academic Year										Percent Change from 1998
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
African American/Non Hispanic	140	119	138	138	133	143	120	99	72	1102	-49%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	15	13	18	25	28	23	17	17	11	167	-27%
Asian/Pacific Islander	12831	13305	13688	15139	14645	13667	13504	13168	12703	122650	-1%
Filipino	111	119	119	128	133	123	115	86	86	1020	-23%
Hispanic/Latino	7933	8361	9528	10319	10281	9215	8355	8300	7994	80286	1%
Other Non White	119	131	120	96	84	81	94	88	92	905	-23%
Unknown/No Response	4266	4194	3695	3632	3532	3693	3666	3494	3537	33709	-17%
White Non Hispanic	2461	2216	1931	1562	1294	1095	999	954	866	13378	-65%
Grand Total	27876	28458	29237	31039	30130	28040	26870	26206	25361	253217	-9%

Credit											
Ethnicity	Academic Year										Percent Change from 1998
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
African American/Non Hispanic	59	42	34	35	34	34	36	39	33	346	-44%
American Indian/Alaskan Native		3	3			1			1	8	
Asian/Pacific Islander	3427	3324	3261	3482	3466	3145	3066	2935	2743	28849	-20%
Filipino	256	239	215	175	232	234	208	167	126	1852	-51%
Hispanic/Latino	803	778	836	861	814	785	809	707	658	7051	-18%
Other Non White	24	29	33	36	60	61	72	59	57	431	138%
Unknown/No Response	298	326	189	104	76	69	71	49	66	1248	-78%
White Non Hispanic	519	434	372	447	434	359	326	287	297	3475	-43%
Grand Total	5386	5175	4943	5140	5116	4688	4588	4243	3981	43260	-26%

Age. Table 2.7 displays the age of CCSF’s ESL students. Non-credit students tended to be older than credit students. Sixty-seven percent of non-credit ESL students were 30 years old or older compared to only 37% of credit ESL students.²² The 50 or older age group in non-credit was the largest (25% of the total), while the 20-24 age group was the largest in credit (34% of the total).

The 16-19 year old age group comprised only 4% of non-credit enrollment, but comprised 11% of credit enrollment. *These young people are of particular interest, because many of them might otherwise have been in high school. It is encouraging that their personal goals lead to a higher percentage of them going to credit ESL than to non-credit, because credit ESL is intended to be a preparation for academic courses in college. It is also encouraging that so many of them had a high enough level of English proficiency to enroll in credit courses.* Unfortunately, this study could not determine whether their total enrollment or their education levels were proportionate to the percentage of this age group in the immigrant population of San Francisco.

Table 2.7 ESL Enrollment by Age, 1998-2006

Age	Non-Credit Academic Year									Total	% Change From 1998
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006		
16 - 19	1066	1051	1244	1156	1121	1050	1047	1116	1064	9915	0%
20 - 24	3310	3582	3821	3987	3856	3509	3425	3506	3426	32422	4%
25 - 29	3491	3467	3534	3673	3671	3226	3031	3064	3000	30157	-14%
30 - 34	3392	3412	3487	3729	3639	3260	3083	2868	2765	29635	-18%
35 - 39	3059	3146	3263	3534	3267	2833	2705	2619	2505	26931	-18%
40 - 49	4930	5157	5287	5940	5880	5570	5224	4868	4755	47611	-4%
50+	7421	7222	7028	7315	7178	6966	6894	6799	6917	63740	-7%
Unkwn/NoResp	1207	1421	1573	1705	1518	1626	1461	1366	929	12806	-23%
Grand Total	27876	28458	29237	31039	30130	28040	26870	26206	25361	253217	-9%

-Table 2.7 cont'd on next page-

²² This calculation and the others in this paragraph are based on the “Grand Total” of enrollments in Table 2.7, and hence it includes 12,806 non-credit students whose age is unknown. If the calculations included only non-credit students for whose age is known, the percentages would increase slightly. For example, the percentage of non-credit students 30 years of age or older would be 70%. But because the ages of only 13 credit students are unknown, the percentages given for these students would not change.

