

# English Learners and Language Minority Students in United States Community Colleges: A Review of Policy, Practice, and Research

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# About CCRC

CCRC has been a leader in the field of community college research and reform for over 20 years. Our work provides a foundation for innovations in policy and practice that help give every community college student the best chance of success.

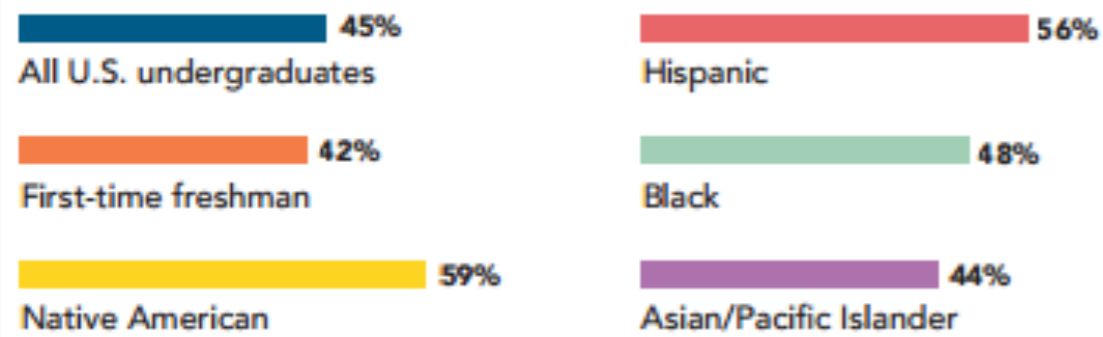
Our areas of research include:

- College readiness and dual enrollment programs, and the transition from high school to college
- Developmental education and adult basic skills
- Non-academic support services, financial aid, and student engagement
- Online education and instructional technology
- Student persistence and completion, and transfer to four-year colleges
- Guided pathways, institutional reform, and performance funding
- Workforce education and training and the economic returns to higher education



