

California Department of Education  
Adult Education Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

**ESL TEACHER INSTITUTE**

**K. LYNN SAVAGE**

**FOUNDING DIRECTOR**

Association of California School Administrators  
1988 - 1994

Dissemination Network for Adult Educators  
(Association of California School Administrators)  
1985 - 1988

California Adult Student Assessment System  
(San Diego Community College District)  
1983 - 1985

California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages  
1982 - 1983

Association of California School Administrators  
1980 - 1982

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San Francisco, California

**By Cuba Z. Miller**



K. Lynn Savage

CALIFORNIA ADULT EDUCATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

ESL TEACHER INSTITUTE

INTERVIEWEE: K. LYNN SAVAGE, Founding Director  
ESL Teacher Institute

INTERVIEWER: Cuba Z. Miller

[Session 1, April 2, 1998]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

MILLER: This is Cuba Miller interviewing K. Lynn Savage, Founding Director of the ESL Teacher Institute, in San Francisco, on April 2, 1998. The purpose of the interview is to record the origins of and Lynn's reflections on the project, as well as the impact it has had on California adult education and beyond the state's borders.

Good afternoon, Lynn.

SAVAGE: Hi, Cuba.

MILLER: Before we get into the background and details of the ESL Teacher Institute, will you give us just a brief overview of the project?

MILLER: Well, it was designed to train ESL teachers. Its need was because not only were a lot of people hired in adult education who were untrained in ESL, but a lot of the people who were trained [in

college as language instructors] were not trained to work with adult learners or English as a second language learners. They were coming out with academic backgrounds that worked more in a university than in an adult education setting.

MILLER: Okay, and so the classroom teacher was its main target then?

SAVAGE: The classroom teacher was its main target.

MILLER: Now, federal special projects such as the ESL Institute are adopted to address specific needs. You've made reference to these needs, but can we elaborate on them a little more?

SAVAGE: Well, actually, the first contract was in 1980, and it was when we had huge numbers of refugees coming in from Southeast Asia. Programs suddenly had a burgeoning ESL population. They needed to hire, and they needed to hire fast, and so the people being hired were usually untrained.

MILLER: Okay, so an exploding ESL population. And you mentioned the refugees. In the late '80s there was another major, major population group that impacted the state.

SAVAGE: The late '80s?

MILLER: With the IRCA [Immigration Reform and Control Act]?

SAVAGE: Oh, okay, with the naturalization, yes, and amnesty.

MILLER: With the naturalization legislation. Can you describe the typical adult ESL teacher for us?

SAVAGE: I suppose the first thing that comes to mind is they probably don't have permanent employment. [Chuckling] They're probably working on an hourly basis. Sometimes that's by choice because they may have families and another source of income, but frequently it's because they're unable to find full-time employment. There's a tendency in adult education to assume that our populations will change, and so to hire permanently in any one category hinders the institutions' meeting immediate needs.

MILLER: Okay, so they're part-time. How long do they stay on the job?

SAVAGE: I would say most of them want to stay, and do stay, even though they don't have the security of a full-time position. I would say we lose maybe 15 to 20 percent to non-educational jobs, and I would say we lose another 10 to 15 percent, at least in the ESL field, to full-time employment at the secondary level.

MILLER: Okay, so you're talking about somewhere between 25 to 35 percent that would be lost on an annual basis.

SAVAGE: Mm-hmm.

MILLER: And this then presents problems for the local agency.

SAVAGE: Mm-hmm, very much so.

MILLER: Constantly bringing in new people. What kind of training, for the most part, would these part-time teachers have when they're first hired?

SAVAGE: I would say they don't have training. They might have degrees, and I think it's more and more common in California now for the people who are being hired to have master's of arts in teaching English as a second language. But unfortunately the graduate programs are not very practical. They're much more theoretically based, and so the people may have an underlying understanding but not the practical skills.

MILLER: Okay, and you say *now*, and yet, in point of fact, these training programs started in the early '80s.

SAVAGE: Well, yeah, they started in the early '80s, and there weren't that many places that were giving master's of arts in teaching ESL. So a lot of the people who were hired were maybe trained to be teachers but not trained in teaching languages. Or, if they were trained in teaching languages, it would be probably a foreign language, not English.

MILLER: Maybe a Spanish major or a French major?

SAVAGE: Maybe Spanish or German, as in the case of Mary [McMullin, Director ESL Teacher Institute, 1990-95]. [Chuckling]

- MILLER: Okay, so we're talking then about a lot of part-time people, we're talking about people who have not had specific training in adult English language teaching, and we're talking about a fairly high level of turnover that presents problems for local agencies.
- SAVAGE: Mm-hmm.
- MILLER: Before the ESL Institute, had there been previous attempts to address those needs?
- SAVAGE: The only one that I'm aware of was in 1978 the Department of Education did a *major effort to do crash training in weekend* courses around the state aimed at people who had been hired to work with what we were then calling "the boat people." That's the only one that I'm aware of. Anything else that I have been aware of was more of a multi-disciplinary. It wasn't a discipline-specific kind of training, so it was more cross. . . . It wasn't content skills, it was more pedagogical skills.
- MILLER: Okay. Now, although we're generically talking about the ESL Teacher Institute, there were some kinds of false starts for the Institute. Why don't you tell us about the first ESL Staff *Development that you directed starting in 1980?*
- SAVAGE: In 1980 there was an RFP, a Request for Proposals, and the goal of that proposal was to train ESL teachers. And this was when there

were so many boat people, refugees from Southeast Asia, and schools were being impacted. There was a problem in two ways: one was that there weren't qualified people to teach, in terms of ESL; but the other was that the population that we were receiving was a new population that we were not used to dealing with because they were not literate in their first language, many of them. So, in addition to the fact that we didn't have trained ESL people, the people who were trained in ESL didn't have the skills to work with people who needed literacy skills.

The state let the RFP, and I was involved with the Association of California School Administrators [ACSA], and that was the successful proposal. It was a Friday night/Saturday training. It went from 6:00 to 10:00 on Friday night, and then again from 8:00 to 4:00 on Saturday. It was a really intense crash course for people, assuming a couple of things: assuming they didn't know that much about teaching ESL, and assuming they didn't know that much about materials. So the organizational structure for the training was around the print materials that were available for learners who were adults.

**MILLER:** And those were what you called the Core Workshops [ESL Methods and Materials]?



SAVAGE: We called them the Core Workshops. And the reason they were called *Core* is because it was giving people a core set of skills that would work with adult ESL learners.

MILLER: And so you tried to cover in roughly [eleven] hours what a—

SAVAGE: A master's program would do.

MILLER: [Chuckling] What a major training course for a second-language teacher would involve. Okay, and there were a couple of other components to that project. You had a summer—

SAVAGE: Oh yes, we did a Summer Institute—I think it was a three-day—where we brought in outside experts to do what was more depth. So, for example, I believe one of the workshops was on notional-functional syllabus design, which was big at that point in the field of language teaching. We brought somebody in who was well-known around the country. It gave people who were already in leadership roles in their own institutions an opportunity to bring their skills up, in terms of research and practice in targeted content areas. We did notional-functional syllabus design, we did teaching literacy to non-literate students, we did . . . I believe we did something on English for special purposes, we did something on observation strategies. . . .

- MILLER: So these summer programs then were primarily for the department chairs or resource instructors from the agencies around the state.
- SAVAGE: Yeah. The intention was really to help them build their skills.
- MILLER: Okay, and you let out some funds for local?
- SAVAGE: Actually, I believe that was the second year of the project. The first year of the project, the target was ESL. The second year of the project we were asked to expand our services, and really what we did is we inherited some activities that had been run through a professional organization. And one of the things we did was let money for what, I guess, more recently have been called mini-grants. If somebody had an idea and wanted to do something, they didn't need a whole lot of money to do it, but they needed something. And so to me it was almost like seed money to give people encouragement, and the local institution usually benefitted from it.
- MILLER: And were those generally, what, workshops or other projects?
- SAVAGE: No, they were usually products.
- MILLER: Products?
- SAVAGE: Products, yeah [such as curriculum writing].
- MILLER: All right. Now, that initial project ended after two years, in '82.
- SAVAGE: That's correct.

MILLER: What happened then? What happened to all this work that you had done?

SAVAGE: [Chuckling] Actually, there was a new contract for staff development which was for staff development in general, not a specific discipline. I chose not to go for that money because I felt my field was ESL, not the general adult education field. But through the efforts of one of the monitors that worked out of the Department of Education, there was an agreement that the CATESOL [California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages], the professional organization for ESL teachers, would become the fiscal source for the ESL workshops, and they handled them for one year under the leadership of Sharon Seymour [currently with City College of San Francisco] and Leann Howard [San Diego Community College]. After that one year, the professional organization felt that they didn't really . . . they felt like they were getting into something they weren't really ready to get into, and so they chose not to continue. And then CASAS [Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System, San Diego Community College], which was the assessment project, very generously agreed to become the fiscal agent so that those workshops could continue. Basically, from '82 to '85, I would say

there was lots of solid support for maintenance, but not much opportunity for growth because there wasn't the funding of a staff person.

