

Oral History Interview
with
Gary Tom

This is a 96-page PDF document using the Adobe Acrobat Reader plug-in. You may click on section names below to view individual parts. Use the Adobe tool bar (inside the OTAN frame) to navigate through the document and or to print a document.

To save this PDF document to your hard drive, go to the File menu, choose "Save As," and enter a suitable name, including the ".pdf" extension. (For example, if the PDF file is called "History," then you will need to save it as "History.pdf").

Cover

Table of Contents

*(the page numbers on the table of contents
may be different from those at the bottom of the screen)*

Restrictions, Literary Rights, Quotations

Preface

Interview History

Interviews

Index

Biographical Information

Downloaded from the Outreach and Technical Assistance Network Web Site, <http://www.otan.dni.us>. This is California Adult Education Archives Document number **001894**

OTAN activities are funded by contract #9000 of the Federal P.L. 105-220, Section 223, from the Adult Education Office, California Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily reflect the position of that department or of the U.S. Department of Education.

California Department of Education
Adult Education Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

GARY TOM

San Francisco Community College District, San Francisco
Dean, Alemany Campus
Director, Affirmative Action Office
Associate Director, Office of the Vice President
Assistant Director, Allied Health Training Programs
Assistant Director, Chinatown/North Beach Campus
Assistant Director, John O'Connell Campus
Coordinator, Veterans Educational Incentive Program
1977 - Present and 1972

Office of the Mayor, San Francisco
Principal Planner and Chief Monitor, Office of Employment and Training
1975 - 1977

Coro Foundation, Fellow
1974

United States Civil Rights Office, Washington, D.C.
Program Policy Specialist
1973

February 29, and March 15, 1996

San Francisco, California

By Cuba Z. Miller

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESTRICTIONS, LITERARY RIGHTS, QUOTATIONS.....	iv
PREFACE	v
INTERVIEW HISTORY.....	vi
INTERVIEWS, February 29 and March 15, 1996	
[Tape 1, Side A]	1
Background - The 1970's - Vietnam Veterans Educational Incentive Program - U..S. Office of Civil Rights - Coro Foundation - San Francisco CETA Office - Early days as college administrator - Vietnam War - Proposition 13 - The 1980's - Scope of adult basic education - Federal adult education grants - Competency based adult education -Vocational ESL - Chinese immigration - Refugees - Employment training programs - Welfare reform - Impact of federal funding - The 1990's - College district reorganization - San Francisco Unified's After Six Program	
[Tape 1, Side B].....	29
Impact of college district reorganization on adult education - Impact on personnel - State focus - Impact of immigration - Community based organizations - ESL citizenship program - Differences in programs from 1970's to 1990's - Future needs - Open enrollment - District contributions to state leadership	
[Tape 2, Side A]	55
Chancellor's Office and California Department of Education - Key forces of adult education - Rewarding aspects of work - Difficult role of state personnel	
INDEX.....	59
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.....	62

RESTRICTIONS ON THIS INTERVIEW

None.

LITERARY RIGHTS AND QUOTATIONS

This manuscript is hereby made available for research purposes only. No part of the manuscript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the California State Archivist or of the California Department of Education.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to:

California State Archives
1020 O Street
Sacramento, California 95814

or

California Department of Education, Adult Education Unit
P.O. Box 944272
Sacramento, California 94244-2720

The request should include identification of the specific passages and identification of the user.

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Gary Tom, Oral History Interview, Conducted 1996 by Cuba Z. Miller in San Francisco, California, for the California Adult Education Oral History Project.

PREFACE

Adult education in California has a proud history of helping its citizens to meet the challenges of life in a huge, complex, multicultural state. Through the years, California adult educators have provided leadership to the nation in the development of innovative instructional practices and creative educational solutions.

The California Adult Education Oral History Project began in 1992 as a companion to a print history of adult education commissioned by the California Department of Education. As the century draws to a close, the growth and energy of California adult education in the sixties, the institutionalization of competency based education in response to the influx of refugees and immigrants in the seventies and eighties, and the innovative uses of technology of the nineties will be recorded.

The oral history project started with a small group of leaders whose careers began in the 1950's and 1960's and who witnessed and influenced important events in the development of the nation's largest adult education program. Seven interviews were added in 1994 - 95.

Significant assistance to the project was initially provided by the staffs of both the California State Archives and the Oral History Program, History Department, California State University, Fullerton. This project could not have begun without the vision of Raymond G. Eberhard, Administrator, Adult Education Policy and Planning Unit, California Department of Education, and the support of the late Lynda T. Smith, Consultant, Adult Education Policy and Planning Unit.

Linda L. West
June 30, 1995

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer

Cuba Z. Miller

Interview Time and Place

Two interviews were conducted in San Francisco, California, on February 29 and March 15, 1996.

Editing

The interviewee reviewed and edited the transcript. When the tape was inaudible or when necessary for clarification, some information was added and is indicated by brackets [].

Tapes

The original cassette tapes were transferred to reel to reel format at California State University, Fullerton and deposited with the California State Archives.

CALIFORNIA ADULT EDUCATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEWEE: GARY TOM

INTERVIEWER: Cuba Z. Miller

[Session 1, February 29, 1996]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

MILLER: This is Cuba Miller interviewing Gary Tom, Dean of the Alemany Campus of City College of San Francisco. The interview is being conducted in San Francisco on February 29, 1996, for the purpose of recording his recollections of significant events and trends in California adult education during his career.

Good morning, Gary.

TOM: Good morning.

MILLER: Let's start with your background.

TOM: Okay.

MILLER: You first came to the San Francisco Community College District in 1972, but that was for a short period of time.

TOM: Right.

MILLER: And after that initial assignment, you left the district for some related work with other agencies, and then returned in '77 and have been here since then.

TOM: That's correct.

MILLER: Tell us a little bit about your education and your work background, work history, prior to returning in the mid-'70s.

TOM: Well, in '72 I was a coordinator of the Vietnam Veterans Educational Incentive Program. I had served two years in Vietnam as a medic and had a commitment to trying to help fellow Vietnam vets. It was a work-study program that provided part-time jobs to veterans. In '73 I worked for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. I was a policy specialist. More specifically, I worked on the "National Report on Bilingual Education." At that time bilingual education was, and still is, a very controversial program, and our job was to seek out model programs to set as an example for others to emulate.

MILLER: Did that assignment grow out of your graduate work in bilingual ed?

TOM: No, I actually was hired to do work with a report on Asian Americans, and that was one of the components.

MILLER: Okay. [Chuckling]

TOM: Yes, so then I came back to the City to go through the Coro Foundation.¹ I went through several internships, including Standard Oil, KRON-TV, the California Judicial Council, and the Buildings

¹The Coro Foundation offers leadership training to a selected number of applicants. Its training focus is in developing and administering public policy.

and Trades Council. Then I got a master's degree in Urban Studies. [Next I] worked for the Mayor's Office of Employment and Training as the principal planner and chief monitor for two years. We developed programs under CETA, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.

MILLER: And my guess is you actually worked with the college quite a bit out of that job.

TOM: Yes. We were hoping that CETA money would be seed money to start a lot of the training programs with the college. More specifically, the Skills Center was funded through CETA at \$2 million—that was quite a lot in those days—and that evolved into what is now the Southeast Campus. So a lot of good came from that type of program.

In '77, I returned to the district to be the assistant director at John O'Connell, which handles job training and apprenticeship programs. There were forty-three job training and apprenticeship committees that I belonged to, [Chuckling] and between myself and a director, we spent a lot of time at meetings.

MILLER: Sitting in meetings, yes. [Chuckling] Okay, when you did return then in the '70s, as you say, it was in this administrative position at O'Connell. What do you remember about your early days as an

administrator in the district, other than sitting in all of these Apprenticeship Council meetings? What kind of orientation did you have, and that kind of thing?

TOM: Well, we didn't get an orientation, you had to jump in and learn on the job. But fortunately I've always been an administrator and knew processes, administrative processes, and how organizations worked. So I learned, but I brought in a lot of skills with me. I found that there were basic things that needed to be done at each of the campuses that I worked at. I worked not only at John O'Connell but Chinatown Campus and John Adams Campus. And all three campuses, for instance, didn't have appointments for students. The students would get in line [Chuckling] and wait until there was an opening before they could see a counselor. And one of the first things I did was to set up an appointment system where students can at least sign up to see a counselor. It was amazing what still needed to be done, in terms of organizing the school.

MILLER: Simple organizational tasks.