# Community Colleges in the U.S.

## REPRESENTATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES (FALL 2012)<sup>2</sup>

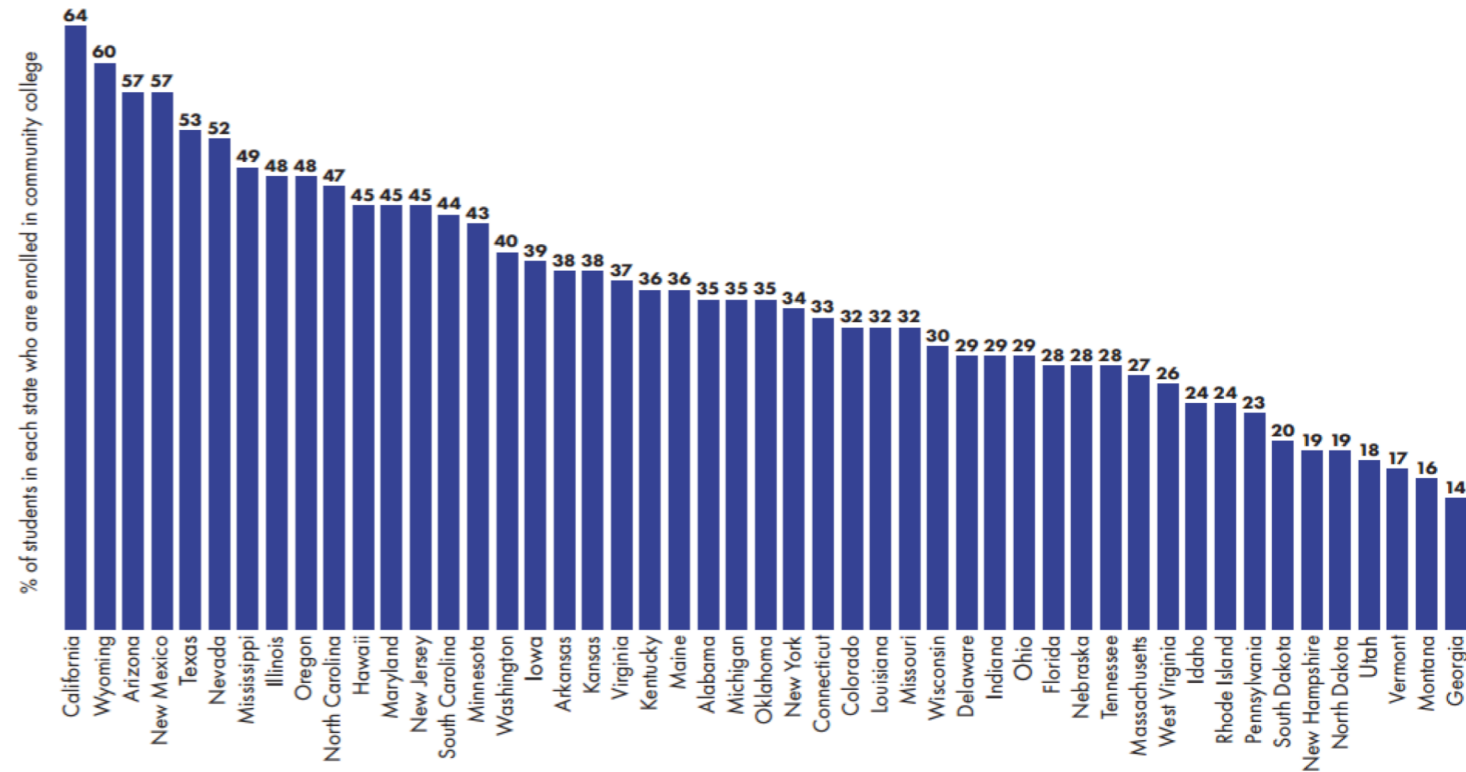


### Sources

- <sup>1</sup> AACC membership database, January 2014.
- <sup>2</sup> NCES (2014). IPEDS Fall 2012 Enrollment Survey [AACC analysis].
- <sup>3</sup> AACC membership database, 2014 [AACC analysis].
- <sup>4</sup> National Student Clearinghouse. (2013). Term Enrollment Estimates Fall 2013.

