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Adult Education ESL in the United States: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This systematic literature review examines the backgrounds and experiences of students and instructors in U.S. adult education English as a Second Language (AE ESL) programs, as well as the institutional practices, curriculum and pedagogy, and policy contexts relevant to AE ESL. Drawing on 107 peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed sources, the review finds that AE ESL students come from diverse linguistic, educational, and employment backgrounds and pursue a wide range of personal, academic, and career goals. It also finds that instructors, often employed part-time and working across multiple institutions, face challenges related to employment stability and professional development. The literature highlights promising curriculum and instructional practices that leverage students' cultural and linguistic assets, align with real-life needs, and foster student agency. The literature also suggests that institutional and community partnerships can expand access and resources for students, yet greater attention to collaboration and clarity about program contexts is needed. Finally, the review shows that researchers exploring AE ESL policy—which prioritizes funding-aligned progress measures over complex and sometimes nonlinear language development—often argue that stronger collaboration among policymakers, administrators, researchers, and educators could improve policy effectiveness and equity. Findings from the review underscore the importance of recognizing AE ESL as a distinct, under-researched segment of ESL programming with critical implications for policy, practice, and future research.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Drawing on 107 peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed sources, this paper examines the backgrounds and experiences of students and instructors in U.S. adult education English as a Second Language (AE ESL) programs, as well as the institutional practices, curriculum and pedagogy, and policy contexts relevant to AE ESL. We use the term adult education (AE) ESL in reference to ESL classes designed for the wide range of adults learning English in the United States—whom we call Multilingual Learners (MLs)—across a range of contexts, including community colleges, that often do not yield any academic credit and are distinct from credit or academic ESL programs. AE ESL traditionally focuses on practical English skills rather than academic preparation, although some students enrolled in AE ESL do plan to pursue further education and some AE ESL classrooms do emphasize academic goals.

AE ESL programs have long served as an important entry point to career opportunities and further education for immigrant and multilingual communities in the United States (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Raufman et al., 2019; Suh, 2023). Offered in varied contexts, including community colleges, adult schools, and community-based organizations (CBOs), these programs provide free or low-cost instruction to learners of a wide range of ages seeking to strengthen their English skills for work, family support, civic engagement, personal enrichment, and further education. These programs are usually federally and state funded and, as described in more detail in this review, are staffed by instructors working under different conditions and constraints than those in other kinds of academic contexts.

English Language Acquisition (ELA) courses, including ESL, make up the largest programmatic area within federally funded adult education. In the 2023–24 program year, approximately 59% of all enrolled adult learners, around 745,000 students, were enrolled in ESL courses (National Reporting System for Adult Education [NRS], n.d.-a; NRS, n.d.-b). Among all AE ESL students, about 37% of enrollees were women, and students were predominantly Hispanic or Latino (59%), followed by Black or African American (17%), Asian (11%), and White (12%), with smaller proportions identifying as Two or More Races, American Indian or Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific

Islander (NRS, n.d.-b). Students enrolled in AE ESL bring diverse linguistic, educational, and employment backgrounds to the ESL classroom.

Despite their reach and importance, AE ESL programs remain underexplored. While individual studies have documented student experiences, instructional approaches, and institutional practices, to our knowledge, no recent comprehensive synthesis has examined what is known about this sector. In their review of ESL programs in U.S. community colleges, Raufman et al. (2019) described student backgrounds and instructional delivery but did not distinguish between AE ESL programs and those offered as part of colleges' credit-bearing academic programs. In a global review of adult learners studying "nonacademic English" (including but not limited to U.S. AE ESL), Mathews-Aydinli (2008) noted that differences between students in programs offering college credit and those in nonacademic contexts are so substantial that "research with one group has often little significance or relevance for the other" (p. 210). Suh et al. (2022) reviewed institutional policies supporting transitions from noncredit to credit ESL in community colleges but not the backgrounds or experiences of students making that transition. To our knowledge, ours is the first review focusing specifically on students and instructors in U.S. noncredit AE ESL programs that also examines institutional factors, curriculum and pedagogy, and policy contexts.

Given the scale of AE ESL and the diversity of the learners and instructors involved, a systematic review provides critical insights into who participates in such programs, how they operate, and what challenges and opportunities are most salient. We reviewed how published literature in the field of AE ESL describes the following:

- The students enrolled in AE ESL programs in the U.S. and their experiences and goals
- The instructors teaching AE ESL courses in the U.S. and their experiences
- The range of curricula and instruction found in AE ESL courses in the U.S.
- The institutions that provide AE ESL programs and services
- The policy landscape that shapes AE ESL programming

We addressed our research questions through a five-phase systematic search and analysis of academic publications related to AE ESL in the U.S. See Appendix A for a description of our methods.

2. Findings

The final corpus in our review consists of 107 entries in all, split between 60 empirical research entries and 47 non-research "other publications." Among the 60 empirical research entries, 30 are qualitative studies, 13 are mixed methods, and 5 are quantitative. Most qualitative studies across the corpus are small-scale, focusing on small numbers of students, instructors, classrooms, or colleges. Only two studies provide longitudinal analysis (Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Spurling et al., 2008), exposing a research gap identified in many of the studies in the corpus. Empirical research for the entries in the corpus was conducted most frequently in community college AE ESL contexts (n = 19), followed by adult schools (n = 12) and CBOs (n = 9). The 47 non-research "other publications" are typically practitioner-facing reflections or reports published in journals aimed at guiding AE ESL instruction or programming (n = 22), policy reports n = 3), or essays reviewing the field or challenges in AE ESL more broadly (n = 14). As discussed in more detail below, there are considerable inconsistencies across the literature in how or whether studies distinguish between AE ESL and credit-bearing ESL programs designed for academic preparation. We therefore decided to omit several studies from review because it was not clear whether or not they specifically address AE ESL contexts.

We organized the literature into five categories based on the research focus of the entry: students, instructors, curriculum and instruction, institutions, and policy. Findings from our analysis of the 107 included entries are presented below, organized by each of the five categories: students (n = 47), instructors (n = 24), curriculum and instruction (n = 58), institutions (n = 43), and policy (n = 21). The findings provide an overview of themes identified in each of the domains, along with relevant exemplars highlighted from the literature. Table 1 shows the number of research and non-research entries coded under

each category; individual entries could be coded under multiple categories. Table B1 in Appendix B provides a list of the 107 entries organized by category and by whether they are research or non-research publications.

Table 1. Number of Entries Coded Under Each Research Focus Category

Category	Number of Research Entries Coded	Number of "Other Publications" Coded	Total Number of Entries Coded
Students	28	19	47
Instructors	15	9	24
Curriculum and Instruction	31	27	58
Institutions	24	19	43
Policy	10	11	21

Note. Single entries could be coded under multiple categories.

