
Meeting the Needs of Linguistically Diverse Students at the College Level

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College Reading and Learning Association*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As linguistic diversity increases in colleges throughout the United States, many institutions are faced with the challenge of meeting the needs of students with diverse language backgrounds. This white paper, commissioned by the College Reading and Learning Association, highlights the increasing number of linguistically diverse students at the college level, in developmental education and ESL in particular, describes the students who comprise this heterogeneous group, identifies the range of challenges that these students experience, and provides practical suggestions that administrators, instructors, and support service staff can apply. In this paper, we aim to increase overall awareness of linguistic diversity so that policies, pedagogy, and support services may be “linguistically informed.” Finally, we suggest that the success of linguistically diverse students at the college level is an understudied area that warrants more research and attention.

More specifically, this paper attempts to answer the following key questions:

- Why is linguistic diversity important at the college level?
- Who are linguistically diverse students?
- What challenges do linguistically diverse students experience in college?
- What strategies can colleges apply to better support the needs of linguistically diverse students?
- What recommendations should guide the policies and practices of colleges?

Why Is Linguistic Diversity Important at the College Level?

Student language background is crucial at the college level, and in education in general. As DiCerbo, Anstrom, Baker, and Rivera (2014) remind us, “Language is at the heart of teaching and learning. It is the medium through which concepts and skills are learned and assessed, social relationships and identities are formed, and increasingly deeper and more complex disciplinary understandings are constructed over time” (p. 446). Thus, students whose language skills are not aligned with the language of instruction in higher education—because their home language is either a non-mainstream (or nonstandard)¹ dialect of English or a language other than English—will be at risk of academic underperformance.

Language as a factor in academic performance is significant given recent U.S. census data, which indicate trends toward a more linguistically diverse society. The 2007 American Community Survey report *Language Use in the United States* indicated that the number of people aged five and older who spoke a language other than English at home had more than doubled in the previous three decades (Shin & Kominski, 2010). During that time period, the percentage of speakers of non-English languages grew

by 140 percent, outpacing the nation’s overall population growth of 34% (Shin & Kominski, 2010). The 2011 report determined that of 291.5 million people aged five and over in the United States, 60.6 million, or 21% of this population, spoke a language other than English at home (Ryan, 2013). Today students who speak a language other than English at home, either those who are born in the U.S. or born abroad, are the fastest growing subgroup of the overall student population in the United States. In fact, more than 20% of the school-aged population are linguistic minorities (Kanno & Harklau, 2012). The increase in this population is similarly reflected at the college level (Kanno & Harklau, 2012). In addition to immigrant students, U.S. institutions of higher education host more international students than any other country (Institute of International Education, 2010, cited in Garcia, Pujol-Ferran, & Reddy, 2013), and these numbers also show an increasing trend. By 2012, 764,000 international students were enrolled at U.S. colleges and universities, up 5.7% from the year before (Pathirage, Morrow, Walpitage, & Skolits, 2014, citing Farrugia, Bhandari & Chow, 2012). Both immigrant and international students comprise the linguistically diverse student population at the college level, though linguistically diverse students are not only those with a non-English speaking background, and also include students

¹ Multiple terms are used in the literature to define and describe the type of English typically expected in educational settings in the United States (though we also argue that one single variety of English is not the only one appropriate for educational institutions). We adopt the term *mainstream English* (instead of *standard English*) here to distinguish between the academic variety of English that is typically expected in college and both other (often called *non-mainstream*) varieties of English and different languages that students bring to the classroom. We note that the terms *non-mainstream* and *non-standard*, which are also used in the literature, imply the existence of a single standard form of English by which other varieties are measured, a notion which needs to be problematized. We discuss this in detail in section 4.1.2 of this paper.

who speak a dialect² of English that is different from the mainstream variety of English used in education (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011). Defined broadly, linguistically diverse students constitute a significant percentage of college-level students. In fact, at many urban community colleges, linguistically diverse students currently represent the majority. Such trends carry crucial implications for colleges in terms of placement, instruction, and support.

There is currently a lack of research on the academic performance of linguistically diverse students at the college level (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Kanno & Harklau, 2012), with hardly any research at the community college level (Almon, 2012). This is particularly interesting in light of the extensive amount of research on linguistically diverse students at the K-12 level, specifically on students from non-English-language backgrounds (August & Hakuta, 1997; August & Shanahan, 2008; August, McCardle, Shanahan, & Burns, 2014; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Wright, 2015) as well as from non-mainstream dialect backgrounds (Craig & Washington, 2006; Labov, 1969, 1995; Washington & Craig, 2001; Wheeler & Swords, 2006, 2010; Wheeler, Cartwright, & Swords, 2012, to name a few; see Rickford, Sweetland, Rickford, & Grano, 2013, for an extensive bibliography). What little data are available on linguistically diverse student performance at the college level, however, paint a portrait of dismal academic achievement among this rapidly growing student population (Almon, 2012), indicating an urgent need to develop a better understanding of the issues surrounding these students. While all college-level instructors need to better understand and support linguistically diverse students, this is particularly important in ESL and Developmental courses, i.e., those designed to prepare students for success in college credit-bearing courses. In fact, Higbee (2009) noted that educators teaching developmental courses can anticipate the opportunity to work in increasingly diverse classrooms.

This paper, then, seeks to explore the implications of an increasingly linguistically diverse college-going student population, with an emphasis on students placed in developmental education and ESL programs who are likely to need support services, often with writing in particular, as they complete coursework that prepares them for college credit-bearing college courses. It describes linguistically diverse students and provides an overview of their language-related challenges and needs. In addition, it offers practical suggestions for supporting these students and suggests that a research agenda be articulated in

order both to better study the participation of linguistically diverse students in higher education and determine what practices most effectively support this segment of the college-going population. Perhaps most importantly, this paper argues that basic awareness of linguistic diversity is a necessity for all college professionals. We begin with the challenge of describing what is meant by the term *linguistically diverse* as it relates to students.

Who Are Linguistically Diverse Students?

The term *linguistically diverse students*, often used interchangeably with *language minority students* or *linguistic minority students*, is used in various ways in the literature. Most often the term is employed to refer to students whose home language is a language other than English (cf. Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002; Commins & Miramontes, 2005; He, Vetter, & Fairbanks, 2014; Kanno & Harklau, 2012; Karathanos & Mena, 2014; Nieto, 2004; Salerno & Kibler, 2013). In this interpretation, it is typically equivalent to the term *English Language Learner(s)* (ELL), the term that is predominantly used in K-12, or *English as a Second Language* (ESL) students, the preferred term for this student type at the postsecondary level. Another use of the term linguistically diverse students is broader, and includes students who are speakers of U.S.-based and overseas varieties of English, some fairly typologically distinct from mainstream English as required in most classrooms in the U.S., including English-lexified creoles such as Jamaican Creole and Sierra Leonean Krio, varieties of World English such as Indian English, in addition to U.S.-based dialects of English, such as African American English (cf. Charity Hudley & Mallinson 2011, 2014; Perryman-Clark, 2012a; Robinson & Clardy, 2011). In this paper, we take the latter position and argue that any student who has grown up in a home where a language variety other than mainstream English is or was predominantly used may experience challenges as a result of a linguistic discrepancy between the home language and the one typically valued in the classroom.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

Bearing in mind that any type of categorization of students is artificial and thus problematic, with different groups overlapping and every student not fitting exactly into a specific category (Thonus, 2014), it is nevertheless helpful to describe the various categories of linguistically diverse students at the college level. For most educators, ESL students (or ELLs) are those who come to mind first when discussing linguistically diverse students, i.e., those who

² Most linguists agree that the distinction between language and dialect is problematic because the distinction is at least partly political (rather than exclusively linguistic). Thus, for example, we speak of Danish and Norwegian—languages that are largely mutually intelligible—but of the “dialects of China,” many of which are not mutually intelligible.

have another home language and are still in the process of developing English language proficiency. ESL students—in K-12 and at the college level—constitute a highly diverse group of students in U.S. educational settings. These students vary in terms of educational background, home language, home language literacy skills, cultural background, socioeconomic status, and English language proficiency levels—all factors that carry the potential to influence academic success significantly (Wright, 2015). Within the category of ESL students, there are various subgroups, which are discussed below.

International and Immigrant Students. The main distinction among ESL students is usually made between international and immigrant students (Ferris, 2011; Leki, 1992). International students are those who come to the U.S. on a student visa after having finished secondary school in their home countries, often with the primary goal of pursuing postsecondary education in the U.S., whereas immigrant students have typically completed at least part of their K-12 education in the U.S. and reside here permanently. The former tend to come from more privileged backgrounds, are highly motivated for their U.S. studies, and have a solid educational background, including advanced literacy skills in their home language (Ferris, 2009). Immigrant students, on the other hand, have socioeconomic and educational backgrounds that vary much more (Ferris, 2009; Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999; Roberge, 2002; Roberge, Siegal, & Harklau, 2009), and sometimes even lack literacy skills in their home language altogether. Thus, the educational preparedness varies between these groups, as do their language learning and overall academic needs when they are enrolled in college. Within the two broader categories of international and immigrant students, several subgroups can be distinguished, each with their own unique linguistic and academic needs.

Generation 1.5 Students. A fast-growing subgroup of immigrant students are so-called *Generation 1.5*³ students (Doolan, 2014; Roberge, Siegal, & Harklau, 2009), sometimes also labeled *long-term English learners* (Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2002). Though precise definitions vary in the literature, this group is broadly defined as those students who grew up with a home language other than English, arrived in the U.S. as children and thus received a part of their K-12 education

in the U.S., typically having graduated from high school in this country. These students' oral and aural language skills are often comparable to monolingual "native" speakers⁴—in fact, having arrived to the U.S. as children, their spoken language is often indistinguishable from that of monolingual English speaking students, as language acquisition theory would predict for early arrivals (Moyer, 2004; Scovel, 1988). For that reason, instructors may not even realize that these students are in fact linguistically diverse and have additional challenges. However, although Generation 1.5 students may often sound like monolingual students, their written academic language development typically lags significantly behind their oral skills.

