Proposing EAL-Related Change Across an Institution

The Context

- A mid-sized private, non-profit university
- Divided into four colleges
- Great majority of students = online classes
- Previous ESL program was sunset years ago
- Diverse domestic EALs with unique needs
- International EALs admitted with a wide range of test scores and little ESL support
- New ESL program started and rebranded
- Many EALs still not being served through ESL
- Instructors and staff trying to cope
- Admin focus divided with other programs

The Reflection

Which of the details of this research context are similar to the context in which you work?

Which of the details are different than your own context?

How does the data gathered in this context compare with your beliefs and experiences, with your current context?

If you needed to propose some changes at your institution for the sake of your EALs, how do you think you would go about doing so effectively?

The Process

Observe, Experience, Communicate

Seek Support of Cross-College Leaders

Formulate, Administer, and Analyze Survey

Share outcomes, invite more cooperative input

Seek support to implement proposed action steps

The Results

Many instructors reported frustration in experiences with EAL students. In the face of limited EAL support, these instructors explored ways to deal with their own situations, including consideration of modified grading standards and course expectations.

Simultaneously, responses reflected interesting insight into instructor’s beliefs. For example, about half said they believe that small writing/speaking errors are not important in the professional field they represent. Yet the vast majority insisted that it is essential for students graduating from the university to be able to communicate all their ideas fluently, accurately, and professionally.

Patterns in Struggles, Great Input, and Triangulated Data to Highlight Needs for an Action Plan