2.1 Students

The 47 entries focusing on students enrolled in AE ESL courses reveal four themes: (1) lower completion/transition rates for AE ESL students compared to those in credit ESL programs, with targeted bridge programs showing promise; (2) the diversity of students' backgrounds; (3) students' varied academic, career, and personal goals; and (4) students' empowerment and agency as knowledge producers and active participants in their own learning.

AE ESL student course completion and transition rates remain low compared with college-credit bearing ESL programs, although targeted bridge programs show promise in supporting these programs. A handful of studies examine AE ESL student course and program completion (Ariza & Miranda, 2006; Getz et al., 2023; Sacklin & Daniels, 2022; Xu & Ran, 2020) and transition rates (Becker, 2011; Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Xu & Ran, 2020), concluding that AE ESL completion and transition rates have been lower than those in college-credit-bearing contexts. For example, Xu and Ran (2020) found that, in their sample of nine community colleges across the U.S., AE ESL courses had a pass rate of just under 60% (compared to 77% for all college-level credit-bearing courses). Ariza and Miranda (2006) found that 45% of the 210 AE ESL students they surveyed had failed an ESL course at least once. Looking at

transition rates at five community colleges across five states enrolling between 1,200 and 27,000 AE ESL students, Chisman and Crandall (2007) concluded that only 10%–18% of AE ESL students went on to enroll in credit-bearing ESL courses and that fewer than 10% ever made a transition to an academic credit-bearing program. Reporting on 17 AE ESL students enrolled in a California community college, Becker (2011) found that participants' social and economic capital strongly shaped student success, as those with greater financial stability, education, and social networks were more likely to transition to credit-bearing programs. However, Sacklin and Daniels (2022), studying AE ESL students in one community college in Oregon, found that AE ESL students enrolled in bridge programs designed to support transitions into credit-bearing coursework or workforce training had significantly higher persistence and completion rates than the general student population, with 72% of academic bridge students and 55% of career bridge students graduating or transferring within three years, and 90% of all bridge students persisting to a second term of credit-bearing courses. Meanwhile, one longitudinal study found that AE ESL students who successfully transferred to credit programs performed as well as or better than their non-ML peers in areas such as retention, graduation, and subject performance in most subjects (Chisman & Crandall, 2007).

Understanding AE ESL students' diverse backgrounds helps improve student access, supports, and retention. The literature emphasizes the need for a greater understanding of AE ESL students' complex backgrounds in order to better attract, retain, teach, and provide students with meaningful options and supports, such as evening courses and childcare. AE ESL students tend to be older than traditional college-age students and have diverse linguistic, employment, and educational backgrounds (e.g., Blumenthal, 2002; Eyring, 2014; Getz et al., 2023). The literature also highlights AE ESL students' important roles in their families and communities (e.g., Martinez & Wang, 2005; Mercado, 2022) and the distinct positions they embody as refugees (e.g., Kamışlı, 2022), older adults (e.g., Weintraub, 2022), or individuals with particular intersectional identities, such as migrant women (e.g., Ennser-Kananen & Pettitt, 2017). Sharmin (2022) found that multimodal narrative assignments that created opportunities for female immigrant students to discuss experiences with linguistic discrimination improved their

language development, and Park (2011) illustrated ways in which an autobiography assignment highlighted "connections of [time and energy] investment, English language learning, and construction of identity" (p. 163). Washington (2016) reported on the use of oral storytelling around "topics and themes determined by the community" in a class of male Cambodian refugees and how this approach helped students move beyond the mechanics of language acquisition and into deeper discussions of identity while negotiating a new language and culture.

AE ESL students' varied academic, career, and personal goals can inform program goals and guide instruction. In addition to acknowledging the importance of understanding AE ESL students' backgrounds, the literature underscores their varied academic, career, and personal goals. For example, the studies we reviewed document students choosing to take English courses for naturalization or citizenship purposes (e.g., Hsiao, 2016), to better communicate with their children's teachers and schools (e.g., Shiffman, 2019), for self-improvement (Grover et al., 2014), to gain or improve employment (e.g., Kamışlı, 2023), and to further their academic pursuits (e.g., Becker, 2011). Entries highlighting students' goals tend to encourage researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to consider what "success" looks like for each student and to tailor classes and programs to adapt to individual aspirations, needs, and definitions of achievement. For example, Suh (2020) suggested that honoring AE ESL learners' literacy identities helps students and instructors to better connect student goals and experiences to course assignments and membership in the classroom's community of practice. In another example, Suh and Shapiro (2020) suggested that even within traditional AE ESL curricula, instructors can increase student investment and sense of belonging by centering learners' identities and academic or professional goals. The authors went on to suggest that AE ESL programs could provide structured interactions with faculty and college staff in other departments and fields related to students' goals and aspirations. In examining an AE ESL course serving primarily Latina women, Menard-Warwick (2008) found that the instructor implicitly constrained learners' identities and success by aligning instruction with narrow assumptions about students' goals and gender identities; the author argued that AE ESL teaching should be grounded in the diverse and individual backgrounds and

aspirations of enrolled students rather than in curricular materials or activities developed for previous classes.

Students develop empowerment and agency when they are active participants in their learning. Although fewer than half of the entries in the student category include direct reference to students' experiences or student voice, those that do address these topics raise important themes, including students' experiences transferring from noncredit to credit coursework (e.g., Becker, 2011; Getz et al., 2023; Suh, 2016), the importance of understanding students' identities (e.g., Sharmin, 2022; Suh & Shapiro, 2020), and the promise of student-centered pedagogies (e.g., Waring & Yu, 2018; Washington, 2016). Suh and Shapiro (2020) found that, due to deficit-oriented views, instructors in a midsized community college in the Midwest sometimes perceived student classroom actions as resistance and disengagement when, in reality, they were moments in which students were asserting their identities. The authors suggested that by moving beyond assumptions, instructors can use such moments to be responsive to students and promote their agency. In another example, Waring and Yu (2018) found that when ESL instructors drew on students' out-of-class experiences during classroom interactions and activities, AE ESL students were able to actively shape classroom discussions and use language in more personally meaningful ways. These moments supported students' agency and voice while connecting instruction to their individual goals and experiences.

Exemplifying the theme of student-centered learning, our review identified several publications written by current or former students. One essay written by a then-current student advocated for leveraging students' varied backgrounds in volunteer roles assisting other AE ESL students and instructors in the community college (Kravtsova et al., 2021), and another highlighted the potential for AE ESL programs to promote and develop the leadership capacity of adult immigrant students (Atacho, 2023). An article by a former ESL student turned instructor reflected on how teachers sharing their own positionality can enable deeper connections with students (Park, 2011). Together, these texts highlight the value of amplifying AE ESL student voices through their own knowledge production and dissemination.