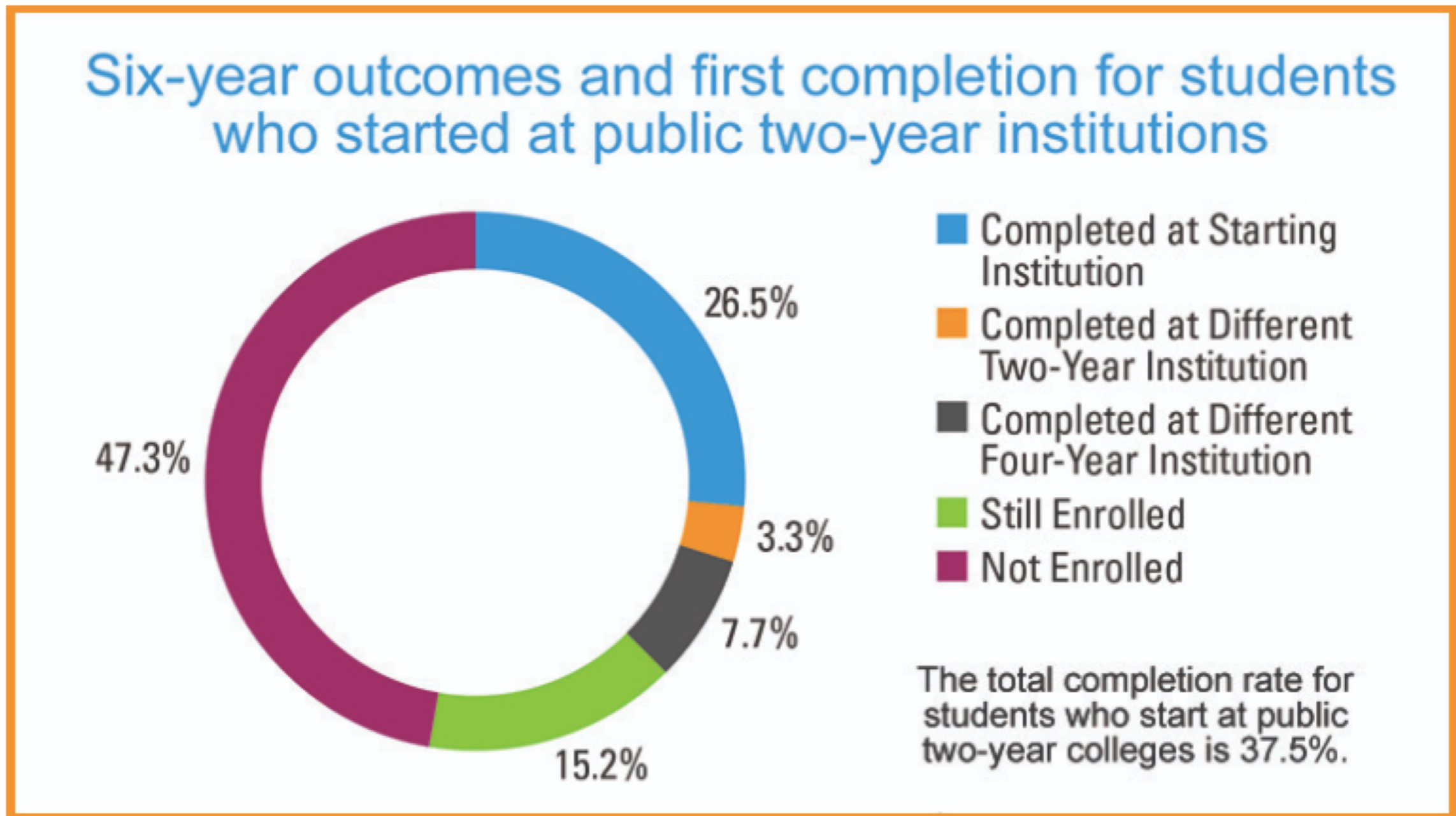
## 28 States Enroll at Least One Third of Their Students in Community College