World English Speaking Students. So-called *World English speakers* have become a significant group at many community colleges; these are students who speak an overseas variety of English that is different from mainstream American English. These students hail from countries where a standardized variety of English is (one of) the official language(s), for education and other purposes, and where other non-mainstream varieties of English are usually also used. These countries include mostly former British colonies such as India, Pakistan, Ghana, and Nigeria. What sets these students apart from other linguistically diverse students is their oral fluency in English (albeit another variety of English), which often masks their (much more) limited written language skills. Particularly those students who come from countries where varieties of so-called "restructured" varieties of English are widely spoken, i.e., pidginized and creolized varieties, experience significant linguistic challenges in U.S. schools and colleges (de Kleine, 2006, 2009; Nero, 2001, 2010), and struggle to develop mainstream American English skills. Countries where restructured English is widely used include the Anglophone parts of the Caribbean (e.g., Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago) and West Africa (e.g., Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana). Immigration from these countries has increased dramatically in the past two decades and is currently reflected in increased college enrollment, particularly in urban areas on the U.S.'s East Coast, including New York, Washington, Baltimore, and Miami.

U.S.-BORN SPEAKERS OF NON-MAINSTREAM VARIETIES: AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH

The final group of linguistically diverse students discussed in this paper is constituted by U.S.-born speakers of non-mainstream varieties of English. This group is often not

³ The term *Generation 1.5* was first used by Rumbaut and Ima in 1988, but more recently, scholars have used other terms in addition to *long-term English learners*, such as *U.S.-educated linguistic minority students* (Bunch & Endris, 2012) and *resident ESL students* (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2009). See Matsuda and Matsuda (2009) for a discussion of the use of the term *Generation 1.5* and the population that the term attempts to capture.

⁴ The terms *native* and *non-native* speakers have been problematized by many within the field of TESOL, particularly from a sociocultural perspective, because students naturally do not always fit neatly into these binary categories. For more in-depth discussions, see Chiang and Schmida, 1999; Nero, 2005; and Peirce, 1995.

explicitly included in discussions of students described as linguistically diverse, the latter term usually being reserved for students who speak another language (rather than dialect) at home. However, an extensive body of research dating back as far as the 1960s has demonstrated convincingly that students who grow up with a variety of English that is different from mainstream “standard” English are at a distinct disadvantage in school (Bailey, 1969; Charity, Scarborough, & Griffin, 2004; Craig & Washington, 2006; Fasold & Shuy, 1970; Heath, 1983; Labov, 1969; LeMoine, 2001; Rickford, 2005; Smitherman, 2000; Wheeler, Cartwright, & Swords, 2012; Wheeler & Swords, 2006, 2010, among others), and may experience linguistic challenges that are to a certain extent similar to challenges facing those who speak another language at home (Abbate-Vaughn, 2009; Siegel, 2010). Thus educators must also be prepared to meet the needs of linguistically diverse U.S.-born students who speak non-mainstream varieties of English, such as African American English (the variety emphasized in this paper) and Appalachian English, for example.

What Challenges Do Linguistically Diverse Students Experience in College?

Because linguistically diverse students vary greatly, in a number of different ways, it should not be surprising that their challenges in college vary significantly, too. Although some of these challenges are language-related, as would be expected, certainly not all are linguistic in nature.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CHALLENGES

In general, international students are the most academically successful among linguistically diverse students, and they are also, somewhat ironically, the group of students on whom the most research has been published. International students tend to enroll in U.S. colleges with strong academic preparation already in place (Garcia, Pujol-Ferran & Reddy, 2013), endowing them with two significant advantages over many other linguistically diverse students. First, they have developed their initial academic literacy skills in their home language, resulting in a solid literacy foundation that can subsequently be used for a second language (Garcia, Pujol-Ferran & Reddy, 2013). Cummins’ (2000) well-known interdependence theory explains that many literacy skills transfer easily from the first to the second language as a result of a common underlying proficiency that functions as a “central engine” used not just for the first but also the second (and third, and other) language (Baker, 2011, p. 166). There is extensive, worldwide empirical evidence from a variety of bilingual educational settings to support this theory (Cummins, 2000). Secondly, often coming from more privileged socioeconomic backgrounds, many internationa

students have solid educational backgrounds, which typically include instruction in formal English preparing them for English-medium colleges and universities.

Nonetheless, international students experience linguistic challenges not faced by their monolingual English speaking counterparts. Writing skills in particular have received a lot of attention in the literature, because this is the area that interferes most obviously with academic performance (see Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008, for an excellent overview; see Silva & Matsuda, 2013, for a historical overview of the main publications on the topic since the 1960s). Developing grammatical accuracy is vastly more challenging in a second language than in a first language (DeKeyser, Alfi-Shabtay, & Ravid, 2010; Johnson & Newport, 1989), although international students (unlike many immigrant students) benefit from already possessing a metalanguage for effective ESL grammar instruction (Johns, 2001). Developing sufficient vocabulary to succeed at the postsecondary level is also a challenge, with students having to develop a vast academic vocabulary as well as discipline-specific vocabularies. In fact, Ferris (2009), drawing on multiple sources, believed that “[t]he vast majority of L2 students in higher education cannot approach the everyday lexical knowledge of their native-speaking counterparts, let alone master the general and specialized vocabulary they will need to function academically” (p. 27). Further challenges related to written language skills include developing a familiarity with the features of American discourse prevalent in textbooks and essays. Most ESL courses at the college level focus primarily on written language skills (Ferris, 2009), and with the solid educational foundation international students typically bring to the classroom, including formal English instruction in their home countries, these students are well-positioned to benefit from ESL instruction in the U.S. It should be borne in mind, though, that written language challenges of international students are likely more pronounced in non-ESL courses, where instructors may not always be familiar with second-language-specific challenges of academic writing, such as U.S. conventions of written academic prose and grammatical accuracy, and may misinterpret “errors” as evidence of inadequate academic or cognitive ability, potentially providing to these students inaccurate or damaging feedback.

Academic ESL courses tend to focus much less on spoken language skills development than on writing skills (Ferris, 2009), presumably on the assumption that spoken language is less relevant for academic success or less of an obstacle. However, as research by Ferris and Tagg (1996) has shown, international students also struggle with listening and speaking skills, and the difficulty is compounded by the fact that many international students come from

cultural backgrounds that do not place as high a value on oral interaction in the classroom as U.S. educational culture does. In fact, compared to immigrant students, international students' speaking and listening skills are less well developed (Ferris, 2009; Leki, 1992), which is hardly surprising given that immigrant students have had more exposure to English speakers. Reduced oral or aural skills may have significant implications, as these skills affect class participation and the ability to comprehend lectures. Fortunately, these challenges often lessen over time as a result of increased language exposure (Ferris, 2009).

Although international students have the best academic and language preparation of linguistically diverse students, their sociocultural adjustment challenges, as expressed in anxiety levels and homesickness, for instance, are often more pronounced (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002; Mori, 2000), though this varies by geography of student background (Fritz, Chin, & DeMarinis, 2008). Not surprisingly, research has confirmed a direct link between cultural adjustment and academic performance (Salamonson, Everett, Koch, Andrew, & Davidson, 2008), with higher levels of acculturation being linked to improved academic performance.

IMMIGRANT STUDENT CHALLENGES

Compared to the sizeable amount of research on international students at the college level, the body of research on immigrant college students is limited. As Kanno and Harklau (2012) observed, there is a curious void in our knowledge about [immigrant] linguistic minority students' placement and participation in college. To date, work on linguistic minority students' educational achievement has focused primarily on high school graduation. In stark contrast to the voluminous body of research on college-going in other underrepresented students such as ethnic minorities and low-income students, there has been no tradition of counting or analyzing linguistic minority students' transitions to and success in higher education. (p. vii) Kanno and Cromley (2013) concurred, explaining that "although English language learners (ELLs) are currently the fastest growing group among the school-age population in the United States, there is surprisingly little information on their participation in postsecondary education" (p. 89). This paucity of research has now begun to be addressed, with recent publications focusing not only on these students' linguistic challenges but also on their college preparation, access, retention, attainment, and graduation rates (Kanno & Harklau, 2012). Part of the reason for the lack of research on immigrant students appears to have been caused by how demographic data are collected at the college level, where *language minority* or *linguistically diverse* status is often not recognized as a separate demographic category (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Kanno & Harklau, 2012).

In general, linguistically diverse immigrant students face more challenges and display a pattern of academic underperformance compared to both English-proficient international students and "regular" monolingual students (Kanno & Cromley, 2013). Recent research suggests that several factors contribute to this pattern, not all of which are directly related to students' language skills. For instance, compared to their monolingual counterparts, linguistically diverse students have less exposure to academically rigorous coursework in high school (Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Mosqueda, 2012), and ironically this reduced exposure is often the result of their extended enrollment in ESL classes (Callahan & Shifrer, 2012). In fact, based on a series of five studies conducted by Callahan and others, Callahan and Shifrer (2012) concluded that "linguistic minority [immigrant] students on the whole leave high schools woefully underprepared to enter into higher education" (p. 30). This pattern of underpreparation as a result of limited access is repeated at the college level, where the perception exists that linguistically diverse students are un(der)prepared for academically challenging coursework, and thus they are overrepresented in basic level courses (Bunch & Panayotova, 2008) and steered away from courses richest in academic language (Kanno & Harklau, 2012).

Though issues of access and placement certainly play an important role in the academic (under)performance of immigrant students, English language proficiency is also a crucial factor, "often considered to be one of the primary challenges for immigrant students and the children of immigrants" (Bunch & Panayotova, 2008, p. 9). When discussing English language skills, particularly those of immigrant students, it is important to distinguish between social and academic language skills (Cummins, 2000; DiCerbo, Anstrom, Baker, & Rivera, 2014). Social language is the type of language used in social settings in daily life. Social language is highly context-dependent and relatively undemanding cognitively (Cummins, 2000). Although academic language has been defined in a number of ways (see DiCerbo, Anstrom, Baker, & Rivera, 2014), researchers generally agree that it is characterized by low-frequency, academic content-specific vocabulary and more complex syntactic structures; there is, however, a fair amount of disagreement as to whether academic language is more cognitively demanding (Cummins, 2000), or simply a different register used in school settings (Bailey, 2007; MacSwan, Rolstad, & Petrovic, 2010). Either way, there is widespread agreement, supported by extensive research (Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002), that for ESL students developing academic language is more challenging than developing social language, with social language on average developing in three to five years, while academic language takes four to seven years

(Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000). Although relevant for all students, the social versus academic language distinction is particularly relevant for understanding the linguistic challenges of immigrant students, as the latter tend to have solid social language skills (frequently on par with those of monolingual English speakers) but much less developed academic language skills, i.e., precisely those skills needed for academic success.