2.2 Instructors

The 24 entries focusing on instructors primarily discuss the following themes: (1) commonalities in demographic and training backgrounds of AE ESL instructors, (2) challenges associated with part-time employment, and (3) limited access to high-quality professional development.

Commonalities in demographic and training backgrounds of AE ESL instructors. Across the corpus, three entries report on national surveys of AE ESL instructors (Fernandez et al., 2017; Shore et al., 2015; Sun, 2010). However, the demographic trends described should be treated with some caution, as some of the reported survey data do not distinguish between ESL instructors working in adult education or credit-bearing programs. Despite these limitations, these three large-scale surveys suggest that a large majority of instructors are 45–55 years old, identify as White, identify as women, and have an average of 15 years of experience. Surveyed instructors typically held advanced degrees in TESOL or adult education, and most worked in community college AE ESL programs (Shore et al., 2015). Instructors often worked across multiple institutions, teaching 20–30 contact hours per week or 3–5 courses per term (Sun, 2010). Despite more than 60% of AE ESL instructors working in part-time positions, over one third reported AE ESL as their long-time career (Sun, 2010). A few entries reporting on more local data from volunteer or faith-based ESL contexts (e.g., Durham & Kim, 2019; Perry, 2013) noted that instructors in these programs held K-12 teaching credentials or no formal ESL- or adult-education-related training at all. Although the broader literature presents a fairly homogenous profile of AE ESL instructors, smaller case studies and nonempirical entries highlight more diversity among instructors in the profession (e.g., Larrotta & Chung, 2020; Park, 2011).

Challenges associated with part-time employment. Multiple studies in the corpus connect AE ESL instructors' part-time employment to a range of challenges they face in the profession (e.g., Fernandez et al., 2017; Getz et al., 2023; Housel, 2023), with Getz et al. (2023) linking the prevalence of part-time positions to institutional budget constraints and recruitment difficulties. The most cited challenge in the literature is that part-time employment limits access to high-quality professional development or collaboration with other instructors within and across institutions (Fernandez et al., 2017;

Getz et al., 2023; Housel, 2023), a theme we discuss more below. In a national study of 1,141 ESL instructors (including those in adult education and credit-bearing programs), part-time instructors reported few if any benefits, such as health insurance or sick leave, and over half lacked a personal desk or office space (Sun, 2010). Sun (2010) also found that the few full-time ESL instructors surveyed were often required to teach 20–30 contact hours per week (while carrying out additional duties) to be considered full-time, whereas faculty in fields such as foreign language typically had full-time loads of only 15 hours per week or less. With few full-time positions available, AE ESL instructors reported working across multiple institutions and teaching ESL alongside other topics such as computer, workplace, or citizenship skills. These circumstances were associated with potential burnout due to longer teaching hours. Potential job instability was also a noted concern because of, as one instructor commented, ‘‘the never-ending threat of loss of funding” (Sun, 2010, p. 152).

Limited access to high-quality professional development. Instructors reported a lack of paid release time or funding to participate in formal professional development or networking, noting that institutions often instead offered low-cost, internal supports like peer observations, informal mentoring, and voluntary, unpaid workshops (e.g., Durham & Kim, 2019; Eyring, 2014; Housel, 2023). Additionally, surveyed ESL instructors across the U.S. reported limited opportunities to collaborate with other ESL faculty, including those in credit-bearing programs in their own institutions (Fernandez et al., 2017). In the national survey of over 1,000 instructors mentioned above, Sun (2010) reported that about 25% of respondents received about 10–20 hours of professional development per year, 28% received less than 10 hours, and nearly 30% did not receive any professional development at all. Volunteer instructors in faith-based AE ESL programs (Durham & Kim, 2019) and community-based literacy centers (Perry, 2013) often had little or no training in ESL pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, or second language acquisition, and professional development opportunities for instructors in these particular contexts were even more limited than in other AE ESL contexts. Reporting on one volunteer AE ESL instructor in a community-based literacy center, Perry (2013) noted that formal credentialing or coursework was often impractical or poorly matched to the instructor’s immediate classroom needs and personal time availability outside of their volunteer work

for the literacy center. Instead, the volunteer instructor described relying on prior educational and cross-cultural experiences, self-directed learning, and reflective practice as professional development.

2.3 Curriculum and Instruction

More entries (58) were identified as discussing curriculum and instruction than any other category in the corpus. As is true more generally in the fields of language education and second language acquisition (Atkinson, 2011; Block, 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 2013; VanPatten et al., 2025), the literature in the curriculum and instruction category is based on a wide range of goals for AE ESL instruction and different conceptions of language and language learning. The literature also points to the fact that, while programs themselves often aim to align with state learning goals or curriculum guidelines (Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Suh, 2023), they also adapt their instruction to attempt to meet the needs of their students' diverse levels of English proficiency, home language backgrounds, goals for learning English, and other factors (Chisman & Crandall, 2007). The literature in this section also documents the wide discretion each individual instructor has as "interpreter of the curriculum" (Chisman & Crandall, 2007, p. 35). Collectively, the articles in this section suggest three areas of importance: (1) leveraging learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, identities, and experiences; (2) integrating language and literacy skill development with explicit instruction and active and multimodal learning; and (3) aligning instruction with students' civic, community, and personal needs, including vocational, career, and academic preparation.

Leveraging learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, identities, and experiences creates inclusive and equitable learning environments. Multiple studies highlight the importance of recognizing and integrating students' cultural backgrounds, prior knowledge, and personal histories into instruction to create an inclusive and equitable learning environment and to challenge deficit views of adult MLs. Examples include employing culturally relevant or responsive pedagogies (Anumudu, 2022; Johnson & Chang, 2012; Sanczyk, 2021; Suh & Shapiro, 2020; Tindall & Nisbet, 2010), incorporating students' home languages in the AE ESL classroom (Eyring, 2014; Huerta-Macías, 2003; Ramírez, 2020), and designing curriculum materials and learning experiences that build from adult learners' lives and experiences (Flores, 2019; Lems,

2005; McGovern & Yeganeh, 2023; Washington, 2016; Waterman, 2009; Weintraub, 2022). A smaller portion of these studies focus on ideological issues involved in language learning, including the role of race and power (e.g., Sanczyk, 2021; Sharmin, 2022; Washington, 2016). For example, Sanczyk (2021) described the culturally responsive practices of seven AE ESL community college instructors, finding that they acknowledged their own privilege and their students' hardships, provided a culturally and racially diverse curriculum, offered opportunities for their students to critically analyze societal inequities, worked to dismantle racial and cultural stereotypes, and created authentic classroom communities.