MILLER: So the workshops were delivered but there was no updating of materials, no increase in the number of trainers, no improving trainer skills.

SAVAGE: Correct.

MILLER: Okay, now, certainly these Core Workshops, or this staff development project that you ran from '80 to '82, laid the foundation for the ESL Teacher Institute then?

SAVAGE: Mm-hmm.

MILLER: What else in your background contributed to your expertise to direct this project?

SAVAGE: Well, I think I need to look at it in two terms: one is the content expertise and the other is the administrative expertise. In terms of content, I started in adult education before I got my degree in English as a second language, and so I have always been in adult education. I started overseas, but when I came to San Francisco I worked with a community-based organization, which gave me an opportunity to see a broader scope for adult education than a publicly funded school. Administratively, I was the education

coordinator for a community-based organization. I was the lead developer on another funded project in the late '70s, which gave me an opportunity to get comfortable with working with different kinds of people. I also directed the West Coast office of the Center for Applied Linguistics, which gave me management skills in terms of budget and organization hierarchy and that kind of thing.

MILLER: Okay. And by this time you were also with San Francisco, and what was your position there?

SAVAGE: City College of San Francisco?<sup>1</sup>

MILLER: Yes.

SAVAGE: I was hired in '74 as an ESL teacher. In 1982 I became a vocational ESL resource instructor.

MILLER: Okay, and as a resource instructor, you then. . . ?

SAVAGE: I was responsible for setting up new programs and training teachers.

MILLER: Training teachers. Very much as the Institute did.

SAVAGE: Absolutely.

MILLER: And you mentioned a more general staff development project. You were on the Consortium of the CBAE [Competency Based Adult

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<sup>1</sup>Prior to 1992 the San Francisco Community College District was divided into two administrative units with separate presidents: the Community College Centers which contained adult education (noncredit courses); and City College which was the credit division. Now everything is referred to as City College.

Education] Staff Development [San Francisco State University], and you did some work with them which impacted your work with the Institute later on.

**SAVAGE:** Very much so. The Consortium was established so that people were brought in because of expertise in a particular area, and I was brought in as the vocational ESL expert. That project began doing videos, and I had the opportunity to do a series of four videos that were on establishing programs for vocational ESL. So the videos that I did for the staff development project at San Francisco State gave me an opportunity to develop some skills that I hadn't had before. The goal of the videos was different, because the goal of [those first] videos was designing how to set up a program, which is much broader than what we did with the ESL Teacher Institute.

**MILLER:** But they still had training packets with them, didn't they?

**SAVAGE:** They had training packets with them, but they were not. . . .

**MILLER:** The audience was different?

**SAVAGE:** The audience was different and the goal was different. The videos were more informational than skill development.

**MILLER:** All right. Now, when the RFP then for this new teacher training came out for the ESL Teacher Institute. . . . No, it was not an RFP?

SAVAGE: It was not an RFP. At the time that it began [in] 1985 there were three projects that were funded through the state. One was funded for dissemination [Dissemination Network for Adult Education, DNAE, sponsored by ACSA], one was funded for assessment [CASAS], and one was funded for staff development. And because the ESL training was considered a successful project with a product and a system, it became a part of the Dissemination Network, which was disseminating previously proven practices.

MILLER: Okay, actually going back then to the two-year project that you had. I mean, is that what they were saying was proven practices?

SAVAGE: Yeah, which had been maintained through CATESOL and CASAS.

MILLER: Okay. Well, at any rate, you got a new license. We'll put it that way. [Chuckling]

SAVAGE: Okay. [Chuckling]

MILLER: So, as you set out with your new license [and a new name], did you have a vision for what you wanted? What guided you in shaping the Institute, starting in 1985?

SAVAGE: I don't know if I had a vision. I had a concern, and it was a concern that I had developed from '80 to '82, which is: to be successful, it's important that the people who are doing the training have some consistency, that it's not dependent on the personality of

the trainer. And so I felt that materials. . . . We talk about books that are teacher-proof, and that's a bit of an insult and I don't like that term, but I would take that term and transfer it to training. I felt that the materials needed to be trainer-proof. We all have good days and bad days, and if your materials have it there, then if the trainer for some reason has forgotten something or missed something, the trainee still has the opportunity to get it. So I guess my vision was beefing up the training materials.

**MILLER:** Okay, and you modeled the training materials on one model of staff development. Do you want to tell us about that?

**SAVAGE:** Well, actually, from '80 to '82, what we tried to do is the trainers would demonstrate a technique, and they would use the workshop participants as students in order for them to experience the technique. After I got exposed to video through the San Francisco State project, I realized the potential for video. It's also very difficult as a trainer to be constantly switching between modeling, teaching, and then speaking as a trainer to a group of teachers. So what we started doing was putting the things that we wanted to model onto video so that the trainer would not have to play two roles in the training process.



**MILLER:** One big change from your Friday night/Saturday, which, although it was over two days, it was still a one-shot deal, you made a major change in that approach as well.

**SAVAGE:** What we had found through research, from reading the research, the literature, is that you need staff development over time. And so what we did is we took the content that had been packaged from '80 to '82, laid a CBE [competency based education] component on top of it, because that was the direction the state was going, and then we divided it into three sections so that trainees would go three different times to get their training. I have to say that the trainers were very skeptical about how successful we would be, they were very concerned about drop rate. . . . They really were quite nervous about that approach, and it worked just fine.

**MILLER:** All right, let's go into some detail now about the project and about the modules. Certainly you went through many steps before training actually began, but I still think that's the best place for us to start. Describe the training for us and how it exemplified elements of successful staff development that you said that the research pointed out. So, just describe the training program in a lot of detail for us.

**SAVAGE:** Well, basically, if I were a teacher going to one of these workshops, there would be a four-step process—actually, initially a three-step process. We would provide some information, which would be a presentation. We would model what it was we were talking about so they could observe it. Then we would give them some kind of task so they had an opportunity to work with it, to practice. What was missing initially was there was no opportunity for them to discuss what happened after they left the training. So, by divvying it up so that they came back, then they got an opportunity to discuss their experiences in their own classrooms, and that was a way that we began to incorporate some feedback.

In 1985-86, we hired an outside consultant to do some serious evaluation because there was. . . . The question was: you're training all these people, but is any change taking place in the classroom? So, based on that, fifty teachers were observed in their classrooms, pre-training and post-training, to see what kind of change was taking place. And based on that, we developed something called a feedback form, which was very clear teaching steps, so that people knew exactly what to be looking for. We completed the cycle that is a part of the training model, which is: presentation, demonstration, practice, and feedback.

MILLER: The feedback form then was what you used to achieve that last step of application?<sup>2</sup>

SAVAGE: Yes.

MILLER: Okay, what determined the content of the modules? Well, your target audience, for one.

SAVAGE: Well, the target audience. Initially we were looking at the four basic skills for language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. But then we started breaking that down into something more finite, which was looking at specific techniques that are quite well-known in the field of language teaching, and especially English language teaching. And they fell into those four categories of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but there were a range of what we call techniques within those categories. They were selected because a good ESL teacher has them and is able to call upon them when they're needed and make them their own, in terms of a broader lesson, and because a lot of the published materials for learners were using those strategies. So, for example, with speaking, one of the things that happened is we moved away from the audio-lingual, stimulus response, behaviorist approach to more communicative.

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<sup>2</sup>See Appendix A for a copy of the feedback form.

Something called "information gap" became very popular among ESL teachers. So, one of the things we did was information gap.

**MILLER:** And of these techniques, some of them were more appropriate for lower levels?

**SAVAGE:** Yes, some are more appropriate and some are more appropriate for higher. We did dialogue drill, which is an old audio-lingual approach, but they're still. . . . The most successful textbooks that the authors are making the most money [Chuckling] are still basing that on audio-lingual pattern practice, dialogue substitution, and that's very appropriate for a low-level learner. It's very boring for somebody who has a language base. So, for that [higher] level [of English proficiency] we look more at things like role play, problem posing, problem solving. We look at reading. When we deal with the reading skill, we have to think about whether the readers are non-readers. If they already read in their first language, then the kinds of skills we're teaching them are more related to the culture, in terms of things like skimming and scanning and organizational structure. Whereas if they're not literate in their first language, we're looking at sound/symbol relationships and just putting print in sequence.

