# IN-SERVICE LEARNING OF TEACHERS OF ELLS:

# AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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This work is dedicated to the two loved ones I lost in this process, Barno and Mick Mick.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ELL | English Language Learner |
| PD | Professional Development |
| PLC | Professional Learning Community |

# Chapter I

# Introduction

## Statement of the Problem

Over the last twenty years, the United States has experienced a significant demographic shift. Much of this shift has been seen in minority populations, most noticeably among Spanish speakers. The Census Bureau (2003) reported that in 1990, there were almost 32 million people, or approximately 14% of the total population of the U.S., who spoke a language other than English at home. A little more than half of those who reported speaking another language spoke Spanish. In 2000, however, almost 47 million people, or close to 18% of the nation's population, reported speaking a language other than English, with 28 million speaking Spanish. In other words, not only is the Spanish-speaking population overwhelmingly the largest non-English speaking group in the United States, but it is also growing ever larger. Not surprisingly, then, the U.S. has also seen a similar demographic shift among school-aged children during the same time period. The Pew Hispanic Center (Pew) (2008a) observed that in 1990 one in every eight students in U.S. public schools was Hispanic[1]. In 2006, one in every five students in public schools was Hispanic. Current estimates place this population at around 11 million students, and it is projected that this number will increase to 28 million by the year 2050,

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[1] The term "Hispanic" refers to people who are Spanish-speaking or are of Spanish descent. The term "Latino" refers to people whose language is related in some way to Latin. While these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they are, in fact, different. For example, Brazilians speak Portuguese, making them Latinos, but they are not Hispanic. In this paper, the term Hispanic will be used to identify people and children who speak Spanish or are of Spanish descent.

a 166% increase. In contrast, by 2050, the non-Hispanic school-aged population will increase a mere 4% to 45 million, up from 43 million (Pew, 2008a). These data might seem on the surface to have little impact on our public school system beyond increased school enrollment, but upwards of 70% of Hispanic students currently report speaking a language other than English in the home. In effect, the number of students in classrooms unable to understand the language of instruction is increasing at a very rapid pace.

While in years past many English language learners (ELLs) may have lived and attended schools primarily in urban areas, today, ELLs attend schools in urban, suburban, and rural schools alike. In fact, as of the 2007-08 school year, nearly three quarters of *all* public schools across the country enrolled at least one student who had been identified as limited English proficient, or LEP[2] (Keigher, 2009). American schools are required to provide academic support services (i.e., pull-out ESL classes, sheltered content instruction, bilingual aides) to ELLs. However, students are not required to take advantage of them. Many ELLs opt out of educational services designed specifically to aid in their academic achievement, and many test out of services and enter mainstream, English-speaking classrooms. In the 2003-04 school year, a total of 4 million ELL students received formal educational accommodations (Pew, 2008b). Considering the rate of ELL population growth this number is no doubt much larger today.

[2] The term "LEP" refers to a student's proficiency with the English language. It is normally a label applied in schools based on testing results. The term "ELL" refers to students whose first language is not English. While an ELL might be LEP, once the student achieves a certain level of English proficiency, they may not continue to be labeled LEP. However, they would still be considered an ELL, based solely on the fact that English is not their first language. In this paper, ELL will be used for all students who do not speak English natively, regardless of their level of English proficiency.

The ELL population explosion, interestingly, has not resulted in widespread diversity within schools in the U.S. Indeed, white students have become less isolated from minority students, but minority students experience greater isolation than in the past (Pew, 2007b). In 1993-94, one third of White students attended nearly all-white schools, or schools with fewer than 5% of the student population being non-white. In 2005-06, this percentage decreased to 21%. At the same time, however, Hispanic students experienced an increase in isolation. Close to 30% of Hispanic students attended nearly all-minority schools in 2005-06, with more than half of these Hispanic students attending majority Hispanic schools. Even more striking, the overall number of nearly all-white schools has fallen 35% since 1993-94 while nearly all-minority schools have almost doubled in number. These data reflect trends in nationwide ethnic dispersion of population and residence, as well as federal, state, and local desegregation policies.

Such educational isolation does have its consequences. ELLs are among the students farthest behind in meeting the educational standards set by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (Pew, 2007a). In 2005, close to three quarters of 4$^{th}$ grade ELLs scored "below basic" in reading. 8th grade ELLs did not fare much better in reading, with 71% scoring "below basic." Nearly half of 4$^{th}$ grade and 8$^{th}$ grade ELLs are behind their white, English-speaking counterparts in reading, and the results in math tests scores show similar trends. Whether tested in math or reading, ELLs, on average, perform lower than other English-speaking students. In fact, the average scale score on national assessments in 2007 for reading in 4$^{th}$ grade for ELLs was 188. Students not classified as ELL scored an average of 223 (Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007). The gap between these scores has remained relatively constant over the last three years. Pew (2008b) reported "when ELL

students are not isolated in these low-achieving schools, their gap in test score results is considerably narrower" (p. i). In addition to poor performance on standardized tests, Hispanic students also have a much higher high school drop out rate than all of their classmates combined. White, Black, and Asian/Pacific Islander students drop out at rates of 6%, 10.4%, and 2.9%, respectively; Hispanic students drop out at a rate of 22.4% (Laird, DeBell, Kienzl, & Chapman, 2007). ELLs also are more likely to attend older, low performing schools with high student-teacher ratios, high student enrollment, and high poverty levels (Pew, 2008b). Essentially, Hispanic students are in more substandard schools, are much less academically successful, and are much more likely to stop attending school than their peers.

Despite the change in student populations, the teacher population of the U.S. has not experienced as dramatic a demographic shift. In 1987-88, 71% of teachers in the U.S. were female, and 89% were white, and only 2.8% were Hispanic (Hammer & Gerald, 1990). In 2007-08, 75% of teachers across the country were female, and 83.5% of teachers were white, as apposed to the 6.9% who were of Hispanic descent (Coopersmith, 2009). Of course, the cultural differences that might exist between ELLs and their teachers cannot be underestimated. "This gap matters because it means that students of color…are much more likely than White students to be taught by teachers who question their academic ability, are uncomfortable around them, or do not know how to teach them well" (Sleeter, 2008). It is not simply the differences in cultural understandings that lead to teachers' difficulties with ELLs; rather, many teachers are simply not prepared to instruct the ELLs they receive in their classrooms. In fact, only one third of teachers feel very well prepared to teach students from diverse backgrounds (Parsad, Lewis, & Farris,

2001). Accordingly, there is a large population of students entering classrooms with a teacher who either feels or truly is unprepared to teach them effectively.

School districts often require that teachers already working in classrooms, or in-service teachers, engage in professional development (PD) activities so that the teachers can stay abreast of the latest research and practical applications. These activities may focus on the expansion of instructional repertoires, theoretical understandings, or classroom management techniques. Various PD opportunities can be effective in preparing in-service teachers to work with ELLs, and NCES data suggest that the amount of time teachers spend in PD has an impact on how well prepared they feel for classroom activity. Moreover, teachers who participated in collaborative activities with other teachers reported that they were more prepared to meet the demands of their teaching assignments (Parsad, Lewis, & Farris, 2001). However, despite a federal mandate to employ highly qualified teachers, many states do not offer much in the way of support for ELL instruction. Currently, four states require that all incoming teachers be competent in aspects of ELL instruction, and fifteen states do not require teachers of ELLs to have any specialized training or certification (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008); further, only 33 states have teacher standards for ELL instruction, and eleven states offer incentives and assistance to teachers who wish to earn an ESL license of endorsement.

In sum, teachers working schools are more likely than ever to have students who do not speak English in their classrooms. In addition, these teachers are not likely to be from similar backgrounds as their students. While many researchers and theorists have raised the issue of the demographic divide and imperative, I argue that the fact that teachers in general feel unprepared to teach students who do not speak English is of

greater import. Simply sharing the background of their students does not make a teacher effective. In other words, whether a teacher is from the same cultural, ethnic, or linguistic group as the students they teach is not as important as their ability to effectively impart instruction. Sadly, however, teachers in classrooms today are less prepared and are not always required to know how to teach linguistically diverse students when they step in front of their students. This lack or preparation can result in even lower academic achievement for this typically marginalized student group.

### Objectives of the Study

Over the course of the last twenty years, during which time the U.S. experienced a significant demographic shift in school-aged children coupled with little change in teacher characteristics, researchers have both conducted research on and made recommendations toward providing in-service teachers of ELLs with effective PD opportunities. The research findings and PD program recommendations aim to highlight not only the effect of PD on, but also the features of effective learning opportunities for in-service teachers of ELLs.

Based upon the recommendations of Little (1988), Abdal-Haqq (1995), Richardson (2003), and Ball (1996), much can be said about PD for in-service teachers. First, development opportunities for working teachers should be collaborative in nature. These opportunities also need to include a classroom focus and provide on-going follow-up support. They also need to be sustained over time and account for what teachers know, believe, and do. The literature pertaining to the PD of teachers of ELLs also highlights the need to provide teachers with opportunities to collaborate with their fellow teachers

as well as researchers. Additionally, teachers of ELLs need to develop a specialized base of knowledge and set of skills in order to deliver effective instruction to their students. While many PD opportunities abound, the research suggests, in agreement with the general literature on PD, that learning opportunities, provided over a period of time that include guidance and follow-up activities can result in positive changes in teacher practice.

While more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2, the research concludes that collaboration is an effective means to learn about instructional issues. These results are limited, however, by a lack of focus on how the interactions between teachers and their peers, researchers, teacher educators, or larger institutional structures lead to learning. The research does not satisfactorily determine under which circumstances teachers can develop new ways of thinking about their teaching and their students. The research thus far has not intensely focused enough on *how* these teachers learn; rather, the focus has been on *what* they learn.

Also, teachers' needs vary across contexts, yet not all PD models are responsive to variable teacher needs. The research literature does not satisfactorily address the individual needs of these teachers and rarely differentiates empirical results by instructional program model. Additionally, the research body as a whole tends to downplay larger institutional and legislative concerns and how these concerns impact the learning of teachers. Institutional concerns such as a changing student demography are normally seen as simply reasons for PD; however, they are not seen as forces in and of themselves that can determine both the subject matter contained within and the means of presentation of PD. If PD is to be provided to teachers, specifically addressing the needs

of the student, the teacher, the school, at the district, state, and federal level, research could provide greater insight into how these forces interact.

Lastly, research suggests that PD can result in a change in teacher beliefs, attitudes, and teacher efficacy. However, which models of PD result in teacher change remain unspecified. The effects of PD on attitudes and beliefs is clear, but the research is unclear in that it does not specify which professional programs or which features of these programs result in more positive teacher attitudes and beliefs toward ELLs. As mentioned above, the research does not focus on *how*, beyond the mode of PD, as much as on *what* teachers learn.

This study aims to investigate the PD opportunities in-service teachers of ELLs have at their disposal. More specifically, I investigated how teachers come to choose and learn through the various opportunities they have available to them. Specifically, I determined how various contextual factors (i.e., instructional programming, legislation, institutional support, classroom concerns) interact in order to make available and facilitate teacher choice of particular opportunities to learn.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that guide the proposed study are:

1. In which PD opportunities do ELL teachers choose to participate?
2. What institutional factors impact ELL teachers' choice of PD?
3. In what ways do these factors converge to influence ELL teachers' choice of PD opportunities?

4. In what ways do ELL teachers utilize what they learn through PD in their classroom?

**Overview of the Dissertation**

This dissertation contains five sections. In order to fully explicate the legal and instructional landscape of this study, Chapter 2 begins with a discussion of the educational legislation and scholastic programming for ELLs. Subsequently, I offer an overview of the recommendations made regarding teacher development models in general. Next, I present a review of the literature pertaining to the in-service PD of teachers of ELLs. I also include a brief summary of the previous three sections of this chapter. Lastly, I discuss the main theoretical perspectives and constructs that guide not only my data collection but also my data analysis. These perspectives include an overarching ecological focus as well as the sociocultural constructs of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), mediation, and internalization.

Chapter 3 includes a description of the methodology employed in the study. In this section I outline the research approach I have adopted. I also fully describe the sites in which I conducted the research study and the participants with whom I worked. Lastly, I present a clear explication of the data collection and analysis procedures in which I engaged. In the remaining chapters, I present my data (Chapter 4), offer a discussion of my findings (Chapter 5), and provide conclusions and implications for the field (Chapter 6).

# Chapter II

# Literature Review

## Educational Legislation and Programming for ELLs

A discussion of students, teachers, and schools is incomplete without some mention of the educational policy. These policies, which can take the form of local, state, or federal law, are embodied at the school level by program offerings. I argue that these concerns have tremendous impact on what teachers do and need to learn in order to provide effective instruction to ELLs. Accordingly, this section presents a brief overview of the relevant legislation and court cases that have shaped the landscape of education in regards to ELLs. Also, this section offers a description of the various program options school districts have adopted in order to educate the ELLs they serve.

### Legislation.

The increased influx of ELLs into schools places pressure on educators to respond to the changing needs of the student body. Legislation and specific programming exists to aid in providing equitable educational opportunities for ELLs. In the past, large numbers of ELLs made little academic progress, prompting the passage of the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. This legislation made available funds to schools that wished to offer bilingual instruction to their students. Congress held that “quality bilingual education programs enable children and youth to learn English and meet high academic standards including proficiency in more than one language.” In addition, the act is based in part on the fact that native language proficiency (see Bialystok, 1991, 1997) and instruction (see

Dutcher, 1995 and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995) can be of great benefit to students and the country as a whole and meets the standards of equality set out by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The act, however, did not mandate bilingual education in any form, nor did it require schools to make accommodations for any student that did not speak the language of instruction, English; rather, it made available funds to those schools wishing to offer bilingual programs. Six years later, a group of students in California filed suit, claiming that they were not provided equitable educational opportunities in a school that did not recognize language differences in the classroom. The case, Lau v. Nichols (1974), provided the first real push toward widespread educational equity for ELLs. The unanimous ruling stated that "there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" (Lau, 1974). However, the court did not specify what exactly schools were to do for their ELLs beyond simply providing a program through which the students could learn English.

Also in 1974, a Texas law was passed that refused public funding to schools that enrolled children who were illegally residing in the United States. Of course, many students who didn't speak English were unable to attend school. In response, the Supreme Court heard the case of Plyler v. Doe (1982), wherein it ruled that schools could not refuse enrollment to children who happened to be illegally residing in the U.S. While this decision was met with great resistance, confusion, and anger, the ruling established education as a human right, not to be denied any child for fear of the "creation and perpetuation of a subclass of illiterates within our boundaries, surely adding to the problems and costs of unemployment, welfare, and crime" (Plyler, 1982).

These legal precedents, which attempt to ensure some sort of educational equity for ELLs, were limited in the fact that they did not explain how this equity could be achieved. A few years later, the Castañeda v. Pickard (1981) decision clarified the nature of whatever program a school wanted to implement. The decision mandated that programs serving ELLs must be based upon sound educational theory, employ qualified instructional personnel, and monitor student progress. Some twenty years later, with the passage of NCLB, the previous vision of the Bilingual Education Act had been changed to reflect a new approach to teaching ELLs. While the Bilingual Education Act has undergone a number of reauthorizations (e.g., 1974, 1988, 1993), each with its own amendments[3], NCLB effectively changed the name of this legislation to the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act. A very different perspective on language learning and the achievement of ELLs is presented in NCLB.

> NCLB stresses rapid English language acquisition by means of 'scientifically based' programs. The goal of developing a LEP student's native language abilities has been eliminated. Cultivating bilingual skills is no longer an approved goal of 'language instruction educational programs;' in fact, the word bilingual has been expunged (Asian American Justice Center, 2004, p. 2).