TOM: Second was a grid to explain the programs all on one page, as opposed to several pages, and it would be a summary of not only the prerequisites but the materials you were going to need, the length of the program—again, basic things that still needed to be done.

MILLER: Who did you go to for help when you had questions? Did you have any specific mentors?

TOM: Well, yeah, in those days it was a very . . . I wouldn't say informal, but a very close structure, in that people were willing to help you if you asked. I remember going to Chancellor Louis Batmale after 5:00, just going in and chitchatting with him, and he was continually giving encouragement for me to go on with my job and giving advice. That was the open-door policy, and it was very helpful for me to have mentors like him and Larry [Laurent R.] Broussal, who was the president of the college. I relied on them for guidance and advice.

MILLER: Okay. Anything else from the '70s that you remember as perhaps key issues or. . . ?

TOM: Well, the '70s was a time for change. People forget that the Vietnam War was still going on, and the turmoil that went with it. The tone of the country [was one of] wanting to get itself out of this predicament and also trying to keep itself going while their sons and daughters were sent to Vietnam. The American people [were] trying to put things in perspective, including education, and trying to, I guess, redefine things that they took for granted. If nothing else, the Vietnam War brought forth questions about what was the American ideal and what was our place in the world, and also who we are. I

think there will continue to be books written about the impact of that war on our society and on every aspect of our institutions, including education.

MILLER: Now, you mentioned that you had worked as a coordinator for Vietnam vets early in the '70s.

TOM: Yes.

MILLER: Were there special programs for returning vets throughout the '70s and into the '80s?

TOM: Well, it gradually developed, but the Vietnam veterans were ignored for a long time. I think that there was a lot of guilt about having sent them over to Vietnam, and no one really to this day had a specific reason or justification for our having been there, other than national security. So I was glad to have participated in formulating the Vietnam Veterans' Education Program. And it was actually my start, in terms of education, because I enjoyed it very much. I enjoyed putting programs together and finding funds and implementing and also running the program.

MILLER: Okay, and you were an administrator in the district then with the passage of Proposition 13 at the end of the '70s?

TOM: Yes, I was. Sure, in '77 and '78, when that took place.

MILLER: And what direct impact did that have on you?

TOM: Well, a tremendous impact as a result of Prop 13. Specifically the decision-making and the policy-making powers were now in the hands of Sacramento, as opposed to locally. For years, prior to Prop 13, we were funded through local taxes, so we were directly accountable to the citizens of San Francisco, and worked very well with them. We were able to develop unique programs without having to get the various layers of approval through the state government. And the funding was more reliable, too, because if we needed additional funding we may increase, say, the tax by maybe one penny.

[Chuckling] Now if you want funds, it takes a statewide initiative to create more funds. And so the power structure and the decision-making process changed drastically, and we're still going through that even today.

MILLER: It's strange sometimes that twenty years after the fact we're still talking about Prop 13 as if it were yesterday.

TOM: Yeah, Prop 13, [had] a tremendous impact. I think that people who don't know the history don't know the difference, and miss the fact that when you have local control you have more innovative programs and you can get things done much quicker.

MILLER: Okay, anything else from the '70s that you might want to comment on?

TOM: No.

MILLER: Okay. Let's go on to the '80s, which was really a decade of change. As we talk about the things that took place during the '80s, I know we're going to be talking about adult basic education programs, and I think we probably need to clarify what we mean by ABE, because it has both broad and narrow connotations. Do you want to address that for us?

TOM: Sure. I think the locals have one definition and the state definitely has another definition. Our definition of adult basic ed included ESL [English as a second language], but it was a separate category. ESL was one category; adult basic ed for primarily native-born speakers was another category. It was confusing to approach Sacramento and say "We'd like some adult basic ed funds," and their image was, "Well, that's native-born English speakers." And we said, "No, no, that's ESL too." So that's one definition.

[tape turned off]

MILLER: The federal programs also make that same distinction, because in the federal legislation when they talk about adult basic ed programs, they mean both the native speaker and the foreign-language speaker. And also in the federal program, they mean up through high school, whereas in California we don't, so. . . .

TOM: Oh, I'm surprised. I didn't know that. [Chuckling]

MILLER: Yeah, yeah.

TOM: I'm going to work on that now. [Chuckling]

MILLER: Technically, the federal funds can be used up through secondary level, but the California State Plan has always limited it to the elementary levels.

TOM: If you're talking about changes, the most dramatic change is the establishment of what is now ABE 321 [Adult Basic Education, Section 321 of the federal Adult Education Act]. When I got involved [with that program] in 1984, it was already implemented two years prior to that.² And competency-based adult education [CBAE], I felt, was the model, the way to go. I know with our district we needed to develop our programs so that [they] would coincide with each other. I mean, that the different levels, if you go from Level 1 to Level 2, there will be a rational progression of curriculum and materials. I still recall how we used to take in students. I mean, our placement tests consisted of three questions:

²This refers to the mandate in the 1982 California State Plan that implementation of CBAE (competency-based adult education) was a requirement for eligibility to receive the federal ABE Section 321 funds. Federal funding for adult education was first available in 1966.

"What is your name?" "Where are you from?" and "How long have you been here?"

MILLER: Yes.

TOM: Now, if you can answer the first two questions, you're Level 1, and if you can say how long you've been here, you're Level 2. And this was done primarily by clerical staff. And I think that competency-based adult education, in cooperation with CASAS, the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System [a special project funded through Section 310, later 353, of the federal Adult Education Act], helped us to solidify our programs so that there would be standards for us to follow. Also, there were tremendous resources for us to tap into, and people were available from Sacramento and from San Diego where CASAS is located, so that was a tremendous help. It also helped us in terms of accountability, because I think that up to that point ESL programs were also looked at as social classes, socialization classes, and it's to learn how to be good citizens. But through the help of CBAE and CASAS, it went beyond that. It helped us look at job training programs for ESL students, and ABE students, too. Because at that point it was just a separate category. No one really talked to each other.

MILLER: Teachers used to be very independent within their classrooms.

- TOM: Yes, absolutely. They literally could teach anything they wanted and any way they wanted. There wasn't a master plan, per se. We had one on paper, but it wasn't . . . it needed further development. I think the [ABE 321] also bridged the vocational ESL [VESL] program. That opened doors, not only to programs, but to our way of thinking. Up to then, we thought that, well, you have to master English before you get into job training. And there wasn't a bridge there, and the bridge was, and still is, vocational ESL.
- MILLER: San Francisco was one of the leaders in the VESL programs.
- TOM: Yes, and we were very fortunate to have Lynn Savage, who was, to me—and still is—one of the experts in the field of vocational ESL, not only in terms of programs but in terms of the philosophy and concepts of vocational education for ESL students.
- MILLER: You were mentioning CBAE bringing changes into the classroom, and even though teachers had been used to operating independently, it seemed that this movement really kind of empowered teachers to take control of curriculum development.
- TOM: Yes. Well, it really helped us to focus on what education is all about, and it gave us a sense of direction. I think up to that point we were strictly grammar-based. I mean, you learned grammar but it was all over the ballpark, and you'd spend time like writing letters to friends,

which is helpful, but I think we needed to get beyond that and start thinking about the fact that everybody eventually needs a job, needs survival skills. So, through CBAE we identify areas like transportation, community service, and many other areas that we focused on in our curriculum, at all levels. So you'd have information on transportation at the beginning level but also at the advanced level, so it was a reinforcement again and again as to what you learned.

MILLER: As the students went through the different levels.

TOM: Yeah.

MILLER: There were other things in the '80s. For example, our first refugee funding came to the schools.

TOM: Yes.

MILLER: Any impact of that on your district?

TOM: Well, we were glad to see finally the federal government coming through with funds to back up its national direction. I mean, in the past when they decided to open doors for certain groups of refugees from a particular country, rarely was there any money invested. But it started with the Chinese coming over. And people forget that there was a large migration of Chinese in the 1970s that continued to increase into the '80s. What specifically happened was, in 1965 they

started to loosen the [restriction on the] number of Chinese immigrants coming into the United States. At one time it was restricted to, I think, 120. [Chuckling] That is it!

MILLER: Not very many. [Chuckling]

TOM: But then there are other ways of getting in, of course. But I remember growing up in Chinatown and knowing that a lot of people were what's considered *paper sons*. And *paper sons* were individuals who came over under a different name because there was no other way to do it, and so they existed on paper but really were not citizens.