**MILLER:** Okay. So there were a number of things that went in here then.

[telephone rings - tape turned off]

MILLER: You were juggling a lot of balls, in terms of the language skills, the class level—the beginning levels versus the upper levels—and inexperienced teachers and experienced teachers. So, how did you handle all of that? [Chuckling]

SAVAGE: Well, fortunately in ESL there are some people who are omnivores and they'll just come to anything no matter what, and usually end up going away happy. But we did divide into two tracks after 1985. I believe it was probably about '86 or '87 that we started doing training for experienced teachers and training for inexperienced teachers. And the training for the inexperienced, basically the difference was the approach, it wasn't the content. So, with the experienced teachers, you would assume that they already had a base knowledge of whatever you were training on and you would build more from their experience, and then, based on what you found, go forward. Whereas with the inexperienced you would assume that they didn't have that knowledge base, and so you would start out like you would with any class that was a new subject matter.

MILLER: And in fact, for the inexperienced teachers you always started with lesson planning?

**SAVAGE:** Actually, yeah. Interestingly enough, a local agency [Palo Alto Adult School] that is using ESL Institute materials now, one of the ways she [Kara Rosenberg, ESL Coordinator] managed to establish rapport within her own faculty is she started with lesson planning, not with the assumption that they didn't know—she knew they didn't know—but her rationale to the teachers was "This gives us all a common language to talk about. So it's not that you don't know this, and don't think that you don't know it, it's just so that we all have a common base from which we start." So actually yes, the lesson planning was very important. And in fact, one of the problems I think with ESL and adult education is frequently the less experienced or less skilled teacher does lots of techniques but they're not put together into a lesson. So it's lots of fun and games—

**MILLER:** So it's just kind of a series of things.

**SAVAGE:** Of activities, but not necessarily related to each other, and certainly not following the five-step lesson plan.

**MILLER:** Okay. And then, in addition to these skills and techniques and so on, the modules also contained theory?

**SAVAGE:** Absolutely. Yeah, and again that relates to the integration of theory and practice. An example that I can think of is in one of

the modules that's on reading. It's very important that the learners get the theory, because in ESL a lot of people think that if you have a learner read out loud, they're practicing reading, and in fact what they're doing is practicing pronunciation. So, it's not that we won't want them to read out loud, but we want to be sure that the teachers understand that if they have the learners reading out loud, *what they're doing is a speaking activity, they're not doing a reading activity*, and that reading skills are something different. So, yes, absolutely, that theory piece is crucial if you want the teacher to be able to make a decision down the road about which learners he uses it with, where he uses it in the lesson.

MILLER: Okay. You had to develop materials for trainers and then the materials for the participants as well.

SAVAGE: Actually, we started out developing materials for the participants, and then we realized that just because we're all working off the same piece of paper doesn't mean we're all working for the same outcome. We went through a stage where we were trying to have the trainers do everything the same way. We grew beyond that and recognized that you can do things in different ways but you want the same outcome for the learners, and so we did develop trainer packages. *Again, that was pretty much modeled after the San*

Francisco State project, which had done trainer packages, and we had not done them from '80 to '82.

**MILLER:** Okay, now certainly we've mentioned the videos before, and they were a vital part of the training, let's go into some detail about the use of those. You've alluded to this, but let's nail it down. Why use videos? You had master teachers that were delivering the training, so what's the advantage of the video?

**SAVAGE:** The advantage of the video is that you have teachers looking at teachers using the [technique] in the classroom; whereas if you do it in a training session, they're not doing it with learners, they're doing it with other teachers. And so the teachers who are a bit less receptive are always going to say, "Well, yes, but if you had real students . . . not this, this." So one reason was you got to see them actually use it in a classroom. And another is, if you're going to model it in a workshop, you have to have somebody playing the part of the student, which becomes the trainee. So the trainee is so busy being a student he's missing observing what makes the practice work.

**MILLER:** Okay, and consistency, I suspect, would play a part in this.

**SAVAGE:** Absolutely, consistency. If I modeled a technique and two other trainers modeled a technique, we wouldn't necessarily always be



modeling exactly the same things. So what the teacher would walk away with wouldn't be the same, which meant you couldn't expect the same outcomes from the people you're training.

MILLER: How did you choose which classes to videotape?

SAVAGE: That was a real challenge. I felt very strongly that the people that were being videotaped needed to be so comfortable with their teaching that they would not be disturbed by having two cameras, one on wheels rolling around the room—I think later on we even actually had three cameras—a microphone plugged to the back of them while they walked around the room with their students, with a cord hanging out behind. So they had to be so secure in what they were doing that they could tune all that out, forget that they were being taped, and just teach. Because it's very, very important, I think, for the teaching to be very natural. It should not be staged, it should be like any classroom. I wanted things to go wrong, as well as to go right, because I wanted teachers to be able to identify with the teacher that was on the screen. First of all they had to be comfortable not only with all that but also with whatever strategy we were after. So, for example, a teacher in San Francisco [Christine Bunn, co-author of *Stepping Out*] was doing life skills reading, and I knew that she had written a book that had lots of life

skills readings in it, so I knew that she was really on top of what was involved with that. I also knew that she had interesting ways of doing it that was more student-centered and less teacher-centered, because she used stations around the room and the learners moved from station to station to read the different examples. And I knew about her through . . . not only was she a friend, but she had presented at this professional organization. So, some of the people came through . . . my awareness of them through things they had done at TESOL [Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages] or CATESOL, some of them came through recommendations of their resource teachers or their directors. I think almost all of them were actually ESL Institute trainers, though we did branch out.

**MILLER:** Did you have to do lots of observation before making your final selection?

**SAVAGE:** Actually, we didn't do lots of observation before making our final selection. In the entire series, we did a total of . . . well, I did a total of twelve or thirteen, and then after me there were four or five more, which I'm not as familiar with. But in the twelve or thirteen that I oversaw, there was only one that never worked. And

that's because it was rehearsed. We found out after the fact that the teacher had practiced the students, so it wasn't a real lesson.

MILLER: That's interesting. In addition to watching the teacher in the classroom, there were also interviews with the teachers, usually as voice-overs. What was the purpose of those?

SAVAGE: Actually, [Chuckling] it was not a part of the original design, but I realized as we were editing that there were things that happened that weren't necessarily what the teacher would have wanted to have happen, and I felt it was important for the teacher to have an opportunity to comment. Because I knew that once you're on videotape it . . .

MILLER: It's there.

SAVAGE: It's there and you're subject to a great deal of criticism that may or may not be justified, and I felt that it was important that teachers be able to speak to what was happening.

MILLER: So it was essentially them making comments on their own performance.

SAVAGE: Mm-hmm.

MILLER: All right. Now, one other component of the training, and I guess this came about a little later but was still part of the modules, and that was the self-directed part.

SAVAGE: Yeah, independent study. And this was actually Cindy Ranii, who was one of our ESL Institute trainers who worked at Fullerton, it was her. . . . She got a mini-grant to do it, and then she worked with us and she also worked with John Tibbetts from San Francisco State on it. Actually, I think to me this is one of the greatest things about it, because the intention is that people be able to get training when they're ready for it, and that's not necessarily when the state has decided to schedule a workshop. So, what this has done is it's made possible for a resource teacher who knows his faculty and knows where the faculty wants to go, and has the materials, can check out a training module to a teacher. The teacher can watch the video at home, the teacher can work his way through the print materials, and then there are key points in the training where that teacher needs to meet with someone. The first point is after the presentation piece, which is the theory, to be sure they got the theory; the next one is after the observation of the video, to be sure they saw the key steps and understood those key steps; then the next one is they develop their own guided practice activity, they get feedback on that; and then they develop an original piece that they'll use in their classroom, they get feedback on that; and ideally the resource teacher would actually go into the classroom, observe,

at the invitation of the teacher, so that they could get feedback on that. So, what it does is it gives it flexibility for open-enrollment staff development.

**MILLER:** Lynn, tell us about your trainers. How were they selected and what kind of training did they go through, and that kind of thing?

**SAVAGE:** Initially, in 1980, the state was divided into eight adult ed regions, and we selected one trainer for each region. The way I selected them was by looking at people who had been doing presentations at CATESOL over the years, so I knew they had experience in making presentations, and through resource teachers who had people on staff that they knew would be good. For example, in San Diego and Los Angeles I was given names by the people who were running the ESL programs. In the Santa Cruz area it was through a CATESOL regional that I found someone. The initial training was—

**MILLER:** I want to interrupt just a minute because I'm just astounded. You're saying one trainer from each region?<sup>3</sup>

**SAVAGE:** Uh-huh.

**MILLER:** You've previously told me that it was Friday night and all day Saturday?

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<sup>3</sup>See Appendix B for list of original eight trainers and their regions.

SAVAGE: Yes, it was. [Laughter]

MILLER: Okay. [Chuckling]

SAVAGE: Yes, it was Friday night and all day Saturday. We did eight workshops that first year, and I did all eight, so there were two trainers.