Language and literacy development can be supported with explicit instruction as well as multimodal, embodied, and active learning opportunities. The literature explores a variety of approaches for addressing different aspects of English language and literacy development. These include demonstrating the benefits of classroom instruction for improving the cognitive development of vocabulary and reading (Huang & Nisbet, 2014; Madrigal-Hopes et al., 2014; Shaw, 2014); the role of narrative and expository writing in the development of composition skills (Flores, 2019; Larrotta & Chung, 2020); and how social interaction, such as that between students and instructor, foster learners' focus on particular features of language and thus opportunities for language development (Park, 2015; Tai & Brandt, 2018; Tai & Dai, 2024; Tai & Khabbazbashi, 2019; Waring & Yu, 2018). Entries discussing technology-based instruction (Adams et al., 2021; Chung, 2022; Coryell & Chlup, 2007; McClanahan, 2014; Nisbet & Austin, 2013) tend to take an eclectic view of the goals and processes of language development. Other studies focus on the role of creative arts and expression in language development (Lems, 2005; McGovern & Yeganeh, 2023; Tindall, 2012; Washington, 2016). Overall, curriculum and instruction entries point to the importance of active, communicative-based instruction that involves social interaction, movement and creativity, collaboration, and the fostering of learner autonomy.

Curriculum and instruction in AE ESL can be aligned with students' civic, cultural, personal, and academic needs. The literature describes ways in which connecting language learning to students' daily lives, vocational goals, and community involvement allows curriculum and instruction to be relevant and empowers students to

participate actively in society, achieve their personal goals, and further develop their English language and literacy. Entries highlight AE ESL curriculum and instruction aligned with developing students' health literacy (Candelaria et al., 1996; Diehl, 2004; Wagner, 2019), civic engagement (Carlock, 2016; Larrotta & Chung, 2020; Loring, 2013), workforce preparation (Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Huerta-Macías, 2003; Kamışlı, 2022; Madrigal-Hopes et al., 2014; Martinez & Wang, 2005), and college readiness (Fernandez et al., 2017; Getz et al., 2023; Suh, 2023). Although more general academic preparation is occasionally mentioned as one of the potential goals of AE ESL in studies on curriculum and instruction, in a survey of 400 adult ESL instructors working in contexts including but not limited to AE ESL across the U.S. and Canada, Fernandez et al. (2017) found that writing practices in adult ESL classrooms, including the types of texts students wrote, the length of assignments, and teachers' feedback practices, were misaligned with academic expectations that students would likely encounter in colleges and universities. Included studies exemplify the variety of AE ESL programs attempting to respond to the wide-ranging goals of AE ESL learners: for example, work-specific vocabulary instruction at a waste collection company (Madrigal-Hopes, 2014); employing a professional theater artist to build learners' agency and "dialogue for peace-building" in a nonprofit language school for immigrants (McGovern & Yeganeh, 2023); a pen-pal project pairing adult learners with foreign-born ESL teachers in a community-based program to help develop students' writing skills and develop their "civic literacy" (Larrotta & Chung, 2020); and a vocational ESL program in a community college to help prepare students for its certified nurse assistant program (Chisman & Crandall, 2007).

2.4. Institutions

MLs aspiring to develop their English language proficiency have opportunities to take ESL classes at a variety of institutions, including CBOs, adult schools, for-profit ESL programs, and community colleges. The literature points to both advantages and limitations of these different kinds of institutions. For example, Ramakrishnan et al. (2021) noted that adult schools, usually administered by local K-12 school districts, "offer a safe space to learn about local systems, understand the sociocultural context, and meet diverse community members" (p. 48); what is more, some adult schools have the flexibility to build innovative programs—collaboration between adult schools and a local

city government, for instance, led to the development of a Census ambassador program. Almost twenty years ago, Chisman and Crandall (2007) wrote that "in many respects, community colleges are ideal providers of adult ESL service, because they are adult-focused institutions that offer both noncredit and credit ESL as well as opportunities for immigrants to pursue further education—all under a single educational umbrella" (p. 135), yet they also argued that the biggest obstacle to innovation in the five colleges they studied was how little the colleges drew on institutional data to understand how AE ESL students were doing in their programs.

The 43 entries in the corpus addressing institutional components of AE ESL primarily discuss: (1) the capacity for AE ESL programs at community colleges to provide access to low-cost career and academic programs, (2) opportunities to partner with community organizations to reach diverse learners and expand resources, (3) the role of internal collaboration to support retention and success, and (4) institutions' ability to connect and integrate students into the broader community.

Community colleges provide access to low-cost career and academic programs. Unlike other sites offering AE ESL (e.g., CBOs or for-profit ESL programs), the literature documents community colleges as important institutions offering proximity to free or low-cost career programs (Curry, 2004), apprenticeships (Mollica, 2020), and potential transitions into academic programs (e.g., Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Ellis, 1998; Getz et al., 2023). Research indicates that community college AE ESL opportunities are particularly attractive to adult immigrant students when offering reduced costs and local educational opportunities (e.g., Curry, 2024) and attractive to working students when offering flexible class schedules (Mollica, 2020). The literature points to the fact that the community college context is critical for MLs who benefit from the open-door, low-cost opportunities to develop English in their local communities. However, some research points to the challenges of the National Reporting System (NRS), which measures students' language learning gains, credential attainment, and employment after exit (Adams et al., 2021; Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Spurling et al., 2008). Crandall and Sheppard (2004) conducted a review of five colleges offering AE ESL courses and wrote, "While the NRS requires programs to report student progress in terms of improved English proficiency (as well as education

and employment outcomes), it does not adequately reflect students' language learning gains … nor take into consideration the nonlinear nature of second language acquisition" (p. 14).

Partnerships with entities outside of ESL-provider institutions fill important gaps. Partnerships with community organizations have helped colleges reach diverse learners, offer flexible class formats (e.g., online, evening, weekend), and support culturally responsive staff interactions (Erying, 2014; Kallenbach & Nash, 2021; Mollica, 2020). These partnerships have the potential to broaden awareness of community resources in their local community. For example, Ramakrishnan et al. (2021) described how adult schools in California were able to collaborate with local government partners to support immigrant students' civic engagement. The authors described two successful collaborative models that provide students with firsthand experience about how local government works. Crandall and Sheppard (2004) also noted that "some of the best adult ESL programs maintain close working relationships with the community, referring students to social services and receiving students from such agencies" (pp. 17–18). Collaboration involving entities outside of educational institutions may also offer opportunities for school-to-career pathways for MLs as well as basic needs services and other supports that educational institutions might not be able to provide on their own. For example, Mollica (2020) showed how partnerships between a range of AE ESL-provider institutions and employers and labor organizations led AE ESL students to apprenticeships and employment in various professions and supported curriculum development relevant to specific job qualifications. Chisman and Crandall (2007) described a highly successful partnership between a community college district in California and the local Department of Human Services that provided students with vocational ESL instruction and additional support services that colleges might not provide, such as financial assistance, counseling, childcare, food assistance, and public transportation support. The authors noted that students enrolled in the partnership program advanced one or more ESL levels at a rate two to three times higher than other students at comparable levels across the district.