Then there was, like I said, an increase in the number of people in ESL classes in the '80s. I mean, I know right now that ESL classes are so impacted in our district there isn't even room. But there was a time when ESL teachers were worried about their jobs [Chuckling] because there weren't enough students coming into this country. So that was the first wave.

The second wave was the Vietnamese, because with the fall of Vietnam and Saigon, they started coming over as what we considered "boat people" at that point. I think it increased to something like 800,000. Although the initial idea was to have them spread throughout the United States, they gradually migrated back to the

West Coast because that's where their friends and relatives were, that's where the opportunities were, and quite frankly, that's where they were accepted, too. So that's the second migration.

MILLER: Yeah, that acceptance has a lot to do with it also, as well as the climate, I think.

TOM: Sure.

MILLER: That first refugee money was under the sponsorship of Social Services. Are there any problems with educational dollars coming through agencies other than the educational agencies?

TOM: Well, the problem is that each agency looks at money as something for them to keep, as opposed to something to share. I think when we went into the amnesty education [starting in 1987, peaking in school years 1988-89 and 1989-90], I know that something like \$800 million came to California through Sacramento, and 90 percent of that went to social service and health agencies, and we received 10 percent.

MILLER: Little.

TOM: Education received eighty million, and the [others] received the rest of the eight hundred million. So I have problems with [the State] not allocating sufficient funds for education and turning [most of the funding] over to a social service or health agency. I think that there needs to be more equity among all the statewide agencies and

that . . . each agency has its own say as to what the policy and direction should go, in terms of federal dollars.

MILLER: Okay. There were a number of employment programs during the '80s—well, during the '70s too, but carrying over into the '80s as well. Now, you've already mentioned that CETA funded the Southeast Campus. What other impact did the JTPA [Job Training and Partnership Act] or CETA programs have on the district?

TOM: I was with the JTPA Council after I left the CETA programs. I wanted to keep contact, [Chuckling] so I was with them for another ten years, so I saw the changes in the JTPA program. More and more the funding went to community-based agencies. I think when the funding got real tight, the thinking was that if you're an established public institution there would be no reason for you to get any supplemental money because you're getting big dollars anyway. So I saw the change, in terms of who would do innovative job training programs, and that [change] relied on the community-based agencies.

I need to say, however, that in San Francisco the agencies did a tremendous job in terms of serving the public. The sad part is that they ended up having to fight each other for the few federal dollars that came trickling in. When CETA was at its height, and I was

working for them at that time, in 1975, San Francisco received \$55 million in CETA money. And that included [programs] like the summer youth program, job training. We would have OJT programs—on-the-job training programs—we would have mentor programs, we even funded security for the buses, and so it was a huge program. But now it's trickled down to something like \$20 million, and I think it's even . . . in more recent years it's down to probably about \$10 million, and that's very little for the population that needs employment training.

MILLER: Gary, what's the relationship between basic ed and job training?

TOM: When you say "basic ed," you're talking about native-born English speakers?

MILLER: Either one. Either ABE or ESL.

TOM: Yeah. Well, as I mentioned before, there are bridges like vocational ESL, but I think that we still need to concentrate on working with the training programs. There's a dichotomy here because, for instance, if you want to train someone to be a clerk-typist, to be marketable that person has to type 45 words a minute, correctly. And to ask an English as a second language person or a native-born ABE person with limited skills to do that, it takes extensive training. It's not an overnight situation. I think that problems with the federal

and state funding is that they need to do something quick, and the quick fix does not work in the long run, because even if they got into the job, they may not be able to hold the job.

MILLER: If they don't have a strong enough basic education.

TOM: Right, so we go back to basic education, which in reality takes a long time. If someone is non-literate, it will take them five to eight years to reach a point where they would have marketable . . . truly marketable skills. And we may turn out people with high school diplomas, but they still are not ready for jobs. So, to answer your question somewhat, there's a big gap between ABE and job training, that we're still struggling with even today.

MILLER: Actually, I'm jumping forward a little bit, but in the re-authorization of the federal funds at this point, they're looking more and more towards job training with only limited amounts set aside for these pre-employment skills.

TOM: Yeah. To me, and this is my personal, individual perspective, training funds come in cycles, four-year cycles, depending on who gets elected. And that person has to show results within the four years or he or she doesn't get reelected. So we're caught in this problem where, even if you found the money and allocate the money, it takes a year to develop the processes and programs to get it off the ground. It

takes another year to get it to the community-based agencies or the public institutions. It takes another year of trial-and-error to find your way around, because nothing's perfect. By the [end of the] third year you're kind of on your way. Then the fourth year comes the reelection and we go through the same thing again if the individual is not reelected or if the party is not reelected. And so we're caught in this short-term answers for long-term problems.

MILLER: And leads to what we refer to as "creaming."³

TOM: Well, creaming is [a] difficult [decision]. Yeah, you have to survive and you have to do what's necessary. Fortunately with the community college, half the time they have stable money, but the support funds, the supplemental funds are also necessary. So we're constantly struggling with, well, do we accept the money and hurry up, in terms of getting the students through and cream, or do we spend time and work with the students? And at this point, I feel that we're working with the students in terms of long-range planning, and we do sacrifice not getting funds because of that. Because we're willing to say, "Look, what you asked for us to do is impossible." A

³Just as cream rises to the top, creaming is the practice of selecting the "top" of the eligibility pool for job training programs. By accepting only those who are already close to being job-ready, the agency ensures high placement rates within a short period of time. This practice leaves the lower-skilled population without the education, training, and support services they need to become self-sufficient.

good example is that at one point I also wrote proposals, and there were some funds coming down that were specifically earmarked for ABE students. And we came in with a proposal saying that for each semester, and we're pushing it, we'll push them two levels up in terms of reading and math—this is a semester.

MILLER: That is pushing.

TOM: Yeah, that is pushing. Someone came in and said, "We can do it in three months." And of course that agency got the funds. And I sat back and laughed and said, "Okay, if you can do it, fine, it's a miracle, but we can't in good conscience take that money and say we can do that." So that's an example of what you're up against, that if you don't want to cream, you decide not to accept certain monies that have goals that are impossible to fulfill.

MILLER: Another initiative during the '80s was the GAIN [Greater Avenues to Independence, California's welfare reform legislation] program.

TOM: Yes.

MILLER: What impact did that have on San Francisco?

TOM: I was involved in GAIN from the beginning, in terms of the legislation. I kept saying, "Why would a welfare mother of two who gets \$900 in subsidies—not only in terms of income supplement, but rent and food stamps and everything else—why would that parent, he

or she, want to go through a job training program for six months and upon completing make \$700 a month and try to survive and still support two kids? So there are a lot of problems with that. I think that the middle ground at this point is that *they'll gradually reduce the supplemental support income or whatever and gradually make the change. But even then it's difficult. A lot of people don't make it through the program and they're back to where they started, and even in a worse place, because they had high hopes that this would help them get out of poverty. But these programs are again not long-range programs. We're constantly, especially ABE, constantly being pressured to get them out in two years; and if you're non-literate, you need more than two years to even have marketable skills.*

MILLER: And GAIN particularly has been under-funded.

TOM: Absolutely. Yeah, it's been under-funded and it's been administered *primarily through the social service agencies, so there isn't a voice for education per se. There isn't a direct voice as to how GAIN programs should run. A contract is set up and we'll go with the contract, but we still are not part of the GAIN policy-making and decision-making process.*

MILLER: Gary, you've mentioned that there are decisions to be made, in terms of whether to take federal dollars, whatever the source of them might

be, versus a more long-range but more realistic approach that you can do just within your state funding. Can you make any generalizations about the impact of federal funding overall, and what that relationship has been to the changes that have taken place within your system?

TOM: Well, having worked in Washington, D.C., [Chuckling] there's what I call a reality gap between what happens in the inner cities and what the policy should be in Washington. I had a wonderful graduate instructor who always said, "When you look at programs, you have to look at what assumptions people are making about the clients and what assumptions they're making about how this program would affect the client." And I find that Washington has a long ways to go, in terms of bridging that reality gap, so that the funds would be administered to the locals and allow the locals the flexibility to develop educational programs that affect their particular population. There is no model program to solve any of the social ills. Each city and population has its own solution, and we need some flexibility to explore those remedies.