MILLER: Oh, there were two trainers? [Chuckling]

SAVAGE: There were two trainers. I did all eight. Actually, you know, that was one of the payoffs for me because, of course, each of those trainers had skills that were different, and so at the end of the year I felt like I had had private tutoring and training from eight different people. But it was also a way for me to find out what was working and what wasn't working with the materials. And then the next year each of those people I worked with worked with someone else, and I observed each training but I didn't train. So, by the end of the second year we had sixteen trainers, two in each region. Those were basically the people who trained between '82 and '85.

[tape turned off]

MILLER: Did each of your eight trainers pick their own co-trainer from their region?

SAVAGE: No.

MILLER: You still picked the other person?

SAVAGE: We worked together on it. I needed to be sure it was somebody they were comfortable working with. But no, because when you're doing something like this, it's very important that you have representation from a variety of agencies, a variety of sizes, and that the trainers have a broader understanding than their own classroom. You want trainers who are still in the classroom, because that's what gives them credibility with the teachers, but you don't want them so limited to their classroom that they don't understand broader issues.

MILLER: Okay. Now, did you do any specific training with those trainers in that first couple of years?

SAVAGE: No, we just worked together. We—

MILLER: Kind of played it by ear?

SAVAGE: Usually we met on a Saturday. Sometimes we drove, met at a halfway point, or I flew in, but we usually met for about a full day prior to the training to just go through everything, who was going to do what, how we were going to do it, what the purpose was.

MILLER: But no formal training as a group?

SAVAGE: But no formal training.

MILLER: Okay. Now, that changed then in '85.

SAVAGE: That changed significantly in '85.

**MILLER:** So go ahead and tells us. I imagine you started out with the same core trainers?

**SAVAGE:** Actually, between '82 and '85 a few new people were brought on because there was such a demand. So when I came back to it in '85, I would say we probably had about twelve or thirteen trainers, and probably 25 percent of those were people that had not worked with me before—but had worked with someone I had worked with. The first step in '85 was putting the CBE layer on, so I met with teams to do. . . .

[tape turned off]

So we met in teams to work with the materials. The initial reason we brought the trainers together, really, I think, as I try to recall, was looking at the training materials and refining the training materials. And we came together . . . I don't remember if it was only once a year or if it was more than once a year, but where we ultimately ended was once a year we brought all the trainers together, and the goal was to not only refine the training materials but it was to refine our own skills as trainers. We did . . . what's it called? I can't even remember what it's called. Microtraining, where we actually stood up and tried training in front of our peers and evaluated each other's training. We also brought in outsiders.



For example, we brought somebody in on learning styles, and then we all measured our learning styles. And what people came to realize was they were better off co-training with someone who had a different learning style than theirs. We brought in somebody on cognitive coaching so that they could improve the quality of the questions that were being asked when they did training. And I would say probably people looked at the ESL Institute because of the products that developed for training, but I think the biggest product it developed was trained trainers.

**MILLER:** All right, now, did your trainers. . . . You said that you looked at materials. Did any of them actually write materials?

**SAVAGE:** Oh, absolutely. Initially I did all the writing. Beginning in '85, what I tried to do was find what I would call content experts who did the print material. The content expert was different from the teacher that was on the video, and sometimes the content expert edited the video of a teacher that was demonstrating, sometimes it was a third person who did the video editing. The content expert was a person who knew the technique well, who was willing to take some time to research the literature so they could write a nice page-and-a-half summary of the theory, because we didn't want to overwhelm

teachers with theory, and then who had access to knowledge about teachers who were using that especially well.

MILLER: And was that a wide range of your trainers, or three or four that did most of the writing besides you?

SAVAGE: Probably half a dozen, maybe eight.

MILLER: Pretty good participation then?

SAVAGE: Uh-huh. In '85 we had about twelve trainers, and by the time I left in '90 we had sixty. And we grew too fast, I think, in terms of the number of trainers.

MILLER: Okay, that you didn't get them all up to the same level?

SAVAGE: Right.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

MILLER: This is side B of tape 1 of the Lynn Savage interview. Lynn, certainly another major task for the Institute was handling the logistics. In other words, your administrative part of it, the scheduling and delivery of services. What kind of challenges did that present for you?

SAVAGE: Well, of course, the first thing is you don't want to schedule something where you can't find a trainer, so you've got to balance the need, the location, the area, the host, and a trainer's schedule.

The demands on the host site, I think, were fairly. . . . We gave a lot of guidance to the host site. We felt very strongly about things, like the kind of refreshments that were served, receiving the materials ahead of time, a host site having somebody there able to provide support to the trainers. Towards the end, we even required a photocopy machine, because the teachers would develop materials and they'd be photocopied and people would walk away with a set of materials. And I would say over the years I found that some host sites were much easier to work with than others. I think that that was one challenge.

And this is silly, but another challenge was getting really good directions. Because if you have people who come to training and they've had trouble getting there, you can never turn them around so that they're ready to receive training, and so it was very important that the maps and the narrative that told you how to get someplace was clear. In the first couple of years, I went to every place and went through the whole thing myself to be sure that was all done right. But towards the end I didn't do any of that, and of course towards the end we had a file. But even simple things like signs on-site to direct people to where you're going. Some of the plants were quite large, and if there wasn't a sign at the main gate,

by the time a teacher got to the room they were angry. Or they drove three hours to get there, and they got there and the host hadn't come [early enough] so that the coffee would be ready by the time the first person came. So they had to wait thirty minutes for coffee and they weren't happy. You know, I think the greatest challenge was those subtle little things that it takes a while for. . . . Well, if you're a host and—

MILLER: But they can make or break the success of—

SAVAGE: That can make or break it, that has nothing to do with the content, and it seems like. . . . I'm sure that some host sites probably felt we were being very nitpicky about things, but it really makes a difference for the trainers.

MILLER: Did you have major obstacles at the start-up of the project, or actually anytime during the course of the project? Anything that just kind of kept getting in your way?

SAVAGE: Yeah, changing state priorities. [Chuckling] We had to change our delivery system several times based on directions that the state was going. One year we were told that local agencies would have to purchase services. Another year we were told that we were only to provide services to the demonstration sites. So this changing . . . it wasn't changing what we were doing, but it was changing who we

were to serve. And it made it difficult for the field because they would come to depend on something and they'd build it into their plan, and then the following year. . . . This would usually happen over the summer. So they would have built their staff development plan in the spring for the following year, something would happen over the summer, and they'd come back and they would find that they thought they had a service that they didn't have, or they didn't think they had a service and they had it. So that constant changing of direction produced challenges that sometimes I think it was difficult to rise to. Another challenge was—

**MILLER:** Along that line, one year then the state really took all project personnel to evaluate pilot sites for the demonstration sites, and it took you away from your main task.

**SAVAGE:** That's correct, that's correct. And another challenge was from '85 to '90, I never had funding more than one year in a row, and frequently when the trainers came in June for their training, we didn't know if we had funding the next year. So. . . .

**MILLER:** It made long-range planning. . . .

**SAVAGE:** It made it very difficult for the trainers. And I'm sure it made it difficult on the state monitor, who would have to come in and say,

"Well, we think but we're not sure." And the trainers were frustrated by that, and I was, too. [Chuckling]

MILLER: You operated your project on minimal staff.

SAVAGE: Absolutely. I never had more than one person. No, that's not true. I think the last couple years I had a data compiler, who was part-time, but basically it was me and an assistant.

MILLER: Okay. Now like when your trainers would write a module, would they get paid for that?

SAVAGE: Absolutely. And I shouldn't say *absolutely* so strongly, because on hindsight the pay was quite minimal. I think initially we were doing \$500 a module. And as I look at it now and think about the work that went into it, it was a lot [we were asking of them]. However, they got a lot of support in terms of editing. I did a lot of editing. I did a lot of the writing on things that had other people's names on them, too. We had a given format. I mean, there was a lot that was actually developing the skills, and I like to look at things that way, so, yes, they were paid. They were paid very minimally, but they also were getting a lot of opportunity to grow.

MILLER: Okay.

SAVAGE: One of the things we went around on was whether or not trainers should be paid when they came to their training of trainers sessions,

and the policy would change from year to year. And I could accept their not being paid because I really did feel that they were becoming. . . . We all—not just them but me too—were getting an opportunity to grow without having to pay a tuition to do that, so I could accept the fact that there wasn't an honorarium or a stipend to come to that training. But that was a difficult thing for some of the trainers to accept, especially if they were not tenured faculty.

MILLER: Or if they had to take off work to come.

SAVAGE: Or had to take off work to come. And most institutions were willing to cover the pay of the trainer because. . . . Not most. Some of the institutions were willing to cover the pay of the trainer because they recognized that that trainer was going to give service to their own agency based on the skills that they were getting at the training. But some didn't see that and weren't willing to pick up that piece.