Table 2.7 cont'd

Credit

Age	Academic Year										% Change From 1998
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total	
16 - 19	644	579	548	568	543	446	449	397	395	4569	-39%
20 - 24	1895	1769	1769	1788	1699	1533	1551	1508	1427	14939	-25%
25 - 29	1011	979	892	935	999	878	775	726	679	7874	-33%
30 - 34	674	682	643	736	742	685	633	558	474	5827	-30%
35 - 39	496	485	450	464	464	475	439	400	363	4036	-27%
40 - 49	491	472	470	471	488	479	503	448	401	4223	-18%
50+	170	207	169	176	181	190	238	206	242	1779	42%
Unknown /No Response	5	2	2	2		2				13	
Grand Total	5386	5175	4943	5140	5116	4688	4588	4243	3981	43260	-26%

D. DISCUSSION

1. Serving Students With Very Limited English Proficiency

The overwhelming majority of CCSF's non-credit ESL students were in enrolled at the very lowest levels during each of the nine years examined by this study. It appears that CCSF is not unique in this respect. Hard evidence on this point is fragmentary, but the evidence available from surveys of other programs and from ESL professionals indicates that most other adult education non-credit ESL programs across the country have a very high percentage of low-level students.²³ These students have very limited English

²³ Regrettably, this study was unable to find any comprehensive data on the relative number of ESL students enrolled at different levels nationwide. In the course of its 2005-2006 investigation of ESL in community colleges, CAAL reviewed the enrollment patterns of more than a dozen colleges and found that the lowest level students (students at the Literacy and Beginning levels) comprised by far the largest proportion of enrollments in all of their ESL programs. In addition, CAAL consulted several leading authorities on ESL who have knowledge of many more ESL programs. All of these authorities agreed that students at the very lowest levels of English proficiency dominate adult education ESL enrollment. Finally, CAAL obtained data on ESL enrollment for all 50 states gathered by the Department of Education's National Reporting System for adult education (NRS) for Program year 2005-2006. This data shows that 48% of ESL students reported by states to the NRS in that year were at the ESL Beginning or ESL Beginning Literacy levels. Regrettably, some (perhaps most) programs do not test all of their students using NRS approved tests, and hence do not report the levels of all their students to the NRS. *It appears that lower level students are least likely to be tested.* As a result, NRS reports probably understate the percentage of students at low levels. Nevertheless, NRS estimates reinforce the observations of CAAL and various authorities on ESL. (NRS data received via communication from Mike Dean of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education to Forrest Chisman on July 17, 2007).

proficiency, and, thus, have a long way to go to reach a proficiency level that will make a significant difference in their lives. They will need a much higher level of proficiency to move beyond entry-level jobs, get a college degree, function more successfully in an English speaking environment, and become effective citizens.

Retaining Beginning level students and moving them to higher levels of proficiency is, therefore, one of the major challenges that ESL programs across the country face. Future chapters in this report will provide further evidence of this challenge.

2. ESL Plays a Significant Role at the College

ESL plays a prominent role at CCSF as evidenced by the fact that 68% of the College's non-credit enrollment and 10% of its credit enrollment from 1998-2006 were ESL students. CCSF also relies on ESL students to contribute to the enrollment in other non-credit and credit programs/classes at the College. As ESL students increase their language proficiency, some enroll in the wealth of vocational and academic courses/programs offered by the College to further their education and skills. Chapters 6 and 7 will describe some of the ways in which ESL students move beyond ESL. CCSF has risen to the challenge of serving the large limited English speaking population in San Francisco, and the College as a whole has benefited from the ESL enrollment. Other colleges may also find similar benefits from serving ESL students.

In the past, CCSF's ESL program, taken as a whole, was considered a profit center for the College because it brought in more funding than was needed to cover the costs of running the program. CCSF was willing to add courses to meet the high demand that had existed in previous years. But the declining enrollment in the last five years has caused some concern. Because CCSF funding largely depends on income from the state based on student enrollment and from student fees in credit courses, declining enrollment means fewer dollars to pay for rising costs.

3. Declining ESL Enrollment

There has been a rise and fall pattern in ESL enrollment at CCSF over the years, but overall credit ESL enrollment has declined 26% from 1998, and non-credit enrollment has declined 7%. The percentage declines from the years of highest ESL enrollment (2001-2002) are even greater. The primary sources of decline have been enrollment of new students at the lowest levels of the College's largest non-credit programs – ESLN and ESLF. On the whole, the College has been more successful in retaining ESL students than in attracting new students to ESL. The positive side of this finding is that the College has retained a fairly large percent of ESL students, at least for short periods of time. Chapter 4 of this report will show that long-term persistence is a problem.

At least some of the decline in both new and continuing ESL enrollment at CCSF probably can be attributed to a decline in immigration to San Francisco²⁴ combined with a movement of immigrants out of the city.²⁵ This out-migration may be due to the increased cost of living in the city as well as the desire of immigrants to find higher-paying jobs and re-unite with their families elsewhere.