The general paucity of research on immigrant students at the college level is also reflected in the lack of research on the academic language skills of this population, but extrapolating from extensive research among K-12 linguistically diverse students, one can assume that a significant percentage of immigrant students—particularly those who received their K-12 education partly in the U.S.—do not possess sufficient academic language skills when they enter college. Analyzing academic performance and language proficiency data from over 200,000 K-12 students in the U.S., Thomas and Collier (2002) found that the most important factor predicting academic performance is the amount of formal schooling in a student's home language. That is, the more formal education linguistically diverse students had received in their home language, the better they performed on standardized (English-language) tests measuring reading and interpretative skills across the curriculum, including math, science, social studies, and literature. That is a counterintuitive finding: it means that those immigrant students who entered the U.S. educational system *later* perform relatively *better* compared to those who received more instruction in the U.S. and therefore had had more exposure to academic English. Thomas and Collier (2002) explain this through the Prism model, which posits an interdependency between (second) language development and cognitive and academic development. Thus, linguistically diverse students with prior formal schooling, i.e., those who have been able to develop solid cognitive and academic age-appropriate skills because the curriculum was fully accessible in the home language, have a foundation that enables them to develop language skills quickly and efficiently in the second language.

On the other hand, students who never developed literacy and academic skills in their home language, i.e., students who were born in the U.S. or arrived here relatively young and received most of their K-12 education in a language other than their home language, lack this type of foundation and have spent most of their K-12 years unsuccessfully catching

up (Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002). In K-12 settings, such students are usually termed *long-term English learners* (Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2002), though in college the term most commonly used is *Generation 1.5 students* (Roberge, Siegal, & Harklau, 2009). Proper ESL support in K-12 can ameliorate or even fully negate such effects, but common K-12 school district policy in the U.S. today is to exit ESL students in one to three years, in spite of research solidly demonstrating that it takes four to seven years to develop academic language skills that are comparable to those of monolingual students (Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000). The largest study to date on linguistically diverse students' achievement puts this estimate even higher, at seven to ten years (Thomas & Collier, 1997). In fact, Thomas and Collier (1997), who examined records of over 700,000 linguistically diverse students, found that the majority of students who had no schooling at all in their home language and had thus received all of their education in their second language showed a persistent pattern of academic underperformance and never caught up to their monolingual fellow students throughout K-12.

Underperformance patterns among linguistic minority students at the K-12 levels are highly relevant at the college level because gaps in students' language development that interfere with academic achievement in K-12 are present upon arrival at college (Bunch & Panayotova, 2008); in fact, the effects of such gaps will only be enhanced by the increased academic demands that college places on students. This explains the pronounced difference between the academic performance of international students at the college level, who usually catch up quickly to their native speaking monolingual counterparts as they build their English academic language skills on their existing language and academic skills, versus immigrant students, who tend to lack such literacy and academic skills and thus struggle linguistically (Roberge, Siegal, & Harklau, 2009) and are overrepresented in developmental English and other remedial⁵ programs and courses. Bunch and Panayotova (2008) cited that in recent years at California's community colleges "more than 70% of [immigrant] students placed at the remedial math level and 42% placed in remedial English" (p. 8).

Generation 1.5 Student Challenges. The one issue that has generated a fair amount of research on language-related challenges of immigrant students has been academic writing (DiGennaro 2008, 2009, 2013; Doolan,

⁵ Though the term *remedial* is found in the literature, we do not support its use because of its negative connotation and because it has traditionally focused on students' cognitive deficits as learners (Arendale, 2005). Phipps (1998, cited in Paulson & Armstrong, 2010, p. 6) noted, however, that "what the general public refers to as remedial education is often defined as 'developmental education' by professionals and practitioners in the academic community" (p. 1), and Sanchez and Paulson (2008) preferred the term *transitional* to emphasize that literacy for all students develops over time (p. 165). See Paulson and Armstrong (2010) for a useful discussion of terminology in postsecondary literacy.

2011, 2013, 2014; Doolan & Miller, 2012; Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999; Harklau & Siegal, 2009; Leki, 1992; Roberge, Siegal, & Harklau, 2009), which is understandable given that “skill in using academic writing is often a key criterion for gaining entry to collegiate academic studies and exiting a college degree program” (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999, p. 1). Most of the literature that has discussed the writing skills of immigrant students has focused on Generation 1.5 students. Reid (1998) was one of the first to highlight the distinct written language characteristics of these immigrant students. She described Generation 1.5 students as “ear learners”—students whose written language skills are largely derived from their oral fluency (because they have had extensive language exposure) but who lack proper written academic language skills. Thus, the writing of “ear learners” displays linguistic features that are disproportionately associated with informal, oral language but lacks the grammatical and lexical features typically associated with written academic prose. International students, on the other hand, are “eye learners,” whose written language reflects having learned English through formal, written instruction and who have therefore had much more exposure to written academic language.

In recent years there have been several empirical studies to test claims regarding qualitative and quantitative differences between the writings of immigrant students and international students or monolingual students (Connerty, 2009; de Kleine, Lawton, & Woo, 2014; Di Gennaro, 2008, 2009, 2013; Doolan, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014; Doolan & Miller, 2012; Levi, 2004; Mikesell, 2007). This is a crucial issue from a college teaching perspective: if research shows that Generation 1.5 students produce written language much like the written language of monolingual writers, they will benefit most from instruction in developmental or non-ESL English composition courses, whereas if their written language resembles that of international ESL students, they are best placed in ESL courses to develop the required academic writing skills so crucial for academic success.

Interestingly, studies analyzing the properties of students’ written academic language, most of which have focused on overall textual features and grammatical errors, display largely contradictory findings. Several studies on error patterns—long thought to be the main area in which Generation 1.5 students distinguished themselves—have identified Generation 1.5 students as different from monolingual students (Connerty 2009; Doolan & Miller, 2012), and more similar to international students in error patterns and frequencies (de Kleine, Lawton, & Woo, 2014; Levi, 2004), while other studies have failed to find a difference in error patterns between Generation 1.5 and monolingual students (Doolan, 2014) or between Generation 1.5 and international students (Di Gennaro,

2009). Research into textual and rhetorical features of student writing is similarly inconclusive, with some studies finding little difference between international and immigrant student writing (Di Gennaro, 2009), claiming the latter is more like monolingual student writing (Doolan, 2013), while others have identified significant differences (Di Gennaro, 2013). Although part of the discrepancies in findings can probably be attributed to differences in research design and different variables being studied, even a recent replication study of Doolan and Miller (2012) resulted in contradictory findings (de Kleine, Lawton, & Woo, 2014). Clearly more research is needed, with close attention paid to the various variables that can impact findings.

Multilingual and Multicultural Identities. Another strand of research concerning immigrant students has examined the multicultural and multilingual identities that many immigrant students negotiate in college and their effect on students’ academic experiences (Chiang & Schmida, 1999; Kim & Duff, 2012; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Roberge, 2009). Being “caught in between two worlds,” immigrant students may identify both with their heritage culture as well as with mainstream U.S. culture, potentially leading to conflict. Earlier research in identity negotiation among immigrant students often viewed the Generation 1.5 in a negative light, lost between two generations, with negative educational implications (Kim & Duff, 2012). More recent research, however, explores the broader sociocultural context in which immigrant students negotiate and form their identities, in an attempt to arrive at a better understanding of language learning, socialization and use among immigrant students (Huster, 2011; Kim & Duff, 2012; Mossman, 2012). Research on immigrant students’ complex identities is highly relevant in understanding students’ linguistic and academic challenges. For instance, after immigrant students enter college, their identities often change, going from the “good kids” in high school to the “worst kids” in college (Harklau, 2000), where (unlike in grades K-12) immigrant students find themselves in ESL classrooms with international fellow students, who, as already mentioned, have a better overall academic foundation on which to build in ESL courses. Clearly such an identity change will likely affect their academic performance. Similarly, research among Generation 1.5 students has shown that in the process of developing one’s identity in both the home culture and the mainstream U.S. culture, students may end up feeling alienated in both cultures (Roberge, 2009, citing Vigil, 1997). To complicate matters further, immigrant students’ identities may also include ethnic and racial identities imposed by mainstream society, which can affect access to education and subsequent experiences (Roberge, 2009).

WORLD ENGLISH SPEAKING STUDENT CHALLENGES

The challenges that World English speaking students face are somewhat different from those faced by other linguistically diverse students in college. Some World English speaking students will fall into the group of international students, who tend to have the same advantages described here (well-developed literacy skills, prior formal English instruction, solid academic foundation) and generally experience few additional challenges. However, many immigrant World English speaking students, in spite of hailing from countries where English is the official language, display written English skills that are significantly below their oral English skills (de Kleine 2006, 2009, in press; Nero, 2001). This is particularly the case for students coming from countries where so-called “restructured” varieties, i.e., pidginized and creolized forms of English, are spoken, such as in West Africa (in particular, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ghana), in the Caribbean, and in countries such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana (de Kleine 2006, 2009). This disparity is in large part explained by the structural differences between these students’ native creolized variety of English and mainstream American English. Research has shown that these students often fail to perceive differences between their creolized English and mainstream American English and as a result do not acquire some or all of the structural properties that set mainstream American English apart from their home varieties (de Kleine, 2006, 2009, in press; Siegel, 2010). Just as is the case with many Generation 1.5 students, at the K-12 level the education of World English speaking students may have insufficiently addressed their particular linguistic needs, because ESL (and mainstream) instructors typically do not possess specific knowledge of creolized English patterns to modify ESL instruction effectively (de Kleine, 2008). In fact, as some have argued (Adger, 1997; Nero, 2001), ESL courses may not even be appropriate for these students because their needs are quite different from those of other ESL students. By contrast, de Kleine (2006, 2009) has argued that though these students’ needs may be very different, by professional training ESL instructors are best suited to tailor instruction to the needs of this unique group. However, depending on the intake assessment policy of the school district, students who come from Anglophone countries may not receive a language assessment, in which case ESL instruction is not even a consideration. Thus, once World English speaking students enter college, their academic literacy skills, including their grammatical control of mainstream American English, are often insufficient; furthermore, these

students may be misinterpreted by instructors who, like teachers at the K-12 level, may not recognize that these students are actually using another, fully legitimate, variety of English rather than producing language fraught with errors. Adding to these challenges is that World English speaking students perceive themselves as native speakers of English (which they are, albeit of another variety than that of the U.S. classroom) and thus may be resistant to ESL instruction (Nero, 2001, 2014; Winer, 2006).