MILLER: Yeah. It makes it hard. [Chuckling] A number of changes took place during the course of the project, and again the project had different phases. Maybe we ought to just pick up those phases now. And Lynn, you said that you had identified six periods that involved either a funding or an administrative change. Why don't you just

summarize those for us and then we'll talk about some of the changes.

SAVAGE: Okay. Well, '80 to '82 was the initial year of the project. It's when we were training people that weren't trained, and our goal was to have them use textbooks correctly. So, it was driven by the books that were in the field and how to use those books and what the underlying techniques were behind those books. Eighty-two to eighty-three was under CATESOL. It was under Sharon Seymour, who was, I believe, the adult level chair of CATESOL at the time and a resource teacher at the College of Marin, which had federal dollars for adult education. It was a maintenance year. Eighty-three to eighty-five was under CASAS. We had a northern and a southern person handling it. Leann Howard was the person in the south, Sharon Seymour was the person in the north, and they took responsibility for getting the materials duplicated, setting up the training schedule, matching the trainers to the schedule, getting the materials mailed out. Again that was maintenance. Then '85 to '90 was when I was directing it under . . . initially under the Dissemination Network for Adult Educators, ultimately its own project through the Association of California School Administrators.



MILLER: And that's when the name *ESL Teacher Institute* came in was in '85.

SAVAGE: That's when the name *ESL Teacher Institute* came in. That's when we brought in Judy Alamprese, who was then a consultant for Cosmos, to do an evaluation study, and we observed fifty teachers pre-/post-training. That's when we began doing videos for the modeling portion of techniques, and that's when we [started going] from twelve to sixty trainers. That's also the period of time when three of the trainers—Leann Howard, Cindy Ranii, and myself—received Honig's [Bill Honig, California Superintendent of Public Instruction] award for work that had been done. To me, it was really an award to the Institute for the work that had been done. [During] that [five-year] period we focused on the training method, we developed modules, adapted them for independent study, and followed that presentation modeling guided practice and feedback. Ninety to ninety-one I had left the project but it had one more year of funding, and Mary McMullin, who had done extensive writing of modules and contributed a lot of ideas, came in [from *ABC Adult School, Cerritos*] as director. We had started the previous year. . . . Eighty-nine to ninety we had started a whole new series of modules on cooperative learning, and Mary had been the key person on that, and so in ninety and ninety-one we moved

away from the standard ESL techniques into things that were a little bit more non-discipline-specific. And then at the end of '91 there was an RFP, Request for Proposals, and there were, I believe, three that were submitted to the state. And Mary submitted with the Association of California School Administrators. She had writers on board, *Leann Howard*, *Marilyn Knight Mendelson* [Napa Valley Adult School], and *Lori Howard* [Los Angeles Adult Education], and they became a staff of four content people, and they were the successful bidders. Their focus was mentor training.

**MILLER:** Okay. Now, let's talk then about the scope of some of the changes that have taken place through the years. Certainly I think we can start off by talking about increasing sophistication of the project. What were some other changes? Now you've mentioned some of them, but let's talk about them a little bit. How did you change your selection of trainers? You said you had this tremendous growth, so there was something involved there.

**SAVAGE:** Initially I had handpicked them, not particularly democratic and not particularly open. It was decided that we needed a more systematic approach, something that you could document, so we developed an application process—actually a nomination process—which went to directors of adult ed or others in leadership at the local level, and

we asked for nominations. We evaluated those nominations based on academic background, position with the agency, experience in training. I believe that was the criteria. One of the things that I think was good about that is . . . really, one of the benefits for an agency is they have a trainer they can use in-house and they're not having to pay to send that trainer out to get trained. That trainer comes back with a lot of skills. One of the disadvantages of that process was once in a while somebody really wanted to be a trainer and they would get somebody to nominate them; and that person didn't even feel they were qualified, but they would still nominate them.

**MILLER:** Left it up to you to do screening.

**SAVAGE:** Yeah, and so we had to come up with a rather detailed screening process. And that really was late in the game that that was happening. That was the late '80s, early '90s that that developed. We actually were mandated by the state to have the number sixty. And we went from about . . . we went gradually from fifteen to thirty, and then after we got thirty we were told we needed sixty, and jumped.

**MILLER:** What was the thinking on that?

**SAVAGE:** That the demand was so great and that there shouldn't be extensive expenses in getting trainers to training sites. They needed to be spread around the state, and there needed to be enough so that if somebody requested training that you had somebody who was available to train on the date that was requested.

**MILLER:** Okay, and yet you felt that generally you lost some control over the quality of trainers when you made that big jump.

**SAVAGE:** Very much so.

**MILLER:** Okay. Being selected as a trainer didn't mean that you trained in everything, however.

**SAVAGE:** That's correct. We had a certification process. It didn't start that way. It started that if you were an ESL trainer, you knew ESL, you could train on anything. But as we went into specific techniques, we developed a certification process which involved actually taping yourself using the technique, and then having a colleague, a peer, or a mentor reviewing your tape with a feedback form, to be sure that you in fact were modeling that technique in the way that it was presented on the demonstration video. Actually, that process started. . . . Well, we'll get to that later, but that process started because of a need to certify people out of state.

MILLER: Oh? Okay. All right. Now, the main thrust here was teacher training, but later you added a component for training coordinators. What was behind that?

SAVAGE: I think there were two things behind it. One was research says that if your coordinators aren't behind what's going on, if your leadership isn't behind what's going on, then it's a waste of time to bother with the teachers. Well, actually, we have a horror story. We did training on focused listening, which is heavily dependent on audiotapes, in a location which was predominately attended by one agency, only to discover that no tape recorders were available to the faculty. *So there was a great deal of hostility on the part of the teachers.* And that brought to our awareness level, painfully so, that it was unfair to coordinators to do that kind of thing without the coordinator knowing in advance what the teachers were being provided and what they needed in order to implement.

MILLER: Also, did that help in that final stage of practice with feedback? Were you asking the coordinators to follow through on the teacher training?

SAVAGE: We wanted something to happen that didn't require the coordinator to observe, because sometimes coordinators are evaluators and we didn't want to mix those two roles. But things happen. For

example, the coordinator would create car pools for people to go to the next session. As a result, in the car, quality discussion took place around the content of the training as opposed to other things. Sometimes coordinators arranged for some kind of meeting among the faculty that was participating in the training. Sometimes those coordinators even arranged for some kind of monetary compensation for those meetings. So it was happening, not in a forced way and not everywhere, but it was definitely happening, and that was the intent.

**MILLER:** Well, you actually said this was under Mary McMullin, so let's talk about that first. Why did you leave the project? Why the change in directors?

**SAVAGE:** Well, actually, for a couple of reasons. One was I wasn't sure if I stayed it would get funded again, and I thought if I left it might get funded again. I had been doing it for ten years and it was time for a change for me. And there was going to be a change in the Department of Education in Sacramento. The woman who was the ESL monitor was in the leadership role for the model standards for ESL, and she really was ready to make a change in her life. And the director, Ray Eberhard [Administrator, Adult Education Unit, California Department of Education], I think felt that there would

be some kind of gap, in terms of that project, because of the procedures you go through to replace people internally. And so I had an opportunity to go to Sacramento to inherit Edda's [Caraballo Browne] project, which was the model standards, and I thought it was an opportunity I couldn't pass up.

**MILLER:** Okay. And so then you mentioned that the project kind of had a shift when Mary came in, both towards cooperative learning but also towards the mentor teacher training. Tell me. . . .

**SAVAGE:** Actually, the cooperative learning started under me the year before I left, and then Mary finished that up. We did the training without video, without developing expensive products, and after doing the training then developed the videos to go with it. When the RFP went out in '91, which was a new contract, that RFP stipulated an expansion of staff development models. When you look at staff development, training is one of five models that was big in the early '90s. Now there's a sixth called reflective teaching, but there were five models. One was curriculum development; one was an independent approach; one is . . . I don't even remember all the terminology, but it's more of the feedback approach, like the mentor; one is an inquiry approach where you're problem solving in a group and trying to find answers to problems; and the fifth is

training. Training had been very well developed by the ESL Institute, but the other four models hadn't been. And so, by incorporating an opportunity for expansion into other models with the RFP, what happened was with the new contract the new direction was the mentor approach.

MILLER: Okay.

SAVAGE: Actually, the new project also picked up the curriculum development improvement approach. Because, in collaboration with my position in the department, it took responsibility for training on the model standards.

MILLER: And how did the mentor teaching . . . just briefly what was the idea behind that?