Improving collaboration within and across institutions can support students' retention and success. As discussed above, the literature often cites instructors' part-

time status as a persistent challenge in the field. Multiple studies (e.g., Fernandez et al., 2017; Getz et al., 2023; Housel, 2023) note that this part-time status limits opportunities for collaboration across the institution and hinders educators' understanding of the expectations across their institution's ESL sequence. The literature suggests that stronger institutional support for adult educators, such as better access to professional development, could trickle down to better support for students, including improved curriculum alignment across divisions (Curry, 2004; Suh, 2023). The literature also underscores the need for collaboration among various stakeholders within and across adult education institutions, community partners, and other institutions of higher education (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Fernandez et al., 2017; Suh, 2023; Tichenor, 1994). In Chisman and Crandall's (2007) review of five community colleges offering AE ESL, they recommended more intentional institutional planning to move beyond fragmented, ad hoc reform efforts toward the adoption of continuous program improvement, including establishing clear managerial responsibility and resources for strategic planning, improving longitudinal evaluation and outcome research, and developing budgeting systems that reward improvement in benchmarks like learning gains, retention, and transitions. Entries discussing specific collaborative efforts highlight instructional improvements as a result of collaboration between AE ESL and credit-bearing developmental literacy programs (Suh, 2023), increased confidence and skills using English in the workplace in a workplace-based ESL program (Madrigal-Hopes et al., 2014), and improved language and parent involvement for students in a collaborative K-12 school-based ESL program (Waterman, 2009). Although research on specific collaborative efforts is limited, multiple studies point to improved collaboration within and across institutions as a key recommendation for enhancing curriculum and instruction in AE ESL, highlighting the need for increased collaboration between AE ESL programs and college-credit-bearing programs (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Fernandez et al., 2017; Getz et al., 2023; Suh, 2023) and between AE ESL programs and community partners and organizations (Carlock, 2016; Diehl, 2004; Sanczyk, 2021; Wagner, 2019).

Institutions are often well positioned to support students' integration into the community. Institutions that serve adult learners have opportunities to help integrate newcomer students into their educational communities and to serve as a bridge between

AE ESL students and the larger civic, economic, and social life of their communities. For example, Heller & Mumma (2023) found that students enrolled in English language courses had significantly higher rates of voter participation and employer-reported earnings. Additionally, Ramakrishnan et al. (2021) described two successful partnerships between adult schools and local government agencies that trained and supported AE ESL students to become civic leaders in their communities. Kallenbach and Nash (2021) also highlighted that AE ESL programs were typically one of the first contacts for immigrants and found that these programs were effective in promoting immigrants' "linguistic, civic, and economic integration" (p. 115). Finally, Johnson et al. (2019) found that, by training students enrolled in a local adult literacy program to serve as peer leader navigators, the program was able to deliver health and wellness resources to hundreds of new English learners in immigrant and refugee communities. The literature in this category indicates that, while institutions may not necessarily focus on community integration as part of their AE ESL programming, there is an important return on investment in the community when adult ESL students are supported in meeting their goals.

2.5 AE ESL Policy

Federal AE ESL policy is primarily shaped by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which defines the goals, governance, and accountability structures for AE ESL nationwide. At the federal level, AE ESL is authorized under Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)—known as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). Through this law, Congress provides funding that flows to state agencies (commonly housed in departments of education or labor). WIOA Title II establishes federal, state, and local coordination requirements. State agencies must set priorities, develop plans, and oversee program delivery within federal guidelines (see Deutsch et al., forthcoming; Finn, 2022; Hoffsetter & McHugh, 2023). Importantly, WIOA requires adult education programs to prioritize service to individuals with barriers to employment, such as low-income adults, English language learners, and those with low literacy.

Recent policy analyses underscore the central role that community colleges play in the delivery of AE ESL within the federal adult education system. As part of the larger project from which this literature review is drawn, Deutsch et al. (forthcoming) report on

interviews with federal and state administrators and providers, national data, and other literature in showing that community colleges serve as primary access points for free or low-cost AE ESL instruction in many states and function as key bridges to postsecondary education and workforce pathways. At the same time, their analysis highlights structural tensions embedded in federal policy, particularly accountability systems tied to measurable skill gains, lengthy ESL course sequences, and limited funding for wraparound supports that constrain persistence and transitions for MLs, especially those with lower English proficiency. Recent federal developments, including heightened immigration-status restrictions, shifts in what federal agencies are administering adult education, and funding volatility, further exacerbate these challenges at community college-based and other AE ESL programs, which serve large numbers of immigrant learners and rely on braided federal and state funding streams. These findings suggest that, while federal policy envisions AE ESL as a gateway to economic mobility, misalignments between policy design and implementation continue to shape who benefits from these pathways and under what conditions.

In our literature review, we identified 21 entries that analyze policy related to AE ESL; they highlight two themes: (1) student progress measures are strongly aligned with workforce goals and not necessarily students' learning, and (2) collaboration across stakeholder groups may unlock more effective policy development and implementation.

Funding formulas emphasize work-oriented funding criteria rather than student learning, resulting in an incomplete picture of student outcomes and progress. Several entries in the corpus note and question the common assumption that MLs attend AE ESL courses to secure employment (e.g., Ennser-Kananen & Pettitt, 2017; Finn, 2022; Howard, 2021), whereas MLs may already have jobs and may seek English language development to meet other goals. In one example, Hoffsetter and McHugh (2023) explored how WIOA performance and accountability measures obscure the needs of MLs. They found that, although AE ESL programs often support low-wage working MLs, WIOA's heavy focus on post-program employment rates incorrectly assumes that learners are unemployed. The authors raised the concern that the WIOA accountability structure overemphasizes students' job attainment status (which may be misaligned with their actual employment goals) relative to their learning outcomes and

may fail to capture slow, complex, and often nonlinear language development. They argued for a reconsideration of WIOA's heavy emphasis on workforce features and suggested that "federal policy frameworks should allow—and ideally even require—state and local systems to offer programs responsive to the characteristics and learning and skill needs of their adult populations" (Hoffsetter & McHugh, 2023, p. 19). Examining the changing landscape of WIOA guidelines, Vanek (2016) reported how the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education's emphasis on digital literacy as a key component of workplace preparation has, in some states and implementations, served to disadvantage MLs.