MILLER: Okay. But in some cases, like with the federal adult ed funds, like you had indicated, the CBAE movement had pushed you in the right direction—

TOM: Yeah, I think the key people here, the players here, are the people who run the program. I think with competency-based adult education we have wonderful administrators in Sacramento now. I'll mention one of them, Dick Stiles [Dr. Richard Stiles, Consultant, Adult Education, California Department of Education]. He is a leader, he is an idea person, he can conceptualize programs and develop statewide policies, and he keeps in touch with the local administrators. And to this day you can feel free to call him up and ask him questions and seek advice from him, and he'll give it to you. I think he's also a visionary, in that he saw the need for assessment, to say that through program evaluation and feedback from the students, "This is how you justify a program and this is how you determine whether a program is working or not." And to his credit, and to his staff, they've done a tremendous job. So, sure, federal policy may not be directly related to what the local needs are, but the key role is in Sacramento and to find state educators who are in touch with the local communities.

MILLER: Okay, and essentially you're saying that that's in contrast then to the employment or the welfare programs that money has come to you through?

TOM: Yes. Well, I can't speak for the welfare agencies; I just find that we need to work closely together.

MILLER: Well, I mean the GAIN program as it impacted your district.

TOM: Yeah. In fact, my particular campus had the largest number of GAIN participants—we had 100 participants—so I know first-hand as to how the policies have affected our students. It doesn't give them enough time to really make progress. And we do what we can and hopefully they'll find a job. Because once they get cut off, the only option is to find a job, and we prepare them as much as possible.

MILLER: Okay. My guess then, based on what you've said, there would not be really major changes in your program if there were cutbacks in these federal funds?

TOM: Well, at this point there have been changes. We've had a reduction in our GAIN funds, so our staff is now housed in the State Employment Development Department [EDD], and I think for the better. I think now that they're on EDD's premises a more comprehensive picture can be developed, as opposed to a kind of we/they, contractor/subcontractor relationship.

MILLER: So actually working out your own working relationships at the local level to try to continue services.

TOM: Right. And the price we pay is that we now have less counselors being paid to assist with GAIN participants, so now we rely on EDD to follow up on our participants.

MILLER: Okay. *Let's move on to the '90s, and right at the beginning of the decade your district had a major reorganization. Throughout the '70s and '80s there was a different organization here. Specifically they were what we call the San Francisco Community College Centers, and then there was City College of San Francisco. Would you describe that organization and then what happened to it for us?*

TOM: Sure. Up to the '90s, we had two divisions that didn't work very closely with each other. They were independent of each other. We had one chancellor and two presidents, one for the credit division and one for the noncredit division. And the linkage is when the noncredit students went to the credit programs. But even then there wasn't a smooth transition, even though they're still in the same district. What pulled us apart was the funding formula, which was that 65 percent of our district funds went to credit and 35 percent went to noncredit, and so we were fighting each other for the same pot of money.

When we went through reorganization and we finally started *developing bridges with each other*, I suggested that we have a kind

of ceremony when we had our first district-wide meeting of both divisions. And we even had our own catalogs, so I said, "Why don't we do an exchange of catalogs? A noncredit catalog with a credit catalog." It's like North and South getting together and finally making peace. And so it's taken years. We've gone through a second reorganization, but I think it's really opened our eyes as to what our potential is. I think sometimes when you get territorial, like credit and noncredit, you miss out on the bigger picture.

MILLER: Now, you're using the term "noncredit," and I've been using the term "adult ed." What's the relationship there?

TOM: Well, noncredit also involves job training, it involves. . . .

[tape turned off - interview session ends]

[Session 2, March 15, 1996]

[Tape 1, Side A Continued]

MILLER: [This is Cuba Miller continuing the Gary Tom interview in San Francisco on March 15, 1996]. Okay, Gary, we were talking about the relationship between adult education and noncredit education, and so if you could elaborate on that a little bit for us, please.

TOM: Okay. I see statewide that there is a distinct difference between the administration of adult ed programs. Through the community college, for instance, they have a separate office than the State Department of Education. And from a local perspective it's always confusing sometimes when we get funding. Whom do we report to? We can get state education funds, but it's run through the community college, so sometimes there's dual reporting, in terms of the attendance records and also the kinds of courses that we offer that we have to get approval from both perspectives.⁴

⁴State legislation authorizes adult education funding for ten program areas. Public school district adult schools administer most of the programs. By local agreement, the community colleges may offer adult education through their noncredit

On a local level, the San Francisco Unified School District only within the last three years have pursued adult education and expanded on their programs. More specifically, a program called the *After Six Program*, which handles high school dropouts and those who want to come back even after they're eighteen. But that's been set up through the unified school district, and we as a community college became very concerned because we do have evening high school programs that used to be 50 percent from the local high school. Kids who need credit for English or history or whatever would come to our classes, and suddenly there was a drop in enrollment. One of my jobs is to be the K-12 liaison through the unified school district, so we called a series of meetings and found that they had received a directive to start expanding on their program. Of course, the question is: Well, where do they get funding? Because technically they don't get reimbursement [for adult education from the state], so I discovered that the funding was from local funding. But I think also it was . . . and this is only my guess, that statewide there was the court case as to who was really in charge of adult education. And I think that perhaps the unified school

divisions. Approximately 17% of the state's adult education is administered by the community colleges.

districts throughout the state were looking, once again, at adult education as a possible source of revenue. With the San Francisco Community College District, in 1970, prior to 1970, we were part of the unified school district.

MILLER: Yeah, and quite specifically, there was an election here to determine where the adult ed programs would go.

TOM: That's absolutely right, yeah.

MILLER: Has the community college district pursued any legal approaches to . . . ?

TOM: Well, we looked at it, and we were more generous, in terms of our approach, because we were saying, "Well, tell us what you're going to do." Because we think there are many needs out there, and if you're going to take adult [secondary] education, then maybe what we need to explore are other programs for high school dropouts other than the high school diploma.

MILLER: The diploma. So the San Francisco program is pretty much a diploma program.

TOM: Right. Well, at this point, yeah.

MILLER: The unified program, yeah.

TOM: And I even talked to high school counselors, just to try to track down the process in which students get counseled as to where to they go in

the evening. I discovered they were also under the directive to funnel their students into the After Six Program under the unified school district. Fortunately, our own enrollment went up within the last two years, so that now we have diploma programs and perhaps less of the makeup programs, or makeup courses, for high school students. So it's worked out, but it was quite a task to try to get all the information, figure out what was going on, and decide what to do for. . . .

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

MILLER: This is Side B of Tape 1 of the Gary Tom interview. And Gary, we stopped in the middle of a sentence.

TOM: And to figure out what was going on and decide what to do in the future.

MILLER: Okay. [Chuckling] All right.

[tape turned off]

Okay, Gary, I wanted to get back a little bit to the reorganization. One thing about the Community College Centers is that there was a separate identity for adult ed. People knew their focus was [adult education]. It was their mission, it was a select group of students that

they served. Has that in any way been diminished with the merging of the divisions?

TOM: No, actually it has expanded. Prior to the first reorganization, which took place in 1990, we had seven campuses actually. There was the main campus, which is Phelan Campus, and six Community College Centers, and each Center would be in *a* neighborhood and serve a particular population. It was supposed to be self-sufficient and serve a particular goal that was defined by that particular Center. In the reorganization, we all became campuses as opposed to centers, and so now there are seven campuses as opposed to one campus and six centers. And I think that's helped because now we have a bigger identity where students can feel free to go to another campus and pursue job training, or go to the Phelan Campus and pursue an A.A. degree. So that's actually helped us tremendously because now we have more flexibility.

MILLER: Okay, and do instructors teach in both the credit and the noncredit divisions?

TOM: They can. In fact, with English as a second language programs, a number of instructors decided that they wanted to teach in a credit mode. And there is a distinct difference between credit and noncredit teaching. There are longer hours in the noncredit teaching.

A full-time instructor has to teach twenty-five hours a week, but on the other hand, he or she doesn't have to do midterm tests, final tests, grades. They do ask for some homework, but it's not critical that [students] do it. If they don't do it, well, that's fine. Then, as you know, in the credit division there's a lot of paperwork, there's grading that's traumatic [Chuckling] for a lot of teachers who are not used to passing judgment on their students. So it's a lot of give and take, and I know that some noncredit teachers who went to the credit division have come back, saying "I'd rather have a more relaxed atmosphere where the stress is not as high for the students."

MILLER: Okay. But overall then the teachers have been generally pleased with the merger?

TOM: Yes. Yes, I think another interesting result of the merger was that English as a second language on the credit side used to be under the English Department, and the English Department didn't fully realize how many English teachers we had. And I was at a meeting where we said, "Well, do you want us to be in the English Department?" And initially the person said, "Oh, of course!" Then when we said, "Well, you know we have over a hundred"—

MILLER: Two hundred teachers. [Chuckling]

TOM: Yeah, "and you have fifty, and are you sure?" And suddenly he said, "Oh, wait a minute. Maybe we should have a separate department."