NCLB also evaluates schools in part by how quickly ELLs are transitioned out of services into mainstream classrooms and deemed fluent in English. As a result, schools and teachers may no longer view languages other than English as resources that children can bring to bear in the classroom. In fact, languages other than English may be seen as roadblocks or hindrances to student's entrance into mainstream classes and success on standardized tests.

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[3] See Aleman (1993) for a discussion of previous authorizations and the issues surrounding the 1993 reauthorization.

More locally, citizens in certain states have sponsored initiatives that influence the course of education for ELLs. In 1998, for example, voters in California voted to eliminate bilingual education to students who didn't speak English by passing Proposition 227. Schools, then, placed ELLs in a one-year program in which they received sheltered instruction completely in English. As a result, ELLs only received one year of assistance before being transitioned into mainstream classes, and teachers faced possible legal action if they did not comply with the legislation. Arizona and Massachusetts have also passed similar initiatives. Colorado and Oregon are the only states thus far to reject a referendum seeking to eliminate native language support for ELLs. Despite what might look on the surface like anti-immigrant sentiment on the part of those who seek to limit native-language instruction and bilingual education through citizen-sponsored initiatives, "the United States has probably the strongest legal protections (on paper) regarding equity in education of any country in the industrialized world" (Cummins, 2000, p. 3). In other words, while ELLs, and their education, are protected by law in the U.S., there are many who would seek to install educational programming that is both dismissive and often unable to offer students opportunities to succeed in schools.

**Programming.**

Great variation exists across the country in programs that serve ELLs. As mentioned above, there is no particular program that schools are required to implement. The only requirements are that a program is implemented that satisfies the standards set by the Castañeda v. Pickard ruling. There are numerous pathways to compliance, to be sure. The most commonly seen programs that are currently used throughout the country

include submersion, ESL pull-out, sheltered instruction, transitional bilingual education, immersion, and dual-language immersion. I argue later in this review that the program a teacher works within should be taken into account in delivering PD. For example, PD should be delivered to teachers that is responsive to the specific needs they have as determined by their grade level, content area, student body, and institution. Accordingly, in this section, I briefly outline each of these programs and provide a short summary of their effectiveness.

One of the models of instruction provided to ELLs is termed "submersion." Commonly spoken of as "sink or swim," submersion offers instruction to ELLs solely through the use of the English language. ELLs study in the same classrooms as their English-speaking peers, and while it is possible that the teacher in the classroom speaks more than one language, the language of instruction is 100% English. No extra support is provided. Essentially, ELLs are provided the same exact instruction as their English-speaking peers, as if there were no difference between them. This is the program that ELLs who have waived support services receive. Teachers within this program may not differentiate instruction between native and nonnative English-speaking students.

Another program model of instruction for ELLs simply adds an extra ESL class during the school day to support students' English language development. Often termed "pull-out," this program offers students one class period each day in which they learn English language content including English grammar, conversational conventions, reading, writing, and listening. ELLs learn all other content in the mainstream, English-speaking classroom. ELLs in this program attend two classes, the mainstream and pull-out, which are not often integrated. Mainstream teachers within this model do not

necessarily need to know how to adapt instruction to ELLs. ESL teachers within this model are not necessarily required to teach content-area subjects such as math and science.

Another commonly seen accommodation presented to ELLs in schools is the implementation of a sheltered curriculum. Sheltered instruction (see Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004 for more on sheltered instruction) offers ELLs content-area instruction through simplified language that is specifically aimed at providing them increased access to academic content and vocabulary. Teachers within this program model need to understand how to present content in such a way as to facilitate ELL learning of, engagement in, and access to the instructional curriculum. This model of instruction is often provided in self-contained classrooms wherein ELLs study with their fellow nonnative English-speaking peers. They do not have as much interaction with their native English-speaking schoolmates. It is possible, however, to implement a sheltered curriculum in a mainstream classroom.

Transitional bilingual programs provide a classroom where ELLs are allowed to use their native language to acquire enough academic English proficiency to participate meaningfully in the mainstream classroom. Teachers in this type of program often offer instruction in the student's native language, but as the name of the program suggests, the students are slowly transitioned from using their native language to using English. There are two forms of transitional bilingual education, early-exit and late exit. Early exit is characterized by short and intense period of assistance, usually lasting no longer than two years, after which time the student enters the mainstream classroom. Late-exit programs offer support for a much longer period of time and offer a relatively large amount of

native-language instruction for at least part of the school day throughout the entire duration of the program. Teachers in these programs need to be able to speak *and* teach in the native language of their students.

Another program that provides students the opportunity to become bilingual is an immersion program. Students in these programs receive instruction in a language other than English from bilingual teachers. The aims of these programs are bilingualism and biliteracy as well as an understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity. More often than not, the students in these programs are English speaking. The difference between these programs and the previously mentioned programs is that students choose to enroll in an immersion program. Further, first language development is supported by the teachers, staff, and administration, and most students enter the program with a similar lack of knowledge of the second language. In contrast, the previous program models cater to language minority students whose first language is often without value in the classroom and who may have dissimilar proficiency in the second language.

Not all immersion programs are the same. Swain and Johnson (1997) offer some of the variations that might exist between programs of this ilk. These include but are not limited to the grade level of immersion, the extent of immersion (i.e., full or partial), the ratio of first- to second-language instruction, and the status of the second language. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), as of 2006, the four most common languages taught in immersion programs in the United States are Spanish (132 schools), French (90 schools), Hawaiian (26 schools), and Japanese (22 schools) account for almost 90% of the immersion schools in the country (2006).

An extension of the immersion program, dual-language immersion, sometimes called two-way immersion, resembles on the surface submersion education in that both language minority and majority students study together in the same classroom. The defining characteristic of dual-language instruction, however, is the inclusion, value, and instruction of each student's first and second languages. CAL (2009a) lists the criteria for determining if a program of instruction is dual-language. All students must be integrated for at least half of the instructional day. Content and literacy instruction must be offered in both languages with all students receiving instruction in their second language for at least half of the instructional day. Also, the student body must be relatively balanced between language minority and majority students, with both groups comprising at least one third but no more than two thirds of the overall school population. The most common second language for these programs is Spanish (CAL, 2009b). Spanish/English programs comprise over 90% of the dual-language programs in the U. S. Teachers in dual-language programs need not always be bilingual, however, they need to understand instructional theory and implement practices that facilitate second language development.

Early evaluations of program effectiveness do not find much of a difference between submersion education and other bilingual models (see Baker and de Kanter, 1981). However, most reviews of bilingual programs since Baker and de Kanter (1981) have concluded that bilingual education is indeed more effective in educating ELLs. Willig (1985) conducted a meta-analysis of many of the same studies included in Baker and de Kanter found that bilingual programs were slightly more effective than submersion programs. Ramírez (1991) and his colleagues (Ramírez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1992) corroborated these results, finding that students in bilingual programs improved in

English, math and reading in English. Late-exit transitional programs tended to show higher gains for students suggesting "that giving the native language a much more important role than is typically done in bilingual programs may enable these …students to achieve at levels comparable to those of majority students" (Cziko, 1992, p. 12). Collier (1992) also conducted a synthesis of studies investigating the long-term achievement of ELLs in various program models. Working from data collected over four years, Collier concluded that the longer students were instructed in their native languages along with English, the better they achieved in their future schooling. Genessee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, and Christian (2006) extended these findings but added that while ELLs in bilingual programs may perform lower than their English-speaking peers in the first few years of a particular program, they usually achieve at levels equal to or even higher than their peers by the time they finish elementary, middle, or high school. Overall, the research suggests that dual-language programs are the most effective in educating ELLs.

Though many bilingual program models seem to be more effective than submersion models, Ramirez (1991) concedes that there are large differences among program models as well as between them. For instance, two programs labeled as transitional bilingual models may not resemble each other in any discernable way. Also, as not all programs are feasible to install in any given neighborhood (e.g., a dual-language model may not be feasible in a location that has a relatively small non English-speaking population), looking for the one best program model may not be a viable endeavor. Instead, Lucas, Henze, & Donato (1991) developed a framework for ELL instruction that transcends program model. These researchers offer eight features of

schools that promote the academic achievement of ELLs: a) students' language and culture is valued; b) ELLs are held to high expectations; c) ELL instruction is a priority for school leaders; d) PD opportunities are provided to school staff and teachers; e) ELLs have access to a variety of course offerings; f) counseling services are available; g) parent involvement is encouraged; h) school staff are committed to the empowerment of ELLs. Though this framework seems to downplay the impact a particular program model may have on what teachers need to be able to do, I argue that each program offers differential support such that some of the above-mentioned features of effective schools may be easier to employ than others. For example, schools that promote the academic achievement of ELLs need to provide PD for school staff and teachers. A school with a small number of ELLs and an ESL pull-out program may not feel that providing a school-wide workshop pertaining to ELLs is appropriate as only a small number of students and teachers may be involved. On the other hand, a school offering a dual-language program may feel that an ELL focus to PD is of great import as every student in the school and indeed every teacher and staff member needs to know or practice the concepts related to the instruction of ELLs. In sum, the programs as well as the features of the programs within which teachers of ELLs work can impact not only what teachers need to do and know but also what opportunities are made available to them. Institutional factors such as student body, subject matter, administrative support, and beliefs and attitudes towards ELLs all play a role in what teachers need to know and do in the classroom.

**Professional Development Recommendations**

PD for P-12 teachers has been the subject of much debate. In the wake of the NCLB, classroom teachers have been forced to balance the demands of state and federal reforms, specifically in terms of student achievement, with what their knowledge and practice have prepared them to do. As such, teachers need to continue learning new pedagogical strategies in order to keep up with not only the requirements of the position they hold but also the needs of the specific students they teach. It is clear, then, that with ever-changing educational policy, teachers need to be afforded a wider variety of PD opportunities (Cohen & Ball, 1990; Lieberman & Miller, 2001; Little, 1993). Despite the call for more innovative approaches to PD, a more traditional model of teacher development, one removed from the situated classroom experience, is the most likely form of PD teachers receive (Miller, Lord, & Dorney, 1994). Normally in the form of a 'one-shot' presentation, these traditional PD programs do not engage the teachers in any meaningful way, nor do they improve their instruction (Gall & Renchler, 1985; Richardson, 1994; Showers, Joyce, & Bennett, 1987). In fact, a majority of teachers have reported that they both have no input in the content or delivery method of the PD they receive (US Department of Education, 1994) and feel that the development opportunities in which they engage are of little value (Corcoran, 1995; Little, 1993; Smylie, 1989). Wilson & Berne (1999) also submit that very little is known about what teachers learn in traditional PD programs or how they come to know it.

As Borko (2004) alerts us, NCLB requires that all states offer 'high quality' PD to teachers. "NCLB does not, however, address questions such as what constitutes high-quality professional development or how professional development should be made

available to teachers" (p. 3). Though it may have provided further impetus for current debate, the ratification of NCLB did not seem to create the interest in what makes PD effective for classroom teachers. Previously, Little (1988) offered her recommendations for the provision of effective PD, stating that "conditions that are powerful enough to introduce new ideas and practices in the classroom and to sustain 'collegial' relations among teachers require a degree of organization, energy, skill, and endurance often underestimated in summary reports" (p. 26.) Based upon her review of various PD programs,

> researchers concluded that staff development is most influential where it: (1) ensures collaboration adequate to produce shared understanding, shared investment, thoughtful development, and the fair, rigorous test of selected ideas; (2) requires collective participation in training *and* implementation; (3) is focused on crucial problems of curriculum and instruction; (4) is conducted often enough and long enough to ensure progressive gains in knowledge, skill, and confidence; and (5) is congruent with and contributes to professional habits and norms (p. 35).

In other words, Little argues for a model of PD that allows for teachers and staff developers to work together to solve problems that arise directly from the teachers' classroom experiences. While Little does not specify how much time a PD model such as this would require, she does state that frequency and length of time are indeed considerations to be made.

Abdal-Haqq (1995) also offers similar recommendations for effective PD for teachers working in schools, making the argument that time is among the most difficult hurdles to overcome in educating in-service teachers. According to the author

> effective professional development: is ongoing; includes training, practice, and feedback; opportunities for individual reflection and group inquiry into practice; and coaching or other follow-up procedures; is school-based and embedded in teacher work; is collaborative, providing opportunities for teachers to interact with peers; focuses on student learning, which should, in part, guide assessment of its effectiveness; encourages and supports school-based and teacher initiatives; is rooted in the knowledge base for teaching; recognizes teachers as professionals

> and adult learners; provides adequate time and follow-up support; and is accessible and inclusive (p. 3).

The author also contends that schools do not always consider these features in providing PD to their teachers. "School schedules do not normally incorporate time to consult or observe colleagues or engage in professional activities such as research, learning, and practicing new skills, curriculum development, or professional reading" (p. 4).

Virginia Richardson (2003), in a more recent discussion of PD, argues "while we have had research evidence on the characteristics of effective staff development programs for some time, these features are not commonly seen in practice" (para.1). According to Richardson, PD programs should "be long term with follow-up, encourage collegiality, foster agreement among participants on goals and vision…develop buy-in among participants…acknowledge participants' existing beliefs and practices" (para. 2). She also posits that traditional, yet still current programs fail to take into account the current state of classrooms, schools, or districts, and often consists of the transmission of information and provides few opportunities for classroom application.

Ball (1996) agrees with the three sets of recommendations above and states, "The most effective professional development model is thought to involve follow-up activities, usually in the form of long-term support, coaching in teachers' classrooms, or ongoing interaction with colleagues" (p. 501-502). Ball continues with her own consideration of what PD should address in terms of what teachers know and how best to support their learning. These factors include a consideration of teachers' prior beliefs and experience. "Increasingly, teachers' own personal and professional histories are thought to play an important role in determining what they learn from professional development experiences" (p. 501). In effect, what teachers know and do is brought to bear on the

learning experiences they have and how new information is appropriated in the classroom. Subject matter knowledge as well as knowledge of the students in the classroom is also of great import. “To guide a discussion…can be treacherous when the teacher is unsure of the terrain being explored…How to *hear* what students say…requires experiencing the world through another’s perspective” (p. 501). Ball also does not underestimate the power of context and its impact on teacher learning. Time, reflection, follow-up, and modeling are also important to consider in supporting teacher learning. The last factor to consider in Ball’s framework is teacher control. Ball argues “teacher development is considered especially productive when teachers are in charge of the agenda and determine the focus and nature of the programming offered” (p. 502).

Additionally, much research has been conducted that investigates teacher learning within a context of collegial collaboration (e.g., Clark, 2001; Florio-Ruane & Raphael, 2001; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001; Little, 2003). Specifically, Little (2003) found that when engaged in collaborative learning communities, teachers “express a felt responsibility to student success, and orientation toward instructional innovation, and a commitment to close and supportive collaboration with colleagues” (p.938). These findings mirror those of similar studies (e.g., McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Westheimer, 1998) in that when teachers worked with their colleagues, they tended to discuss issues of instruction, examine these problems in such a way as to design novel approaches to solving them, more readily invite and accept feedback on issues of contention, and share class work. Discussions like these, in which teachers critically examine their instructional practices, however, do not normally occur (Ball, 1996; Putnam & Borko, 1997), and as Borko (2004) suggests, “such conversations must occur, however, if teachers are to

collectively explore ways of improving their teaching and support one another as they work to transform their practice" (p. 7).

## Professional Development of In-Service Teachers

### Classroom-based opportunities.

In this section, I review seven studies that report on collaboration between teachers and researchers. Four studies (Bryant, Linan-Thompson, Ugel, Hamff, and Hougen, 2001; Clair, 1998; DaSilva Iddings & Rose, 2010; Levine & Marcus, 2007) discuss teachers engaging in teacher study groups. I found one study (Mahn, McMann, and Musanti, 2005) which details a program that brought teachers together to discuss their classroom struggles and find solutions through teacher-teacher collaboration, as well as two studies (Day & Ainley, 2008; Hawkins & Legler, 2004) show teachers and researchers working together to jointly plan and implement classroom instruction. A final study investigates teacher reflection as a means to understand teacher learning.