Further complicating these policy tensions is that the NRS requires level gain assessments for all AE ESL students after 40 hours of instruction. In her assessment of a college and career readiness course at a CBO, Finn (2022) described the pressure faced by an instructor who had to cover college- and career-related language skills while also meeting WIOA funding requirements that prioritized level gain assessments; she cited SLA research that has shown that language learning cannot be rushed, even for higher-proficiency students. Similarly, Chisman and Crandall (2007) argued that NRS accountability measures present additional limitations and challenges, including that NRS tests do not typically assess all domains of ESL skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing); that learning gains calculations include only learners who are both pretested and posttested within a given year; and that "NRS levels are, to some extent, arbitrary benchmarks" (p. 21).

Collaboration across stakeholder groups (e.g., educators, researchers, and policymakers) may prove promising for more effective and responsive policy decisions. Literature on AE ESL policy consistently recommends greater collaboration between practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to better serve students and set more relevant expectations and accountability measures for programs serving MLs (e.g., Edgecombe & Bunch, 2023; Finn, 2022; Gibb, 2015). Belzer and Greenberg (2023) described AE assessment as a Gordian knot, in that there are impossibly tangled and competing interests between learners, educators, and policymakers, with the latter looking to quantify program effectiveness. They and others in this review have called for greater collaboration to answer questions related to supporting MLs in AE ESL programs

and beyond. In one example, Finn (2022) underscored the high stakes of WIOA-related policy implementation for language acquisition, arguing that while federal workforce and education initiatives are essential, the ways that WIOA policies are developed can complicate English learners' literacy development and thus warrant closer scrutiny from researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. Gibb (2015) critiqued the "quantification of learning" in adult education and argued that policymakers and employers should engage more directly with ESL classrooms and learners to better understand holistic forms of assessment and students' language practices. The author concluded that more participatory approaches to policymaking are needed that include the perspectives of practitioners, researchers, and learners themselves. The literature indicates that inclusive decision-making among key stakeholders (e.g., adult educators, administrators, policymakers, researchers, and students) has the potential to develop policies that acknowledge the complexities of language learning and ensure that programs are accountable to the needs and goals of their students.

3. Discussion and Conclusion

This review offers the first comprehensive synthesis of research literature on AE ESL programs in the United States, literature that examines students, instructors, curriculum and instruction, and institutional and policy contexts. Across the literature, AE ESL programs emerge as critical potential gateways for MLs to seek or advance in their employment, develop civic engagement, improve broader community participation, and enter credit-bearing programs. The literature documents efforts by program staff, instructors, and others to facilitate bridges to these potential futures through a focus on understanding students' diverse needs and goals, offering curricular programs that focus on particular careers, and improving partnerships between noncredit and credit-bearing programs and with other relevant organizations. Collectively, the literature reminds us that teaching and learning in AE ESL extends beyond the nuances of English acquisition; it includes the need to support students in pursuing their goals, engaging in their communities, and participating meaningfully in the civic life of larger society.

The studies examined in this review also document what is already well known anecdotally in AE ESL—that students bring diverse and intersecting educational, linguistic, and national-origin experiences and identities to the classroom, often shaped by difficult socioeconomic conditions that influence their access, persistence, and outcomes. The literature provides a range of examples on how institutions and instructors can better support this population. Across the studies in this review, the findings underscore the value of acknowledging and building from AE ESL students' distinct identities, histories, and aspirations. Relatedly, incorporating culturally responsive pedagogies and other asset-based, student-centered approaches allows instructors to recognize students' strengths and draw connections between language learning and their daily lives, responsibilities, and goals.

The review also highlights AE ESL instructors' central role in shaping student experiences and outcomes in coursework and the wider programs, while also drawing attention to the structural constraints that many AE ESL instructors face, including part-time appointments, limited access to benefits, and restricted opportunities for professional development, collaboration, and innovation. If increasing funding for full-time positions and benefits is not possible, the literature suggests the importance of improved funding for and access to high-quality professional development for part-time instructors, along with more concerted efforts to create collaborative opportunities across ESL contexts. Case studies also suggest that hiring instructors with diverse linguistic and demographic backgrounds can deepen the emotional and cultural connections between teachers and learners, thereby enhancing students' engagement and linguistic development.

Collaboration within and across institutions emerged as a recurring recommendation across entries in the corpus. Research underscores the potential benefit of partnerships between AE ESL programs and credit-bearing departments, other adult education institutions, CBOs, and employers. Despite this promise, empirical research on the design, implementation, and impact of such collaborative efforts remains limited. Strengthening and studying these partnerships could help address challenges related to program alignment, student transitions, and duplication of services across community sites.

It is important to highlight several limitations in the literature. First, the review reveals considerable inconsistencies in how studies distinguish between AE ESL and credit-bearing ESL programs designed for academic preparation. We decided to omit several studies from review because it was not clear whether or not they specifically addressed AE ESL contexts. While noncredit AE ESL programs and ESL programs bearing academic credit certainly share some similarities, the differences—in students' backgrounds and goals, funding structure, cost for students, curricular goals, instructor's preparation and support, program governance, institutional context, and policy frameworks—are stark. More precise reporting on the nature of the programs being studied will help identify the strengths, challenges, and needs of each context, and thus better inform instructional, institutional, and policy decision-making.

Second, it is important to acknowledge that most of the literature consists of small-scale studies focusing on small numbers of students, instructors, classrooms, programs, and institutions. Such studies provide important insights into the challenges facing AE ESL students, instructors, programs, institutions, and policymakers—as well as promising practices to address them. However, with several important exceptions (such as national surveys of ESL instructors and a longitudinal multi-state study), few large-scale investigations are available. Additionally, the range of AE ESL student outcomes reported in the literature is relatively narrow, with only a handful of studies reporting on broader trends in course completion and transition rates. Instead, as seen in much of the literature on curriculum and instruction, student outcomes in the entries we reviewed are focused largely on discrete language or literacy skills in individual students or classes of students. Longitudinal and large-scale research examining student outcomes and success within and transitioning out of AE ESL programs, which could inform policy and programmatic decision-making, is lacking in the literature. Future AE ESL research would benefit from more longitudinal tracking and analysis and more holistic measures of student success toward their self-defined language, academic, career, and personal goals.

Third, one of the strengths of the literature, especially regarding curriculum and instruction, is the wide range of dimensions of AE ESL that are addressed, but this breadth is not matched by multiple studies inquiring into each particular area. For

example, the literature as a whole suggests many curricular and pedagogical goals that are possible in AE ESL, including supporting students' acquisition of specific vocabulary and grammatical features, advancing their skills and strategies in reading and writing, developing the communicative competence to navigate classroom conversations, promoting students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and challenging racial and other power imbalances. As beneficial as this breadth is, only a handful of studies have addressed each of these topics, leaving it difficult to make strong recommendations for practice. Additional studies are needed on effective strategies for integrating AE ESL students' diverse backgrounds, goals, experiences, and wider cultural and linguistic resources into classroom practice and wider program design.