SAVAGE: That an expert can help someone who's trying new things to reflect on that experience and improve his skills through carefully structured questioning strategies. So really the underpinning for the mentor was twofold: he needed to be an expert in whatever he was training on, but he also needed to have questioning strategy skills that would help the person who was being questioned reflect. So that they were probing kinds of questions to get the person who's developing new skills to really think about and process and evaluate his experience.



MILLER: Is this the same as peer coaching, or are there differences?

SAVAGE: No, it's not the same. There are two kinds of coaching: one is expert coaching and one is peer coaching. And the way Mary interpreted the mentoring was you really want an expert coach because you don't want two people at the same stage exchanging information. You need someone who has knowledge to help guide the other one.

MILLER: Okay, but it is the coaching feedback?

SAVAGE: It is the coaching feedback process, and I would say that probably in reality, the way it actually happened in a lot of agencies, it was more of a peer coaching than an expert coaching approach.

MILLER: Now, you continued work with the Institute after you went to Sacramento. In what capacity was that?

SAVAGE: Actually, in a couple of capacities. One was, the Institute became the fiscal agent for delivering training on the *ESL Model Standards*. So my first year in Sacramento was the completion of the model standards and the review process and the revision based on the review process. Then in '91-92 we were responsible for training around the state, and the ESL Institute provided the organizational structure to do that. So it took the leadership role in terms of establishing satellite uplink-downlink around the state so that the

state message about the model standards could get out to all the places at the same time from the same people in the same words, and then it did follow-up training through its structure. That was one way. The other way was the involvement with the mentor teacher training. There were three of us who took the leadership role on that: Mary, who was directing the project; Leann Howard, who was the coordinator in San Diego and had been with the ESL Institute since 1980; and then me.

**MILLER:** You've had a lot of activities spread out over a lot of years. What impact did the ESL Institute have on adult education in California? What do you think your major contribution was?

**SAVAGE:** I would say the major contribution that I can still see is that the trainers became leaders. They may have already been leaders, but they became even more skilled as leaders. And even though the print products and the video products are still there, frequently they are on shelves and new personnel have come into play. They don't know about them, they don't know how to use them. But the people who were trainers with the Institute are truly recognized as leaders in the field of ESL, not just in California. For example, the Oxford Publishing House just made a huge investment in a picture dictionary for adult learners, and the two authors are ESL Institute

trainers. In fact, in their acknowledgements they thank the ESL Teacher Institute. So they have indirectly impacted the whole country. And I'm not sure that they would be where they are if they hadn't had the opportunity of collaborating with peers and growing with peers in a nonthreatening, very stimulating way.

**MILLER:** I'm pulling it out of the air, with no chance to do any research on it, but actually quite a few of your trainers have publications, don't they?

**SAVAGE:** Probably almost all of them, actually. At least of the original, yes. Yeah, that would be very interesting. Linda Little [San Diego Community College] did problem solving; Lori Howard is doing a reader; Leann Howard, of course, had published before the Core Workshops were started; Gretchen Bitterlin [San Diego Community College] had published before the Core Workshops started, or about the same time; Jaime Adelson Goldstone and Norma Shapiro [both from Los Angeles Adult Education] did the Oxford dictionary. I can't think of any others right now.

**MILLER:** Had Sharon Bassano [Santa Cruz Adult School] started her publishing before?

**SAVAGE:** No, actually she hadn't. Sharon was a trainer in 1980-81, and at that time she was very much interested in . . . she actually asked

me, "How do I go about making a living as a consultant?" Actually, her first publication for Alemany Press was probably just about the same time. She may have already done one or two books.

MILLER: Okay. What about the change in the way people look at staff development, pre- and post-institute activities?

SAVAGE: I think the field is more demanding than it once was. I think that probably in the mid-'70s, late '70s we were happy to come together and have an opportunity to exchange, but perhaps we weren't as critical or as demanding of what was offered. And I think the expectations of people who go through training now are higher than they used to be.

MILLER: And certainly there is also the contrast of staff development delivered over time.

SAVAGE: Yes.

MILLER: In contrast to. . . .

SAVAGE: One-shot, yes.

MILLER: One-shot workshops. And I think that your project was the first to really get that entrenched.

SAVAGE: I think one of the reasons it's worked is because within those workshops participants are expected to do something, and they're really expected to do something back home that's going to be

different. I think people who go to the training now are ready for that, expect that, and perhaps if they don't get it are disappointed. Whereas fifteen years ago if you did a . . . No. Fifteen? I guess it'd be twenty now. If you did a workshop and you expected the people to do something besides sit there passively, sometimes there was unhappiness. So I think the expectation of the participant is that he will get something that he can implement and he will get help implementing.

**MILLER:** Can you give us, and I know they're very rough, but can you give us an estimate of numbers served, maybe on an annual basis?

**SAVAGE:** This is very rough, and I would get at it by saying we had somewhere between forty and sixty participants a workshop.

**MILLER:** Now, that was usually divided into two parts?

**SAVAGE:** Not initially.

**MILLER:** Not always? Okay.

**SAVAGE:** Not initially. What happened is they were in such great demand initially that we took up to sixty, and then eventually our state monitor said, "That's silly, don't do that. Cut it off at forty and then do another workshop instead of taking up to such a huge number." And towards the end we had more reasonable numbers. But assuming that we had forty, fifty, sixty a workshop, and the number

of regions and the number of activities in a region, we probably reached a thousand teachers a year.

MILLER: And I would say that would be a conservative estimate.

SAVAGE: Uh-huh.

MILLER: Very definitely. Lynn, some of your early brochures for the Institute specified that it was for teachers new to ESL, new to adult ed, new to CBE. What was the Institute's contribution to the implementation of competency based adult ed?

SAVAGE: I think it was probably significant in the last half of the '80s. Initially it was not focused on that, it was focused on teaching strategies and not the content. But of course the teacher training institutions certainly were not looking at life skills content, so we really needed to bring that in. And I think that there is a little cynicism on the part of trained language teachers about—or at least there was at one point—about the content piece. Adult ed, at one point the immigrants were well-educated, and you could assume a transference of those skills and all you needed to do was give them the language. But in more recent years we've had more immigrants who have had fewer skills, and you cannot assume that they transfer. You have to teach those skills. So I would say it was significant, because we were able to say to the adult educator, "This

is what you do with language and you integrate it." And we were able to say to the language educator, "This is what you do with content and this is how you integrate it." So it legitimized both approaches.

MILLER: So the incorporation of life skills content into the skills training—

SAVAGE: Into pedagogically sound training and teaching.

MILLER: Okay. In the late '80s, early '90s, I guess it started in '90, there was another teacher institute in the state patterned after yours?

SAVAGE: Oh yes, there was an RFP for adult basic education. Actually, we had been asked to do adult basic education, and I felt very strongly that part of the success of the ESL Institute was that they were *people who were grounded in the content of their discipline*. I felt that I would have resented an adult basic education leader for ESL, and I felt that it needed to be an adult basic education leader. And there was an RFP let, and L.A. [Los Angeles] Unified [School District] got it. Aryola Taylor was the director, and I'm very proud to say that one of the ESL Institute trainers [Nancy Hampson, San Diego Community College] who was not trained in ESL, whose academic background was reading, became an ALIT trainer, and I think made many contributions. It was nice to see that kind of crossover.

MILLER: That was the Adult Literacy Instructor Training, the name on that, and, in very rough outlines, was patterned after-----

SAVAGE: The idea was: train trainers, trainers responsible for the content of the training, and follow the same approach to training, where you have presentation, demonstration, practice with feedback, and then the . . . guided practice in the workshop, and then the practice *outside the workshop*. *One of the things that they did not have*, and I do not know exactly how this happened, but I think one of the differences between their product and our product is they did *not do as much video development*. So they have a lot of modules, I think, with no video piece; whereas we felt we couldn't do that model, that training model with the demonstration, without the video piece.

MILLER: I know they've got a couple, maybe three, but certainly not-----

SAVAGE: But I think they have a lot more modules than that.

MILLER: They have a lot more modules, yes.

SAVAGE: I'd like to see an opportunity for that to be

MILLER: To go ahead and be developed further.

SAVAGE: Yeah.



**MILLER:** The ESL Institute reached far beyond the borders of California. First let's just talk about nationally. What other states or major agencies in the United States adopted the institute?