The first group of studies I review in this section focus on teacher study groups. Bryant et al (2001) implemented a four-month PD program for 10 sixth grade middle school teachers of ELLs to " examine professional development activities aimed at helping content area and special education teachers integrate reading strategies into their subject area teaching" to increase reading outcomes for struggling readers in content-area classes (p. 253). The teachers worked in two groups to work in and prepare for a newly implemented program in which special education students are included in mainstream classes. They collaborated on planning and lesson implementation as well as attended PD activities focused on three specific reading strategies – word identification, partner

reading, and collaborative strategic reading. First, full-day in-services were provided for each strategy, during which teachers worked together to devise schedules for incorporating the strategy into classroom instruction. Next, the researchers provided in-class demonstrations of each strategy, and at the same time, the teachers and researcher met weekly to discuss any issues and challenges they faced in implementing the three strategies. The strategies were implemented on a staggered schedule in order for each strategy, normally in three- or four-week intervals.

The researchers found that many teachers were concerned about how their students' reading proficiency would impact their learning of class content. The teachers also felt overwhelmed by the low achievement of their students, the difficulty of course materials, and the many demands placed on them by high-stakes testing and school curriculum. Other than the English and language arts teachers, many of the content-area teachers did not feel that they could effectively teach reading to their students. Further, while the teachers felt the in-services were helpful, they requested more modeling activities, in keeping with previously mentioned research (see Abdal-Haqq, 1995; Ball, 1996; Little, 1988; Richardson, 2003). Also, they felt that the frequency of the support meetings was a bit difficult to manage as they already met with their colleagues two to three times each week. However, the teachers cited "strong preferences for working in teams and the benefits of interdisciplinary teaming for implementing strategy instruction with their students" (p. 258). Support was another issue for the teachers as they felt they needed support from the district if they were going to incorporate more reading strategies into the classroom. The teachers also varied in their implementation of the strategies suggesting that more time and practice was needed to ensure that teachers were providing

consistent and effective instruction. The researchers conclude that PD opportunities need to allow enough time for teachers to adjust to new practices and to include them in their everyday instruction.

Clair (1998) also researched teacher study groups, reporting data from a year long study in which two groups of teachers met in organized study groups to discuss and work through issues they faced in classrooms regarding ELLs in their charge. The researcher makes clear her own perspective on PD by stating, “I acknowledge the value of individual efforts, but I know that collective energies are necessary for school-based change, and I understand that who teachers are and what they do is situated in a larger sociopolitical context” (p. 467). These views connect with those of Richardson (2003), and accordingly, the researcher sought to determine whether teacher study groups would support teacher independent thinking, facilitate collaborative problem solving, transform the teachers’ stance toward PD, and contribute to PD opportunities in other settings. The researcher was invited by two school districts to provide information to their respective staffs on issues regarding ELLs, and after offering support for all of the teachers at the schools, she eventually convened two groups of teachers, one at each school. The first study group contained 15 middle school teachers, a curriculum coordinator, and a bilingual counselor. The teachers came from a variety of content-areas, including language arts. The second study group consisted of five elementary school teachers and two coordinators who were members of the Title I staff at two elementary schools.

During her work with the teachers, Clair cited five recurring themes – “(a) tensions about knowledge, (b) alliances with traditional professional development structures, (c) ways of working with one another, (d) understanding the educational needs

of ELLs, and (e) [her own] experience as a member" (p. 474). Her findings suggest that while teachers were initially expecting to receive information and knowledge from the researcher and were unable to adapt some of the material discussed in the study group to their specific teaching contexts, over time the groups began to share their own knowledge and trust each other's experiences. In addition, teachers did not initially view the study groups as a viable PD opportunity and were not able to fully articulate their roles and responsibilities for participation in the group. By the end of the study, the teachers saw the groups as a valuable experience, and some of them had actually continued the practice and started their own study groups. Also, through their participation in the study group, the teachers were better able to work together, and they also began to include other teachers by sharing information and offering support to those teachers who may not feel prepared to work with ELLs. The teachers also developed more sophisticated ways of thinking and talking about ELL education issues. The researcher lastly claims that there is a "tension between invitation versus imposition" (p. 484). As the de facto leader of the study group, the researcher struggled to not constantly intervene when the teachers made unsubstantiated claims. The push and pull between inviting teacher discussion and the free flow of ideas and imposing the views of the researcher on the group as a whole led to confusion as to what effect on classroom practices the study group discussions would have. Ultimately, Clair concludes that study groups offer "ESL content teachers the sustained opportunities they need to critically reflect on schooling issues that have a direct impact on their day-to-day lives" (p. 490).

DaSilva Iddings and Rose (2010) also worked with in-service teachers, offering, at the request of the school district, a teacher-researcher collaborative model of PD. The

project “illuminates some of the social, material, and organizational resources that were identified as necessary to achieve more equitable educational experiences” for ELLs (Introduction, para. 2). This analysis, part of a larger study focusing on a larger group of teachers, detailed the experience of one teacher as she worked with the researchers (and her peers) to develop more meaningful understandings of ELLs and ELL instruction. As a result, she was able to provide greater access to instructional content and increased classroom participation for one ELL student.

The teacher, in collaboration with the researchers and in response to classroom contextual influences, was able to implement instructional strategies that provided more access to class content while not sacrificing academic rigor. For example, the student had previously been given phonics worksheets that did not connect to the work of the rest of the class. One day, however, the student requested that she be given the same work as the other students. In response, the teacher began to provide the student with the same work but added additional supports to help the student complete the work. These included the use of the student’s native language with peers and on writing assignments, flash cards, advance organizers, and increased opportunities for interaction with native English-speaking students. The findings of this study “suggest that there are supports that are *essential* in order to minimize institutional constraints that may prevent these students from accessing the content of instruction, to become legitimate members of their classroom communities, to develop and expand their linguistic resources, and to discover and extend their identities as students in a U.S. classroom” (p. 122-3; see also DaSilva Iddings & Rose, 2007). The researchers concluded that in order to effect some classroom

and teacher change, the agency of teachers as well as students needed to be considered within the larger school context.

Levine and Marcus (2007) presented data taken from a larger study in which they followed a group of six teachers as they collaborated with their fellow teachers and observed the impact this collaboration had on their classroom practices. In this article, Levine and Marcus presented a smaller piece of their research focused on four of the participating teachers and the multiple trajectories their learning took during their work together. The researchers argued that "closing the achievement gap will require more than just choosing the right intervention and implementing it with fidelity…requiring multiple, ongoing trajectories of individual and group development" (p. 118-119). To view these trajectories, the researchers observed teachers in a collaborative community, or house, which shared 80 students, served as advisors to 20 students each, contacted families regularly and often, collaborated with their colleagues, and focused on ELLs.

The researchers noted three learning trajectories for the teachers – collaboration, family partnership, and instructional modifications for ELLs. While not all teachers may be willing or prepared to work with other teachers, these four teachers seemed ready to share and listen to each other's experiences from the start. Also, the teachers worked together to foster increased parental involvement in the school, and though the teachers were not yet trying to discover new sources of student capital, it is clear that they wanted continued contact with their students' parents and families. Lastly, the teachers engaged in discussion resulting in instructional modifications for their students. The researchers conclude that "left on their own, there is no guarantee that teachers' trajectories of learning will lead them to uncomfortable, yet productive, practices of collaborative work"

(p. 133) and that “leaders should track and participate in such learning” (p. 133) in order to help guide teachers as they develop new understandings of and practices for working with ELLs.

These fours studies show the potential for teacher learning to occur within organized study groups. Teachers benefited from working with their peers and the researchers in developing new instructional strategies and ways of thinking about ELLs. Additionally, this research brings into stark relief the challenges present in implementing a collaborative PD program as the roles and responsibilities of participating in study groups were not discussed or understood by all parties. Some teachers were confused about how knowledge and information was to be shared. Even the role of the researcher was a source of tension. The research suggests that these relationships develop over time as trust and respect among the participants evolves. The authors suggest that “without a shared vision or set of objectives, the various trajectories of learning that occur may have little synergy or coherence and thus, may not have a powerful positive impact on teaching and learning” (p. 134). In addition to building trust and respect through having a strong, shared set of goals, teachers may also need time and support to develop the capacity to work effectively in collaboration with their colleagues.

In addition to the literature on teachers engaging in study group, other studies discuss teachers meeting with their peers on the school site to discuss issues they face in their classrooms. One such study (Mahn, McMann, & Musanti, 2005) discussed the Teaching/Learning Centers (TLC) the researchers implemented over the course of two years. Their aim was to create a space wherein teachers could come together and collaborate to devise effective strategies and activities for language and literacy

instruction to both mainstream and ELL students. They based their program on the notion that "sustained periods of time are needed during which practicing teachers can work with other teachers to consider new ways of teaching and to think about ways to help students in their particular schools and socio-cultural contexts" (p. 379). A TLC was convened at five elementary schools; the school represented the different ESL program present in the district – dual-language immersion, bilingual education, and immersion. Teachers were invited to participate for one week at a time to collaborate with and learn from each other in developing new strategies for working with the ELLs in their classroom.

The researchers found that teachers valued the opportunity to learn from each other, and they were able to effectively focus on the particular needs of their students within their specific classroom. Implementing a TLC model of professional model is not without its challenges. The teachers felt that the TLC was a source of stress in that their more experienced colleagues often observed some of the lessons. The researchers further discovered that collaboration between teachers does not simply occur and that a sense of trust, support, and respect in order for true sharing to occur. The researchers also contend that the best results come from PD when "teachers assess the particular needs for their schools site, plan and implements professional development grounded in immediate classroom experience, and establish opportunities for ongoing dialogue and reflection among themselves" (p. 379).

Another group of studies focused on teacher-researcher collaboration occurring in actual classrooms. Day and Ainley (2008) traced the change in attitude of one teacher, the second author, toward a single instructional practice, literature circles, through her

interactions and cooperation with a university researcher, the first author. Glenna, the teacher, had previously worked in a school environment "where the philosophy was structured and teachers used a scripted reading program," and had thought that certain literacy activities such as literature circles were inappropriate for lower-level readers (p. 159). Specifically, she thought that the linguistic demands required to successful participate in literature circles were beyond the capabilities of ELLs who may not have enough proficiency with the English language. After moving to a new school, one in which she was granted more freedom to implement a wider range of instructional strategies, the teacher agreed to work with the researcher to present literature circles to her class of 22 students, ranging from eleven to thirteen years old, almost half of whom were ELLs. The study began by the researcher initiating the literature circle activities while the teacher watched. Overtime, the responsibility shifted, becoming more collaborative with the teacher becoming more involved in the instruction surrounding the literature circles.

Through the use of interview data and teacher 'free writes,' the researcher catalogued the teacher's experience in observing her students discussing books. At first, she was skeptical about whether her students would be able to participate meaningfully in the book discussions, but over time, the students proved up to the task. The instruction began slowly with students learning how to simply talk about books. The researcher brought in picture books and the students were asked to relate what they felt about the books. Native language use was encouraged "which assisted students in verbalizing their thoughts and opinions about the books" (p. 163). As the students progressed in their ability to talk about books, the subject of the discussions shifted to themes and literacy

elements. “Glenna particularly wondered if a discussion would show that her students understood the books and if this was a good use of their time” (p. 166). The students were actively engaged and excited about what they had read, and Glenna went from a ‘skeptic to believer’ commenting that the ELLs in her classroom were “far more capable of producing higher level thinking on their own that I ever thought possible” (p. 172).

In a similar fashion to Day and Ainley, Hawkins and Legler (2004) worked together in a kindergarten classroom that was one third each White, Black, and ELL. The ELLs were comprised exclusively of Spanish and Hmong speakers. After an in-service course at her school, the teacher, Legler, approached the researcher, Hawkins, about her classroom experiences with ELLs. Starting with that meeting, both authors began a collaboration that resulted in the design of classroom experiences for the ELLs in Legler’s classroom. Their collaboration “assumed equal (though differential) participation” (p. 338). Through their first year of teacher-researcher collaboration, the two devised a framework for working with ELLs in the classroom that made language a main component of every activity, provided support for multiple literacies including academic language, provided opportunities for students to interact socially, and responded to the social and cultural resources children bring to school with them.

The second year of collaboration was framed around an “action research cycle: designing and implementing curriculum activities, gathering and analyzing classroom data, then redesigning and implementing instruction based on our findings” (p. 341). One such activity was the Camera Project for which they distributed cameras to every child. Each child took pictures of whatever they felt was important to them, organized the pictures, and presented them to the class. From these presentations, the researchers found

that the students needed support in various areas of language use (i.e., summarizing, sentence structure, and question formation). In the years following, the researchers further developed the curriculum to reflect a more local focus that allowed the students to more fully access the content of the class. For example, instead of working with topics far removed from the students' experience, the teachers chose topics the students could actually touch and work with in person (i.e., "faraway topics such as 'arctic animals'" were replaced with "'evergreens' and 'bugs'" [p. 341])

At the time of this publication, the researchers were designing initiatives that forged connections between the home and school environments. Three components to this focus were essential - home visits, homework, and parental involvement in the classroom. While the researchers agreed that this collaboration resulted in a change in thinking and perspective, they stated, "it has also changed our understandings and articulations of language and literacy learning in kindergarten and of classroom instructional design" (p. 342).

While the other studies were clearly conducted within the context of the classroom, the following study investigated teachers' reflection on their classroom practices. Golombek and Johnson (2004) discussed the impact teacher-authored narrative inquiry had on the development of three ESL/EFL teachers. The researchers asked the teachers, one of which a secondary language arts teacher, to write about their teaching experiences in order to investigate and legitimate the knowledge base of the teachers. Ultimately, however, "what emerges as most striking in teacher-authored narratives is the journey of *how* teachers come to know as well as *what* they come to know" (p. 312, emphasis in original).

The researchers found that, in the case of the language arts teacher, the activity of engaging in narrative inquiry created a mediational space where teachers were able to draw upon various resources that in turn allowed them to reconceptualize and reinternalize their new understandings of themselves and their instructional practices" (p. 324). In other words, while teachers may obtain knowledge, they might not always be able to apply this knowledge in the classrooms, and narratives, according to the researchers, allow teachers the opportunity to take what they learn and appropriate it in meaningful ways that affect classroom practice.

Together, these studies connect to the general PD literature (see Ball, 1996) and highlight the impact teachers and researchers can have on each other affecting both small- and large-scale changes in their classrooms. Ultimately, teacher-researcher collaborations can result in changes in individual instructional practices such as literature circles, as well as curricular modifications, such as we see in Legler's kindergarten class. While we see in Day and Ainley (2008) that specific roles were assigned to the researcher and the teacher and in Hawkins and Legler (2004) that the roles were not as clearly defined, more work needs to be done in this vein to understand in what ways teacher-researcher interactional dynamics result in teacher learning.

**Coursework-based opportunities.**

I located seven studies that investigated the PD opportunities offered to teachers through formalized coursework or instruction. Other researchers have argued for a wider variety of opportunities for teachers to learn (Cohen & Ball, 1990; Lieberman & Miller, 2001; Little, 1993), and courses such as are discussed in this section offer precisely that. In fact, six studies (Favela, 2007; Gebhard, 2003; Gebhard, Demers, and Castillo-

Rosenthal, 2008; Layton & Lock, 2002; Meskill, 2005; Montavon & Delaney, 2007; Sowa, 2009) present the experiences of teachers as they engage in coursework offered at local universities. One study (Fournier, 1993) reports on a teacher's experiences studying abroad during a summer institute.