AFRICAN AMERICAN ENGLISH SPEAKING STUDENT CHALLENGES

The final group of linguistically diverse students discussed in this paper includes those who are speakers of non-mainstream varieties (or dialects) of English. The literature on linguistically diverse students has often emphasized international and immigrant students, but a large body of research—dating back to the 1960s (Fasold & Shuy, 1970; Stewart, 1964; Wolfram, Fasold, Baratz, & Shuy, 1969)—has convincingly established that speakers of non-mainstream English are also at a distinct linguistic disadvantage in education (Adger, Christian, & Taylor, 1999; Adger, Wolfram & Christian, 2014; Alim & Baugh, 2007; Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011; Craig & Washington, 2006; LeMoine, 2001; Reaser & Adger, 2010; Rickford & Rickford, 2010; Rickford, 1999; Rickford & Rickford, 1995. For an extensive bibliography, see Rickford, Sweetland, Rickford, & Grano, 2013).

Research at the K-12 levels has demonstrated beyond any doubt that the literacy skills of speakers of non-mainstream English lag behind those of mainstream English, with most of the evidence (in the U.S.) coming from speakers of African American English (AAE).⁶ In fact, the achievement gap between Black and White students is well-documented in the U.S., and though language is by no means the sole factor causing this gap, language plays a central role in it (Siegel, 2010; Washington & Craig, 2001). It is by now generally accepted among linguists that AAE and other non-mainstream English varieties such as Appalachian English form rule-governed systems and are from a linguistic perspective different but not inferior (Lippi-Green, 2012). Thus, non-mainstream dialects are in themselves no obstacle to academic success. However, children develop their initial literacy skills in mainstream American English, and thus for children who grow up with non-mainstream English as their primary language variety there is a discrepancy between their home and school languages, which impacts reading skills development (Charity, Scarborough, & Griffin, 2004; Labov, 1995; Terry, Connor, Petscher, & Conlin, 2012; Craig & Washington,

⁶ Other terms used for this language variety are African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Black English, and Ebonics.

2006), writing skills development (Fogel & Ehri, 2000; Nelson, 2010), and overall academic achievement (Rickford, 1997; Wheeler & Swords, 2010).

By far most of the empirical research available on the literacy skills among speakers of non-mainstream English is at the K-12 level; similar studies conducted at the postsecondary level are rare. It is therefore unclear whether the challenges observed for K-12 students, such as dialect interference, are also observed at the college level. The bulk of the literature on non-mainstream English speakers at the college level has been in the developmental (basic) writing course setting, where such students tend to be overrepresented (Rickford, Sweetland, Rickford & Grano, 2013; Williams, 2012), with most studies addressing issues of language, power and pedagogy (Halasek & Highberg, 2001). The lack of studies at the postsecondary level is particularly interesting in light of the fact that, more than 40 years ago, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC)⁷ already highlighted the issue of linguistically diverse speakers in the college setting when it passed its now famous “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” resolution, which reads as follows: We affirm the students’ right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language. (Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1974)

Looking back today, instructor training and pedagogical practices have not aligned with this resolution consistently, and research suggests that educators may not have sufficient knowledge of language and language variation (Adger, Snow, & Christian, 2002); furthermore, even if they do, they may lack specific linguistic knowledge to address issues of linguistic variation effectively in students’ writings (Williams, 2012) or to build effectively on students’ existing linguistic abilities. For instance, a study by Balester (1993) found that the unique rhetorical styles that non-mainstream English speakers bring to the

classroom are often not valued and therefore not used by writing instructors, a concern echoed by others (Perryman-Clark, 2012b; Smitherman, 1993). Lack of knowledge of language variation can also explain the prevalent negative educator attitudes toward AAE, and toward its speakers—attitudes that quite disturbingly “have changed minimally in forty years” (Champion, Cobb-Roberts, & Bland-Stewart, 2012, p. 83). These attitudes affect teacher expectations and student access to quality education, thus impacting the ultimate academic success levels of speakers of non-mainstream English (Gay, 2010). Similar student attitudes to language variation can have an equally damaging effect (Ladson-Billings, 2002). Viewing one’s own language as “broken English,” a variety unfit for academic purposes—as AAE and other non-mainstream varieties are often wrongly viewed—may result in student resistance to more effective approaches to writing that blend mainstream and non-mainstream English, as in translanguaging (sometimes also called “code-meshing”), an approach advocated by Canagarajah (2006, 2011), Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur (2011), and Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera, and Lovejoy (2014), among others. A recent study by Williams (2012) found that teacher discourse about language variation often further fuels the damaging notion that students’ home language varieties are insufficient in an academic setting.

Finally, it should be pointed out that many of the challenges discussed here resulting from a gap between a non-mainstream home language variety and a mainstream school language variety can be observed in other parts of the world, too, such as in various countries in Europe (Cheshire, 1989; Papapavlou & Pavlou, 2009), the UK (Edwards, 1979), the Caribbean (Craig, 2001), and Australia (Wigglesworth, Billington, & Loakes, 2013), among others. (For an excellent overview of worldwide research, see Siegel, 2010.) This includes countries with educational systems that are vastly different from the U.S. system, different educational resources, different distributions of resources among the population, and different race and ethnic relations. Yet across the board the linguistic effects of a school-home language variety gap remain, highlighting the crucial and powerful role of language in education. And, as Reaser and Adger (2010) noted, institutional responses to non-mainstream varieties are the root cause of underperformance rather than use of the varieties themselves (p. 163). Thus the onus for underperformance is on educators.

⁷ Though the Conference on College Composition and Community emphasizes composition, the organization is deeply committed to the development of literacy for all students, and the organization’s statement on students’ right to their own language is equally applicable in developmental and ESL courses.

What Strategies Can Colleges Apply to Better Support the Needs of Linguistically Diverse Students?

In this section, we address the challenges experienced by linguistically diverse students at the college level by providing strategies to support their success, from the perspective of administrators, instructors, and support staff. We begin with a discussion of concepts that are crucial to the development of linguistic awareness within institutions, after which we consider practices to support all linguistically diverse students at an institutional level, with an emphasis on policies related to testing and placement, curricula, support services (with an emphasis on tutoring), and professional development. Next, we focus on pedagogical practices, providing strategies both to support linguistically diverse students broadly and to support the specific groups of students discussed in this paper.

CULTIVATING A FOUNDATION OF LINGUISTIC AWARENESS: LINGUISTICALLY INFORMED INSTITUTIONS

If institutions agree that the onus for understanding and supporting linguistically diverse students is on them, then efforts must be made at an institutional level to cultivate linguistic awareness among all college professionals; we argue that this is a crucial starting point. Linguistic diversity should be approached in “linguistically informed” ways (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011; Wheeler & Swords, 2006) in the areas of instruction, assessment, placement, and support, which necessarily involves an awareness of basic linguistic concepts that will inform attitudes in ways that can influence and shape policies, pedagogical practices, and support services. Because students’ home languages may differ from the language expected in educational contexts, and the linguistically diverse student population encompasses a range of students, college professionals must develop a basic awareness of students’ challenges and needs in order to build upon students’ linguistic differences while simultaneously helping students navigate the system and acquire the academic form of English required for success in college. Linguistic awareness involves knowledge of the challenges associated with acquiring academic language skills, language variation, the role of English in the world—particularly as it relates to the notion of what is often called “standard” English—and the difficulties that students may encounter when there is a discrepancy between their home language or variety and the language variety expected in college.

Language Variation. Language variation is natural, and the form of language used varies by time, place, audience, and purpose (Wheeler & Swords, 2006). Both national and international variation exists within all languages, and in

the case of English, for example, the very use of the plural form “World Englishes” demonstrates that the singular term “English” may now be insufficient to describe the multiple varieties used within the United States and throughout the world. Matsuda and Matsuda (2010) noted that the English language is not a monolith, referring to it as a “catch all” for multiple varieties (p. 370). Today English is a global language (see Crystal, 2012), the majority of whose users have acquired it as an additional language (Graddol, 1998) and are not “native” speakers. Crystal (2012) explained that a language becomes global when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country. The present-day world status of English, for example, is largely the result of the expansion of British colonial power and later the emergence of the U.S. as the leading economic power (Crystal, 2012).

Kachru (1985) conceptualized the spread of English around the world using three concentric circles—inner, outer, and expanding—representing the different ways in which English has been acquired and is used. The inner circle focuses on places where English is the primary language, such as the U.S. and the UK; the outer circle involves nonnative settings in which English plays an important role (in multilingual contexts), such as Singapore and India; and finally the expanding circle represents nations that recognize the importance of English as an international language but have not given it special administrative status, such as China, Poland, and Russia (Kachru, 1985). Given that English is so widespread and has been adopted for different purposes in diverse contexts, it is no surprise that multiple varieties have developed. Because U.S. college enrollment has seen an increase both in students from countries where other varieties of English are spoken and U.S.-born students who speak varieties of English that may not be considered “mainstream,” education professionals must be aware of English’s role throughout the world—and language variation in general—so that they are able to legitimize “other” varieties, both national and international, during their interactions with students.

“Standard” English. We mentioned earlier that the terms “mainstream” and “standard” English need to be problematized and merit further discussion. Because “standard” English, a term used frequently and without consideration of what it actually represents, is often seen as the norm in the classroom, it is important to consider what that means linguistically. Trudgill (1999) described standard English as one variety of English among many, and Wheeler and Swords (2004), who described it as a dialect of English, view the term “standard” English as a misnomer because it implies that only one standard exists (p. 474). Adger, Wolfram, and Christian (2014) pointed out that many believe in the existence of a standard dialect of

English used by those who speak so-called good English, though in reality the speech of a certain social group does not define what is considered standard, and the norms for that standard are not identical in all communities. Furthermore, a formal standard (the norms prescribed in grammar books, for example) and an informal standard (spoken language that allows for deviation from those norms) exist in any community (Adger, Wolfram, & Christian, 2014).

Thus, though variation in language is always present, attitudes toward non-mainstream varieties may be negative, with “standard” English seen as good English and non-mainstream varieties seen as bad or broken. Such judgments are based on sociopolitical considerations rather than linguistic grounds (Wheeler & Swords, 2004, p. 473), and educators should realize that standard or mainstream English, whatever it is, is associated with cultural and political power. Not all students have had access to this variety of English, and educators who fail to realize this may manifest stereotypes in their interactions with students. For instance, Dandy (1991) described the language spoken by many African Americans as “too often degraded or simply dismissed by individuals both inside and outside the racial group as being uneducated, illiterate, undignified or simply nonstandard” (p. 2). ESL students, too, are often encouraged to adopt a certain variety of English that may not reflect the linguistic reality of language use in context.