It is important to note that demand for ESL is variable from year to year and from location to location. Other areas of the country are facing increased ESL enrollment as immigrants leave San Francisco and as the initial destinations of new immigrants change. Policy makers need to be prepared for continued changes in the demand for ESL. In particular, they need to be prepared to augment resources when the demand is high, as CCSF has done, and they need to be prepared for the consequences of reduced enrollment when that happens.

It is also important to remember that a decline in ESL enrollments does not mean a decline in the need for ESL service. According to the 2000 census, 16 million people in the United States between the ages of 16 and 65 “had difficulty with English, and they comprise 12-15% of our workforce.”²⁶ For a variety of reasons, adult education programs serve only a fraction of those who need ESL instruction. According to the U.S. Department of Education, only 1.1 million limited English proficient adults are served nationwide by federal/state funded ESL programs.²⁷ The number of new immigrants with limited English each year may well exceed the number served.²⁸ Declining enrollments provide CCSF with the opportunity to review how to better reach and serve the unmet need. Improved recruitment efforts, more partnerships with other organizations, better marketing, and new and improved programs are some of the options CCSF and other institutions faced with declining enrollments can consider.

²⁴ According to the City College of San Francisco 2006 Accreditation Self Study, legal immigration to San Francisco declined from 13,198 in 1993 to 7,551 in 2003. See also data on declining rates of San Franciscans who report speaking English less than very well at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Products/Profies/Chg/2003/AS/Tabular/385/38500US736273602/htm>

²⁵ See: Jeffrey S. Passel and William Zimmerman, “Are Immigrants Leaving California? Settlement Patterns of Immigrants in the Late 1990’s,” (Washington D.C.: Urban Institute, 2000.)

²⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, “America Speaks: A Demographic Profile of Foreign-Language Speakers in the United States: 2000.” Available at: www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/AmSpk/htm. U.S. Census Bureau, “Language Use and English-Speaking Ability:2000.” Available at: www.census.gov/prod2003/pubs/c2kbr-29.pdf.

²⁷ See: U.S. Department of Education, “Adult and Family Literacy Act Report to Congress, Program Year 2003-2004.” Available at: www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/ovae/2004ae/fla.pdf. Any program can determine the unmet need for service in its area by comparing its present level of service with Census reports on the number of people with limited English in its area, such as the report for San Francisco mentioned in Note 11 above.

²⁸ See: Jeffrey Passell, “Background Briefing Prepared for Task Force on Immigration and America’s Future” 2005. Available at: pewhispanic.org/files/reports/46.pdf.

4. Decline in Citizenship Enrollment

Enrollment in CCSF's ESLC Citizenship programs has declined more than enrollment in its other ESL programs over the past nine years. In part, this may be due to a decline in immigration into the San Francisco area. In addition, agencies other than the College may be offering more citizenship classes. Also, the costs for applying for citizenship have risen. The cost of taking the American citizenship test is now almost \$700. However, the need for citizenship classes could change dramatically if proposed changes in federal immigration laws are passed and obtaining citizenship becomes a higher priority for immigrants. ESL programs need to be prepared for a potentially large increase in demand for these classes.

5. Increase in Vocational ESL (ESLV)

ESLV enrollment at CCSF has increased at a faster rate than enrollment in any of CCSF's other ESL programs over the past nine years. CCSF has made an effort to increase ESLV offerings to better meet student needs, and the increase in enrollment has been a result of this increase in offerings. The most successful non-credit ESLV offerings in spring 2006 were Communication Skills for the Workplace, ESLV for Culinary Workers, and ESLV for Janitorial Workers (all offered for non-credit Level 5 students – Intermediate Low – and above), and ESLV and Career Exploration (offered for non-credit Level 3 and 4 – Beginning High – students).

The success of these ESLV programs in attracting students is probably due to the fact that many of CCSF's ESL students are employed and are interested in learning English that will help them in the workplace. Increased enrollment can also be attributed in part to collaborations the College has developed with other agencies to provide courses for special groups of students. One of these is the ESLV Intensive Program, offered in collaboration with the Department of Human Services, which started in spring 2001.²⁹ Another collaborative program is the displaced garment workers program, which started in fall 2005. This program is partially funded by the Department of Labor and offered in collaboration with several community partners.

Other colleges may wish to consider increasing offerings in ESLV. Based on CCSF's experience, they should examine the demand for particular offerings to determine what types of ESLV classes are likely to be successful in their service areas, in terms of student interest, the availability of the types of employment for which the courses prepare students, and the potential for students who enter these types of employment to achieve substantial earning gains and take the first steps up "career ladders." In several cases CCSF has offered new ESLV classes to meet expressed student desire/need, but had to cancel the class because enrollment was insufficient.

