



The Search for a New Identity

A multimedia project by Lindsay Naggie featuring voices of faculty, staff and administrators from the ELL Program Reform with commentary by Shawna Shapiro (2011) author of “Stuck in the Remedial Rut”.

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ABSTRACT

In this multimedia publication, video excerpts from the faculty, staff and administrators who participated in round table discussions about the five-year reform of an English Language program at a large, urban institution are woven together to examine the critical question of *how* and *at what point* did the faculty and staff redefine community and common goals. Participants also discussed the challenges and opportunities the ESL (now ELL) Department faced in revising the program. The excerpts are grouped into three categories, and a written synopsis by the project author, Lindsay Naggie, is provided to draw out the connections. Shawna Shapiro, author of one of the reform's guiding texts, "Stuck in the Remedial Rut" provides additional commentary.

FOREWORD BY DR. SHAWNA SHAPIRO

When I wrote the article "Stuck in the Remedial Rut," I was trying to make meaning out of a messy situation. I had struggled for years to understand what was preventing curricular change in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program that I knew well and cared deeply about. I had assumed that if we could just get enough faculty and administrators to agree on the problems with the existing curriculum, we would be well on our way toward a more student-centered, academically relevant model. So I set about documenting students' dissatisfaction with the curriculum and identifying possible directions for reform. When first I presented these findings to my EAP colleagues, I encountered a lack of enthusiasm that I naively read as intransigence. Over time, however, I realized that something more was going on: The program was so institutionally marginalized that its faculty thought they had no control over their own curriculum. They were "stuck" in a remediation role, which prioritized institutional expediency over the needs, goals, and assets of students. Once I understood that these were identity issues—not instructional ones—I wanted to tell the story, in the hopes that it might provide insight to someone, somewhere, who was also hoping to enact curricular change.

I would have never anticipated receiving an invitation to contribute to a project about how that article had helped to catalyze curricular change at another institution. Learning about what Lindsay Naggie, Jeff Ellenbird, and their colleagues have done at Bunker Hill has been—and I mean this non-hyperbolically—one of the greatest delights of my career. They took this idea of institutional identity shift and asset-based approaches and ran with it. I am so inspired by what they have done, and by their commitment to reflecting deeply on how they did it. Thank you so much for including me in this project—it has meant so much to me!

INTRODUCTION BY LINDSAY NAGGIE

This project highlights the progress we have made in reshaping our attitudes and practices to be asset-based. Excerpts from four discussion groups are organized into three themes: reflection, institutional structures and taking ownership to move forward.

To experience the full version of this project, visit:

www.teachingforourtimes.org/the-search-for-a-new-identity

REFERENCES

Shapiro, S. (2011). Stuck in the remedial rut: Confronting resistance to ESL curriculum reform. *Journal of Basic Writing*, 30(2), 24–52. <https://doi.org/10.37514/jbw-j.2011.30.2.03>