[Chuckling]

MILLER: Okay. But the ESL Department does have both the credit ESL and the noncredit?

TOM: Yeah, and that's another plus, that the credit and noncredit ESL departments merged also.

MILLER: And do they still use the terminology "ESL" for the credit courses, or do they call them something else?

TOM: Yes, they use the same title, ESL. But an interesting phenomenon also is that there was an increase, in terms of students going from noncredit to credit programs, so much that last year the numbers of students that went from noncredit to credit outnumbered the number of students who were coming out of the high schools straight into the credit division.

MILLER: Okay. [Chuckling] All right, other than your reorganization, and as you say that was primarily local but it does have—

TOM: Could I just touch on that for a second?

MILLER: Sure.

TOM: The reorganization, the idea of the reorganization actually came from the state, because under Title V there is an emphasis on shared

governance; whereas the teachers needed to have more input on policies and procedures. And so when the faculty looked at it, they said, "Well, what can we do to participate in shared governance?" And the administration responded by giving individual departments their own budgets. As opposed to an administrator figuring out a budget for the campus, each department would have their own budget. And the hiring process would also be conducted primarily by the faculty, as opposed to the personnel office. Well, the personnel office still participates and sets up the procedures, but there's less administrative participation, in terms of hiring faculty, except when the name goes to the chancellor's level, and that's—

MILLER: For approval.

TOM: For approval. But at the interview process, the specific regulation says you need four faculty members before you even consider inviting an administrator.

MILLER: Okay. Gary, you were mentioning hiring, and that reminds me of . . . I think it was AB [Assembly Bill] 1725, which did away with the credential requirements for community college instructors.

TOM: Yes.

MILLER: Has that made any real impact in realistic day-to-day operations or the way that you hire people?

TOM: No, because the credentialing process was more a formality. Because what really mattered is whether the person was qualified on paper and, of course, through verification, which we already did. So sure it's nice to hang something on the wall, but we've managed fairly well without the credentialing process. We modeled ourselves after the university system, which doesn't have credentials, it just has . . . if you have an M.A., you can come in and apply.

MILLER: And demonstrate your skills.

TOM: Of course.

MILLER: Absolutely. [Chuckling] Okay, what have been some of the other key issues during the '90s for adult ed in the state?

TOM: Well, statewide I've seen tremendous changes in terms of focus. In the past it was competency-based adult education, the format [and] areas of curriculum. Now it seems that we're—or statewide anyway—that we're trying to be all things to all people, and now when you go to conferences you have a whole spectrum of programs with all their own goals and objectives. And I wonder where their focus went, [Chuckling] to put it literally. Or, where's the beef?

MILLER: [Chuckling] Some people might agree with that question.

TOM: Yeah, because I haven't heard competency-based adult education for a good three years, and I haven't seen workshops in that area. Well,

maybe there's one or two, but there used to be dozens of workshops to cover all areas, but I don't see that [anymore]. It makes me wonder where the state's going to go with adult basic education at this point.

MILLER: Okay. So the community college noncredit involvement in the development of the strategic plan for adult ed has not had local impact in San Francisco? Is that basically what you're saying?

TOM: Well, the strategic plan was . . . it worked very well when we had competency-based education. At this point, it seems that whatever is pushed by certain legislators, that becomes the emphasis. I think that in some ways it's good and some ways it's bad; it just depends on the program. With the amnesty program, I thought that we as a state did a tremendous job on that, and all the way up and down the line people were working with each other. The community-based agencies would work with the community colleges in a very positive way because the community-based agencies were a lot more flexible in terms of getting a program off the ground. And when the amnesty funds came down, or IRCA [Immigration Reform and Control Act] funds I should say, came down, the community colleges needed to go through committees and reorganize their curriculum to fit the needs of the students. [In contrast,] the community-based [organizations]

started up immediately and then fed into the community college. And that worked well, and then when the funds. . . . After three years—it was a three-year plan—when the funds started to decrease, then the community-based picked up the slack there because we couldn't continue without a full-blown program. And so the community-based agencies were able to take care of. . . .

MILLER: The stragglers. [Chuckling]

TOM: Well, the clients who needed the classes, but the community college couldn't accommodate them because we need a certain number in a class and we have all kinds of additional expenses because of the size of our institution.

MILLER: Okay. You're talking about the amnesty program, the IRCA program, and let's talk generally about the impact of immigration. We touched on it a little bit earlier in our interview but I kind of want to concentrate on it. San Francisco is a city of immigrants.

TOM: Yes.

MILLER: And can you make any generalizations about the different waves of immigration, or the different immigrant groups that have impacted the city, and what the major immigrant populations in the city are, and the dedicated sites that you have for them?

TOM: Oh, sure. Well, if I may, I'd go back into the late '70s where the first wave of immigrants came from China.

MILLER: Okay, we've mentioned the first Chinese coming in, that there were no special programs for them at the time.

TOM: Right, yeah.

MILLER: And you had told us about the *paper sons*.

TOM: Sure, sure, and then the Vietnamese wave came. But I think that we were somewhat prepared because we knew now that you needed special curriculum and special support services for particular populations. So, for the Vietnamese we set up job training programs. We set up Vietnamese classes that were taught by bilingual teachers at the beginning level. There were support services, and we gradually were able to hire Vietnamese-speaking counselors and people who worked in the office who spoke Vietnamese.

The latest wave in the '90s has been the Russians. Three years ago, the Russian immigrants surpassed the Southeast Asian immigrants in San Francisco.

MILLER: I hadn't realized that.

TOM: Yes, so now we look at the data and find that, for instance, at Alemany Campus, out of 3,000 students, close to 900 are from Russia or the Ukraine. And it's a different population with a different style

of learning, a different way of interacting in classrooms. We're still learning to work with Russian students alongside with their learning how to work with Asian students and people from other cultures. Because as you know, each culture brings with them their own biases and ways of thinking about the world, and then when they come here it's a cultural shock because we have students from eighty different countries.

MILLER: On this campus.

TOM: On this campus alone, this Alemany Campus. And the majority of the students, if you want to go by countries, the top country is China, then Vietnam, then Russia, then Mexico, then the Ukraine, and then the smaller Latin American countries, Peru and El Salvador. In fact, two weeks from now we're going to have an international day where we're going to celebrate all the countries [Chuckling] who are willing to come forth.

MILLER: Celebrate diversity. [Chuckling]

TOM: Yeah, this is the world in a nice package.

MILLER: A microcosm. [Chuckling]

TOM: A nice, neighborhood package.

MILLER: Gary, you had mentioned a big Chinese immigration in the '70s, and was that connected with the Taiwan/mainland China. . . . Are the

Chinese here mostly from mainland China? Are they from Hong Kong, are they from Taiwan?

TOM: They're from mainland China. If you look at the federal legislation, up to 1965 it was very restrictive in terms of Chinese coming in.

MILLER: Yes.

TOM: So, once that expanded, because technically . . . it was amazing, but only 120-125 Chinese were allowed per year [Chuckling] into this country, and the rest, well, they find their way through, like I mentioned with the *paper sons*. But when that officially opened up and the mainland Chinese government was more flexible. . . . And also the U.S. too. The U.S. had its reservations, too, because they didn't know mainland China. I know when Richard Nixon visited China in 1972, it was eye-opening to the rest of the world [as to] what the Chinese civilization was all about. And I think the Chinese were equally mystified by what Americans were all about. [Chuckling] And so from '72 to maybe the later . . . '77, '78, then there was a closer relationship and bridges built between the two countries, so the immigrant population started to come in.

MILLER: Okay, and so, as far as being directly related then, it was directly related to Nixon's visit to China and the recognition of China.

TOM: Yes.

MILLER: You've got some centers in the city that are pretty much dedicated. I mean, you've got the Chinatown center. Are there other centers that are dedicated primarily to populations?

TOM: Yes, we have the *Mission Campus*, which is in the *Mission District*, and it serves primarily a Hispanic population. We have another center called John Adams, which is similar to Alemany: they serve a multitude of immigrants from different countries. I think their main population also is Russian at this point.

MILLER: And I think one thing we should mention is that you also provide teachers to a lot of community-based organizations, don't you?

TOM: Yes, we do. We feel that we need to work with community-based agencies, and it's the same rigor and standards in those agencies. They invite us to participate in their programs, and those classes become feeder programs into their job training efforts, so it's worked out very nicely.