The proportion of students in each state enrolled in community college in 2013



# Community College Completion Rates

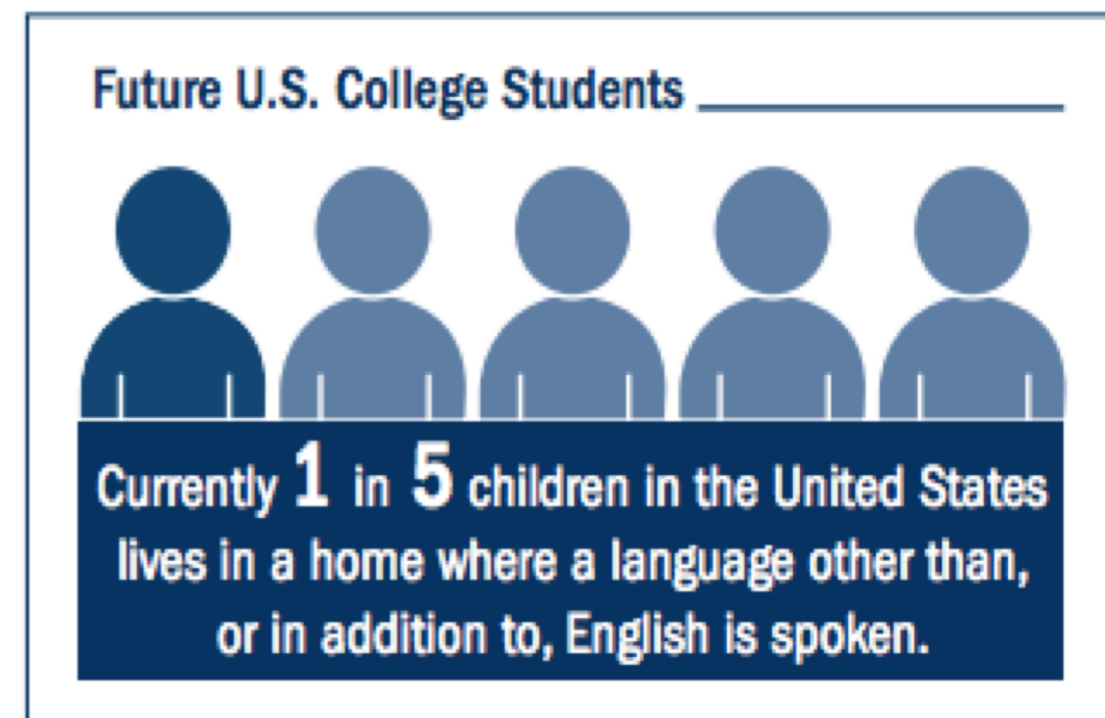
## Completion after six years at 38%



Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, "Signature 14, Completing College: A National View of Student Completion Rates – Fall 2011 Cohort," December 2017.

# Postsecondary Enrollment Patterns Suggest a Growing Proportion are English Learners

- Immigrant and language minority students make up an estimated 25% of the 2.6 million community college students in California (Llosa & Bunch, 2011).
- An estimated 46% of the 91,000 students enrolled in the City University of New York's community colleges are not native English speakers (City University of New York, 2011).



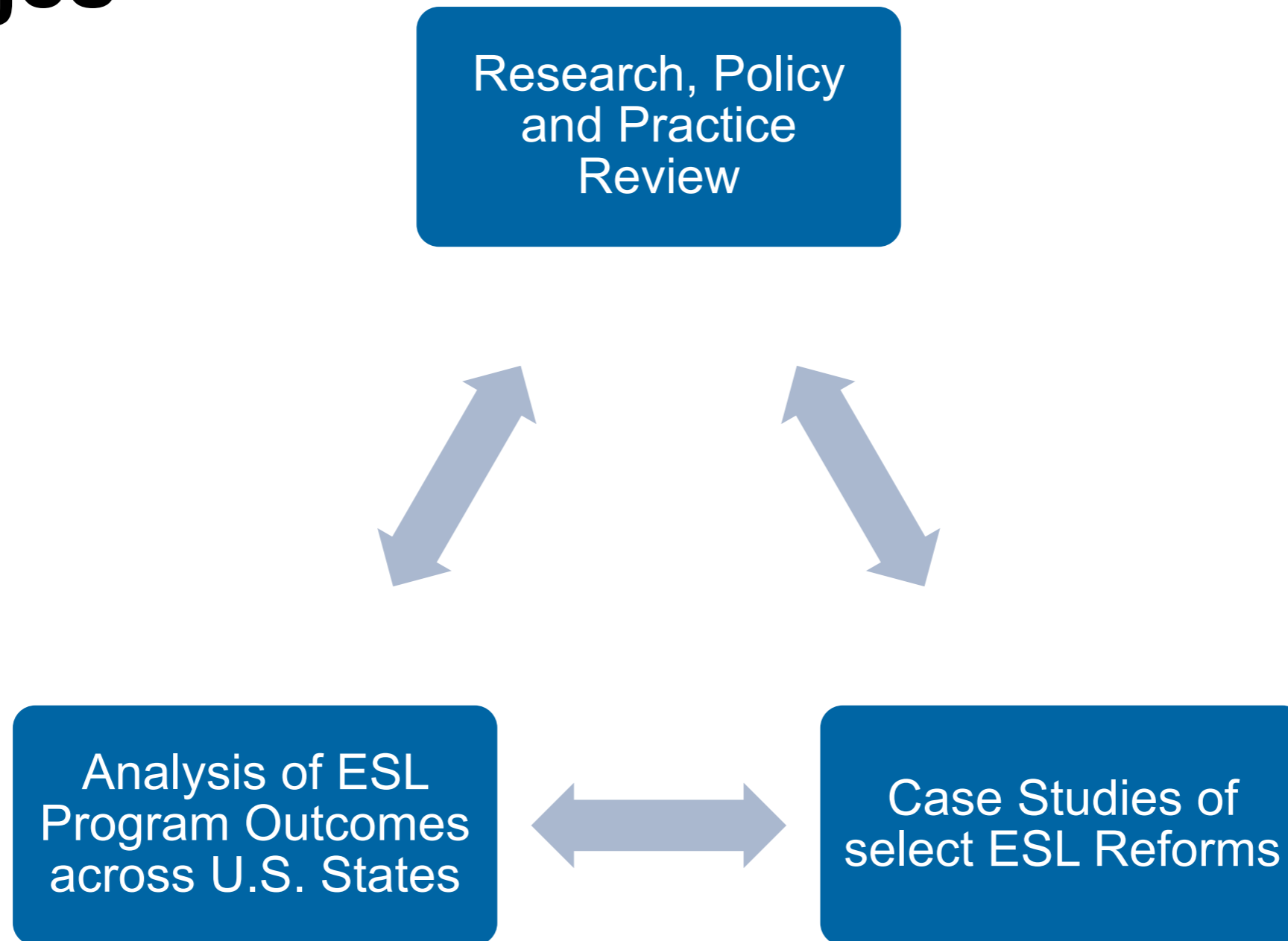
(Bergey, Movit, Baird, & Faria, 2018)