To effectively support linguistically diverse students, then, institutions must acknowledge that multiple varieties of English exist and should view them as resources rather than deficits. Furthermore, terminology is important, and it may be more effective to avoid terms such as “standard” or “mainstream” in favor of others; for instance, Charity Hudley and Mallinson (2011) preferred the term *standardized English* over “standard English” to avoid suggesting that a single standard variety of English exists regardless of social norms, registers, or situational contexts. Cliett (2003), too, claimed that educators need to learn about language diversity in the U.S. and around the world, so to focus on a solely domestic concept of “standard English” would be disadvantageous to teachers in a changing cultural and global landscape. She also argued that English teachers in the U.S. “must come to grips with the reality that linguistic diversity is here to stay, and in fact, will become even more widespread during [the 21st] century” (p. 71). Gay (2010) posited that multiple variations of “standard” English and other languages should coexist and be recognized

as strength-based complementary tools for teaching culturally diverse students and necessary competences for living fully and effectively in pluralistic societies.

Finally, educators need to acknowledge that language changes over time; in fact, language is not static and is always changing. Technology, for example, has significantly influenced how language is used. In addition, language changes both because each generation creates new words, pronunciations, and ways of phrasing thoughts and ideas and because different cultures come into contact (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2014).

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT ALL LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS: AN INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Access to college is a significant aspect of the discussion on linguistically diverse students, and community colleges in particular have become increasingly important sites of access to higher education for students from immigrant backgrounds (Bunch, 2009; Bunch & Endris, 2012; Bunch, Endris, Panayotova, Romero, & Llosa, 2011; Bunch & Kibler, 2015; Kibler, Bunch, & Endris, 2011). However, access alone will not ensure that students persist and successfully complete coursework at the community college level or transfer to a four-year institution, and, as previously mentioned, academic underperformance is an area of concern for linguistically diverse students. According to the American Association of Community Colleges’ 2012 report, *Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and the Nation’s Future*, fewer than half of the students who enter community colleges with the goal of earning a degree or certificate actually attain their goal, transfer to a four-year institution, or are enrolled 6 years later; those rates are even lower for minority students, including Hispanic and Black students, and low-income students, many of whom can be described as linguistically diverse.⁸ Certain culturally and linguistically diverse students, including Hispanic and Black students, actually represent an increasingly large percentage of the overall college population, yet their retention rates are much lower than those of their White and Asian counterparts (Abbate-Vaughn, 2009; see also Seidman, 2005). Though causation between linguistic diversity and lack of completion cannot be proven, attention should be paid to language as a possible factor influencing lack of success, especially because the number of linguistically diverse students in developmental reading and writing courses is increasing. Baugh (1999) rightly stated that “unless systematic reforms take adequate account of the dynamics of linguistic

⁸ While minority status and linguistic diversity cannot be conflated, many linguistically diverse students are minority students, and there is currently a lack of research on the academic performance of linguistically diverse students at the college level (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Kanno & Harklau, 2012). Thus, it can be assumed that many of the students whom we describe as linguistically diverse are not attaining their goals at the college level.

diversity among students, we are unlikely to meet our desired goal to combine high academic standards with greater educational equity for all” (p. 284).

Institutional Policies. Higbee (2009) noted that “programs and services for students whose home language is not English vary a great deal from institution to institution” (p. 81). Institutions must therefore examine their offerings to ensure both that linguistically diverse students have access to the programs and academic support that they need and are not unduly disadvantaged by policies and procedures. Unfortunately, linguistic difference is often seen as a liability to institutional excellence rather than an asset (Shapiro, 2012; see also Canagarajah, 2002; Ferris, 2009, & Rose, 1985). Such a “deficit-focused ideology results in policies and programs that emphasize student remediation, rather than institutional support” (Shapiro, 2012, p. 238). For example, ESL programs tend to make courses mandatory rather than voluntary (Shapiro, 2012), and students may be prevented from taking mainstream (college credit-bearing) courses until those requirements are fulfilled (Williams, 1995). ESL courses generally bear no credit, indicating that they are not seen as equal in academic rigor to those in the mainstream (college credit-bearing courses) (Van Meter, 1990). Moreover, decisions about placement, evaluation, and completion of ESL courses are made via standardized testing instead of through the use of multiple measures (Shapiro, 2012). This is troubling because, as Abbate-Vaughn (2009) noted, test scores may not accurately represent the knowledge that linguistically diverse students possess. Shapiro (2012) concluded that such policies imply a high degree of institutional marginalization both for ESL students and programs.

The use of multiple measures in testing is particularly important for linguistically diverse students, who may perform poorly on placement tests that emphasize grammar but be able to fulfill multiple language functions in English (Llosa & Bunch, 2011; Valdes & Figueroa, 1994, cited in Bunch & Endris, 2012), though the cost associated with implementing multiple measures must be acknowledged. As a general recommendation, institutions should examine ESL programs closely and ensure that students’ linguistic backgrounds are treated as a resource rather than a deficit so that policies are not punitive.

Research also shows that the general student population often does not understand the high-stakes nature of testing and placement; this is the case for linguistically diverse students, too, who as a result do not prepare for placement tests and receive little guidance about the academic expectations of community college (Bunch and Endris, 2012; see also Grubb, 2006; Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, & Person, 2006; Venezia, Bracco, & Nodine, 2010). Many

linguistically diverse students are the first in their families to pursue higher education, and they are likely to encounter both the range of problems documented in research on the general student population (Bunch & Endris, 2012) as well as additional hurdles (Gray, Rolph, & Melamid, 1996). Those hurdles may be related in part to lack of familiarity with the culture and bureaucracy of institutions of higher education in the U.S. as well as the linguistic demands associated with the language used by institutions, among other challenges (see Bunch & Endris, 2012).

Placement. Institutions need to ensure that linguistically diverse students are placed in courses that meet their language-related needs; otherwise, students may not have sufficient opportunities to develop the academic language skills necessary for success in college. Though international students and more recently arrived immigrant students may be placed in ESL courses at the college level, at least at institutions in which such courses are offered, other linguistically diverse students may be placed in developmental or even college-credit-bearing courses that may not sufficiently meet their language-related needs.

According to the National Council of Teachers of English (2006), the majority of ELLs are placed in mainstream classrooms in K-12, which means that they are taught by teachers with limited formal professional development in teaching such students. (See also Barron & Menken, 2002; Kindler, 2002.) This trend may continue at the college level, and placement is a particularly important issue for certain linguistically diverse subgroups. For example, a growing number of Generation 1.5 students are entering college writing courses (Harklau, 2003), and because these students typically possess oral fluency in English, they can be difficult to place properly. In reality, they may not be well served by ESL, developmental English, or freshman composition courses since their needs are different from those of recent arrival immigrant students, international students, and linguistically diverse U.S.-born students. (See Holten, 2009, for a discussion of assessment and placement of Generation 1.5 students.) Admission and placement procedures may be insufficient to properly serve Generation 1.5 students, who may be misplaced (Miele, 2003; Di Gennaro, 2008); Di Gennaro (2008) has argued for better ways to assess and place these students. (See also Bunch & Kibler, 2015). As another example, World-English speaking students may be improperly placed because of their oral fluency despite their more limited written language skills in academic American English. On the whole, the existence of multiple linguistically diverse subgroups of students means that one-size-fits-all approaches to placement are unlikely to meet students’ needs. Therefore, institutions must gain a better understanding of linguistically diverse students, in order to ensure both that placement procedures do

not disadvantage certain students and that students receive the language instruction they need for success in higher education. (As one example, see Matsuda, 2003, for a discussion on how the City University of New York developed an elaborate, multi-tiered placement procedure to identify the differing needs of linguistically diverse students.)

The challenges associated with identifying and placing linguistically diverse students can result in classroom-related difficulties since instructors must try to address both the linguistic strengths and challenges of all students in one classroom. Lucas, Villegas, and Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) posited that “a one-size-fits- all approach to teaching ELLs is bound to fail because students bring varying linguistic and academic backgrounds to learning” (p. 364). Ideally sections of courses designed to meet the unique needs of students would be developed, such as pre-academic writing courses specifically designated for Generation 1.5 students. However, there are practical challenges associated with the implementation of population- specific sections, including how to appropriately identify the students for different types of courses and ensure that additional barriers to registration and completion are not created. Thus exploring the possibility of population- specific sections is worthwhile, though there may be challenges associated with their implementation. In the absence of such sections, however, it is crucial that all instructors (and support staff such as tutors) be able to implement differentiated pedagogical approaches across courses to meet the needs of all linguistically diverse students.

Faculty and Staff Professional Development. Gay (2010) stated that it is our responsibility [as educators] to provide culturally responsive courses and learning support services, and culturally responsive approaches must include a focus on linguistic diversity. Because linguistically diverse students often find themselves in mainstream courses with instructors who have little if any formal professional development in teaching those students and are thus not sufficiently prepared to assist them (Barron & Menken, 2002; Kindler, 2002; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008), it is imperative that institutions provide professional development opportunities for both instructors and support staff. In a position paper on support for bilingual students, the NCTE encouraged collaboration between English teachers and ESL and bilingual teaching professionals who can offer classroom support, instructional advice, and general insights into second-language acquisition (2006). We would add that such opportunities to develop linguistic awareness should be available to all teachers and support staff at the college level, especially those in developmental programs. In addition, the NCTE

recommended that institutional administrators support and encourage instructors to attend workshops and professional conferences that offer sessions on linguistically diverse learners, especially in the areas of reading and writing. The NCTE also addressed the need for mainstream teachers to acquire knowledge and skills that allow them to develop effective curricula to engage and develop the academic skills of English language learners while helping them negotiate their identities (2006). Richardson’s (2003a) research found that though most language educators wanted to foster language diversity, some felt that they did not have the training to provide it, which supports the need for professional development. (See also the CCCC Language Knowledge and Awareness Survey’s findings and recommendations, 2000.) In addition, Mallinson, Charity Hudley, Strickling, and Figa (2011) promoted a conceptual framework that involves partnerships that bring together linguists and educators to integrate cultural and linguistic knowledge into education. Their research revealed that educators saw language as an important component of education (multicultural education in particular), that language awareness needed to be brought to schools and classrooms, and that knowledge of language variation was critical, especially in assessing linguistically and culturally diverse student populations.