MILLER: Okay. Now, you've had a lot of experience at the state level with both the amnesty program and the ESL citizenship program that is currently. . . . That look on your face [tells me what you think about that]. [Chuckling]

[tape turned off]

Would you tell us a little bit about your role on . . . I know you've been on state advisory committees and that sort of thing for these two big programs.

TOM: Right. I've always been interested in immigration, and with amnesty it was a wonderful experience. I mean, everybody was working together as a team: the legislators were working with us and the State Department of Education provided staff that were out of the competency-based adult education programs. We knew about them and we had worked [together] before so everything went smoothly. If there's any reservation, it was that the state of California received \$80 million out of IRCA funds, Immigration Reform and. . . .

MILLER: Control.

TOM: Control Act. And out of the . . . I'm sorry, they received *\$800 million*, and out of \$800 million, \$80 million went to education and the rest went to social services and health agencies. And I felt that, gee, that the emphasis was incorrectly placed. I felt that we should have gotten at least half of those funds for education and it should have reflected on what the state emphasis is in terms of identifying population needs. But we went with the \$80 million, and I think everybody did a phenomenal job, including the community-based agencies, in serving the needs of the formerly undocumented

individuals. So, when the citizenship project came about, it was a surprise as to how different it was, in that the funds were taken out of the ESL programs, which caused dissension among those who worked in adult education institutions and—

MILLER: Let's clarify that just a little, Gary. It was taken out of the federal 321 funds.

TOM: Yes, it came out of 321 funds. But people needed to be up-front about that.⁵ So there were all kinds of speculations as to where the funds came [from] and whether it was new money or old, and whether even the state of California had the authority to conduct [these] citizenship programs, because that wasn't part of the [State] Plan under adult basic education. Evidently, from my perspective of course, there was a movement from southern California to put together citizenship programs and to emphasize that people needed to vote. And my response was that it's very important that people should vote and they should also become citizens, but if you take it out of the ESL programs, it's like robbing Peter to pay Paul. And

⁵In 1994 the State Legislature, without public notice or hearings, earmarked a portion of California's federal adult education funds for special citizenship programs beyond the citizenship classes that were already available through state funding for adult education. However, the federal funds are available to community-based organizations that meet specified guidelines, whereas state apportionment funds go only to the public school and community college districts.

overall with adult basic ed at the community college level, our [federal] funding went down by a third. Of course, everyone's into denial as to what happened, and I'm saying that if you want to focus on the citizenship program, you shouldn't take it from existing programs. You should find new funds. And when I asked those who had been pushing for this kind of program, the response was, "Well, I don't know what it is, but it is new money." And to pursue that argument, I'm saying that even if it was new money, ESL programs still needed those funds, too. And the community college has done a tremendous job, in terms of having citizenship classes. In the San Francisco Community College District we have thirty of them, and it goes from 8:00 a.m. in the morning to nine o'clock at night.

MILLER: Now, the citizenship classes had been present before this state legislation.

TOM: Right, and we've expanded because, [for those going] through the IRCA programs, the five-year required residency is up and a lot of the former IRCA participants are now coming back to get their citizenship. But I think that down south, because of the enormity of the program, there was a major push. One of the things I need to state as fact was that when the IRCA program came about, I think the estimate was that maybe less than a million would come forth to

participate. [Chuckling] And as it turned out, I think 2.4 million people came forth, the majority being in California. In L.A. County alone they had 700,000 people come forth wanting to be permanent residents who were formerly undocumented. So I can understand the push but I am concerned about the price you pay, which is to take the money away from ESL and put it into citizenship. To this day the controversy is still there. In fact, I was at a meeting two weeks ago and there was a serious discussion as to how this came about.

MILLER: And the fact that it was something that came in at the very last minute without public hearings?

TOM: Yeah, the public hearing, but still another concern is that a month ago—we're talking a year and a half into the program—there was an in-service workshop to talk about the basic criteria and requirements for the program. When I went to the workshop, it was the same people that I've been with for the past year and a half. So I told the presenter, "This is interesting because this program has been going on for a year and a half and people still don't understand, or have gotten information on the program, to the extent that they can conduct it without having to continually go to the workshop and find out what the latest requirements are." And it seems that requirements continue to be placed onto the program, perhaps because people

don't know how to say no when someone says, "Well, how about a five-year requirement, that prior to even enrolling into class you have to be a permanent resident for five years?" I'm saying: "Education is education. Anybody who wants to learn should be able to learn. If someone is here for one year, does this mean they have to wait five years to know what it is to live in America and find out about the laws and the culture of America?" I mean, they should learn it now. And never before in any programs have we had this kind of requirement, and I'm concerned about all the restrictions on this program. It's the most restricted program I have ever worked with, which requires paperwork five times the amount that we did for amnesty.

MILLER: For the refugees or for amnesty?

TOM: Yeah, for the undocumented immigrants. And it's caused us to use funds that would have benefitted the students, to keep records, to do testing. We have one center that does testing every other week because it's required. And if you don't do post-testing—

MILLER: You can't collect.

TOM: You can't collect. Whereas in the past, especially a large institution of ours where we have 30,000 ESL students, we do sample testing, and that is sufficient. And now everybody needs to be tested. I

know, in terms of our [federally funded] citizenship program, we actually collect only 40 percent of what we could collect because of all the restrictions. Well, we just mark it up as a loss.

MILLER: Yeah, and indeed it is a loss because you've put in the time and you've put in the instruction, but because a piece of paper is missing. . . .

TOM: Yeah, and the formula doesn't make much sense, too, because for reimbursement purposes for our ESL programs we receive \$16 per 100 hours of attendance, and yet with the citizenship program, we or community-based agencies can receive \$250.⁶ And to me the programs should be fair and equitable—

MILLER: They should be merged, they should be the same, yeah.

TOM: —and that they should have the same reimbursement rate because the value of the programs are equally as important—English as a second language and citizenship.

MILLER: All right, we've talked about a number of initiatives and changes that went on during the '70s and the '80s and thus far in the '90s. I want to talk about maybe the result of some of these changes and where our programs are headed. When you first started with the

⁶Both amounts refer to the federal funds. The \$16 is considered supplemental (base funding comes from the state) and the \$250 is supposed to cover the entire cost of the program.

community college district, and now, can you make any broad generalizations about the differences in the way our ABE/ESL classrooms look, what goes on in them, methods, materials?

TOM: Oh, sure.

MILLER: What's been the impact of these changes?

TOM: When I started in 1977, there was a placement test, but in actuality the placement was done at the front office. And if you could answer three basic questions we'll determine whether you're at the beginning, intermediate, or advanced level. Also at that time, because of the small classes, there were multi-level classes [Chuckling] where you would have beginning and intermediate students in the same class, and the poor instructor had to have different curriculum for each of their students or groups of their students. I remember an adult basic education class that had actually four different populations: one was the ESL students who wanted a total immersion into the program, and so they wanted to hang out with native-born American English speakers; then you had the high school dropouts who wanted to go through ABE and get a foundation so that they can pursue a high school diploma; and then the third were the older adults who came back after years of working and wanted to complete their high school or get a survival level English; and the fourth were students who had

learning difficulties. And so they were all lumped in the same class, and the teacher was going crazy.

MILLER: Crazy.

TOM: Yeah, but with the continual development of adult basic education, and through Sacramento, through the 321 grant, finally we had some kind of model to look at and say, "Well, this is the way programs should be set up." They should come in and get placement, get a bona fide placement test. There should be a curriculum that has a normal sequence that goes from beginning to end. [Chuckling] I even remember a time when it didn't matter what the teacher taught before in the previous level. When you came forth, you just kind of started on your own and then you went on from there. There was a need for a master plan. We did have kind of a master plan, but when you look at it, the transition was still . . . it still wasn't there. Then, also in terms of [professional] development, there [is now] more emphasis on teacher in-service training; whereas in the past, in the '70s and early '80s, it was like, "Well, if you hear of something, go ahead and take it." Now, we say, "Gee, let's recommend these workshops." [There is now] actually something called flex day, where the entire day or days are set aside for the in-service of teachers.⁷

⁷AB 1725 allowed a flexible calendar, with days set aside for staff development.

Also, through the 321 grant, now teachers can go to the English as a second language conferences, CATESOL and TESOL [Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages], that's C-A-T-E-S-O-L, and TESOL, T-E-S-O-L. TESOL stands for Teachers of English of. . . . [Chuckling] Help me with this.

MILLER: Speakers of Other Languages.