Aguirre-Munoz, Park, Amabisca, and Boscardin (2008), in response to the claim that making content comprehensible to ELLs may not provide adequate exposure to and instruction of academic English (see August & Shanahan, 2006; Bunch, Abram, Lotan, & Valdés, 2001 for more on this claim), aimed to increase teachers' capacity to understand academic language in English. The researchers instructed 21 teachers in Systemic Functional Linguistics, a perspective on language that privileges meaning made for specific purposes within specific contexts, and, for the purposes of this study, focused on academic English genres used in classroom settings. Specifically, the PD program the researchers implemented "aimed to increase teachers' ability to respond to common linguistic choices ELLs in middle school make when producing a written response to literature" (p. 300). Further, the study sought to determine not only teacher response to writing, but also the impact of the intervention on teacher classroom practices.

Through pre- and posttests, classroom observations, and teacher interviews, the researchers found a significant difference in teacher response to student writing. Teachers were more able to provide feedback and planning focused on features of academic English. Initially, teachers provided feedback on spelling, punctuation, and grammar, and offered comments that provided no clear direction to students [i.e., "lacks coherence," "needs more detail" (Aguirre-Munoz et al, 2008, p. 307)]. Posttests results, however, reveal a shift in teachers' responses toward a focus on academic English and support for

an expanded repertoire of appropriate academic language. Further, many of the teachers incorporated material taught in the training course into their classroom curriculum. However, the researchers posit "that additional training is required to increase teachers' capacity to implement a full range of focused academic-language instruction if they are to address the needs of ELLs with varying degrees of English competency (p. 309).

Favela (2007) conducted a study to investigate a PD model focused on supporting teachers of ELLs as they built relationships with their students' families and communities. More specifically, the program helped 23 mainstream teachers "to earn their ESOL/Bilingual endorsements, become leaders for their schools, build upon the linguistic and cultural heritage of their students, and develop and implement ELL parent/family community outreach initiatives at their schools" (p. 14). Teachers from four different schools in Oregon participated in the program offered by a nearby university to meet the needs of the local immigrant community. Two of the schools had failed to meet Adequate Yearly Progress goals as set out by NCLB, and the Spanish-speaking students at these schools had been steadily increasing.

The researchers carefully designed coursework offered in three phases – reflections and discovery; exploration and investigation; and application and dissemination. Fieldwork experiences were specifically connected to the specific needs of their students and families. One such experience took the form of a case study where every teacher needed to analyze the language development of both a native English-speaking child and an ELL, comparing and contrasting the different stages of development each child experienced. In another course, teachers interviewed the parents of ELLs in order to dispel any myths and gain understandings of their attitudes toward

schools and their children's education. The teachers found that parental involvement in school was impacted by a number of different factors including negative previous educational experiences and unfamiliarity with traditional views of parental involvement that ask parents to work with a school to provide educational support to students.

The teachers also created community outreach initiatives, the outcomes of which are presented as a final project, which included four literacy projects all designed to raise family awareness of reading strategies that can implemented in the home and motivate students as well as to increase family involvement in homework and reading activities. The researchers found that the most effective projects were those with specific, clear and simple goals, objectives and budgets", "most families were eager to participate in school events" when given early and frequent notice of activities, and these same families "felt much more at ease when they were warmly greeted when entering the school" (p. 20). Childcare was also a major issue to consider. The communities responded most positively to projects that made use of community resources already in existence. As a result of the program, the researchers concluded that participating teachers "began to rely more and more on the students themselves and their families as valuable sources of knowledge and experience and thus draw them into the educational process as true partners" (p. 21).

Gebhard (2003), in her study of teacher and students in a northern Californian school, asked the questions, "Why do so many schools provide such inequitable and inadequate instruction for their English-language learners, and what can we do about it?" (p. 35). She notes that "schools often fail to provide powerful learning opportunities for English-language learners because of two common misconceptions about how academic literacy in a second language develops" (p. 36) - "Silence is not golden" and "second

language literacy development is not linear" (p.36). The teachers at Olive Grove Elementary, however, engaged in PD opportunities that helped reconcile these misconceptions. In fact, selected teachers from Olive Grove enrolled, with the support of the school district, in a two-year program offered by a local university. While not much more data is presented, "participating teachers noted that the program required a big commitment but that it had a huge impact on their beliefs and practices" (p. 38). Other schools, in contrast, "offered what could best be described as tutorial sessions that helped teachers pass the state's pencil-and-paper licensure test but did not help them rethink what they actually did in their daily practice of how they might modify that practice to respond to local needs" (p. 38).

In another study, Gebhard et al (2008) reported on the impact of a PD program for pre- and in-service teachers aimed to "apprentice these teachers to become critical texts analysts and action-researchers who are able to analyze the linguistic features of their students' emergent academic literacy practices and to implement responsive pedagogical practices" (p. 275). This study highlighted the theoretical framework used in one particular course of the program and how evidence of its use is seen in classroom practice. The theoretical framework the researchers share with the teachers is an institutional perspective of literacy which "suggests that teachers can gain insights into the complexity of their students' literacy practices by asking questions regarding how students use talk, print, gestures, drawings, and other meaning-making tools in complementary and overlapping ways" (p. 276). The authors present two teacher cases and one student case to "provide an example of how L1 and L2 teachers used a critical perspective of L2 literacy…as a heuristic in a teacher education seminar" (p. 279).

The researchers found the "perspective of L2 literacy enacted in this teacher education course assisted Jan and Zoë in literally seeing and re-seeing how a second language learner named Sara produced and interpreted assigned texts in a first grade mainstream classroom" (p. 286). The teachers were also able "to see and re-see how local school reforms supported and constrained the literacy development of bilingual students like Sara" (p. 286). The researchers further concluded that teachers needed to understand and "develop a critical awareness of how school reform efforts position them and their students if they are to attempt to negotiate the unintended consequences of these reforms" (p. 287). Ultimately, this research highlights the need to inform teachers more deeply about their own understandings of their subject matter, in this case, writing, but also the perspectives on and interpretations of texts that their students bring with them into the classroom.

Also providing teachers support through university coursework, Layton and Lock (2002) conducted a study in which special education teachers were instructed to more effectively identify ELLs with learning disabilities. The researchers cited a few of the typical issues that can cause confusion and lead to ELLs being labeled with a learning disability, such as a lack of communicative competence and difficulties with various reading skills. Two groups of teachers, each consisting of 18 teachers, participated in two different interventions designed to instruct them in assessment techniques in special education. One group used a CD-ROM assessment program embedded within a one semester, graduate special education course. The second group also enrolled in a graduate course but did not receive specific training in assessment of ELLs. The course in which these teachers were enrolled presented information regarding issues of cultural diversity

and language development. The CD-ROM, however, included information focused on second language development, bilingualism, and rate of acquisition. In effect, the CD-ROM "was designed to enhance the…groups' ability to identify basic second language acquisition characteristics and become more sensitive to the role that these characteristics play in learning" (p. 364). After the completion of the course, the teachers responded to a survey measuring their sensitivity to and ability to differentiate between ELLs and ELLs with learning disabilities.

The researchers found that the group of teachers trained via the CD-ROM benefitted significantly more than the group who did not use the CD-ROM by "increasing their sensitivity to the characteristics of quality, different evaluations between students" who are ELLs and those who are ELLs with learning disabilities (p. 366). The teachers who did not receive the explicit training seemed to lack the same sensitivity. Often, ELLs exhibit what teachers perceive to be deficiencies in literacy skills and are referred to special education (Ortiz, 1984). These findings, however, suggest that explicit training on assessment of this kind can lead a teacher to more accurately identify ELLs with learning disabilities, reducing the number of special education referrals for this population of the student body.

Meskill (2005), in the Training all Teachers (TAT) program, strived "(a) to infuse ELL issues throughout core curricula for teachers and school personnel in training and (b) to extend this knowledge into on-site partnerships with in-service practitioners and school personnel" (p. 740). The TAT program consisted of a variety of group workshops with continuing support, peer presentations, and "'push-in' work, wherein ELL experts worked directly in participating faculty classrooms to infuse ELL issues on an on-going

basis” (p. 743). The topics covered within the program, including language, acquisition, culture, regulations, and communication, and other topics were designed for specialist in other areas (i.e., reading specialists received information on biliteracy).

As a result of the TAT program many teachers experienced a shift in thinking about ELLs. Of reading teachers, many “were unaware of the lag between ELLs’ oral English proficiency and academic language ability” (p. 749). There was a difference, however, between teachers with different specialties and what they took away from the program. For instance, younger teachers “emphasized the classroom strategies that they had learned about, while the more experienced Reading and Counseling Psychology students’ reports focused on the increase in empathy for cultural differences reflected in the ELL population” (pp. 749-750). Additionally, many teachers who were ELLs themselves spoke of “the challenges they had met as nonnative English speakers in U.S. schools and the need for the patience and support they had seen as desirable qualities in their own teachers” (p. 751). Also, many teachers did not know about the legal rights of ELLs. Of interest, as well as, is many content area teachers, those who do not specifically teach language arts or reading, never considered the instruction of ELLs as within their purview. One teacher remarked, “Oh, is that my responsibility? I didn’t know” (p. 749).

Montavon and Delaney (2007) initiated a research study that focused on 31 teachers, 27 of them in-service teachers, as they participated in a secondary education literacy course offered at a local university. The course content consisted of strategies of sheltered instruction, and one of the lessons was delivered through sheltered Spanish instruction. Sheltered Spanish instruction is the same as sheltered English instruction, mentioned previously, in tenet, only different in language of instruction. None of the

participating teachers spoke Spanish and at the end of the class, they were given an assessment to determine how much of the course content they had understood. In order to answer their research question, "How can we assure that teachers will understand and appreciate the need for adequate training to serve linguistically diverse students," the researchers observed classroom behavior and participation, collected the after-class assessments, and asked the teachers to comment on their previous personal and teaching experiences, as well as their experiences in the lesson (p. 204).

The researchers found that while not all of the teachers gained a new appreciation for ELLs' struggles in an all-English environment, they "referred to the use of pictures, hand gestures, repetition, slower speaking pace, modeling, cooperative learning, hands on activities, cognates and body language" as being of great import in understanding the content of the lesson (p. 207). The teachers also felt that even though they were not able to communicate in the target language, Spanish, they were supported by the teacher and felt increasingly comfortable throughout the lesson. Additionally, the teachers were allowed to use English during group discussions, further increasing the possibility for greater comprehension. Not all of the teachers felt this way, however; two teachers offered resistance to the lesson and did not appreciate the experience at all. One of these teachers commented, "The point was made early on in the lesson about second language learners and barriers – it didn't need to last for 1 ½ hours" (p. 207), though they agreed that body language and visuals helped them understand the content better. This study highlights the potential benefits of learning a second or foreign language for teachers of ELLs. These results suggest that teachers who have gone through this type of experience

either for one lesson or a lifetime are more empathetic and sensitive to the struggles their students may face in the classroom.

Sowa (2009) conducted a study focused on the use of action research projects to help teachers become more reflective educators and help them learn about teaching ELLs. This study was also conducted within an ESL methods course at a local university, and all of the three of teachers discussed were indeed in-service teachers with an average of 10 years teaching experience. These teachers worked within districts that implemented either sheltered instruction or ESL pull-out programs for their linguistically diverse students. A major component of the course was reflection, and each of teachers had close to two months to conduct and reflect on their action research projects. This study reports the data gathered over the course of one semester. I will briefly discuss only the two projects that have a language and literacy focus.

One of the teachers conducted a project in which she (re)taught phonics and phonemic awareness to 4$^{th}$ grade ELLs. She found that the students made gains in reading and spelling, but not in writing. Further, the students developed improved decoding skills and miscue recognition. Another teacher conducted another project based phonemic awareness, this time focused on rhyme detection. As a result of her project, the students' ability to detect rhymes improved.

The researchers found that though teachers understood that their projects could not be used to generalize across all ELLs, working through their own research gave them a better understanding of how to meet the needs of ELLs. The teachers also commented, "they were now more mindful about how they approached the presentation of material and the different types of formal and informal assessment they could use" (p. 1030).

Also, the teachers felt that the strategies they learned and implemented through their action research projects could benefit all students, and that action research helped them see the connection between theory and practice more clearly.

The above studies focus on the effects of formal coursework and experiences embedded within them. One study reports on one teacher's reflection on a study abroad experience. Fournier (1993), a classroom teacher of ELLs in a bilingual program, wrote about her experiences studying Spanish in an overseas, summer institute focused on Spanish children's literature in Madrid, Spain. She claims that through her coursework as well as through her interactions with professors, colleagues, and children she has become a better bilingual teacher. She also clarifies that she is not a bilingual teacher – she teaches the English segment in a bilingual program. Nevertheless, her experience learning a foreign language has opened up her numerous opportunities for her personally and as a teacher of bilingual children.

Her experience in Spain led her to discover a plethora of authentic texts in Spanish that she used to replace Spanish translations of English books in her classroom. She felt this most immediately and realized that these translations were not as good as the real thing. "The richness of the language was lost in the translation, and the stories suffered because of the separation of the language from the culture" (p. 179). In addition, she felt that she had an increased empathy for ELLs and that "silence does not mean lack of understanding" (p. 177). In addition, she developed a heightened sense of her own language. Subsequent to and possibly due to her experience in Spain, she enrolled in a course of study to obtain an ESL endorsement and followed with a master's degree in elementary education with an emphasis in bilingual education. In effect, the increased

cultural understandings she developed while learning another language overseas provided her with an increased awareness of herself and her students, ultimately motivating her to further her own knowledge base and skill set as a teacher.

These studies illuminate the potential formal coursework can have on in-service teacher learning. While this research body suffers in a small way from incomplete reporting of results, the findings across the studies suggests that teachers can benefit greatly from instruction offered through outside coursework or intervention. Specifically, teachers can gain insights through awareness raising activities such as community involvement and teacher inquiry projects. In addition, sustained, explicit instruction is valuable as implicit knowledge may not be easily applicable in classroom settings. Finally, the research has shown that attempts to access and capitalize on community resources of ELL communities can be facilitated through formal coursework and embedded fieldwork experiences.

**School-wide approaches.**

My search yielded two studies (Datnow, Borman, Stringfield, Overman, & Castellano, 2003; Montes, 2002) that focused on school-wide efforts to raise the level of achievement of ELLs. This section offers a brief discussion of each.

Datnow et al (2003) conducted a study in order to determine the nature of implementing comprehensive school reform (CSR) models and its effects on student achievement. There are many CSR models, and "though the reforms differ in their approaches to change, common to many of them are an interest in whole-school change, strong commitments to improving student achievement, new conceptions about what students should be expected to learn, and an emphasis on prevention rather than

remediation" (p. 144). Additionally, the researchers outlined the effect of state and district educational policy on implementation and how these reform models can be adapted in multicultural settings. Initial findings suggest that the implemented reforms could be adapted to diverse school settings and that students in the schools that implemented CSR models, achieved outcomes equal to and in some cases greater than their English-speaking peers in comparison schools. However, reforms were constrained by teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding culturally and linguistically diverse students. For example, "according to some teachers…not only did students lack the innate abilities to do well with the reform's Purpose Centered System of Education, they also came form a culture that did not ready them for taking responsibility for their own learning" (p. 158). Other teachers held similar beliefs about what the students knew. "They haven't been anywhere. They know nothing. They have no prior knowledge…They can't brainstorm because they have nothing to talk about" (p. 159). Also of interest in this review is the researcher's discussion on the effect of educational policy on teacher PD.