Also crucial to professional development, in Gay’s (2010) view, is increased awareness of some of the common myths that may prevent educators from seeing the complexity and necessity of language diversity in educating diverse students. (See also Ball & Muhammad, 2003; Delpit, 2006; Lee, 2007; Smitherman, 2000; Smitherman & Villanueva, 2003.) Several of those myths are as follows:

- A single form of “standard” English exists and is always used in the formal and official functions of mainstream U.S. institutions and interactions.
- Speaking a nonmainstream dialect or another language interferes with the mastery of English and academic skills.
- Language teaching and learning are primarily about form and structure as opposed to use (Gay, 2010).

Linguistically informed professional development should address the myths that often surround linguistic diversity, pointing out their error:

- Mastery of only one language or variety (such as standard English) may not equip students with the linguistic skills demanded by the real world (Canagarajah, 2003). There is value in possessing multiple communicative abilities.

- Research does not support the contention that other languages and varieties impede the mastery of English and academic skills (Gay, 2010). Therefore, to understand why such a myth exists, educators should be aware of negative attitudes toward language diversity and consider their own beliefs.
- Awareness of the social context surrounding students' acquisition and use of language is crucial. (See Gay, 2010, for an overview of specific factors.)

Support Services. Supportive learning services, such as those provided by writing, learning and tutoring centers, constitute an important form of assistance for linguistically diverse students, perhaps especially for those students not enrolled in ESL courses. Educators working outside of the classroom in settings like learning and tutoring centers need to create welcoming learning experiences for diverse students (Higbee, 2009). In addition, research has suggested that peer mentoring programs may be successful for linguistically diverse students (Abbate-Vaughn, 2009). Cooperative learning may also provide support for this student population, and Arendale (2004) identified several principles of cooperative learning, which include peer interaction, activities that establish individual accountability and personal responsibility, development of interpersonal and group skills, and group processing activities. Such programs can be embedded in courses or can be adjunct to courses and led by a supplemental instructor, for example (Arendale, 2004). Supplemental instruction is a widely adopted cooperative learning program, which Abbate-Vaughn (2009) identified as a support strategy for linguistically diverse students. (See Hodges & Agee, 2009, for a more in-depth discussion of Supplemental Instruction and Cooperative Learning Programs).

Moreover, because the one-on-one encounters that take place in tutoring or writing centers can be personalized and responsive to students' individual needs, these encounters have the potential to contribute significantly to the development of students' writing ability (Reynolds, 2009). However, research has shown that support services are not always effective because ESL students, for example, often lack college procedural knowledge (Almon, 2010). First and foremost, college professionals need to ensure that all linguistically diverse students, who may be navigating the system in a new language and culture, have the information necessary to benefit from support services. In addition, support service professionals need access to resources in order to meet the needs of the students they serve, so professional development is crucial. For example, tutors

need to develop awareness of the specific challenges faced by the diverse writers they serve; preparedness is important for these one-on-one encounters. The strategies in the following section can be modified as necessary for use by instructors and tutors.

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES: STRATEGIES FOR INSTRUCTORS

In this section, we provide an overview of pedagogical practices that can effectively support the range of linguistically diverse students. Though our overall goal is to provide strategies for all instructors and support staff, these suggestions may be particularly useful in the area of developmental education, where the linguistically diverse student population is increasing, yet educators may lack the formal training necessary to support these students' needs. We emphasize approaches to teaching that can broadly be described as culturally and linguistically responsive, and we discuss the importance of helping students to develop academic language. Moreover, we highlight the need for instructors to familiarize themselves with students' backgrounds, and we then provide suggestions to meet the needs of the specific groups of linguistically diverse students discussed in this paper: International students, Generation 1.5 students, World English speaking students, and African American English speaking students. Finally, we conclude with strategies for responding to students' writing, since writing has been the subject of extensive research and often presents the most significant challenges for linguistically diverse students. It is also important to point out that the strategy-based culturally and linguistically responsive approaches mentioned here may require additional training and support for instructors and learning support service staff.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching.

We begin by highlighting several broad pedagogical approaches to support the needs of all linguistically diverse students. Culturally responsive teaching⁹ (see Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 2002; Richardson, 2003b) is one such effective approach because its principles include building on the knowledge and skills that students already have; focusing on cultural strengths rather than weaknesses; developing skills for both cultural maintenance and cultural border crossing; and using a multiplicity of orientations and methodologies in helping diverse students develop repertoires of knowledge and skills for wide varieties of situations, contexts and relationships. (Gay, 2010, p. 91)

⁹ Though linguistically diverse students are the focus of this paper, it should be noted that culturally responsive approaches to teaching are positive and beneficial to all students, regardless of their linguistic or cultural backgrounds.

Because the relationship among language, culture, and learning is a complex one in which “one-size-fits-all” mentalities or methodologies are unacceptable, culturally responsive approaches allow instructors to identify and respond to the needs of their students regardless of whether those students speak dialects or languages, and competency in more than one communication system is considered a resource and a necessity to be cultivated for students living in pluralistic societies (Gay, 2010). Within this framework, many scholars have described the skills that culturally diverse students bring to the classroom as useful instructional resources (see, for example, Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011, 2014; Delpit, 2006; Delpit & Dowdy, 2008; Gay, 2010; Rickford & Rickford, 2000), and specific examples of how to achieve this are provided throughout this section.

Charity Hudley and Mallinson (2011, 2014) promoted in addition to culturally responsive teaching a multicultural, multidisciplinary model of linguistic awareness that involves the development of critical linguistic awareness among educators in order to distinguish language variation from error, appreciate the rich variety in students’ backgrounds, and teach students how to communicate effectively. Similarly Villegas and Lucas (2002) offered a six-strand approach to teaching, which involves sociocultural consciousness, affirming attitudes toward students from diverse backgrounds, commitment to acting as agents of change, constructivist views of learning, knowledge of both students and subject matter, and teaching practices that are culturally responsive. Lucas, Villegas, and Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) also advocated linguistically responsive pedagogical approaches, which involve learning about the language and academic backgrounds of students, identifying the language demands inherent in classroom tasks, and scaffolding learning.

Finally, Sanchez and Paulson (2008) advocated a Critical Language Awareness (CLA) approach (to developing literacy in particular), a pedagogy that has the potential to cultivate students’ linguistic awareness. CLA allows students both to access the discourse of academic literacy (see Gee’s [2005] notion of Dominant or big “D” discourse) and to critique issues related to power, access, and quality that are found in language practices. Thus students can develop the language necessary for college success and simultaneously gain awareness of ideologies toward their own languages and varieties. Such an approach also allows instructors to collaborate with students “to foster an awareness of how language is tied up with identity, values, and power” (Sanchez & Paulson, 2008, p. 169). Broadly, CLA may help linguistically diverse students develop academic language and understand how language is

socially constructed, and it may help affirm their identities and own attitudes toward their languages. (See Sanchez & Paulson, 2008, for an overview of CLA-related studies.)

An important starting point for instructors and tutors is to consider their students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and we argue that this is an essential component of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching. Accurate identification of students’ linguistic backgrounds can prove invaluable to the process of building relationships, developing instructional approaches, and providing students with feedback, both in ESL and non-ESL contexts. This is especially important given that students whose linguistic backgrounds vary significantly share the same classrooms and support services, especially at institutions without separate ESL and developmental programs, making differentiated instruction essential.

English instructors (developmental and composition) in particular should be well equipped to support linguistically diverse students. In their position paper on the role of English teachers in educating English language learners, the NCTE (2006) offered several recommendations for developing students’ academic literacy that apply to a range of linguistically diverse students. Those recommendations include the use of culturally relevant classroom materials and familiarity with students’ backgrounds, which have been discussed. They also included the following:

- Choosing texts around a theme and using readings with topics that relate to students’ background knowledge and experiences. For example, multicultural course content provides students with valuable role models, such as accomplished writers whose own linguistic backgrounds are diverse.
- Replacing discrete skills and drills with opportunities to read.
- Bridging the gap between school and the world outside it.
- Creating a nurturing environment for writing.
- Introducing cooperative, collaborative activities that promote discussion.
- Modeling what is expected.

Academic Language. Instructors and tutors must also provide opportunities for linguistically diverse students to develop academic language and literacy skills, which can occur within a culturally and linguistically responsive framework. Because developing academic language is typically more challenging than developing social language, educators should be aware of the linguistic basis for perceived disconnects between spoken and written

language. Wiley (2005) argued that educators should focus on the communicative functions of language and the heavily contextualized language that is used in teaching academic subjects, because language and literacy development takes place in specific social contexts, so students need academic socialization to specific literacy practices as opposed to English proficiency that is not specific to a particular context (cited in Wright, 2010). Because the content of conversational language is predictable and focuses on speakers' personal experiences, it is relatively accessible to ESL students (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). By contrast, the communication of academic discourse relies on language itself to convey meaning, which is impersonal, more technical, and more abstract (Gibbons, 2002). The use of written text adds a layer of abstraction because of its dependence on language itself in order to make meaning (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008).

Thus academic language must be emphasized, and though a single construct of academic language that helps students master any content area may not exist (Wright, 2010), Chamot (2009) has offered the following academic language functions that students must learn: seek information, inform, compare, order, classify, analyze, infer, justify and persuade, solve problems, synthesize, and evaluate. Instructors should provide linguistically diverse students with repeated, well-supported opportunities to develop these academic language functions. Charity Hudley and Mallinson (2011) also recommended that educators explicitly discuss the types of jargon that students will need to learn and use, and model how statements can be phrased and then rephrased using academic jargon. Although instructors (those outside of ESL and developmental education) whose primary responsibility is to teach academic subjects cannot be expected to become experts on language, they can learn to identify the specific characteristics of the language of their disciplines in order to make them more explicit for ESL students (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). In addition, ESL and developmental instructors can use content that is both culturally and linguistically responsive, and aligns with the subject matter of other academic disciplines.