- As the United States gets more racially and ethnically diverse, the proportion of students who speak English as a second language is likely to increase.

# Who are English Learners in Community College Setting?

- English Learners include both immigrants who reside in the United States and international students who are studying in the United States on a temporary basis (Llosa & Bunch, 2011).
- Immigrants who are identified as English Learners include first generation, second generation, third generation and generation 1.5 students (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004; Okhremtchouk 2014).
- Latino students are a large proportion of ELs and they mostly attend community colleges (Bunch & Panayotova, 2008; Laden, 2004; Solorzano et al., 2005; Bowers & Nunez, 2011).

# Postsecondary Language and Literacy Learning (PL3) in U.S. Community Colleges



## PL3 Research Questions

1. How are community colleges meeting the English language learning needs of their students?
2. What types of assessment and placement systems are in place and what types of course (or non-course) based offerings are available for English Learners (ELs)?
3. What are the intersections between ESL and remedial or college English?
4. What other supports are available to ELs?
5. What are the experiences and perceptions of ELs and the college staff who teach and serve them?



# Who is Enrolling in Community College ESL Courses?

## **English language learner (ELL)/ English learner (EL)**

A nonnative speaker of English whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English may limit his or her ability to (1) achieve in classrooms where English is the language of instruction and (2) access opportunities to fully participate in society.

## **English as a Second Language (ESL)/ English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**

Programs that prepare and support ELLs in learning English.

## **Generation 1.5**

Youth who arrive in the United States as a child or teenager. The term reflects the fact that youth maintain some aspects of their native culture, language, and identity while also acquiring English and adapting to a new culture.

## **International students**

Students from around the world who come to the United States to improve their English, obtain degrees, and/or take coursework in U.S. postsecondary institutions.

## **Recent immigrants**

People who come to the United States from another country for better economic, political, or social opportunities.