In response to a district mandate that required all teachers to accept a certain number of training hours determined by their date of hire. For example, teachers hired after 1991 received 300 hours of training while teachers hired before 1990 needed to complete 60 hours of training. A teacher who was hired with an ESL certificate or endorsement did not need to attend additional training. This process was not without its difficulties as "the schools found that they had less time for reform-related staff development because of the ESL training requirements" (p. 154). Reform-related PD was relegated to a lesser position as all teachers became able to instruct ELLs, and in order to ameliorate some of the tension between ESL and reform, some principals asked the

teachers to fulfill the requirements on a shorter timeline, squeezing six years of training into one year. Scheduling was also a problem as not all of the teachers fulfilled these requirements at the same time. In addition, students could not always be grouped by language and reading proficiency, and "the LEP students in the primary grades remained in self-contained classes that were heterogeneous by reading level. One school used this approach for several years and then eventually abandoned SFA[4] in the ESL classrooms" (p. 154). Ultimately, these reforms resulted in greater student achievement and teacher learning, but PD requirements certainly served to hinder or at the very least alter reform efforts at these schools.

Montes (2002) also studied a school-wide effort to raise the achievement of ELLs through and investigation of the implementation of the Content Area Program Enhancement (CAPE), a program that aims to find an approach to instruction that results in increase student English proficiency and school achievement. Instruction in CAPE resembles the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) (see Chamot & O'Malley, 1994 for more information on CALLA). Within this program, all teachers first attended monthly in-service training sessions focused on instructional practices related to or stemming from CALLA strategies, unit planning, and the use of technology in the classroom. Moreover, "these practical techniques are relevant to all content areas and can be grouped in three general language skill areas essential to all students but crucial for the ELL students: vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and writing" (p. 701). Second, the teachers attended seven demonstrations during the school

[4] SFA refers to Success for All, a reform model "in which students are taught to read in Spanish and then transitioned to English reading, usually in third and fourth grade (Datnow et al, 2003, p. 144).

year as presented by the CAPE program staff. These demonstrations offered classroom examples of the material studies in the in-service sessions. Lastly, a weeklong summer institute was offered to participating teachers wherein they could review what they had learned during the year and plan for next year's activities.

The researchers found that teachers felt CAPE provided certain benefits. These included:

1. tools that helped in reaching a much broader range of students:
2. fresh ideas that research has shown work with students;
3. allowances for the research to move forward in the field so we know what works;
4. lessons for students who speak a different language and provided them with a way of feeling more secure in learning new material;
5. usefulness for social studies, reading, and language arts and even science and mathematics; and
6. strategies that involved language acquisition and content vocabulary easier for students to relate (p. 705).

Some problems arose, including problems with covering the participating teachers' classroom hours, juggling school demands while participating in CAPE, and ensuring complete participation of all teachers and administrators involved in the program. Additionally, all participating students also improved their reading test scores as a result of the CAPE program. A major issue in the program, however, was the removal of teachers from their classrooms to engage in the in-service sessions. Often, there were not enough substitutes to cover the hours missed by the participating teachers. The results also suggest that teachers need models and more time in order to confidently implement

the new strategies into their classrooms. Also, strong support from school leaders is essential to making the program work.

These two studies discuss PD that is embedded within larger school-wide reforms. These approaches require buy-in from the teachers and support from the staff. While these efforts resulted in increased student achievement, they were not without their drawbacks. Teacher training mandates and reform requirements may not align in such a way as to facilitate the adherence to both at the same time. Also, as was the case in Montes (2002), scheduling for teachers' participation in training activities can be problematic. Overall, these studies suggest that PD offerings need to account for the institutional and legislative constraints within which teachers and school operate.

**Needs assessments.**

I located four studies that assessed the needs teachers felt could be satisfied with PD. Each of these studies (Batt, 2008, Cho and Reich, 2008, Clair 1995; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll, 2005) asked teachers to report what challenges they faced and what PD could help ameliorate these issues.

Batt (2008) conducted a survey, which included 102 certified teachers, "aimed to directly solicit solutions and priorities from participants in order to design professional development" (p. 39). The teachers were from various school districts in Idaho, which, as a state, had seen a 200% increase in ELL student population between the years 1990 and 2000. Nearly 70% of the teachers held ESL endorsements, and 40% held bilingual education endorsements. The teacher sample also represented various instructional programs, from ESL pull-out and content-based ESL to transitional bilingual and dual-language programs.

The researcher found that teachers felt that education professionals (i.e., other teachers, administration, office staff) working with ELLs did not always have the requisite knowledge to effective support ELLs' academic achievement. Through the survey, the teachers identified six areas they felt were most pressing and for which PD opportunities should be designed. Nearly one third of the teachers wanted more training on parent involvement, curriculum development, and Spanish as a second language. Nearly one quarter of the respondents needed training on ESL literacy methods, sheltered English instruction, and general ESL methodology. Interestingly, many of the teachers (24%) requested training on how to create a center for newly arrived students for whom schooling in English is novel. The researcher concluded that "inservice practitioners need professional development to compensate for knowledge and skills not obtained during the teacher certification process, yet needed in today's educational context" (p. 42).

Like Batt, Cho and Reich (2008) also reported survey data on the needs of teachers. This study, however, focused upon high school social studies teachers of ELLs. Hailing from six high schools in central Virginia and culled from 211 total teachers who responded to the survey, 33 social studies teachers were asked what issues had arisen in their teaching of ELLs. "Teachers indicated they were challenged most by ELLs' lack of background knowledge of content area, followed by language barriers" (p. 237) (see Duff, 2001 for more on the language an literacy issues students face in social studies classrooms).

The PD needs of these teachers included foreign language training, second language development, instructional strategies, cultural awareness, and ELL assessment. Interestingly, close to 90% of the teachers reported that training in cultural differences

was important to them despite the fact that cultural differences between them and their students were not particularly challenging. The authors surmised that this contradiction is due to their role as social studies teachers and the appreciation they have for cultural diversity; in fact, they may have a "bias against selecting 'cultural difference between me and my students' as a challenge to teaching such students and simultaneously indicate they would like more cultural training" (p. 238).

Clair (1995), as with the previous two studies, reported on the PD needs of three teachers of ELLs. This study was conducted in response to "an increased emphasis in many states on in-service professional development for mainstream classroom teachers with ESL students" (p. 190). The teachers taught different grades, 4$^{th}$, 5$^{th}$, and 10$^{th}$ grades, for varying amounts of time, 20 years, 1 year, and 6 years. Teachers were interviewed in order to elicit information regarding "previous professional development opportunities that focused on essential skills and knowledge necessary to instruct ESL students and suggestions for future in-service professional development regarding ESL" (p. 190).

Clair found that only the teacher who had taught for 20 years attended any in-service workshops. In fact, she attended all of the workshops that were offered while her two colleagues failed to attend even one. None of the teachers, however, were satisfied with the offerings, and two of the teachers mentioned "that they would rather have materials and support as opposed to in-service training if given the choice" (p. 191). The teachers also commented that they felt they were able to provide effective instruction to ELLs despite not having any formal training in ESL methodology or second language acquisition. The researcher concluded that the reported needs of the teachers in this study were based on a quick-fix mentality that privileged materials and lesson ideas over

critical thinking and problem solving. She continued with her discussion that teachers often downplay the need for specialized knowledge in teaching ELLs, thus negating the individual learning differences, learning histories, and even language proficiencies of ELLs in mainstream classrooms. Clair also posits, as do other researchers (e.g., Little, 1988, Richardson, 2003) that the one-off workshops that these teachers did, or in this case, didn't attend are not sufficient in providing the necessary support and learning for teachers with ELLs in their classrooms.

Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005) also investigated teachers' PD needs by listening to teachers from a variety of school districts in different regions of California, each with differing programs and demographics. Specifically, the researchers "set out to ask teachers about their greatest challenges with regard to educating English learners…and to discover the kinds of support they have – and need – for doing their jobs effectively" (p. 2).

The researchers found that teachers who had received any PD rated themselves more prepared to offer literacy instruction to ELLs. In fact, teachers rated in-service workshops offered by or at a local college or university as especially helpful. Further, teachers reported that training focused on teaching strategies and the learning factors unique to ELLs (i.e., learning differences, developmental issues) were particularly useful. The teachers felt, however, that PD regarding linguistics was least useful. Also, elementary teachers benefited from presentations on language development and reported needing training on "reading and writing in English, ELD, and instructional strategies" (p. 15). Similarly, secondary teachers requested training opportunities for instructional strategies, ELD, and reading and writing in English, but they also valued workshops

which focused on cultural issues and content-instruction. All teachers, regardless of grade level, cited collaboration as a meaningful way to learn about teaching ELLs. Not surprisingly, they all agreed, as Clair (1995) also discusses, the one-shot model of PD does not provide adequate opportunities to learn.

As a whole, these studies bring to light numerous issues that teachers face when teaching ELLs. Teachers felt they needed to learn more about language learning and development as well as to learn another language, but not learn about linguistics. Teachers also wanted to learn more about cultural differences and the various factors and issues that make ELLs unique. Some teachers reported that they did not need to learn more about their students but needed methods and materials instead. The PD needs of teachers are varied, but these data suggest that teachers feel they need to understand what cultural resources ELLs bring with them into class and the processes through which ELLs go to learn content and language. What we do not know, however, is how teachers' needs in different programs may vary. These studies mention that teachers work within a variety of program models, but no data were reported that indicated that the needs may vary with the program.

**Effect on teachers' attitudes and beliefs.**

I located four studies that pertained to the effects of PD on the attitudes and beliefs of teachers. These studies focus on teacher attitudes towards language diversity in the classroom (Byrnes, Kiger, & Manning, 1997, Mantero & McVicker, 2006), the predictors of teacher attitudes toward and beliefs about ELLs (Youngs & Youngs, 2001), and effects of PD on ELL teachers' beliefs about their own efficacy and the organizational support they receive (Eun & Heining-Boynton, 2007).

Byrnes, Kiger, and Manning (1997) set out to study the attitudes in-service teachers held about linguistic diversity in their classrooms. Through survey, 191 regular-classroom teachers from Arizona, Utah, and Virginia responded to such questions as "It is unreasonable to expect a regular classroom teacher to teach a child who does not speak English" and "Regular-classroom teachers should be required to receive pre-service or in-service training to be prepared to meet the needs of linguistic minorities" (p. 643). Not all of the teachers worked with students who spoke a language other than English; rather, while the teachers in Arizona and Utah often taught speakers of Spanish, Vietnamese, Hmong, or Tongan, the teachers in Virginia more often taught children who spoke African American Vernacular English. The teachers responses were then correlated with, among other variables, formal training in the instruction of linguistically diverse students.

The researchers found that formal training in working with non-English speaking students was associated with positive attitudes towards language use other than English in the classroom. Teachers responded with a "yes" or "no" to the survey item regarding formal training, and no other specification is made. The authors do suggest, however, that both pre-service and in-service teachers could benefit from "carefully planned presentations and field experiences that focus on attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate language development and cultural diversity" (p. 642). The researchers also posit that teachers should develop an awareness of how language and social and cultural identities are linked. It can be inferred, then, that in-service PD opportunities can be considered formal education. As such, this study highlights the possibility that such opportunities for in-service teachers can lead to more positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity.

Mantero and McVicker (2006) also studied the attitudes and perceptions of teachers towards ELLs. They focused on the differences in attitudes and perceptions between mainstream teachers and ELL teachers toward ELLs and determined which factors were closely related to these attitudes and perceptions. The researchers surveyed 148 mainstream teachers and 12 ELL teachers from a school district in Atlanta, GA, which served an ELL population comprising 12.8% of the overall student body. The survey aimed to divine the respondents' views of ELLs in mainstream classrooms as well as to collect background data on the teachers such as years of teaching experience and number of staff development hours taken that focused directly on the instruction of ELLs.

The researchers found a significant difference between the perceptions of mainstream and ELL teachers. ELL teachers held more positive attitudes towards ELLs and responded more positively to questions such as "It is good practice to allow ELL students additional time to complete coursework and assignment," and "Most non-limited-English proficient students are not motivated to learn English" (Appendix section, survey). For both groups of teachers, the greater amount of time spent in staff development pertaining to language minority children, the more positive perception of ELLs the teachers held. Also, the researchers found that mainstream teachers held slightly less positive attitudes than their ELL counterparts given the same number of hours of staff development. In sum, as in Byrnes et al (1997), we see an impact of staff development on the attitude and perceptions teachers have toward their students who speak a language other than English.

In addition to studies that illuminate teachers' perceptions of and beliefs about ELLs, I found one study that investigated the possible predictors of these attitudes.

Youngs and Youngs (2001), for example, posit "teachers' attitudes and expectations with regard to their students often lead to unexpected behavior, even when teachers are unaware that they are communicating different expectations for different students" (p. 98). Accordingly, they sought to determine factors that might predict teachers' attitudes toward ELLs. The researchers surveyed 143 mainstream teachers who taught either in middle or high school contexts. The teachers had an average of 15.5 years teaching experience, and were 53% female; 35% taught subjects in the humanities. The six possible predictors that the researchers included on the survey were general education experiences, specific ESL training, personal contact with diverse cultures, prior contact with ELLs, demographic characteristics, and personality.

For the purposes of this review, I will briefly discuss the predictors and their corresponding indicators that relate to teacher learning. The first relevant predictor, ESL training, is comprised of five indicators, four of which are pertinent to this review – in-service, conference/workshops, other training, and any training. While in-services and conferences/workshops did not show a significant impact on attitudes of ELLs, teachers who had received *some* other kind of ESL training as well as those teachers who had received *any* training in working with ELLs held significantly more positive attitudes toward ELLs. The second relevant predictor, personal experience with foreign cultures, is comprised of four indicators, two of which are pertinent to this review – lived abroad and traveled abroad. The results of this study suggest that teachers who had lived abroad held significantly more positive attitudes toward ELLs; teachers who had traveled abroad also held positive views, and while this indicator was not statistically significant, it was very close to the significance cut off value after statistical analysis. Overall, the findings of

this study suggest that teachers who receive training to work with ELLs hold more positive attitudes toward ELLs. In addition, experiences that place teachers in direct contact with people from other cultures seem to have an impact on teachers' attitudes toward their students who speak a language other than English. "The more…in-service teachers are exposed to diversity through foreign language courses, courses in multicultural education, ESL training, and work with culturally diverse ESL students, the more positive teachers are likely to be about working with ESL students" (p. 117).

One final study in this section (Eun & Heining-Boynton, 2007) surveyed 90 teachers who worked with ELLs or taught ESL in order to determine "the impact of professional development programs for English-as-a-second-language (ESL) teachers on their classroom practice and the way that teacher efficacy and organizational support at the school level relate to this process by interacting with years of teaching experience" (p. 37). The teachers participated in either of two ESL teacher-training programs that offered add-on licensure to already certified teachers. Also, a majority of the participants were ESL teachers, with over 85% responding that they currently taught ESL. Questions regarding teacher efficacy included "When a student does better than usual, many times it is because I exerted a little extra effort" (p. 45). Questions regarding organizational support included "My principal encourages me to select subject matter content and instructional strategies that address individual students' learning" (p.46).

The researchers found that PD did indeed impact teacher efficacy. More specifically, the researchers concluded "that teachers with strong efficacy beliefs revealed a high level of impact from professional-development experience regarding their classroom practices" (p. 42-43). Further, teachers need greater organizational support in

order to implement their instruction. “People need external support, including materialistic resources and a strong sense of efficacy, if they are to successfully and effectively implement their knowledge and skills” (p. 43).

Taken together, these studies highlight the impact PD can have on the way teachers view and think about their students who do no speak English. However, these studies do not reveal whether or how specific PD models, subject matter, or types of interaction and participation within a particular offering lead to teacher learning and change.