Scaffolds (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000; Gibbons, 2002), or instructional adaptations used to make content more understandable, are important to the development of academic language skills. As temporary supports to help learners carry out academic tasks that they could not have done alone (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008), scaffolds allow instructors to "amplify and enrich the linguistic and extralinguistic context" of learning tasks

(Walqui, 2008, p. 107, cited in Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). To effectively scaffold learning for linguistically diverse students, mainstream instructors need certain pedagogical expertise, which involves familiarity with students' linguistic and academic backgrounds, an understanding of the language demands inherent in the learning tasks that students must complete, and the skills for using scaffolding so that students can participate successfully in those tasks (Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). Examples of scaffolds are the use of extralinguistic supports such as visual tools; supplements to written texts, such as study guides that provide outlines of major concepts; students' native languages, which may involve peer interaction and translation with comprehension challenges; and other purposeful activities that allow students to interact with classmates and negotiate meaning. Peterson, Caverly, Nicholson, O'Neal, and Cusenbery (2000) also identified scaffolding throughout the entire reading process as a principle of instruction that may help [linguistically] diverse students achieve. (See Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008 and Peterson et. al., 2000, for other suggestions. Although their emphases are the K- 12 and secondary levels, respectively, their suggestions may also be applied at the college level.)

Finally, in order to be prepared for the academic language of credit-bearing college courses, linguistically diverse students need opportunities to grapple with achieving linguistic accuracy and acquiring academic vocabulary while developing critical thinking skills (Carroll & Dunkelblau, 2011). Carroll and Dunkelblau's (2011) research on ESL writing indicated that students must be prepared for the types of writing tasks that they will encounter in academic disciplines. This means that prior to enrolling in introductory courses within those disciplines, students must experience challenging assignments that require them to engage with texts, summarize, paraphrase and cite sources, and critically reflect on ideas within a text. Content-based, thematic approaches may help teach students how to confidently engage with texts. In addition, ESL and developmental programs and content area departments should develop ways of communicating on a regular basis. (See Carroll & Dunkelblau, 2011, for specific ways to achieve this.) Collaboration between ESL and Developmental programs, the academic disciplines in which credit-bearing courses are housed, and support services is essential to ensure that the needs of linguistically diverse students are met, both while they are completing ESL and developmental coursework and once they have transitioned to college credit-bearing courses.

Although the pedagogical strategies discussed thus far support the needs of all linguistically diverse students, additional strategies can assist the specific subgroups of students whose characteristics and challenges have been discussed. Though these suggestions are based on the predominant needs of each group of students, it must be borne in mind that each student is an individual, and categories are problematic; however, these suggestions may assist educators, especially non-ESL educators, understand and respond to the students they teach.

Support for International Students. Because international students may already possess academic language skills but struggle with listening and speaking skills and the norms of U.S. college classrooms, which place value on interaction, these students need opportunities for the oral and aural development of both social and academic English. Opportunities to interact with classmates and adjust to sharing opinions in class will help provide international students with increased exposure to English at the college level in the U.S.

In addition, international students, who may possess strong writing skills in their native language but may have more pronounced writing challenges in English, especially in non-ESL courses, may need to adjust to the U.S.-based conventions of academic writing, especially as they relate to genres that are specific to certain academic disciplines. It may be useful for instructors to familiarize themselves with the concept of *contrastive rhetoric* (Kaplan, 1966), which construes the expectations of writing as influenced by culture. Matsuda (1997) took this further with his concept of a *bidirectional exchange* in which instructors are aware of how their own cultures, languages, and education influence their reading of a text and acknowledge that a range of experiences beyond culture can influence their students' writing.

Providing strategies for avoiding plagiarism as it is defined in college classrooms in the U.S. is also an important form of support for international students. Essay writing and referencing of sources are practices that are embedded in the culture in which they occur (Abbate-Vaughn, 2009). Thus, international students may be unfamiliar with concerns about plagiarism and even mystified by the importance placed on citing sources and acknowledging ownership of ideas in the U.S. (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2013; see also Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2006).

Instructors should always bear in mind that second-language writing challenges do not indicate a lack of academic or cognitive ability. In-class conversations about students' experiences with writing in their native countries,

including genres of writing assignments and mechanisms for providing proper attribution and avoiding plagiarism, can be useful for this group of students.

Support for Generation 1.5 Students. To date, there has been a lack of empirical research on pedagogical strategies to meet the needs of this particular population, though as discussed earlier, that has begun to change. Although research that has examined the linguistic features of Generation 1.5 students' writing has yielded conflicting results, in our opinion, this student group will benefit more from ESL courses than developmental courses, though instructors should understand that these students may not identify as ESL students and may be resistant to placement in ESL courses. As a result, it is important to draw on students' strengths, such as their oral skills, and emphasize that they are fully functional bilinguals able to use each of their languages effectively for different purposes (Valdes, 2003) while providing them with opportunities to develop academic literacy in reading and writing.

Though Generation 1.5 students may appear to share characteristics with developmental students, developmental writing courses may emphasize process writing without providing sufficient instruction in grammar, which these students may need. In general, approaches that work for ESL students may work better than those used for developmental students, but ESL instructors should be able to differentiate in order to meet the needs of this student population. For example, grammar may need to be explicitly taught, keeping in mind the types of "errors" most prevalent for these students (de Kleine, Lawton, & Woo, 2014). Differentiation also needs to occur in order to support the needs of Generation 1.5 students enrolled in non-ESL (especially developmental) courses, which could include instruction in proofing strategies and ample opportunities for practice.

Writing centers can also provide important forms of support for Generation 1.5 students because they have the potential to recognize the learning abilities and limitations that distinguish Generation 1.5 students from other ESL learners; writing tutors (and writing instructors) can develop appropriate intervention strategies for this growing segment of the college-going student population (Thonus, 2003). Thonus identified several important principles that can be applied during writing conferences as well as other teacher-student exchanges, which include teaching the metalanguage and sociopragmatic conventions of writing, affirming students' cultural and linguistic heritage, balancing grammar corrections with rhetorical concerns, and offering explicit direction rather than appealing to native speaker intuitions (2003).

Bunch and Kibler (2015) also referred to the debate on whether Generation 1.5 students belong in ESL or “remedial” (developmental) courses and suggested alternatives to better serve these students’ needs. They referenced initiatives at several California colleges, which include integrating ESL curriculum and disciplinary content, offering learning communities, or linked classes that the same group of students takes with instructors who collaborate to develop common themes and assignments, and accelerating English through *sequence redesign* (Hern & Snell, 2011).¹⁰

Support for World English Speaking Students. Because World English speaking students, particularly those from countries where restructured varieties are spoken (de Kleine, 2006, 2009), experience challenges with written academic English, they need opportunities to understand the structural differences between their native varieties of English and the English required for academic success in U.S. colleges. The first step in this process is for World English speaking students (and this applies to all non-mainstream English speakers as well!) to develop language awareness, i.e., to learn that all human languages and language varieties have grammatical and sound systems and lexicons, that none is better than another, and that all are systematic and complex in their own way. Exploring structural patterns in one’s own language variety, for instance through analyzing music lyrics, can help students realize that non-mainstream English, too, is fully grammatical, albeit different from “standard” English grammar. This understanding then lays the foundation for writing instruction, as students begin to see that many of the “errors” they may be producing are actually patterns in their home language varieties. This approach is similar to the contrastive analysis approach advocated by Wheeler and Swords (2006) for AAE speakers (see below).

As the CCCC resolution highlighted, many educators believe that students should also be allowed to use their own language variety in education, including in academic writing. Canagarajah (2006, 2011) and Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur (2011), among others, have advocated for a translanguaging approach that encourages students to use both their own variety of English and the mainstream variety side by side in rhetorically effective ways. However, this approach presumes that students are aware of the differences among the English varieties that they use, and research demonstrates that this is often not the case (de Kleine, 2009, in press; Siegel, 2010). Therefore, any pedagogical approach for speakers of non-mainstream English, including World English varieties, must include

instruction that sensitizes students to the structural (mostly grammatical) differences between the different mainstream and non-mainstream varieties used in student writing. Once such linguistic awareness has been developed, instructors and students can make choices as to when and how translanguaging strategies will be applied in writing and writing instruction.

Support for African American English Speaking Students. In response to the “devastating rates at which schools fail African American students” (Rickford, 1999, p. 22), Wheeler and Swords (2004, 2006) offered ideas for creating an accessible, research-based approach in the dialectically diverse, multicultural classroom. Though their emphasis was on K-12 language arts, these suggestions can be effectively adapted for the college level. Wheeler and Swords rejected traditional responses to non-mainstream language varieties, which “correct, repress, eradicate, or subtract student language that differs from the standard written target” (2004, p. 473) in favor of a response based on the recognition that language comes in different varieties and styles, which are systematic and rule governed (Wheeler & Swords, 2004; see also Adger, Christian, & Taylor, 1999; Delpit & Dowdy, 2008; Perry & Delpit, 1998; Smitherman, 1986; Wolfram, Adger, & Christian, 1999). Contrastive analysis, a discovery-based approach that contrasts the grammatical patterns of AAE and mainstream English, has been implemented in multiple settings and has led to positive results (Wheeler & Swords, 2004, p. 474). This approach incorporates code-switching, i.e., choosing the pattern of language appropriate for a given context. Ball and Muhammad (2003) suggested emphasizing that a particular variety of a language may be more appropriate for given situations, purposes, and audiences rather than simply right or wrong. Effective literacy instruction should equip students for real-world situations that require effective communication with diverse speakers of different languages and language varieties in a wide variety of linguistic situations (Smitherman & Villanueva, 2003). Further, the linguistic codes and communicative styles that students bring to the classroom are connected to loved ones, community, and identity (Gay, 2010, p. 84). Delpit (2006) explained that to suggest that such codes and styles are wrong is to suggest that something is wrong with the student and his or her family. Thus academic English should be learned as a complement to home languages rather than as a replacement.

In contrast to contrastive analysis and code-switching, some scholars have advocated code-meshing, which is similar to translanguaging, as a preferred pedagogical

¹⁰ These initiatives are not exclusive to California colleges.

approach (see Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera, & Lovejoy, 2014). For example, Young (2014) supports a framework in which AAE speakers and other speakers would blend their language styles with the English used at school instead of being taught to use two separate codes. Though space does not permit an in-depth discussion of this approach, it is important to note that there may be challenges associated with keeping language varieties separate, and we encourage an exploration of pedagogical strategies that both support student success and affirm students' identities and languages.