(Bergey, Movit, Baird, & Faria, 2018)

# Limited Research on ESL Enrollees in Community Colleges Suggests Poor Outcomes

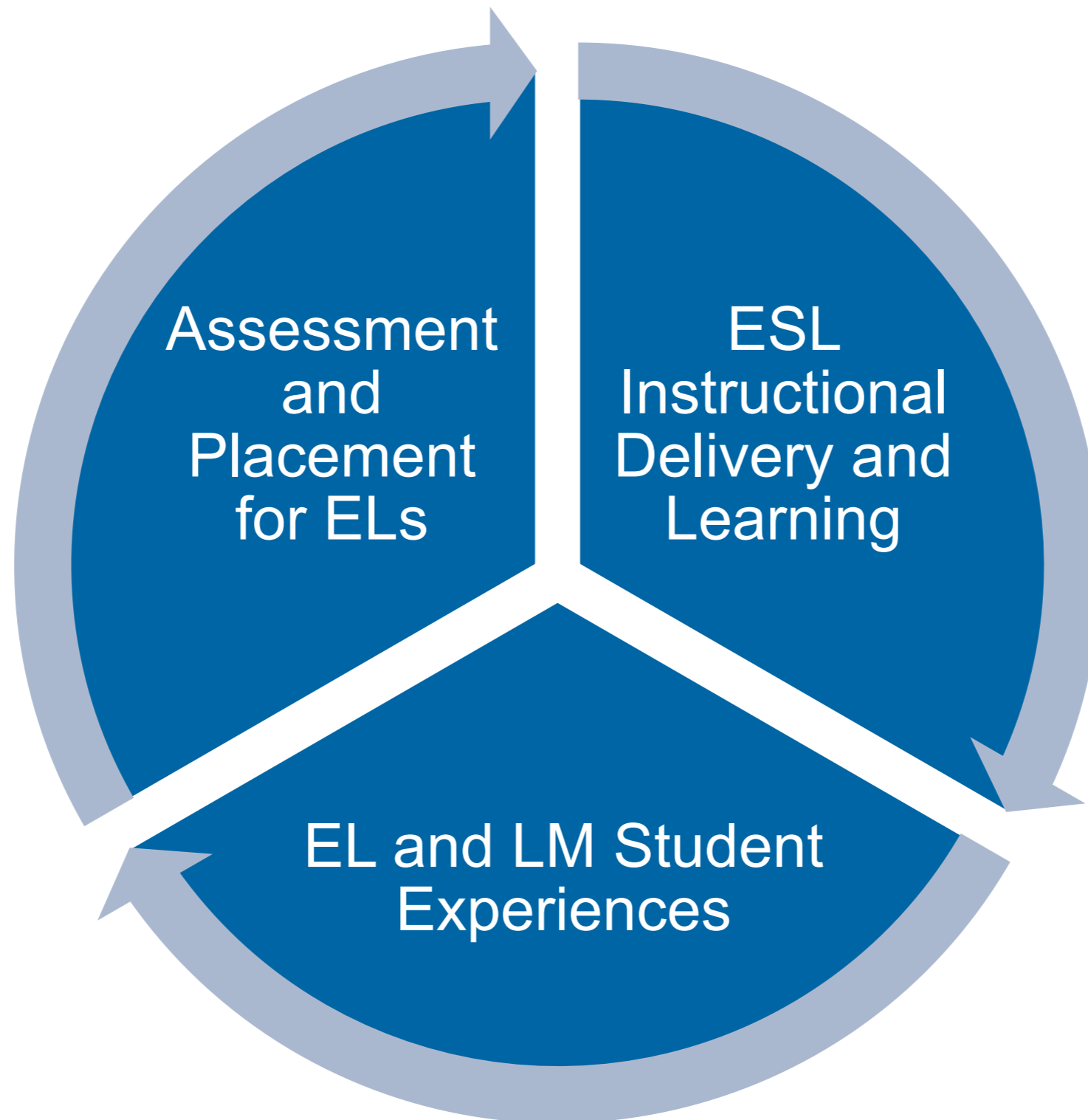
- First and second generation students who enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses accumulate significantly fewer college credits compared to their peers who enroll in developmental English (Hodara, 2015) .
- 62.5 percent of a sample enrolled in a large CA community college do not advance beyond the ESL course in which they first enrolled (Razfar & Simon, 2011).
- Approximately 8 percent of students who enroll in non-credit ESL courses transition to credit level courses within 7 years of their initial enrollment (Spurling et al., 2008) .
- Language minority students who enroll in ESL courses in high school are significantly less likely to enroll at a four year institution compared to native English speakers (Callahan & Humphries, 2016).