TOM: Thank you very much. [Chuckling] So that's worked out. But I think that one of the key improvements was the exit process where students get post-tested; and if not, they get at least certified that they have mastered a certain area that can be documented and shown to employers and say, "Yes, I've finished ESL"—at that time Level 600. "These are the things that I can do. I actually took an exam to get this certificate." And that's been a tremendous improvement.

MILLER: Okay. Let's talk about where our ABE/ESL programs are headed. If you had a magic wand and could sort of wave it around and come up with the ideal, what would that be?

TOM: I would be neglectful if I didn't address also the ABE program. I'm sorry, but let me jump into that and then answer your question.

MILLER: Okay, sure.

TOM: I was also involved with ABE programs. That has paralleled the development of ESL programs because they too have problems in

terms of [program] placement and natural progression. But it's easier because a lot of the curriculum or standards were inherited from other high schools or adult high school programs, and there was an exit. But they also experimented with what was called the ACE program, Adult Competency Education, where you could take progressive exams. Like if you wanted to take civics, you can take five exams, and when you complete all five successfully, then you get credit for completing civics. And then there's the accelerated program, which you go as fast as you want and you work with tutors. So, like I said, the ESL and ABE programs have vastly improved over the years, based on the 321 grant, which was the model that was followed.

Your question about what's in store for the future, I see that there still needs to be bridges with job training programs and A.A. degree programs, and high school programs. The restriction of the 321 grant is [that] you go up to what used to be called the eighth grade, you achieve a certain competency, but you're not allowed to pursue beyond that because there's no funding to bridge this gap and

so you try to do it on your own.⁸ And right now we still see that students are not well-informed about our programs, and we ourselves need to also look at our programs and see if these requirements are realistic, these entry-level requirements, or should we be more flexible, should we adjust our ESL and ABE programs to fit into the job training programs? If there are bridges, it would be the vocational ESL programs. One direction that I've been pushing is vocational ABE programs, too, because native-born English speakers still need that bridge to be prepared for job training. You just can't jump in from strictly a language acquisition kind of program to job training. There has to be a bridge, to not only learn about the vocabulary but also the work culture.

MILLER: Okay, and then I was saying. . . . That question was in two parts: what you would see as the ideal—and that's what you've talked about—and then in terms of realistic predictions in terms of what's going to happen with our programs.

TOM: [Chuckling] I think the faculty is trying very hard to work to develop these bridges. I find that these old territories are still there, and it

⁸In an effort to enhance instruction for the "most in need," the State Plan for supplemental federal funds limits expenditures to elementary level classes, i.e., ABE and ESL. Regular state funding is used for secondary programs and the seven other authorized areas of instruction.

takes a while to change one's vision as to how an educational institution should be. I constantly go through these long meetings at all these committees just to say, "What are we here for and where are we going?" As opposed to trying to figure out these everyday problems or these procedures, I think there needs to be a continual vision as to where we're going. And what's disturbing is that, at this point, I don't see the direction coming from Sacramento, which is fine. That only means that we'll find our own direction at a local level. But it would certainly help if Sacramento would also get together with the locals.

MILLER: Like during the '80s. [Chuckling]

TOM: Yeah, during the '80s, and find out what we need and work together to serve our student population.

MILLER: Gary, are there general problems associated with adult education programs that require special attention? And I'm thinking of things like part-time staff and open enrollment and things of that nature that you might want to address.

TOM: Oh, sure. Open enrollment has always been a problem, in that we have what's called average daily attendance, or what's now called full-time equivalent [students]. And that means that students who come [to class] have to sign in [every time], and it takes away from the

teaching aspect of it because you'll spend the next ten minutes trying to keep track of the sign-in sheet and deal with students who . . . especially beginning-level students who have trouble signing their own name. I wish the noncredit division would. . . . I wish the state would give us what they give to the credit division, which is a census week. We [could] do a census at the beginning of the semester, census at the end, and you average everything out. I think that that would provide more stability for the classes. Also, in open enrollment when someone comes in six weeks into the semester, it's very hard for someone to catch up, especially when it deals with language. It's like going into an Italian class six weeks after it's started and trying to keep up. And so we need to look at that again.

Another area is the area of learning-disabled students. When you have populations that come from all different countries and cultures, it gets to be very expensive to work with students who have these disabilities. I don't have the solution. [Chuckling] I just know that there's a problem out there and we need to address it.

MILLER: Okay. San Francisco has one of the largest adult ed programs in the state. What statewide leadership has come from this district, that you might want to mention? What contributions has this district made?

TOM: Well, the two most outstanding individuals I had the pleasure of working with were Peggy [Cecelia] Doherty and George Woodward [resource instructors in ESL and ABE, respectively, and Co-chairs CASAS Consortium, North]. I think they provided the leadership at the statewide level and had the local agencies in mind and were in close communication with them. Right now, Christine Bunn is our ESL coordinator and Denise Quinn is our teacher resource person, and they're very active in many of the statewide committees. We have Nadia Scholnick. I'd have to check on that spelling.

[Chuckling]

MILLER: That's okay. We'll pick that up later, don't worry about it.

TOM: And she is involved in level testing, which is [necessary] because we've redefined the different ESL levels. We have eight levels instead of our usual seven. Now we need exit testing for each of the levels, and she participates statewide in terms of putting that instrument together.

MILLER: Okay, and you had earlier mentioned Lynn Savage?

TOM: Oh, Lynn is still the pioneer for vocational English as a second language. She's been on loan to Sacramento for over five years. She's on leave right now but she's scheduled to be back with our

district for fall of 1996, so I'm looking forward to having her back and developing our vocational ESL programs even further.

MILLER: Okay, good.

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

MILLER: Tape 2 of the Gary Tom interview. Gary, as an administrator in a community college district—and you've made some allusions to the fact that you work with both the Chancellor's Office and the State Department of Education—do the two state masters present problems for you at the local level?

TOM: Sometimes, depending on the program and the question, it's hard to find out who has final authority, because my understanding is [that] it's a constant struggle to see who's in charge. Like I had mentioned before, we get money from the State Department of Education, but yet we do report to the [Chancellor's Office], California Community Colleges [for our state-funded classes].

MILLER: And it's the [supplemental] federal funds that come from the State Department of Education, or come *through* the State Department of Education to you.

TOM: Right.

MILLER: So it would be those dollars that you would need to answer to them for. We've talked about a wide variety of things, and we're going to be winding up here in just a few minutes. Based on what we've talked about, has it triggered anything for you? Are there other topics that you think we ought to spend a little time with?

TOM: Well, we've pretty much covered most of my experience with adult education and English as a second language.

MILLER: Okay. As you review your career thus far, can you identify who or what you consider the key driving forces of adult education programs in the state? Who or what has made things happen?

TOM: Well, to recap, I have mentioned the key persons whom I respect. I think I would be neglectful if I didn't mention Pat[ricia] Rickard [Executive Director, CASAS] and CASAS. I mean, they have done a tremendous job, in terms of verifying the progress of our students and how this program is doing. Their reports have tremendously improved, to the extent that they can even give us feedback for our particular district. And I applaud [them].

MILLER: Okay. You're a dean. Okay, if you were to draw up a dean's honor roll of adult educators in the state, who would you put on it?

TOM: At the top would be. . . . Well, at the state level. . . .

[tape turned off]

I feel that at the statewide level everybody's contributed. It's hard to single out one individual. I think at the local levels people are doing a tremendous job. When we all go to Sacramento at conferences, it's just good to see friends that you've worked with over the years. It's a coming together of common concerns and common purposes.

MILLER: Okay. What have you found most rewarding about your work?

TOM: Working with the teachers and students. I think that they're the ones who inspire and lead. They're the ones who give input as to how things should be. They're not involved in the political arena; they're involved in education and in serving the students. And the students themselves, when they learn, when they achieve what they set out to do, that's a reward unto itself.

MILLER: Okay. Anything else?

TOM: Well, in the past year I've really appreciated the position, and the difficult position, of the staff of the State Department of Education. It's through the citizenship program we're introduced to the realities of the political arena. To try to maintain one's professional integrity, to be true to the educational institution, and then trying to find a balance and work within the demands of the legislators and special interest groups, it must be very, very difficult. I have especially grown to appreciate Ray Eberhard [Dr. Raymond G. Eberhard,

Administrator, Adult Education Planning and Policy Unit, California Department of Education] with whom I've had differences of opinion and out and out differences, period. Of course, my perspective has always been from the local level and his is from the state, but he's always been open to input. And within the last year I've seen him have to struggle with what's going on, and to find a sense of direction as to where adult basic ed is going with all its increased demands and restrictions. He has been a phenomenal leader, in terms of adult basic ed.