**Summary of the Research Literature**

In sum, we know that ELLs are under the aegis of state and federal law as well as legal precedent. These protections determine both the possibilities and limitations of instruction. While not prescribing particular methodological approaches or instructional programs, state and federal law mandate that schools provide instructional programming that offers equitable access to academic content as well as English language instruction. Accordingly, programming for ELLs is myriad, and variation occurs both among and within programs. As such, researchers have sought to determine which features of successful programs lead to increased academic achievement of ELLs. Some of these features focus on the instructional quality of the education ELLs receive, and others focus on more institutional factors such as the provision of counseling services, a commitment to student empowerment, and continued learning on the part of the entire school staff, not simply its teachers. Ultimately, the success of ELLs in schools hinges upon not only the instruction they receive, but also the institutional factors that influence that instruction.

PD researchers recommend that learning opportunities need to be structured so as to include a definite classroom focus, social interaction with colleagues, as well as the inclusion of teachers' personal and professional histories as viable sources of knowledge. However, the PD needs of teachers at different educational levels (i.e., elementary and secondary levels) vary. Despite this finding, research downplays the influence of many contextual factors, such as grade level, on teacher learning. Further, we know that the PD opportunities in which teachers engage do indeed impact their instruction of, attitudes towards, and beliefs about ELLs. However, the research is less clear regarding which PD models seem to be more effective than others. While researchers agree that PD is effective if teachers engage with their peers or other teacher educators and staff developers, the specific nature of these interactions as well as those in which teachers engage with larger, institutional forces has not yet been fully investigated.

Finally, the literature points to the fact that teachers are ever engaged in a wide variety of PD programs. Whether teachers enroll in university courses, work in concert with researchers, engage in individual, classroom-based research work, or consent to participate in larger research projects, teachers are clearly interested in increasing their knowledge both of their students and the teaching profession. In keeping with the literature, I have adopted as my stance the notion that teachers are interested in furthering their own understandings of teaching and learning and want their students to succeed academically. Also, the research literature highlights the frequency with which teachers engage in collaborative activities within their schools. Teachers engage in planning, teaching, and discussion with fellow teachers and administrators, both in smaller, departmental groups, and in larger, school-wide efforts to continue learning and

providing effective instruction. Accordingly, this study aims to both build and capitalize upon what we already know about in-service teachers and teacher learning through an examination of the various pathways by which teachers of ELLs learn to provide effective literacy instruction to ELLs as well as the mechanisms that influence teachers' choices of these pathways. Doyle and Ponder (1977) state, "Statements of how change *should* occur are not very useful in interpreting how classroom teachers actually respond to influences which impinge upon their established habits and practices" (p. 1 emphasis in the original). Accordingly, this study attempts to uncover the influences with which teachers contend, to which they adapt, in which they reside, and to which they contribute. A thorough understanding of these concerns will provide a clearer picture of not only *what* but also *how* teachers learn.

**Theoretical Framework**

Guiding this dissertation study are two theoretical perspectives, both of which hinge greatly on the influence that social environments within and with which people engage in activity exert on individuals. In this section I begin by offering a discussion of the ecological perspective that primarily guides the study. Next, I provide an explanation of sociocultural theory and three of its most basic tenets – the ZPD, mediation, and internalization. I conclude by marrying these two perspectives into a more unified theoretical perspective which views teacher learning, in the case of this study, not simply on multiple levels but also *through* multiple levels of activity and interaction.

**An ecological perspective.**

The first theoretical frame guiding this study derives from the ecological perspective first proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1974, 1976, 1977, 1979) in response to what he considered the limitations of then-current research of human development. He argued that these notions tended to report on "strange behavior of children in strange situations with strange adults for the briefest possible periods of time" (p. 513). He continues more generally,

> the understanding of human development demands going beyond the direct observation of behavior on the part of one or two persons in the same place; it requires examination of multiperson systems of interaction not limited to a single setting and must take into account aspects of the environment beyond the immediate situation containing the subject.

Put simply, Bronfenbrenner argues for a research approach that strives to understand human behavior by taking into account both the direct contact and activity one engages in with both others and the immediate environment and the influence of people and environments with which one does not have immediate contact. Rogoff (1990) also posits that "individual's efforts and sociocultural arrangements and involvement are inseparable, mutually embedded focuses of interest" (p. 27). In other words, human activity is inherently contextual, and no action is taken free of influence from or impact upon environmental forces.

At issue in this study is the construct of *environment* as it pertains to teacher learning. Bronfenbrenner (1994) proposes this construct be "conceived as a set of nested structures, each inside the other like a set of Russian dolls" (p. 39). These include *microsystems*, *mesosystems*, *exosystems*, and *macrosystems*.

***The microsystem.***

A microsystem is the most focused system in the ecological perspective. Viewing development at this level, researchers can describe the immediate activities and relationships in which one engages in a face-to-face-manner. Development occurs within these environments, and “their power to do so [sustain development] depends on the content and structure of the microsystem” (p. 39). In-service teachers of ELLs participate in various microsystems. For instance, teachers participate regularly systems within their classroom, with their school administration, and among their peer group. For example, in the classroom, teachers may interact with their students, the physical arrangement of the classroom, and/or the materials and curricula they present. With administration, teachers interact with non-teaching school-personnel such as principals and office staff, and confront school reform efforts and PD opportunities. Within the peer group, teachers interact with their colleagues both inside and outside of their content area or grade-level and teacher mentors. There are other microsystems, however, in which teachers do not participate which still influence what teachers do in their classrooms. One instance of such a microsystem is the political arena, which includes educational legislation and instructional programming decisions in which teachers are not directly involved, yet affect them and their work as teachers.

***The mesosystem and exosystem.***

The mesosystem represents the “linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings” (p. 40). More clearly, the mesosystem considers the connection between two or more settings and their influence on the subject under observation. An example of a possible mesosystem, in relation to the current study, might be seen in the

influence of information gathered through teachers' interactions and assessments of students and the concurrent influence of PD provided by the school administration on instructional choices teachers make. Indeed, these two microsystems alone certainly impact teachers in various and specific ways. However, an ecological perspective takes into account the effect these two microsystems have in concert on the ways teachers learn and teach. Bronfenbrenner (1977) argues that "a mesosystem is a system of microsystems" (p. 515). Through this perspective, then, the combined effect of the instructional context as a whole on teacher learning becomes apparent.

Similar to the mesosystem, the exosystem is simply a system of microsystems wherein at least one of the microsystems is one in which the developing person (a teacher, in this case) does not immediately participate. For instance, a teacher may not directly participate in the legislative actions taken at the local, state, and federal level, yet this microsystem exerts a decided influence on the ways in which a teacher goes about the act of teaching and being a teacher in a school. The linkages, then, between these two microsystems - the classroom and the political - would constitute an exosystem. As mentioned above, while various microsystems certainly impact teachers, an ecological perspective of teacher learning offers a more insight into how and why teachers choose to learn what they do as well as what opportunities are made available to them.

***The macrosystem.***

Bronfenbrenner (1977) defines the macrosystem as "the overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture, such as the economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems, of which micro-, meso-, and exosystems are the concrete manifestations" (p. 515). Examples of a political macrosystem can be seen in the

explication of legislative issues concerning ELLs provided above. The political macrosystem in the U.S. positions ELLs, for instance, in a position of weakness as people who are in need of protection. Interestingly, ELLs are simultaneously positioned as interlopers who threaten the status quo and endanger both the economic and cultural foundations of the country. Germane to this study, however, this positioning of ELLs influences teachers of ELLs in a variety of ways. This positioning of both student and teacher, Bronfenbrenner argues, "is of special importance in determining how a child and his or her caretakers are treated and interact with each other in different types of settings" (p. 515). In other words, the ways in which microsystems, such as the classroom, function is determined in some part by the macrosystem within which they are situated.

**Sociocultural theory.**

The second theoretical frame informing this study is sociocultural theory, more specifically, the Vygotskian notion of learning as socially mediated activity (see Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Sociocultural theory presents a "study of the social group and its cultural history [that] highlights the role of social and material context in understanding how knowledge is constructed and displayed" (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000, p. 1). Further, the activities in which we, as humans, participate within these contexts determines in many ways how our minds develop.

> For teachers, this means that the constellation of activities in which they engage as learners in classrooms and schools, as learners of teaching in teacher education programs and, later, as teachers in the institutions where they work, shape their thinking, forming the basis of their reasoning" (Johnson & Golombek, 2003, p. 730-1).

Teacher development, then, can be seen as the construction of new ways of thinking, not simply the addition of new ideas, thoughts, and practices. For example, a teacher engaging in a PD program that results in a specific classroom practice that is performed

without consideration or alteration may not be considered development. On the other hand, if a teacher were to come away with a new understanding of him/herself and/or her/his students, and, as a result, design or adapt instruction to accommodate these new understandings, development can be said to occur.

To see more clearly how the thinking and development of teachers is shaped by the specific activities in which they engage (i.e., PD experiences), I draw upon three of the main constructs of sociocultural theory to frame more clearly the ecological perspective discussed above – the zone of proximal development (ZPD), mediation, and internalization. I explain each of the constructs below.

***ZPD.***

Vygotsky (1978) first envisioned the ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). In presenting the ZPD, Vygotsky devised a model where learning precedes development. An alternative view of the ZPD, which refrains from using a term like *distance* that imply a deficit view of the learner, perceives development within the ZPD as *activity* that leads toward learning and development for all participants, not simply for those who are less knowledgeable (Newman & Holzman, 1993). It is precisely this view to which I wish to attend – the ZPD does not function unidirectionally. Erickson (1996) agrees and states, "This view of relations between teacher and learner, expert and novice, is a radically proximal one in which there is a conjoint participation and influence, one in which no mover is unmoved" (p. 29).

Ultimately, the ZPD is more relational than spatial in that the relationships built within a given interaction are the basis for learning and development.

Chaiklin (2003) presents three assumptions that work together to help more clearly define the construct of the ZPD - *the generality assumption, assistance assumption, and potential assumption.* The generality assumption presumes that a learner is actually able to successfully complete a set of tasks alone and is capable of greater production when working in concert with another person. If a person were unable to perform to a greater extent with a more capable other than there would not be a ZPD. The assistance assumption supposes that the mere fact that one is more capable is not sufficient to provide assistance that occurs within the ZPD. The potential assumption refers to the ZPD neither as something a learner can possess nor as a particular property of a learner but as the psychological functions that are under construction and not yet fully mature. In effect, the ZPD is not a static entity that is accessed through any or even specific interactions; rather, the ZPD is newly constructed with each interaction and can only be constructed when assistance is given.

From this perspective, then, it is imperative to determine what teachers already know and what they can already do. Only then can a ZPD be constructed. While many assessments of knowledge and skill focus solely on what a person can do alone, Vygotsky claims that this measure of knowledge and skill is simply a description of what mental functions learners have actually developed and not an accurate portrayal of where learners truly are in terms of overall mental functioning. "Teaching represents the means through which development is advanced; that is, the socially elaborated contents of human knowledge and the cognitive strategies necessary for their internalization are

evoked in the learners according to their 'actual developmental levels'" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 131).

***Mediation.***

If the ZPD "is a metaphor for observing and understanding how meditational means are appropriated and internalized" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 17), then mediational means, consisting of tools in the form of cultural artifacts, other individuals, or learners themselves, are the product of an individual's "participation in cultural activities in which cultural artifacts and cultural concepts" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 58) intertwine with each other and the psychological functioning of the individual. Mediation, also, according to Wertsch (1998), "provides a kind of natural link between action, including mental action, and the cultural, institutional, and historical contexts in which such action occurs" (p. 24).

What is important to consider within this theoretical framework is the nature and purpose of interaction as well as the roles taken up by the participants within the interactions. As such, the power of interaction as mediational means cannot be understated. "The most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity…converge" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 24).

***Internalization.***

Vygotsky posited that higher mental functions appear twice - once in the social interactions between people, and then again within individuals. Accordingly, the notion of internalization could imply that learners are simply receivers of information and apers of behavior, without any intent of their own. "Vygotsky clearly did not interpret

individuals as empty vessels into which cultural information is poured. On the contrary…he saw people as active agents with the capacity to transform knowledge as they actively participate in social practices" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 162). Teachers engaged in learning activities exert agency when choosing not only which information to internalize but also how it will be appropriated and used. "Learning, therefore, is not the straightforward appropriation of skills or knowledge from the outside in, but the progressive movement from external, socially mediated activity to the internal meditational control by individual learners, which results in the transformation of both the self and the activity" (Johnson, 2006, p. 238).

Accordingly, for PD, "the best instruction occurs when it proceeds ahead of development, when it awakens and rouses to life those functions that are in process of maturing" (Ball, 2000, p. 233). For teachers, this may require learning new classroom practices previously felt to be inappropriate or confronting new information previously irreconcilable with current perspectives. "As…practicing teachers come into teacher education programs with their own literacy histories, they discuss, read, write, reflect on theories and practice, and challenge preconceived notions about literacy within the learning task" (p. 232). Indeed, adult learners (e.g., teachers) are "more than a cognitive machine processing information. He or she comes with a mind, memories, conscious and subconscious worlds, emotions, imagination, and a physical body, all of which can interact with new learning" (Merriam, 2001, p. 96). Merriam (2001) further argues that adult learners (e.g., teachers) do not simply acquire new knowledge by rote; rather, adult learning is a transformative process, invariably influenced by contextual factors. In other words, teachers work from what they already know in order to process new information

and, as a result, reorganize both what is learned and how it is learned. Those who offer PD to these teachers surely must weigh carefully the knowledge and practices the teachers bring with them into their own learning.

***Toward A unified perspective.***

While sociocultural theory and the three constructs discussed above focus fairly minutely upon the social interactions in which teachers engage, an ecological perspective is a more broadly focused, yet not excusive, lens with which to investigate human development and, more specifically, teacher development. Linking these two perspectives offers a valuable analytic framework through which to examine not only smaller, more intricate, social teacher interactions, but also the various institutional influences that impact teachers and the work they do in classrooms. Through this perspective, seemingly monolithic institutions such as legal precedent and school structures with which there is rarely "interaction" as normally conceived by Vygotskian theorists, can still be seen as mediating and influential in the development of teachers. More specifically, decisions such as which learning pathways teachers choose, indeed, even which pathways are made available to teachers can be viewed not as coincidental and without intent or effect. From this perspective, teachers relate to a variety of contexts and their learning is mediated by and internalized in reaction to various environmental factors with which teachers interact and that influence teachers' daily actions.

# Chapter III

# Methodology

In the third chapter of this dissertation, I outline the research methodology for the current study. I begin with a detailed account of the site and participants of the study. Next, I provide an explanation of my data collection, the three research phases of the study, and my data analysis procedures. Lastly, I discuss the trustworthiness of the study.

## Sites and Participants

I situated the current study in two neighboring school districts in a mid-sized city in the Southeast United States – Drake County and Stratton County School Districts. The student population in the state in which the district is located is comprised of around 5% Hispanic students, and almost 4% of its students are classified as limited English proficiency. Across the state in 2010, these non-native English-speaking students did not meet federal benchmarks in Reading, Language Arts, or Writing at any level of schooling. Nearly two thirds of the schools were in "Good Standing" regarding NCLB student achievement requirements at the time of this study.

### Drake county school district.

The district has seen more than a doubling of its ELL population in the last five years, up from nearly 4,000 in 2004 to almost 10,000 ELLs currently. The district also has more than 60 ELL Centers and Program schools at all three levels of education offering an inclusive model of educational programming for ELLs. The 2010-11

academic school year was the first year in which this model was implemented. Previously, the district had employed a sheltered model of instruction for ELLs wherein these students spent a majority of their instructional day grouped with other ELLs and studying the core curriculum separated from their English-speaking peers. All of the students were integrated during Physical Education, Art, and other special instructional time. Not all schools in the district implemented the new inclusion model in the same way. For instance, one of the schools opted to continue the sheltered model in certain grades (none of which were observed in this study) while other schools implemented the inclusion model in every grade in the school. This model differs from a traditional pull-out model in that instead of ELLs moving during a specified time during the school day to a special classroom to study the English language, the students maintain an integrated "home room" and move to other classrooms for the core curriculum. The benefits of this model over a traditional pull-out model are that the students are not removed from content instruction to focus solely on English language development; the students receive support in both language and content development.