Finally, as mentioned above, research in the field of adult ESL instruction would benefit from more precise reporting on the specific type of ESL instruction (adult education, credit-bearing, etc.) and the context of programs being studied (e.g., whether offered at community colleges, CBOs, four-year institutions, etc.) to better inform instructional, institutional, and policy decision-making. Taken together, entries from the literature affirm that AE ESL programs play a vital role in promoting equity and opportunity for immigrant and multilingual communities. This review suggests that strengthening the field will require more attention to the diversity of student experiences, improved professional and structural supports for instructors, and greater collaboration across institutions and community organizations. Through these efforts, AE ESL can continue to serve as a powerful mechanism for social, economic, and educational mobility.

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An asterisk indicates that the reference is included as an entry in the literature review corpus.

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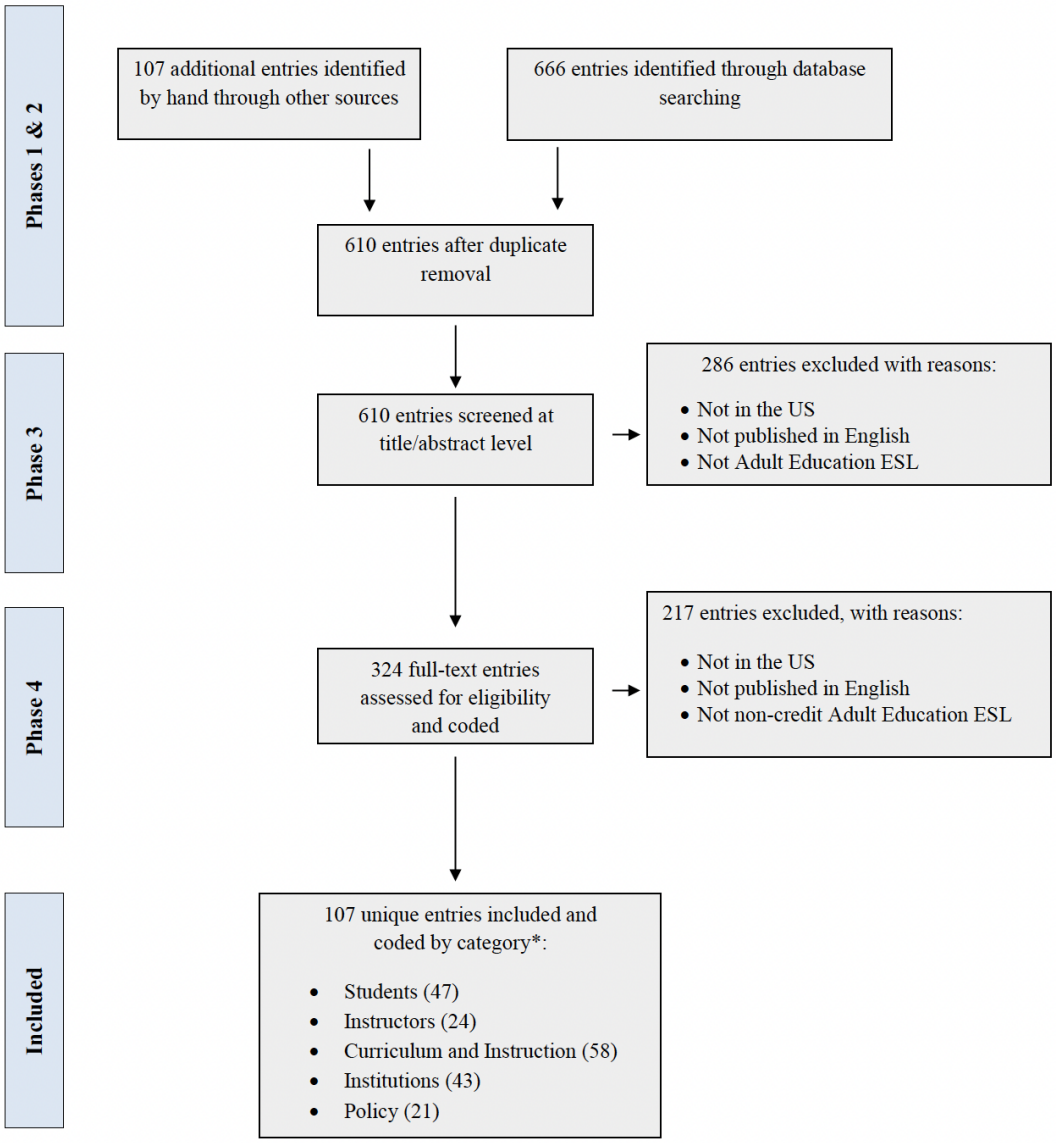
Appendix A. Systematic Literature Review Methods

We addressed our research questions through a five-phase systematic search and analysis of academic publications related to AE ESL in the U.S. Figure A1 summarizes the systematic search process.

Figure A1. Flowchart for Entry Search and Selection



Note. Single entries could be coded under multiple categories.

Phases 1 and 2: Hand Search and Systemic Database Search

In Phase 1, we identified key authors, texts, and other publications that we were familiar with from previous research and reviewed the reference lists to identify additional relevant publications, resulting in 107 potentially relevant entries. In Phase 2, we searched five academic databases: Academic Search Complete, Education Source, ERIC, Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts, and Web of Science, for peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and other AE ESL-related entries. We used key terms across three categories: Multilingual Learners and Instructors, Adult Education, and ESL (see Appendix Table B2). We conducted the search in May 2024 with no date restrictions to capture the full scope of relevant literature, which, after combining with the 107 entries from Phase 1 and removing duplicates, resulted in an initial corpus of 610 unique entries.

Phase 3: Title and Abstract Inclusion and Exclusion

In Phase 3, we used CADIMA evidence synthesis software (see Kohl et al., 2018) to screen titles and abstracts. Entries were included if they were: (1) U.S.-based, (2) published in English, and (c) focused on AE ESL. Team members reviewed a shared sample to ensure consistency before screening the full dataset. Of the 610 entries, 324 met the inclusion criteria.

Phase 4: Full-Text Coding and Sorting

In Phase 4, we reviewed full texts and coded each entry into one of five categories: Students, Instructors, Curriculum and Instruction, Institutions, and Policy. During this phase, we found that many entries did not clearly identify the context as credit or noncredit, so additional entries were excluded if they did not explicitly report on AE ESL. This phase resulted in 107 unique entries (see Appendix Table B1 and References), including peer-reviewed empirical studies and nonempirical texts, book chapters, and policy reports.