MILLER: Okay, and in finding that fine line to walk. Okay, Gary, any other thoughts?

TOM: That's it. Thank you. I enjoyed the interview very much.

MILLER: Well, thank you, both for the interview and for the contributions that you've made to the adult education programs in the state.

This interview has been completed as a part of the California Adult Education Oral History Project.

INDEX

- ABE 321, see Adult Education Act
 ABE, see adult basic education
 Adult basic education (ABE), 8, 10, 16-19, 47, 49-51, 54
 Adult Competency Education (ACE), 50
 Adult Education Act, (Section 321) 9-11, 42, 49, 50
 After Six Program, 27
 Alemany Campus, 1, 37, 38, 40
 Amnesty, 14, 35, 40, 41, 45
 Apprenticeship Council, 3, 4
 Asians, 38
 Assembly Bill 1725, 33
 Attendance, 53
 Batmale, Louis, 5
 Boat people, 14
 Broussal, Laurent (Larry), 5
 Building and Trades Council, 3
 Bunn, Christine, 54
 California Judicial Council, 2
 California State Plan, 9, 42
 California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CATESOL), 49
 CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System), 10, 54, 56
 CBAE or CBE, see competency-based adult education
 Census week, 53
 CETA, see Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
 Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges, 55
 Chinatown Campus, 4, 40
 Chinatown, 13,
 Chinese, 12, 13, 37-39
 Citizenship, 40-46
 City College of San Francisco, 1, 24
 Community based organizations, 15, 35, 36, 40, 41
 Competency-based adult education, 9-12, 21, 34, 35, 41
 Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), 3, 15
 Coro Foundation, 2
 Credentials, 33, 34
 Doherty, Peggy (Cecelia), 54
 Eberhard, Raymond, 57, 58
 EDD, see Employment Development Department
 El Salvador, 38
 Employment Development Department (EDD), 23, 24
 English as a second language (ESL), 8, 10, 13, 16, 30-32, 40-43, 46-51, 54
 Funding, 7, 9, 12, 14-21, 41-46, 50, 51
 Greater Avenues to Independence (GAIN), 19, 20, 23, 24

Hong Kong, 39
Immigration Reform and Control Act, 35, 36, 41-44
In-service training, 48, 49
IRCA, see Immigration Reform and Control Act
Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA), 15
Job Training, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, 37, 51
John Adams Campus, 4, 40
John O'Connell (Campus), 3, 4
JTPA, see Job Training and Partnership Act
KRON-TV, 2
Learning disabled students, 53
Mayor's Office of Employment and Training, 3
Mexico, 38
Mission Campus, 40
National Report on Bilingual Education, 2
Nixon, Richard, 39
Noncredit (division) 24-26, 30, 31
Open enrollment, 52
Paper sons, 13, 37
Part-time staff, 52
Peru, 38
Placement procedures, 9, 10, 47, 48, 50
Plelan Campus, 30
Proposition 13, 6, 7
Quinn, Denise, 54
Refugees, 12
Rickard, Patricia, 56
Russians, 37, 38, 40
Sacramento, 7-10, 14, 22, 52, 54, 57
Saigon, 13
San Diego, 10
San Francisco Unified School District, 27, 28
San Francisco Community College Centers, 24, 29, 30
San Francisco Community College District, 1, 24, 27, 28, 43, 47
San Francisco, 7, 11, 15, 36
Savage, Lynn, 11, 54
Scholnick, Nadia, 54
Section 321, see Adult Education Act
Social Services, 14
Southeast Campus (Skills Center), 3
Standard Oil, 2
State Department of Education, 22, 41, 55, 57
Stiles, Richard, 22
Taiwan, 38, 39
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), 49
Title V (of the California State Administrative Code), 32

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Ukraine, 37, 38
VESL, see vocational ESL
Vietnam Veterans Educational Incentive Program, 2, 6
Vietnam War, 2, 5, 6
Vietnamese, 13, 37, 38
Vocational ESL (VESL), 11, 16, 51, 55
Washington, D.C., 21
Woodward, George, 54

PROFESSIONAL RESUME

Gary Tom, Dean
City College of San Francisco (CCSF)

Professional Experience

- 1953-Present Dean, Alemany Campus, CCSF. Coordinator of ESL and Vocational ESL Programs, administrator of ESL Teachers Resource Center, liaison to K-12 Unified School District.
- 1991-93 Director, Affirmative Action Office, CCSF.
- 1984-91 Associate Director, Office of the Vice President, CCSF. Coordinator of ESL Teachers Resource Center, Amnesty Education Program, CASAS Testing Project, ABE Mini-Grants; CCSF representative on local and state ESL and ABE advisory committees.
- 1980-84 Assistant Director, Adams Campus, CCSF. Coordinator of Adult Basic Education, High School and Allied Health Training Programs.
- 1978-79 Assistant Director, Chinatown/North Beach Campus, CCSF. Coordinator of ESL and Vocational ESL Programs.
- 1977-78 Assistant Director, O'Connell Campus, CCSF. Coordinator of job training and apprenticeship programs.
- 1975-77 Principal Planner/Chief Monitor, Mayor's Office of Employment and Training. Coordinator for planning and implementation of job training programs under CETA.

Education

B.A., Sociology, San Francisco State University
M.A., Urban Studies, Occidental College, L.A.
M.A., Bilingual Education, University of San Francisco
M.A., Public Administration, Golden Gate University
Coro Foundation Fellowship, San Francisco

Professional Profile

Gary Tom, Dean
 City College of San Francisco
 Alemany Campus
 750 Eddy St.
 San Francisco, CA 94109

Education: B.A., Sociology, San Francisco State University
 M.A., Urban Studies, Occidental College
 M.A., Bilingual Education, University of San Francisco
 M.A., Public Administration, Golden Gate University
 Coro Foundation Fellowship, San Francisco

Professional Experience

1977-Present City College of San Francisco, San Francisco Community
 College District, 33 Gough St., San Francisco, CA. 94103.

Dean, Alemany Campus, Coordinate ESL, Vocational ESL
 and job training programs. (1993-Present)

Director, Affirmative Action Office. Developed policies and
 procedures to insure equal educational and
 employment opportunities; investigated
 discrimination cases. (1991-93)

Associate Director, Office of the Vice President. Prepared
 Initiated, developed and administered ESL Program
 grants including Adult Basic Education, Amnesty
 Education and CASAS. (1984-91)

Assistant Director, Allied Health Training Programs.
 Coordinated job training programs for
 paraprofessional positions in the health and hospital
 fields. (1980-83)

Assistant Director, Chinatown/North Beach Campus.
 Coordinated ESL and Vocational ESL Programs. (1978-
 79)

Assistant Director, John O'Connell Campus. Coordinated job
 training and apprenticeship programs. (1977-78)

1975-77 Principal Planner/Chief Monitor, Mayor's Office of
 Employment and Training, San Francisco. Coordinated
 job training and employment programs. (CETA)

1974 Fellow, Coro Foundation. Assigned internships at KRON-
 TV, Standard Oil, S.F. Buildings and Trades Council,
 California Judicial Council, and United Way.

- 1973 Program Policy Specialist, U.S. Civil Rights Office,
Washington, D.C. Prepared national report on
Bilingual Education.
- 1972 Coordinator, Veterans Educational Incentive Program, City
College of San Francisco. Managed work/study
program for 225 Vietnam veterans.

CALIFORNIA ADULT EDUCATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

RELEASE FORM

For and in consideration of the participation by the *California Adult Education Oral History Project*, funded by the *California Department of Education*, in any programs involving the dissemination of tape-recorded memoirs and oral history material for publication, copyright, and other uses, I hereby release all right, title, or interest in and to all of my tape-recorded memoirs to the *California Adult Education Oral History Project* and declare that they may be used without any restriction whatsoever and may be copyrighted and distributed by the *California Department of Education*, which may also assign said copyright and publication rights to serious research scholars.

In addition to the rights and authority given to you under the preceding paragraph, I hereby authorize you to edit, publish, sell and/or license the use of my oral history memoir in any other manner which the *California Department of Education* considers to be desirable, and I waive any claim to any payments which may be received as a consequence thereof by the *Department*.

PLACE San Francisco, CA

DATE 2/29/96

Gary V. Kohn
(Interviewee)

Carla J. Miller
(Interviewer)
(for California Adult Education
Oral History Project)