Across the district 15% of the students were of Hispanic background and 14% were classified LEP. Nearly three-quarters of the students were economically challenged and an even greater number of students qualify for Title 1 services. In 2010, LEP students did not meet federal benchmarks in Math, Reading, Language Arts or Writing.

The district also contained a Newcomer Academy consisting of both classroom teachers and developmental specialists who supported the ELL teachers across the entire school district. Onsite, the center housed a library of curriculum materials to which teachers across the district had open access and offered, upon request either by teachers

or administrators, school-site support in the form of observation and feedback, workshop development and presentation, as well as one-on-one coaching. The instructional arm of the Newcomer Academy, which has since moved to a local elementary school within Drake County, specialized in offering instruction to students for whom English is a new language and have not had any formal schooling in their home countries. The Newcomer Academy currently serves as the assessment center for every student in the school district who enters with a language other than English on the Home Language Survey.

The two schools in Drake County School District in which I conducted this study were Unified Elementary School and Woodruff Elementary School.

***Unified elementary school and Esperanza.***

Consistent with schools across Drake County, Unified has also experienced an increase in ELL enrollment. Of Unified's 819 students, almost a third are eligible for ESL services, up from 21% in 2005-06. While the LEP student population at Unified has not met federal benchmarks for Reading, Language Arts, or Writing, the school has been in "Good Standing" for three of the last five years. Most recently, the school has been classified as "Target," one step below "Good Standing."

*Esperanza.* Esperanza has nine years of teaching experience, the last eight of which were served at Unified Elementary school as a 4$^{th}$ grade teachers. She taught for seven years in a self-contained, sheltered classroom teaching ELLs and just this year, switch to an integrated classroom. This switch coincides with Drake County Schools' implementation of the district-wide inclusion model. She has a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and Child Development, a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction and ESL, as well as an ELL endorsement. She also studied Spanish for seven

years and, to use her own words, was “not completely fluent, but enough to communicate with parents and non-English speaking students.” During her time in Drake County Schools, Esperanza participated in a wide variety of PD activities that often went beyond those required by the school and district. In fact, during the 2010-11 school year, Esperanza completed close to 70 hours of PD, much more than the requirements for the district.

***Woodruff elementary school and Lionel.***

Woodruff Elementary School was one of the largest ELL centers and one of the most economically challenged in the Drake County School District. More than half of the students were of Hispanic origin, a large percentage of which were LEP, and over 95% of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. ELLs at Woodruff did not meet federal benchmarks in Math or Reading, Language Arts, or Writing, with all who were tested scoring “Basic” or “Below Basic” on the yearly, standardized test. Recently, Woodruff went from “Good Standing” (in 2006-7) to “School Improvement 1” (in 2009). In 2010, however, Woodruff received the “School Improvement 1 – Improving” classification, and many at the school viewed the two years as a turning point in the school performance.

*Lionel.* Lionel has been a teacher for over 20 years. He has taught every elementary grade except 2$^{nd}$ grade and has spent the last 15 years in Drake County Schools. More specifically, he has been teaching 4$^{th}$ grade ELLs for the last nine years at Woodruff Elementary. He studied Spanish for two years during his university study but claims to be able to “follow what they are saying [in Spanish] but [has] limited speaking ability.” He attended six hours toward ELL certification at a local university, and throughout his career he has taken over 90 hours of PD relating to the teaching of ELLs.

Most compelling about Lionel was his involvement in the local Spanish-speaking community. He obtained legal guardianship of four of his past students, all of whom were Spanish speakers, attended the births of many of his previous students' children (some of whom have also grown up and become his students), and was invited to other family celebrations, birthdays, and holidays. He was also known to babysit or otherwise watch over numerous students at any given time should they feel unsafe in their own home. As mentioned previously, Woodruff served a high population of students of poverty and many of them come from single-parent homes.

**Stratton county school district.**

In contrast to Drake County, Stratton County schools have implemented an inclusive model of instruction for nearly 30 years. However, in Stratton County, the inclusion model resembled traditional pull-out in most respects except the curriculum of the pull-out class was more closely aligned with that of the mainstream classes from which the students come. Also, in Stratton, 4% of the students were LEP, and while close to half were economically challenged, only a quarter of the students qualified for Title 1 services. The ELLs in Stratton faired similarly as those in Drake schools in meeting federal benchmarks as defined by NCLB. The two schools in Stratton County School District in which I conducted this study were Stoney Creek Elementary School and North Branch Elementary School.

***Stoney creek elementary school and Jane.***

Stoney Creek has been designated "Good Standing for the last two years and has a lower population of ELLs that those schools in Drake County. The ELL teacher here was an itinerant teacher in that she provided ELL services at two separate schools. Jane, the

teacher, taught at Stoney Creek in the afternoons everyday and worked with four distinct groups of students during this time.

*Jane.* Jane has been a teacher for 25 years. She began as a French teacher in middle school and high school. She reached advanced fluency in French through her own schooling, teaching, and foreign travel. She has since changed subject areas, and for the last three years, she has been an elementary ELL teacher in Stratton. Jane also has a very accomplished educational career. She holds a Bachelor's degree in French and Political Science, a law degree, PhD candidacy in French Literature, teaching licenses (ESL preK-12 & French K-12) in two states, and a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an ESL concentration. She is also very active in the professional community of teachers; She is a member of several professional organizations and has presented at many regional conferences.

Jane's recent PD as an ESL teacher far exceeded the requirements of her school and district. Of interest, however, was that Jane developed and presented no fewer than six distinct PD workshops for her colleagues in Stratton County Schools, one of these workshops on three separate occasions. It was in these workshops that Jane felt she learned the most about herself as a teacher and teaching as a profession.

***North branch elementary school and Amy.***

North Branch Elementary has achieved "Good Standing" for the last five years and was similar to Stoney Creek in that there was a lower population of ELLs in attendance. Amy, in contrast to Jane, was a resident ELL teacher onsite and provided ELL services to all of those students who qualified at North Branch.

*Amy.* Amy is a native Russian speaker who also speaks English and German. She had a total of three years of teaching experience, all of which were at North Branch Elementary School. She was the resident ELL teacher and provided instructional support to students in grades K-5. She received a Bachelors degree in English and German, a Master's degree in Secondary English education, and had a K-12 ELL certification. In addition to her duties at North Branch, she also taught ESOL classes to adult learners in a program sponsored by Stratton County Schools. Her PD history was very impressive, especially for the school year 2010-11. She completed 61 hours of PD, far exceeding the required 30 hours for teachers in her district. Of course, she completed many of these hours in district-mandated workshops. However, she obviously chose many other PD opportunities beyond those offered by her school and district.

## Data Collection

The main data sources for this study were interviews, observations, and documents and artifacts (see Table 1 and Appendix A for an overview of data collection procedures as they address the guiding research questions). Each of these data sources, as they pertain to the current study, is outlined in this section.

### Interviews, questionnaires, and survey.

Each participant, both teachers and administrators, was interviewed over the course of the study. Teachers were interviewed on three different occasions. In addition to the semi-formal interviews, each teacher completed a questionnaire asking them to provide information regarding their teaching and educational experiences, foreign language knowledge, time spent abroad, coursework and other professional activities

related to diversity and/or ELLs (See Appendix B). Connected to this questionnaire was a belief survey to which the teachers responded to various statements such as “Teachers who work with ELLs do not need special forms of knowledge and practice” (See Appendix C). From these two sources, I was able to gain background information on each teacher and how they viewed their role as an ELL teacher. For instance, all of the teachers felt that ELL teachers did indeed require special forms of knowledge and practices to work with their students. From this response, I could see immediately that these teachers saw working with ELLs as different from teaching English-speaking students and that they as ELL teachers needed to do something different in their PD to accommodate the students in their classrooms.

The initial, semi-formal interview, conducted at the beginning of the study, focused on the opportunities teachers have chosen for their learning as well as the reasoning for and perceived benefits of their choices (see Appendix D for interview questions). From these interviews I began to understand the views the participating teachers have toward PD, the opportunities they felt are worthwhile, as well as the various reasons certain opportunities were chosen over others. These initial interviews also focused on how the various recent summer activities and any other administrative or collegial interactions influenced the planning of their literacy instruction for the new school year. Some of these interviews were done orally, face-to-face; while due to scheduling issues, the remaining interviews were conducted remotely. In these cases, I emailed the interview questions to the teachers and requested that they write out their answers. Once I received their responses, I emailed them back or spoke to them directly

to clarify any confusion or ask for more information on a certain topic they mentioned in their responses.

I conducted another set of semi-formal interviews two months after the beginning of the study (see Appendix E for interview questions). This round of interviews, all conducted face-to-face, provided data regarding new or recently completed PD activities in which the teachers participated. Also, in these interviews, I asked the teachers specifically about particular instructional practices I had observed in their classrooms, focusing on the source of the practices themselves and the reasons behind any modifications the teachers made to them.

The final, semi-formal interviews took place at the end of the spring term. These interviews focused on further classroom innovations the teachers had implemented as a result of their continued classroom conditions and experiences (see Appendix F for interview questions). In this series of interviews, I asked the teachers to elaborate further on the reasoning behind their instructional decisions and the nature of the impact various interactional and institutional factors have had on their teaching and learning.

I also interviewed the school principals and district-level administrators who oversee PD and instructional programming for the participating teachers. These semi-formal interviews, some also conducted remotely similarly to the teachers, focused on the principals' decisions regarding teacher development and school needs regarding ELLs and their teachers (see Appendix G for interview questions). I also discussed the directions for future PD opportunities as well as the possible influences the new school year had had on the school and its teachers. The data collected during these interviews provided further insight into what opportunities the participating teachers had to choose

from, as well as a clearer understanding of the specific institutional influences brought to bear on the teachers' learning and teaching.

**Observations.**

I routinely observed each participating teacher in his or her classroom. I observed the classroom instruction of each teacher on various occasions totaling more than ten hours of observation across the semester for each teacher. Observations lasted no less than one hour and no more than one and a half hours each. During classroom observations, I participated in an observer-participant capacity. This role was appropriate given that while I was in classrooms only to observe teacher behavior, I did not wish to be unapproachable by teachers or students. I expected some degree of casual contact both with students and teachers alike. In these instances, however, only contact with teachers was recorded in field notes. These observations focused on determining the teachers' classroom practices. Specifically, I looked for instructional decisions and strategies that the teachers mentioned in connection to particular PD opportunities. Further, I tried to identify other practices that could be connected to a specific PD through other the other data sources. Classroom observations provided valuable insight into how questions and concerns originating from the classroom and the students influenced the participating teachers' literacy instruction and their PD choices. For instance, Esperanza specifically mentioned Thinking Maps during my interviews with her. During observations of her instruction, then, I looked for when and how she utilized them in her classroom. Also, Jane discussed her vocabulary focus at length in interview. Accordingly, this focus guided my observations. While in some cases the interviews led to specific observations of classroom practice, there were cases where the opposite occurred – the observations

guided the interviews. For instance, Amy did not mention her use of the whiteboard and projector to me, though I had observed this practice in her classroom, which led to further elaboration in an interview.

**Documents and artifacts.**

Over the course of the study I also collected various documents and artifacts. These included all relevant materials collected from school and teacher websites, school mission statements, official correspondence between school and families, fliers for events, pictures of the physical school environment, and various assessments that were available for distribution. These documents offered me a window into the daily work lives of the teachers and potential institutional influences on their teaching and learning. For example, the physical location of ELL classrooms and the degree to which the surrounding facilities were maintained may imply a particular institutional perspective on the value and presence of ELLs in the school. Additionally, I collected all materials that offered information regarding professional learning opportunities for teachers. These included conference fliers and announcements, publisher catalogs, and university brochures. These materials were found in the teachers' lounge, placed in their mailboxes, or passed amongst the teachers themselves. Lastly, I collected all electronic communication I conducted with the teachers. In some cases, some of the teachers asked for feedback on the teaching I observed. As a possible source of learning for the teachers, I responded with comments and questions that I then used as point of observation from that point onward.

I also maintained my field notes taken during observations, interviews, and discussions, samples of teacher lesson plans and class materials, notes, and handouts

teachers receive during PD sessions. These artifacts served as a means of triangulating my data sources, as I was able to compare what teachers said with what they did. These artifacts also provided further data regarding the particular PD opportunities made available to the teachers.

Table 1: Theoretical Constructs, Research Support, Research Questions, and Qualitative Data Collection

| Theoretical Construct | Research Support | Research Questions | Qualitative Data Collection |
|---|---|---|---|
| ZPD<br>Not all interactions result in teacher learning; rather learning occurs in interactions that take into account what teachers already know and can do (Vygotsky, 1978). | Teachers' PD needs vary (Batt et al, 2008; Clair, 1995; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005), but PD should include a classroom focus, allow for social interaction, and capitalize on what teachers already know and can do (Abdal-Haqq, 1995; Little, 1988; Richardson, 2003). | In which professional development opportunities do ELL teachers choose to participate? | Teacher Interviews<br>Classroom/Planning observations |
| Mediation<br>Teachers' participate in "cultural activities in which cultural artifacts and cultural concepts" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 58) mediates their learning. | Teachers engage in a wide variety of PD (Rose, 2009). | What institutional factors impact ELL teachers' choice of professional development? | Teacher Interviews<br>Administrator Interviews<br>Artifact Collection<br>Classroom/Planning Observation |

Table 1, continued: Theoretical Constructs, Research Support, Research Questions, and Qualitative Data Collection

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<td>Ecological Perspective<br>Human activity is inherently contextual, and teacher learning is mediated by the various systems (i.e., micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems) that constitute the teaching environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1976, 1977, 1979).</td>
<td>The research has not fully explored how teachers interact within larger institutional structures nor how these structures influence teachers' decision making in terms of their PD (Rose, 2009).</td>
<td>In what ways do these factors converge to influence ELL teachers' choice of professional development opportunities?</td>
<td>Teacher Interviews<br>Administrator Interviews<br>Documents and Artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Learning and Professional Development<br>Teacher learning and development is the construction of new ways of thinking, not simply the addition of new ideas, thoughts and practices (Johnson & Golombek, 2001).</td>
<td rowspan="2">PD affects teacher instructional practices, attitudes, and beliefs toward ELLs (Byrnes et al, 1997; Mantero & McVicker, 2006).</td>
<td rowspan="2">In what ways do ELL teachers utilize what they learn through professional development in their classroom?</td>
<td rowspan="2">Teacher Interviews<br>Classroom/Planning Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalization<br>Teacher learning is revolutionary, in that teachers exert agency when choosing not only which information to internalize but also how it will be appropriated and used (Johnson, 2006; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).</td>
</tr>
</table>

**Phases of the Study**

This study was conducted in three phases (see Appendix H). The first phase included obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board as well as from both

Drake and Stratton School Districts. To gain access to schools within Drake County Schools, I first spoke with principals at the Unified and Woodruff. I explained my study and asked them whether my proposal was something they would be interested in. For North Branch and Stoney Creek I spoke with the district office personnel first and received their approval before speaking with the principals. Once I obtained all approvals, I then proceeded with active recruitment of ELL teachers and school administrators.