# Methodology

- Interviews with experts in the field of ESL from K-16 levels
  
- Literature identification
  - Search terms
  - Date limits
  - Databases
  - Journals
  
- Selection criteria
  - Date limits
  - Peer reviewed
  - Types of research
    - Descriptive work
    - Correlational studies
    - Rigorous outcomes studies

Topic	Number of Articles Found	Number of Articles used for Review
Assessment and placement of ELs	21	10
EL Identity	4	3
ESL institutional practice and policy	42	6
ESL outcomes	28	25
ESL policy	24	15
ESL student experience	8	8
ESL theories of action	18	17
High school context	18	16
Identification and labeling of ELs	14	13
Instructional Delivery/Course Structure/ Pedagogy	37	18
Learning processes	15	4
Transition to college	8	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>139</b>

# Three Thematic Areas of Focus



# No systematic policy regarding the education of language minorities in higher education

- K12 policy has focused on the education of LM students dating back to the Bilingual Education Act of 1967.
- Lau v. Nichols (1974) provided a process and accountability structure to insure that districts did not ignore their LM students (Wright 2005).
- Higher education institutions are not subject to the same accountability pressure as K12 schools.

# Assessment and Placement for ELs in Community College

- Relying on a single standardized test score for ESL placement could lead to misplacement.
- The field lacks consensus on what is the most valid measure for English proficiency.
- Problems with placement systems and instruments exacerbate challenges encountered by ELs in transitioning to college.