**SAVAGE:** Actually there were four states, and the way we did it in each of those four states was quite different. I think the first to come on was Connecticut. I actually went into Connecticut to do the training, they did not come to California. I mentioned earlier that our certification by video was the result of one of the states, and that was Connecticut. The person who had done the evaluation study for the Institute was also doing evaluation in Connecticut, and she was actually the link for the Connecticut adoption. She had concerns that the trainers in Connecticut perhaps weren't quite . . . that we weren't certifying their skills before they were going out and training, and that perhaps we should do that. So we started the video process, which then we incorporated into our certification process in California. So Connecticut, and I did all the training in Connecticut. Colorado. The difference in Colorado was that Colorado came to our Summer Institute training of trainers. And Colorado was . . . the ESL consultant for the state was somebody I had known since 1980, and she had actually set up something called ART, Area Resource Teachers. So they had taken the state of

Colorado, divided it into regions, and had essentially a trainer in each region. So they became involved in our process, and we used videos with them for certification. Then Virginia. And in Virginia the trainers were Leann Howard and Gretchen Bitterlin, depending on the module, and they had a combination of training there and coming to the [California] trainer session. Colorado only came to the trainer session. There was nothing done in-state. Then Oregon, we sent trainers to Oregon. There has been turnover in their key leadership in Oregon, and I don't know that they are continuing the process, but I know that they used the Pelavin [United States Department of Education staff development project contractor] modules, and I think that they had a menu that includes the ESL Institute in Pelavin, but I don't think that they ever finished the certification process.

**MILLER:** I see. Now, other than state adoptions, the materials were made available nationally, commercially.

**SAVAGE:** The first purchaser, by the way, was the United Nations.  
[Laughter] I still haven't quite figured that one out. But yes, I asked for permission to seek a publisher because I didn't feel that the use of the federal dollars just to reproduce and disseminate was the best use of the dollars. I felt we had really benefitted from. . . .

We had benefitted by creating an innovative project, and I wanted to see that money to continue to contribute to innovation, not to duplicating and disseminating. So, to me the easiest thing was to get it available commercially. We were given permission, we went out for bid, we got three bids, which was required by the state, and we went for. . . . We accepted the bid that was the cheapest publisher with the fastest turnaround time. The bids per module for resale ranged from \$75 to \$1,200.

MILLER: I see. That's quite a range. [Chuckling]

SAVAGE: We did not accept the \$1,200 bid.

MILLER: So what's out there commercially, then?

SAVAGE: What's out there commercially [through Longman's] is something called *Teacher Training Through Video*, which includes lesson planning and the specific modules that are technique based. There are eleven technique modules that are a part of that package. And then there is also available the cooperative learning package, which includes four modules.

MILLER: Four modules, okay. And obviously you don't know sales figures, but you mentioned that you know the United Nations bought them. Generally speaking, has that been a successful commercial venture?

SAVAGE: I don't know if it has been successful in the sense of whether or not people are making money. I do know that it's had major impact on the university training programs. I know that university teacher training programs around the country have purchased the videos and used them as they train teachers, so to me that's a major success because it means people are coming out skilled, understanding adult education, and those programs weren't accomplishing that before.

MILLER: And that's the kind of feedback you get from TESOL.

SAVAGE: Yeah.

MILLER: Yeah, I think that's great, because I know—

SAVAGE: Actually, there's one other product that's similar but not the same that is published by . . . I think it's published by Laubach. I don't remember who publishes it. Or LVA [Literacy Volunteers of America]—that's called *Teacher to Teacher*. But it's more of a discussion. It's not a skills-based program. So you have teachers on video, you have teachers talking about themselves and the class that you see on video, but it's not "these are the things to learn."

MILLER: Okay.

SAVAGE: There are some unpublished, incidentally. In '90-91, the Institute continued in the direction that it had been going from '85, which

was modules aimed at specific ESL strategies. There was one developed on writing, there was one developed on grammar, there was one developed on pronunciation, and there were a couple developed on teaching multi-level classes. And those are still being delivered through the Staff Development Institute [SDI], but they have not been published.

MILLER: Are there videos with them?

SAVAGE: There are videos with them.

MILLER: There are videos, okay. We'll include a list of all the module titles in an appendix so that the public will have access to that.<sup>4</sup>

SAVAGE: The mentor also has videos, but the mentor piece did not pass on to the Staff Development Institute, so right now it's dead.

MILLER: It's just kind of hanging out there?

SAVAGE: It's just boxed up somewhere.

MILLER: All right. Now, we've already mentioned the United Nations, but you definitely have carved a niche in international training as well with these materials. Tell us about that.

SAVAGE: In the early '80s, I had the opportunity to work with the refugee camps in Southeast Asia, and I worked with a lady who ended up

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<sup>4</sup>See Appendix C for a list of ESL Teacher Institute modules, content experts, and demonstration teachers.

employed by the Peace Corps in a rather significant leadership role. She's the one who made the decision that Peace Corps volunteers needed a competency based approach to their language instruction, that what they really needed was survival skills, a competency based syllabus. She was responsible for an area called PACEM, which stands for Pacific, Asia, Central Europe, and Mediterranean countries. She asked me to look at the training that had been provided by a variety of contracted service providers, and she sent me three different training packages. I looked at them and I made a recommendation. So the Peace Corps decided to use ESL Institute as its training, and we have a number of people who have trained, who are certified ESL Institute trainers.

I started in Poland, the next year Leann Howard and I went to Hungary together, Norma Shapiro and Joanne Abing [Los Angeles Adult Education] have been to Russia, Bill Shoaf [City College of San Francisco] went to New Guinea, I've been to Fiji, Marilyn Knight Mendelson has done several countries in Africa. Basically, we've been in Africa, Europe, and Southeast Asia, including Fiji and all the various islands in the Pacific, probably forty-five to fifty different countries.<sup>5</sup> What we did was we trained

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<sup>5</sup>See Appendix D for a complete list of international trainers.

the people who were going to provide language training to the Peace Corps volunteers. So we trained the people who were going to teach Hungarian to the volunteers, the people who were going to teach Polish to the volunteers, the people who were going to teach Sri Lankan, or whatever the language is there, to the volunteers. And what we would do is we would use the ESL Institute product. We would model for them in English, then they would take that model and develop their own mini-lessons of their language using the techniques that we had modeled. So they would end up with a series of lessons using dialogue drill for teaching Polish, a series of lessons using language experience for teaching whatever. . . .

MILLER: And that's still going on, is it not?

SAVAGE: That's still going on. Interestingly enough, they have just. . . . My understanding is they have just developed some of their own videotapes. I have not seen them and I do not know exactly what the goal of the videotapes is, but I assume that it is to provide demonstrations that are in languages other than English. And Marilyn Knight Mendelson was the editor on those videotapes.

MILLER: Okay, so influence just keeps going on and on.<sup>6</sup> Now, when did

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<sup>6</sup>As a result of the recognition gained by ESL Teacher Institute materials and California's *ESL Model Standards*, Lynn Savage was selected as Chair of the Academic Council, responsible for developing print materials, for *Crossroads Cafe*.

the ESL Teacher Institute formally close its doors as a separate entity?

SAVAGE: June 30, 1994.

MILLER: What happened to the materials after that?

SAVAGE: They were turned over to the state.

MILLER: Okay. And does the state continue to deliver training?

SAVAGE: The Staff Development Institute continues to deliver training on the materials on the modules. They're not doing training on mentor training, and I don't know where the mentor training materials are. I assume that they're in Sacramento. Everything would have been turned over to the project monitor, who is Lynn Bartlett [Consultant, Adult Education Unit]. I don't know on what basis the Staff Development Institute delivers the training. I don't know if it's that they have identified what the training will be on or if it requires local initiative to request the training.

MILLER: To request something, okay. It's been four years now, okay? Is anything being done to keep the trainers up-to-date?

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*Crossroads Cafe* is a nationally used ESL distance learning program consisting of twenty-six video programs with supporting print materials, developed through a public-private sector partnership. Developmental funding was provided by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Adult Education; the Department(s) of Education from California, Florida, Illinois and New York; IntelCom (video products); and Heinle & Heinle (print materials).



SAVAGE: I'm not aware of ongoing training of trainers. I did training in . . .  
when did I leave the state, '95?

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

MILLER: This is tape 2, side A of the Lynn Savage interview.

SAVAGE: I know that SDI does work on developing new products, and when it develops new products it also develops a cadre of trainers related to those products. And that involves reviewing the products, helping develop the products, and then also some kind of modeling with those trainers who will be going out and training on the products.

MILLER: Certainly one of the minuses of all the federal projects is that eventually funding comes to an end. And it's always the hope of our state department personnel that practices will become institutionalized. Is institutionalization a myth?