Charity Hudley and Mallinson (2011) noted that educators have a special role to play in understanding the personal and cultural experience of African American English speaking students and helping them navigate between AAE and standardized English. When students speak non-standardized varieties of English, perceive that their language is devalued, and fail to receive appropriate feedback, they may feel discouraged from continuing their education (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011). Charity Hudley & Mallinson (2011) referred to studies that demonstrate the wide-ranging attitudes that educators have about African American English, both positive and negative (see Godley, Sweetland, Wheeler, Minnici, & Carpenter, 2006; Goodman & Buck, 1973; Terry, 2008). African American English speaking students may also experience differential treatment in the classroom because of prejudice against the variety of English that they speak and consequently lowered educational expectations (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011). Tensions surrounding the use of African American English may be a result of lack of familiarity with the language variety, so it is important for educators to understand the patterns that students employ in order to help them attain academic success. From the perspective of the composition classroom, Ball and Lardner (2005) claimed that instructors "must articulate for themselves their knowledge about their students' cultural practices and their thoughts about their own sense of efficacy and reflective optimism concerning their students" (pp. 144-145). Whether the context is composition, ESL, or developmental courses, it is important to consider Ball and Lardner's (2005) point that instructors must become reflective practitioners who consider how to capitalize on their students' language as a resource.

Wheeler and Swords, who claimed that instructors' attitudes can make or break relationships with students and, as mentioned, focused on "contrast" rather than "correction" (2006, p. 55), suggested that instructors familiarize themselves with common grammar patterns

in their students' writing. Other scholars (Crandall, 1995, 2003, citing Adger, 1997; Crandall & Greenblatt, 1999; de Kleine, 2009; Nero, 1997; Sewell, 1997) offered additional strategies that we see as effective both for AAE and World English speakers. These strategies include the use of literature written in different varieties and having students study different varieties of English. Instructors can also build on the varieties that students bring to class and foster respect for them by allowing students to write in their variety, particularly during the prewriting and drafting of papers. Students also need to be given extensive opportunities to use academic English in their reading and writing and to draft, revise, edit, and share their writings. Moreover, small group, in-class discussions about the similarities and differences in English varieties may be beneficial.

Support for All Linguistically Diverse Writers. Because academic writing skills constitute a key criterion for gaining entry to academic studies and exiting college degree programs (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999), and studies have shown that writing is the linguistic challenge that plagues students the most (Kanno & Grosik, 2012), support for writing is emphasized in this paper. Instructors and support professionals need knowledge and tools to assist students effectively as they develop writing skills. When working with linguistically diverse writers, instructors and tutors often feel overwhelmed and experience difficulty determining where to start. In a historical overview of ESL writing pedagogy, Raimes (1991) pointed out that the field is too diverse to recommend ways of teaching ESL in general. We concur and thus offer strategies that should work well for a range of linguistically diverse writers (not restricted to ESL pedagogy) but can be modified by instructors and tutors depending on their specific contexts.

Thonus (2014) noted that myths abound about the group she described as multilingual writers, and she offered several concrete suggestions for tutors, especially in non-ESL contexts. She suggested that they read about immigrant youth in U.S. public schools, develop a better understanding of the role that interlanguage¹¹ plays (or does not play) in the challenges experienced by multilingual writers, and familiarize themselves with second-language acquisition, possibly through learning another language themselves (we also suggest learning about "other" varieties of English). Thonus also pointed to Williams' (2004) study of multilingual writers' revisions of their writing after tutoring sessions and found that explicit scaffolding resulted in improvement. Because the point of tutoring is to individualize instruction, tutors must tailor their practices

¹¹ The term *interlanguage*, coined by Selinker in 1972, can be defined as the linguistic system constructed by a language learner that draws in part on the learner's L1 (first language) but is different from both it and the L2 (second language); therefore, an interlanguage is a unique linguistic system (Ellis, 1997).

to multilingual writers' needs (Thonus, 2014). All tutors can point out grammar and vocabulary "errors" and guide multilingual writers to helpful resources for self-correction (Thonus, 2014); we would add that instructors should attempt to individualize and differentiate instruction, to the extent possible. In addition, instructors can design exercises that help students focus on particular language features as they are used in specific types of texts (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011); this may be more effective than the use of decontextualized grammar exercises that do not apply to a particular assignment.

Again, consideration of students' backgrounds is important for both instructors and tutors. Writers may be ESL students who have only been in the U.S. for a short period of time, long-term immigrants, or students who speak and write non-mainstream varieties of English. All college professionals who support students as they learn to write academically should make an attempt to learn more about students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds and consider how those backgrounds may impact students' writing. For instructors, the use of a short questionnaire at the beginning of the semester may elicit insightful information, and tutors can ask a few key questions at the beginning of a tutoring session. Tutors or instructors working with students on an ongoing basis can conduct a diagnostic interview related to students' academic and language learning backgrounds (Reynolds, 2009).

Instructor feedback, which Kroll (2003) described as a central component of any writing course, is an important aspect of working with linguistically diverse writers. (See also Ferris, 2002; Goldstein, 2005.) Instructors need to be more intentional about feedback (Goldstein, 2005) and to take what Charity Hudley and Mallinson (2011) describe as a *linguistically informed* approach rather than a *correctionist* approach (see also Wheeler & Swords, 2006) because correcting or marking every error can be both exhausting for instructors and tutors and discouraging and counterproductive for students. Rather, a more successful approach is to focus on issues that appear most challenging and persistent for students, bearing in mind the specific purpose of any writing task or assignment. A small number of language patterns can be addressed at a time, which helps students understand why they use specific patterns, instead of worrying about every area (Smith & Wilhelm, 2007). Reynolds (2009) advised tutors and teachers to read an entire paper and then look for issues that most impair one's understanding of the text; from there, the issues that are most frequently repeated can be emphasized. He also noted the importance of prioritizing learning over correcting when addressing issues in students' writing. In addition, it may be best not to overemphasize micro-level errors, such as misuse of articles and prepositions,

because these are more arbitrary aspects of English that typically do not disrupt the overall meaning of the writing, may take years for ESL writers in particular to overcome, and often persist long after students have exited ESL or developmental courses. Instructors must also ensure that students understand how to use feedback, by providing explanations of how to avoid the types of errors that may be prevalent for certain students and examples of those errors. Students need to possess significant metalanguage to make use of written feedback, which instructors and tutors can help them develop. Charity Hudley and Mallinson (2011) cautioned against making assumptions about what students know, especially if it has not been taught explicitly; thus, instructors may need to provide examples of certain types of errors before they refer to them in written feedback on assignments.

Finally, one-on-one feedback conferences or conversations can provide instructors with the opportunity to learn more about students' language backgrounds and previous educational and writing experiences. Such conferences with students may also be necessary when instructors need to become familiar with the non-standardized English features that appear in students' writing (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011), especially outside of ESL contexts. Furthermore, instead of referring to these features as errors, instructors can describe them as language variations or differences between languages and draw writers' attention to those differences (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011). In addition, all students should be provided with low-risk opportunities to write so that they can express themselves in multiple ways without concern over grammar, punctuation, or other required conventions of academic English. Journal writing may work well for this purpose.

Strategies to Support Linguistically Diverse Students:

An Overview. To summarize and conclude this section, we provide a brief overview of the strategies identified to support the needs of linguistically diverse students:

- Culturally and linguistically responsive approaches comprise a variety of methodologies that build on the knowledge and skills (including language) that students already possess and use them as instructional resources. Within this overall framework, an understanding of students' backgrounds allows instructors to build relationships with students and differentiate instructional practices to best meet students' needs.
- Academic language should be emphasized, and scaffolds can assist students as they understand the language needed in academic contexts, develop linguistic "accuracy," and engage critically with complex texts.

- International students need opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills both in social and academic English and understand the writing conventions associated with academic English in the U.S. Literacy in their native language will help facilitate the development of academic language skills in English.
- Generation 1.5 students need opportunities to draw upon their strengths as fully functional bilinguals while they develop academic language skills. These students may need explicit grammar instruction and increased awareness of metalanguage.
- World English speaking students need opportunities to understand the structural differences between their native varieties of English and the academic English required in higher education.
- African American English speaking students, like World English speaking students, may benefit from an understanding of code-switching, with an emphasis on contrast rather than correction.
- Instructors and tutors should attempt to understand the backgrounds of linguistically diverse students when responding to their writing. Students may benefit from resources for self-correction, a better understanding of the language features of specific types of texts, and a differentiated approach to feedback that makes use of patterns in student writing and does not simply treat linguistic divergence as error.
- All linguistically diverse students should have opportunities to draw on their native languages and varieties as they develop academic English, and this language-based diversity should be regarded as a strength and resource. Conversations about the sociopolitical aspects of language can play a valuable role in helping students value their home languages and strengthen their use of the language variety expected in academic contexts.

What Recommendations Should Guide the Policies and Practices of Colleges?

The aim of this paper has been to raise awareness about linguistically diverse students at the college level in the U.S. in order to focus on the role of language, especially given that “immigrant and linguistic minority students are part of a ‘new mainstream’ that challenges educators and researchers to rethink the traditional normalization of ‘white, middle-class, [monolingual] English speaking experiences’ as ‘mainstream’” (Enright, 2011, p. 111, cited in Bunch & Endris, 2012, p. 166). It is important that linguistic awareness be cultivated throughout institutions so that decisions made about testing and placement policies, instruction,

and support services are informed by a linguistic rationale and are thus appropriately tailored to meet the needs of linguistically diverse students pursuing a college-level education. However, there is a need for more research that documents both the progress and challenges of linguistically diverse students in college. Such research should inform policy and instruction, with an emphasis on expanding access to a college level education and increasing the number of linguistically diverse college graduates.

Enhanced linguistic awareness, which can lead to the adoption of linguistically informed attitudes, is essential at the college level. From there, professional development is also crucial, especially for educators outside of ESL contexts and perhaps for developmental educators in particular, since instructors must be able to use linguistically and culturally responsive approaches in the classroom. Furthermore, strategies that effectively support all linguistically diverse students should be applied across institutions. As a starting point, we recommend that when interacting with linguistically diverse students, all college professionals can validate students’ home languages, acknowledge the challenges of learning in another language or variety and culture, point out that everyone has to learn the academic variety of a language, be patient and understanding, and ensure that students are aware of support services. Language is an essential component of one’s identity, so linguistic assimilation should not be encouraged; rather, opportunities for everyone, students and college professionals alike, to expand their linguistic repertoires should be encouraged and provided. Finally, institutions need to take steps to distinguish between the backgrounds and needs of linguistically diverse students when possible, bearing in mind the similarities and differences between subgroups within the broader linguistically diverse population.

Full discussions of many of the issues raised here are beyond the scope of this paper; however, we hope to have initiated a conversation about the need for colleges to better understand who linguistically diverse students are and more effectively support their success, inside and outside of the classroom. We argue that this can be done only when institutions commit to developing the linguistic awareness of all college professionals.

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