Phase 5: Full-Text Data Extraction and Analysis

In Phase 5, we conducted another full-text review of the 107 unique entries, identifying publication type, research design, context, and extracting findings, recommendations, and demographic data. We also noted whether each entry included

data or contributions directly from ESL students. Data analysis involved Saldaña's (2009) "themeing the data" in which we organized data from the entries into groups of repeating "themes" that "bring meaning and identity to a recurrent [patterned] experience and its variant manifestations" (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000, as cited in Saldaña, 2009, p. 139). During this phase, team members wrote analytic memos and met regularly to discuss emerging patterns, themes, and findings.

Appendix B. Supplementary Tables

Table B1. All Included Entries by Category

Category	Empirical Research Entries	Non-Research Entries
Students (47 entries)	Ariza & Miranda (2006) Chisman & Crandall (2007) Crandall & Sheppard (2004) Ennser-Kananen & Pettitt (2017) Flores (2019) Getz et al. (2023) Grover et al. (2014) Heller & Mumma (2023) Hsiao (2016) Johnson et al. (2019) Kamışlı (2023) Menard-Warwick (2007) Mercado (2022) Osburne (2003) Ouellette-Schramm (2019) Sacklin & Daniels (2022) Sharmin (2022) Shiffman (2019) Spurling et al. (2008) Suh (2016) Suh (2020) Suh & Hodges (2020) Suh & Shapiro (2020) Tai & Khabbazbashi (2019) Waring & Yu (2018) Washington (2016) Waterman (2009) Xu & Ran (2020)	Adversario (2022) Atacho (2023) Becker (2011) Blumenthal (2002) Curry (2004) DelliCarpini (2006) Doerr (2017) Durham & Kim (2019) Ellis (1995) Eyring (2014) Hofstetter & McHugh (2023) Johnson & Owen (2013) Kamışlı (2022) Kravtsova et al. (2021) Martinez & Wang (2005) Mathews-Aydinli (2008) Park (2011) Raufman et al. (2019) Weintraub (2022)

Category	Empirical Research Entries	Non-Research Entries
Instructors (24 entries)	Carlock (2016) Chisman & Crandall (2007) Cochi (2020) Ebsworth et al. (2010) Fernandez et al. (2017) Getz et al. (2023) Housel (2023) Larrotta & Chung (2020) Menard-Warwick (2008) Mori (2014) Perry (2013) Sanczyk (2021) Shore et al. (2015) Sun (2010) Tai & Dai (2024)	Adversario (2022) Blumenthal (2002) Brown & Bywater (2010) Durham & Kim (2019) Eyring (2014) Gonzalves (2012) Mathews-Aydinli (2008) Park (2011) Watson (2018)
Curriculum & Instruction (58 entries)	Candelaria et al. (1996) Carlock (2016) Chisman & Crandall (2007) Cochi (2020) Coryell & Chlup (2007) Crandall & Sheppard (2004) Ebsworth et al. (2010) Fernandez et al. (2017) Flores (2019) Getz et al. (2023) Grover et al. (2014) Huang & Nisbet (2014) Johnson & Chang (2012) Larrotta & Chung (2020) Loring (2013) Madrigal-Hopes et al. (2014) McGovern & Yeganeh (2023) Mori (2014) Park (2015) Ramakrishnan et al. (2021) Sanczyk (2021) Sharmin (2022) Shaw (2014) Suh (2023) Suh & Shapiro (2020) Tai & Brandt (2018) Tai & Dai (2024) Tai & Khabbazbashi (2019) Waring & Yu (2018) Washington (2016) Waterman (2009)	Adams et al. (2021) Adversario (2022) Anumudu (2022) Bourret (2009) Chung (2022) Curry (2004) DelliCarpini (2006) Diehl (2004) Eyring (2014) Huang (2022) Huerta-Macías (2003) Johnson & Owen (2013) Kamışlı (2022) Kreil & Vanek (2021) Lems (2005) Martinez & Wang (2005) Mathews-Aydinli (2008) McClanahan (2014) Nisbet & Austin (2013) Ramírez (2020) Schaetzel & Young (2007) Tichenor (1994) Tindall (2010) Tindall (2012) Tindall & Nisbet (2012) Wagner (2019) Weintraub (2022)

Category	Empirical Research Entries	Non-Research Entries
Institutions (43 entries)	Chisman & Crandall (2007) Crandall & Sheppard (2004) Flores (2019) Gardner (2017) Getz et al. (2023) He et al. (2019) Heller & Mumma (2023) Johnson et al. (2019) Kallenbach & Nash (2021) Kamışlı (2023) Mollica (2020) Pete (2016) Ramakrishnan et al. (2021) Sacklin & Daniels (2022) Shore et al. (2015) Spurling et al. (2008) Suh (2016) Suh (2023) Suh & Hodges (2020) Suh & Shapiro (2020) Suh et al. (2022) Sun (2010) Waterman (2009) Xu & Ran (2020)	Adams et al. (2021) Adversario (2022) Anumudu (2022) Blumenthal (2002) Curry (2004) Durham & Kim (2019) Ellis (1995) Ellis (1998) Eyring (2014) Grubb et al. (2003) Hofstetter & McHugh (2023) Howard (2021) Kravtsova et al. (2021) Kreil & Vanek (2021) Martinez & Wang (2005) Mathews-Aydinli (2008) Raufman et al. (2019) Shaetzel & Young (2007) Tichenor (1994)
Policy (21 entries)	Bruno & Pedroza (1994) Chisman & Crandall (2007) Ennser-Kananen & Pettitt (2017) Gardner (2017) Getz et al. (2023) Loring (2013) Spurling et al. (2008) Suh (2016) Vanek (2016) Xu & Ran (2020)	Belzer & Greenberg (2023) Edgecombe & Bunch (2023) Ellis (1995) Eyring (2014) Finn (2022) Gibb (2015) Grubb et al. (2003) Hofstetter & McHugh (2023) Howard (2021) Raufman et al. (2019) Shaetzel & Young (2007)

Note. Single entries could be coded under multiple categories.

Table B2. Database Search Categories and Terms

Multilingual Learners and Instructors	Adult Education	ESL
English Learner*	adult education	ESL
English Language Learner*	community college*	English as a Second Language
Multilingual Learner*	2 year college*	ESOL
Emergent Bilingual*	two year college*	English to Speakers of Other Languages
Linguistic Minority	junior college*	English for Speakers of Other Languages
Linguistic Minorities	technical college*	adult English Language Instruction
Long term English Learner*	community based	English as an Additional Language
Language minority	faith based	adult basic literacy
Language minorities		
Limited English Proficient		
Linguistically minoritized		
New mainstream		
Dual language learner*		
Adult English Language Instructor*		
Adult English Language Teacher*		
Adult English Language Educator*		

Note. The asterisk (*) was used as a wildcard character in some search terms to represent any number of characters, allowing searches to capture variations of a word.