SAVAGE: [Chuckling] I would like to say yes. Actually, what I had dreamed. . . . You asked me as we started what my vision was, and as I worked through the Institute one of my dreams was we would have developed a product and a cadre of people who could continue to do that training, without the support of a federally-funded state-scale project. And I think where there is a strong

organizational structure at the local level that has been involved and understands the benefits of something, it can become institutionalized. I'm thinking, for example, of San Diego Community College. They were very clever. They did extensive nomination for trainers, and they had quite a number of trainers. Leann Howard, Gretchen Bitterlin, Nancy Hampson, Linda Little are four that I can think of from one agency. I know that they are still training with the ESL Institute modules. I know that the ESL Institute training is still happening in San Diego. In the same way that it was done at the state level, they have a range of modules that are offered on a regular basis. I do not know of any other place in the state, except maybe Palo Alto Adult School. Because I know that when they went to their individualized staff development approach, they used the Institute product to start that approach. Each teacher was required to do one Institute module, but got to choose which one, and it was done independently. So there are two places that I would say there's a kind of institutionalization. Now, the interesting thing about Palo Alto is they had no trainer. But they had a leader who recognized how she could benefit without having a trainer. I think that one of the problems with institutionalization is partly a problem at the local level, because I

think the local level likes to rely on a state-funded project and doesn't see it as something that will build its own local skills that they can integrate and then move on. They are constantly coming back for the state-funded service.

MILLER: There is also the problem of continuing staff changeover.

SAVAGE: That's true, at the local level and at the state level.

MILLER: Because you get someone trained—

SAVAGE: Mm-hmm, and then they're gone.

MILLER: And then if three years from now that department chair, that trainer, whatever, leaves, then it's gone.

SAVAGE: Yeah. Well, and I also think another problem is institutionalization can happen at a certain size agency, but some agencies are not of a size that you can get that kind of institutionalization. At one point I was trying to look at, with the guidance of Bob Ehlers [Consultant, Adult Education Unit], agencies in three separate arenas, three different kinds of agencies with three different needs. And I think the San Diego example is where I would want to see Los Angeles go, I would want to see San Francisco go, I would want to see Rancho Santiago, Sacramento City. . . . I mean, these are big agencies with lots of personnel, and they should be able to take up responsibility for their own in-house training. But the state

can provide training to their leaders. That's how we can serve them. But then there is the middle-sized.

**MILLER:** So many of the schools in the state are that middle-sized school, where even if they have a resource teacher it's probably not full-time.

**SAVAGE:** And there's turnover, and the resource teacher's job is not necessarily what I would define as resourcing. It may be more related to hiring, scheduling, stocking books; and those are essential tasks but they aren't resourcing. And so in those agencies I think that institutionalization is more difficult. Then there are those little tiny agencies that just need a whole different thing. They need the independent study and they need somebody to constantly be letting them know what's there, and that's where the SLRCs [State Literacy Resource Centers] could be real helpful. Because for the little tiny agencies, the SLRCs can see to it that they're aware of those things. So, yes, institutionalization certainly would never happen across the board.

**MILLER:** Well, it seems to require either very great interest on the part of the administrators, or some outside stimulus, to keep the staff training going. And the state projects do provide that outside

stimulus. What do you think needs to be done about ESL staff development at this stage?

**SAVAGE:** Oh, my! Well, I don't know if this has already happened, but it's probably time to ask the field what they feel is needed. There was a time when federal dollars weren't distributed without. . . .

**MILLER:** Needs assessments?

**SAVAGE:** A needs assessment in the field. And it's been a long time, I think, since we've had a needs assessment in the field. That I'm aware of. But I'm not in a position locally where I would necessarily be aware whether or not that had happened. I think there's an ongoing need for staff development. I think that there's a need for it to be content-specific, because I think that's the way you get credibility with the people who are asking for it. I think that it shouldn't be so content-specific that it misses some more global things. And I think that the best use of staff development dollars is not only product development and services, but training people who are in leadership roles. I think that if you brought the ESL Institute trainers together and asked them what the need was, they would probably say the trainer of trainers meetings. If you brought administrators together or others in leadership roles at the local level that have high turnover, they might say more workshops. And the teachers, I

don't know what they would say. They would probably want . . . I don't know, I was going to say they would probably want new directions, new products, but I'm not sure.

**MILLER:** Okay, it's very much up in the air at this point anyway. All right, Lynn, you directed projects both before and after the ESL Institute. We've touched on some of this, but let's try to bring it in just a little bit. What do you consider the rewards of project management?

**SAVAGE:** Working with bright minds that are like sponges, that have creative ideas, and that create a synergy that produces something far superior to anything you could do on your own.

**MILLER:** Okay, what about frustrations? Maybe these are the ones we've touched on. [Laughter]

**SAVAGE:** Well, this is probably more of a personal thing than a project manager thing. I'm a creative person, I'm a person who likes to develop products. I'm more of a product person than a people person, I think, and management is a people thing. But it's also noncreative paper. And I think sometimes when I manage. . . . I don't manage unless it gives me the opportunity to be creative, and I think sometimes the management pieces suffer because I get so involved in the creative that I would rather sit at the desk and write than balance the budget or figure out if I need more money or how

to more effectively get the word out to people. The other frustration is you're always caught between the field and the funder. And the field perceives one thing and the funder perceives another, and neither is totally accurate. And how to make it more. . . . I suppose it's like looking at the teacher versus the administrator, how to make it more complementary and less combative.

**MILLER:** Okay. California has had a wide range of these federal projects. Do you have any general comments about, or recommendations for, the federal project programs in California? Best use of money? Whatever. I mean just general comments on this?

**SAVAGE:** I think that the way projects have been funded since about '82, where it's looked more at . . . it's looked at staff development, dissemination, and assessment as sort of three separate things. It's nice. I think it can be destructive if the lines between the projects are not real clear. Because if you're going to create an assessment instrument, you need to do staff development on it. If you're going to do staff development, you need to have products to do them on. If you're going to disseminate, what are you disseminating? Staff development products. So those lines can become very blurry, and since you're all competing for the same pot of money, it can become very destructive rather than constructive. I happen to like

that kind of division. I happen to like the opportunity for directors to come together and see how they can complement each other. I do think there is a perception that. . . . And because staff development is my area, I'll focus on that. I think there's a perception that, well, assessment takes expertise, so you don't have to go out for bid for that, but staff development anybody can do, and so it has to go out for bid. And one of the things I've seen in other states is the same people get staff development, and know they're going to get it over a long period of time.

MILLER: Connecticut comes to mind. [Chuckling]

SAVAGE: Connecticut is an example, Illinois is another example, Virginia is another example. And I think having that kind of comfort—

MILLER: Continuity.

SAVAGE: Continuity enables you to do much more. I think one of the reasons the ESL Institute was able to do so much is it had a ten-year life, it had a fifteen-year life. It didn't exactly, though, because it really was . . . you know, it would stop.

MILLER: Start and stop.

SAVAGE: Start and stop and start and stop, and if we had known where we. . . . If we had known in 1980 that we would be funded for fifteen years, I suppose one thing is we could have become lazy and



not done anything, so I can see the disadvantages of that, too.

[Laughter] But I think that continuity is important for the field as much as it is for the project. And you can have continuity through structure and still have fresh blood.

MILLER: Yes, you can.

SAVAGE: Which, of course, is one of the functions of the leadership, to be sure that that fresh blood keeps coming in.

MILLER: Okay. Of course, right now we need that continuity from the state level before it can be translated to the projects.

SAVAGE: Yes, that's true. And a common vision. A common vision, because I think that . . . I think federally-funded projects are more than maintenance. I truly believe they should be research, in the sense of trying things out and trying to move things along in a new direction. And I think that you need vision for that. But I think you need vision with the people who issue the RFPs as well as the people who respond to them, and that requires leadership at both the local and the state level.

MILLER: Okay, we're getting ready to wind up here. I'd like to give you an opportunity to just add anything else you want to talk about.

[Chuckling]

**SAVAGE:** I would say that directing a federally-funded project, at least for me in California, gave me skills that I never would have gotten anywhere else. It gave me an opportunity to meet people who have had a major impact on my life, and it gave me an opportunity to work with people who I would not have had the opportunity to work with if I had been within my own local environment. As a result of that, I've gotten to grow in ways that I never would have thought possible. I think that those projects can be a key to the success of local programs if they have, I suppose, enough rope to hang themselves, is maybe what I want to say. [Chuckling]

**MILLER:** Enough freedom to experiment.

**SAVAGE:** Thank you. That's a much nicer way of putting it. [Chuckling] Freedom to experiment and input from the local and the state. Because I think that you need to know local needs, but you also need to know state directions. And I think that if you don't have the two, and they work in tandem, that you don't get where it needs to go.

**MILLER:** Okay. Anything else?

**SAVAGE:** Well, thank you for making me a part of this. I can't wait to see the result.

MILLER: Okay. The ESL Teacher Institute was truly an exemplary project, Lynn, and you must be very proud of the accomplishments that you and Mary McMullin along with your writers and your trainers were able to achieve over this period of time. And I'll add my thank-you to you, [Chuckling] both for the interview and for the contributions that you've made and continue to make to California's adult education programs.

SAVAGE: Thank you. I especially appreciate the *continue to*, because I don't feel that I'm finished yet. [Laughter]

MILLER: Absolutely not. This interview was completed as a part of the California Adult Education Oral History Project.