²⁹ For a description of this program, see: Sharon Seymour, "VESL Immersion Program (VIP) at City College of San Francisco" in Forrest P. Chisman and JoAnn Crandall, Passing the Torch: Strategies for Innovation in Community College ESL (New York: Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy, 2007) pp. 148-153. Available at: www.caalusa.org.

6. Changing Demographics

This study shows that there have been some changes in the ethnicity of CCSF's ESL students since 1998, but not in their age. During all of the 9 years studied, the College's ESL students were predominantly Asian (especially Chinese), and the second largest ethnic group was Hispanic. The ratio of Asian to Hispanic enrollment has remained essentially the same from 1998-2006. The number of both groups enrolled in non-credit ESL has remained about the same over the 9-year period, and the number of both groups enrolled in credit ESL has declined at about the same rate.

The major demographic changes in CCSF's ESL population have been dramatic decreases in the enrollment by members of all other ethnic groups – such as African American, Filipino, and White Non-Hispanic. This study cannot explain the reason for these decreases. In part, they may be due to demographic changes in the immigrant population of the San Francisco area. Whatever their cause, they challenge the College to investigate unmet needs in all ethnic groups and to examine whether it can serve them better by out-reach efforts or curricular changes. For example, the increasing percentage of Hispanic immigrants in the San Francisco area may indicate the need for more Spanish language literacy classes.

7. Focus on the Source of Enrollment Declines

Because of the importance of declines in ESL enrollment to CCSF, the College needs to focus attention on what it can do to reverse the major sources of those declines. The major sources are a decline in new non-credit students, particularly at the lowest levels of the College's largest non-credit programs (ESLN and ESLF). Efforts to recruit and retain more students in ESLN and ESLF should have a high priority. But the College must also increase efforts to recruit and retain students in non-credit ESL courses that have smaller enrollments, but suffered large percentage declines in new students (all except ESLV).

And priority must also be given to credit ESL – in which the number of both new and continuing students declined. Also, the College should focus on declines in enrollment by members of ethnic groups other than Asians and Hispanics. Finally, it should realize that the majority of ESL non-credit students are over 30 years of age and make an effort to reach more young people. Chapter 4 of this report focuses on a key element in addressing enrollment declines – increasing the persistence of ESLN and ESLF students. Increasing persistence would, effectively, convert more “new” students to “continuing” students. Other chapters will augment this discussion of persistence.

8. Definitions of “New” and “Continuing” ESL Students

As defined for purposes of this study, new students are any students who were enrolled in credit or non-credit ESL for the first time in the year (or years) and/or class (or classes) designated. Some of these new students (about 10%-15% depending on the years examined) were previously enrolled at CSSF in courses other than ESL. Continuing students are those who were enrolled in credit or non-credit ESL at some time prior to the

year (or years) designated and who were enrolled in ESL during the year (or years) and/or class (or classes) designated.

Unless otherwise noted, the number of new and continuing credit and non-credit students was calculated separately. This means that some students who are reported as new to credit ESL, were previously enrolled in non-credit ESL, and a small number of students reported as new to non-credit ESL were previously enrolled in credit ESL.

Finally, all non-credit ESL students included in this report were enrolled in a course or courses at the College for eight hours or more in the academic year indicated. The data used to generate this report does not indicate whether they were enrolled in an ESL course for all of the eight hours, but, undoubtedly, the vast majority were. Credit ESL students included in this report were students who enrolled in a credit ESL course and had not “dropped” (notified the college that they would no longer be attending) from the course or been dropped by the teacher (been removed from the enrollment list) by the time of the College's first census of non-credit enrollment (usually 2-3 weeks into the term).

In describing the total enrollment of the College (of which ESL students are a sub-set), this report uses the same definitions of new and continuing students that it uses to describe ESL students. New students are students who had not been enrolled in any class at CCSF prior to the year specified, and continuing students are students who had been enrolled in at least one class prior to the year specified. This means that some students who were new to ESL are counted as continuing students in calculating total College enrollment, because they had previously been enrolled in classes that were not ESL classes.

Students who comprised the cohort of ESL students that will be discussed in subsequent chapters of this report differed from other ESL students described in this chapter in only one respect. In calculating the number of new non-credit students for the cohort, only non-credit students who were enrolled for eight hours or more in an ESLF or ESLN class were included, whereas in calculating the number of new non-credit students in the other tables in this chapter, only students who enrolled in a non-credit ESL class and were enrolled in *any* non-credit class for eight hours or more were included. The difference in numbers is undoubtedly small, but should be noted.