# Traditional ESL Course Sequences in Community Colleges

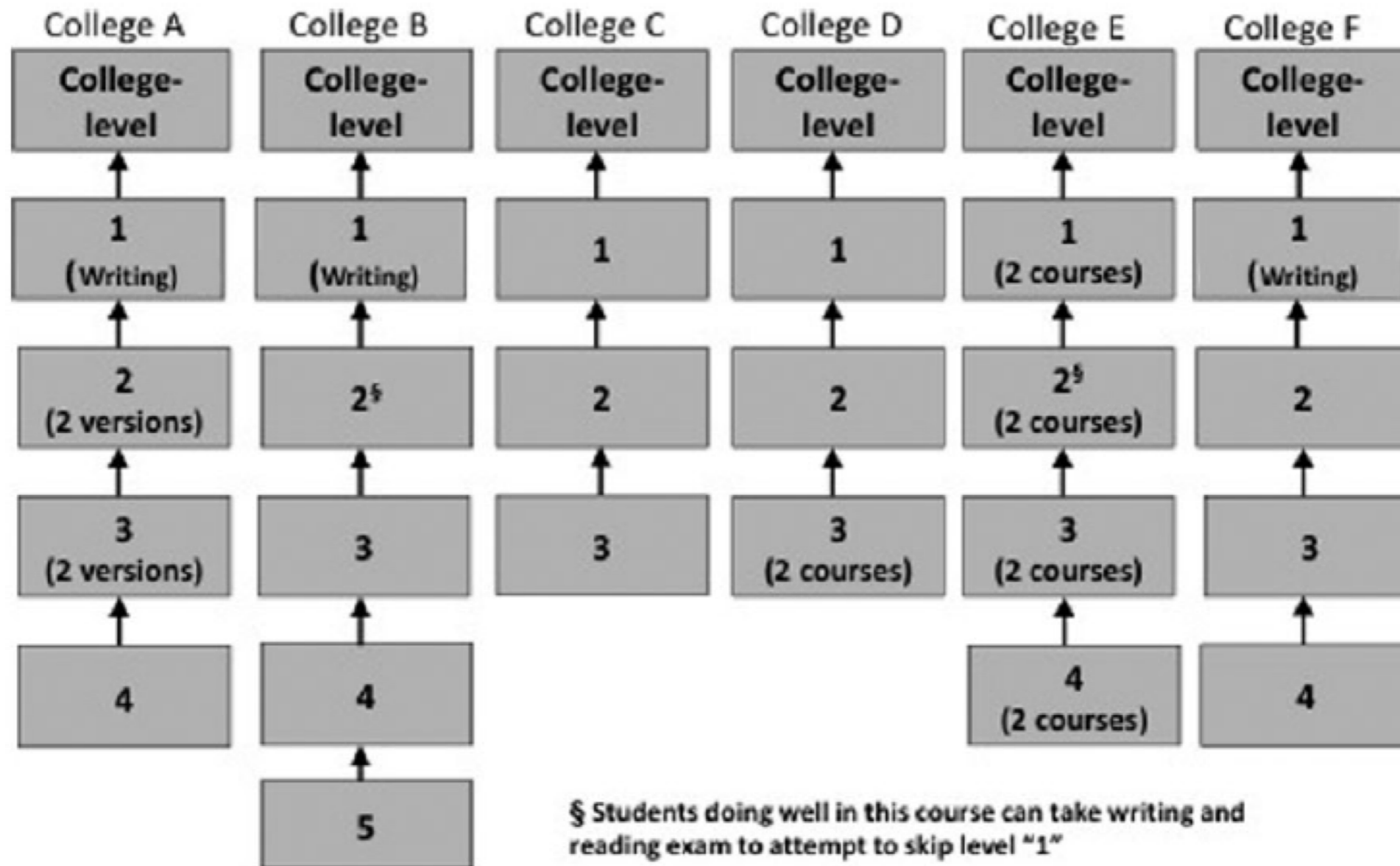


FIGURE 4. *English as a second language sequences.*

# Traditional ESL Course Content Areas

Course Prefix & Number	Course Title	Lecture	Lab	Credits
EFL 062	Listening/Speaking II	5	0	5
EFL 063	Listening/Speaking III	5	0	5
EFL 064	Listening/Speaking IV	5	0	5
EFL 072	Reading II	5	0	5
EFL 073	Reading III	5	0	5
EFL 074	Reading IV	5	0	5
EFL 082	Grammar II	5	0	5
EFL 083	Grammar III	5	0	5
EFL 084	Grammar IV	5	0	5
EFL 091	Composition I	5	0	5
EFL 092	Composition II	5	0	5
EFL 093	Composition III	5	0	5
EFL 094	Composition IV	5	0	5
EFL 111	English for Internationals I	4	0	4
EFL 181	EFL Lab 1	0	2	1



# “Resource-Oriented Frameworks” in Community College ESL Programs

- Four areas of practice that move from deficit to resource-oriented approaches (Bunch & Kibler, 2015):
  - Support for academic transitions in college
  - Integration of language and academic content
  - Accelerated access to mainstream, credit-bearing academic curricula and coursework
  - Promotion of informed student decision-making
- Instructors and lower-level ESL students experienced challenges with accelerated ESL courses (Scordaras, 2009).

# EL Student Experiences in Community College

- EL and LM students in community colleges have negative experiences with ESL course structures:
  - Multilingualism is not perceived to be an asset
  - Students resist being grouped into a homogenized ESL student category
  - Institutional labels and representations impact how LMs negotiate their identity as learners
- Use of curricular materials from which students can draw personal connections positively influences how students engage with instructors and peers.

# Policy and Research Implications


- State and institutional policies should include:
  - Instating more accurate assessment and placement systems
  - Comprehensive advising/counseling practices that support student course and enrollment decision-making
  - Limiting multi-course sequences and integrating skill instruction
- Future research topics should include:
  - Processes for more effectively identifying EL and ESL populations in community colleges
  - How student decision-making processes occur

# Thank you!

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