After I had secured the participants for the study, I visited their classrooms during the instructional day. These first observations helped me understand the teachers' daily schedules, the content of their current instruction, and the types of routines and interactions that were common in the classroom. From here I distributed the questionnaire and survey as well as scheduled the first interviews with each teacher and administrator. As mentioned previously, I conducted some of these interviews electronically and used interactions within the first few observations to extend and explain the teachers' electronic responses.

While the first phase included gaining all required approvals, recruiting all participants, and conducting the initial interviews and observations, the second phase continued the data collection procedures outlined above. I observed each teacher's classroom routinely and collected documents and artifacts relevant to the study. In this phase, which lasted two months, I conducted the second of three interviews with the teachers.

The third and final phase of the study, occurring at the end of the spring term of instruction for both Drake and Stratton County Schools, included the final round of

teacher interviews, the completion of classroom observations, and the end of document and artifact collection (see Table 2 for an overview of data collection procedures). I left the final phase somewhat open ended to account for the possibility that follow-up communication might be necessary.

Table 2: Overview of data Collection Procedures

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Interviews</td><td>Teachers</td><td>Three interviews each teacher - 12 in total.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Administrators</td><td>One interview with each administrator - 4 in total.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Observations</td><td>Instructional/Planning Time</td><td>10 classroom visits for each teacher, ranging from one hour to one and half hours in duration – nearly 50 hours of total observation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Documents and Artifacts</td><td colspan="2">Lesson plans, handouts, classroom photographs, field notes, PD-related materials such as PD lists, workshop material, and district-created descriptions and communication.</td></tr>
</table>

**Data Analysis**

To reiterate, the data sources I collected in the current study included: 1) interviews, 2) classroom observations, and 3) documents and artifacts. Data analysis focused mainly on identifying and describing the various microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1994) that exerted an influence on the mental lives of the in-service teachers of ELLs. Specifically, I analyzed the collected data to identify the systems and linkages that existed between these systems.

I employed a naturalistic approach to data analysis, following the recommendations of Lincoln and Guba (1985). I began by taking data collected through

the interviews, observations, and documents and artifacts and *unitized* them into what Glaser and Strauss (1967) call "incidents." These units were 1) heuristic in nature and 2) small enough to stand on their own (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 345). Accordingly, I parsed the data into segments that provided a basis for understanding a particular action or event. Both my research questions and theoretical framework guided this initial unitizing. I looked specifically for influences upon teacher learning both at the interactional and institutional levels as well as evidence of these influences in actual classroom instructional practices. For instance, I initially identified the various PD in which the teachers participated, but I also looked for data that offered reasons for the teachers' participation in these PD opportunities. I also parsed the data in terms of classroom practices, including the content of instruction as well as actual activities and techniques the teachers implemented.

Next, I coded the units of data into categories. While many researchers have devised various coding families (see Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), I began coding the data through a strategy of immersion (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). I noted emergent patterns from within the data as expressed by the participants themselves or as I observed them in the field. I further refined the categories and codes by "testing emergent understandings" and "searching for alternative explanations" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 157). This process forced me to evaluate certain data units' effectiveness in answering the research questions and presenting plausible explanations of the data. In the case of the current study, this process helped me more clearly define how and what teachers learn in schools. I focused on data points that helped explain how the ways in which teachers interacted with their immediate instructional contexts and other institutional influences affected how

they provided instruction to the ELLs in their classrooms. For instance, Lionel spoke at length about his activity in the local community and how those experiences helped him build relationships with his students. I categorized these activities separately within the larger category of PD opportunities because these experiences translated into specific instructional activities and techniques in his classroom.

I also conducted a cross-case analysis of the data. Cross-case analysis is useful in 1) enhancing generalizability and extrapolation of findings and 2) deepening understanding and explanation (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 173). While some would say that generalizability is not always possible in qualitative studies (Guba & Lincoln, 1981), providing analysis across multiple cases can yield understandings that transcend any one individual case under investigation. Also, multiple cases can help researchers examine negative cases and alternative explanations as well as "pin down the specific conditions under which a finding will occur [and] help us form the more general categories of how those conditions may be related" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 173). Specifically, a cross-case analysis of teachers at the four different school sites illuminated the similarities and differences in institutional influence on teacher learning. Indeed, these teachers' instructional decisions were impacted in various ways. A cross-case analysis brought these variations into relief. For example, both Esperanza and Lionel attended PD on Thinking Maps as required by their schools and districts. However, these two teachers utilized Thinking Maps in their classrooms differently. More to the point, Lionel did not use them during this study, while Esperanza used Thinking Maps on several occasions and across subject areas.

**Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of a study, as described by Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993), must be established "to make a reasonable claim to methodological soundness" (p. 131). Research in this vein, then, must be credible. First, I believe the research schedule outlined above provided credibility through prolonged engagement and persistent observation. I also used multiple data sources (i.e., interviews, observations, artifacts and documents) to triangulate my findings. For example, data collected through individual interviews expanded on those collected during observations. Likewise, classroom and planning session observations expanded upon various artifacts such as lesson plans and also helped me plan future interview protocols. I also kept an informal reflexive journal during the data collection and analysis process to maintain the credibility of the research study (Erlandson et al, 1993). The journal contained notes regarding the implementation of the study and my own thoughts regarding the data I collected. These notes often took the form of questions or other points of interest that I wished to pursue with the teachers either through emails, interviews, or informal conversations during observations. For instance, after observing Esperanza using clicker technology in her classroom, I noted, "The kids really seemed to get into the clicker activity. How has this practice evolved in your class?" We discussed her interest in technology in the classroom in an interview conducted later in the study.

I also established trustworthiness by sharing these data with my faculty advisor and selected members of the doctoral student community at Peabody College. Specifically, I discussed my findings at various times with three of my doctoral student colleagues who are interested in the teaching and learning of ELLs. These students are all

knowledgeable in research and theory related to this field, and we have all participated in a research group focused on working with teachers in developing innovative instructional techniques to increase the reading comprehension of ELLs in elementary and secondary schools. The discussions with my committee and peers offered me opportunities to explore hypotheses, discuss emergent research design, and more deeply examine my interpretations of the data I collected. For instance, in conversations with one of my colleagues, I was better able to make sense of and begin to view Lionel’s experiences in the local community as a form of PD. Though it did not resemble other more formal PD opportunities, Lionel’s community engagement was more meaningful to him and his understanding of his role as an ELL teacher than many of the official PD offerings he attended.

# Chapter IV

# Findings

In this chapter I present my research findings. The data I collected during this study support these three main claims:

1. Professional development comes in many forms;
2. In-service teachers of ELLs choose PD in response to specific influences;
3. These teachers use what they learn in PD in the classroom.

While these findings are aligned with the research questions guiding this study, they are not in immediate lock step. For instance, my second claim, in-service teachers of ELLs choose PD in response to specific influences, attempts to capture both the singular, systemic influences that impact teacher decision making as well as the linkages between these single systems. In this way, this one claim addresses both the second and third research questions of the study – what institutional factors impact ELL teachers' choice of PD, and in what ways do these factors converge to influence ELL teachers; choice of PD opportunities? Accordingly, I present these findings in terms of the research data collected during the study.

## Finding 1: Professional Development Comes in Many Forms

The one-shot workshop is a common form of PD for in-service teachers (Miller, Lord, & Dorney, 1994), though it is clear from the data that the participating ELL teachers engaged in a wider variety of PD experiences. Indeed, teachers do need to have

at their disposal a variety of PD opportunities (Cohen & Ball, 1990; Lieberman & Miller, 2001; Little, 1993). While these teachers did engage in the normal, formal, one-shot PD, they also engaged in PD of a less typical sort such as community-engagement activities, professional learning communities (PLCs), and workshop creation and presentation. Taken together, these PD activities paint a more nuanced picture of what ELL teachers do to continue learning once they enter the classroom.

**Jane.**

I first met Jane in a coffee shop, as she wanted to discuss my study and make sure I was someone she could speak to about what she does as a teacher. In order to verify my bona fides, she quickly began discussing her own educational background and asking about mine. As mentioned above, she has quite a long list of educational and professional achievements. It was quite clear from the beginning that she was not your ordinary teacher. She had a law degree, Ph.D. candidacy, fluency in French, a credited EdS, and a newly conferred M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction/ESL. We spoke for a time regarding our educational experiences during which time she said, "I don't see myself completing a higher degree in education." The irony of this statement is that she planned to enroll in a university program to become a licensed school administrator beginning after the conclusion of this study. Certainly, education was very important to Jane, and as a teacher, she took her PD very seriously. A statement she made after that first meeting now provides a bit more clarity to some of the decisions I report below. She spoke about how she was able to fulfill the 30 hours of PD Stratton school district required her to complete:

> While some of the offerings and required attendance at certain workshops are not necessarily the best use of my time, it is easy to exceed those 30 hours with good

> opportunities. If something good/interesting/fun comes up, I try to take advantage of it. For example, I sadly missed a workshop last month because of illness; I would have become certified to be loaned a moon rock for my classroom – how cool would that have been?

The very thought of being able to possess a moon rock and the classroom possibilities that might follow was too much for her to resist. This statement highlights Jane's interest in learning new things; every topic is worth investigating.

During her first year in the Stratton School District Jane completed 34 hours of PD as well as attended a regional TESOL conference. This PD total is just beyond the required 30 hours she needs to fulfill. In her second year, she completed 38 hours and attended the national TESOL meeting. The current school year, 2010-2011, will see her complete nearly 50 hours of PD. She will also attend the annual meeting of the International Reading Association. Jane has a history of attending more PD hours than are required of her (See Figure 1 for a list of Jane's PD activities).

Most compelling about her PD is the fact that these hour totals do not reflect the number of hours of PD she routinely *presented*. Jane has presented a number of workshops for her fellow teachers in Stratton County Schools. All of these workshops were focused on the instruction of ELLs – SIOP/CALLA approaches, cultural awareness, vocabulary instruction. During this same time, she also assisted the county instructional coach in a number of presentations on reading comprehension for ELLs. Her most recent review, again conducted before this study began, in the fall of 2010-11 school year offered new goals and expectations. Jane explains, "I am expected to present at a state or national conference and am expected to begin working at the state level on ELL issues."

Jane

[redacted] PD Information

**2008-2009 (1st year in [redacted] County system)**

New Teacher Orientation Aug 04, 2008 6 hrs

District-Wide Teacher Event: Eight Keys of Quantum Success and Moving Beyond Rhetoric Aug 05, 2008 6 hrs

JAE/SCE Help! I Have a Student Who Can't Speak English! Nov 11, 2008 2 hrs

Suicide Prevention Training Oct 20, 2008 2 hrs

Quantum Learning Days 1 and 2 Oct 17, 2008 6 hrs

Reading Street for ELL Students Jun 03, 2008 6

Quantum Learning Days 3 and 4 Feb 06, 2009 6

Also went to Birmingham, AL for SWTESOL conference – 2 days

**2009-2010**

Quantum Learning Day 5 May 28, 2009 6 hrs

Assessment & Intervention Strategies for Students with Eng. as a 2nd Language Jul 28, 6 hrs

ELL Professionals: Working with Administrators, Teachers, and Other School Staff Jul 29 6 hrs

Art Teachers: Book Arts/ Binding and Creating a Visual Journal Jun 30, 2009 6 hrs

CEO - ELL Suicide Prevention Training May 01, 2009 2 hrs

Textbook Adoption Committee Feb 09, 2010 6 hrs

[redacted]: New and Apprentice ELL Training Jan 16, 2010 6 hrs

Attended TESOL annual conference in Boston, MA April, 2010

**2010-2011**

DIBELS FOR K-2 Jun 22, 2010 3 hrs

I've DIBEL'D, Now What? Jun 22, 2010 3 hrs

CEO - ELL Suicide Prevention Training 2010-2011 Apr 15, 2010 2 hrs

ELL Professional Development Jun 25, 2010 6 hrs - [redacted]

Figure 1: List of Jane's PD participation 2008-2012 (projected)

K-2 Teachers: Elementary Drive-In Conference Jun 24, 2010 6 hrs [redacted]

Growing Up WILD Aug 28, 2010 3.5 hrs

SCE Comprehension Connections Jul 27, 2010 3 hrs

SCE Understanding SST process - Special Ed.

SCE Comprehension Connections-Inferring Jan 25, 2011 .5 hr

JAE Reading Strategies Nov 30, 2010 1 hr

[redacted] Close the Achievement Gap Summit: Addressing Culture, Abilities, Resilience Jun 14, 2010 18 hr

Will attend IRA annual conference in Orlando in May. Seriously, not a boondoggle, although I will need to go do the Tea Cup ride.....

**PD Presentations:**
2009 on:

- Remix book studies (3xs)
- SIOP/CALLA: Teaching ELLs (1x)
- Instruction that Works (Marzano): Teaching ELLs (1x and we didn't like it)
- Blog: Robust Vocabulary Instruction (1x)
- SCE Vocabulary PD: Robust Vocabulary Instruction (combined with Marzano Academic Voc.): one initial presentation with two shorter follow-up sessions
- Assist [redacted] on several Comprehension Connections presentations

2011-2012:

- Possible Beck blog for SCE teachers – not sure if [redacted] still wants it
- [redacted] I were asked to do an ELL instruction PD by last night's group, so we are going to get with [redacted]) about that
- Will present the Robust Vocab/Academic Vocab instruction PDs at JAE starting in June; it is one of JAE's initiatives in the SIP for next year. Can add review games/activities.

Figure 1 continued. List of Jane's PD participation 2008-2012 (projected)

Jane's PD did not end with simply attending and presenting PD workshops. Prior to the beginning of this study, she had begun to learn Spanish. She was already a fluent English and French speaker, but she chose to learn Spanish as a result of the shifting demographics in her classrooms.

> I'll be taking a Spanish class this coming semester to begin brushing up on that – I've been on homestays in Mexico twice, and am very much a beginning speaker. I figure I'll take 4 semesters and see how well the Spanish is after that.

**Amy.**

Amy is a native Russian speaker but is also fluent in English and proficient in German. She holds an M.Ed in English and an ELL certification. At the time of this study, Amy had completed 61 hours of PD, more than double the required 30 hours Stratton County requires. Some of these were district offerings, but many Amy chose to attend. For instance, she attended the district-mandated suicide prevention training and volunteered to participate in a district-organized PLC. As listed in Figure 2, she also chose to attend a number of workshops focused on ELL instruction as well as some workshops on the use of technology in the classroom.

When I first met Amy, she was working on a presentation she and a colleague of hers were to give to the faculty at North Branch. She had attended a PD workshop and was tasked by her administration to return to the school and share the information she had learned. Amy's main decision point on what to include in her presentation for her colleagues was whether the content she presented was what she wanted "to tell regular teachers." She included as her portion of the presentation a number of *helpful hints* for teachers who work with ELLs. Among these hints were the value of oral language production and that very little time is provided ELLs to speak in class, possibilities for error correction in the form of recasting, and the importance of vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension.

Figure 3 outlines the recommendations she has prepared for her colleagues. First, in the top left, she recommends teachers provide time for students to produce meaningful oral language. Specifically, she mentions *Think/Pair/Share* activities that promote peer interaction focused on the content of instruction as well as asking students to restate

Individual Professional Development Record

**Individual Professional Development Record**

| Session Title | Location/Time | Date | Enrolled | Attended | Credit | Focus | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Classroom Instruction That Works with ELL Students K-12 Teachers | Teacher Center - 8:30 am | Jun 10, 2010 | Yes | Yes | 6 | | | |
| K-12 District Wide Event (K-2 REGISTER HERE) | Long Hollow Baptist Church - 8:30 am | Jul 22, 2010 | Yes | Yes | 6 | | | |
| K-2 Teachers: Elementary Drive-In Conference | SCM - 8:30 am | Jun 24, 2010 | Yes | Yes | 6 | | | |
| ELL Professional Development | Teacher Center - 8:30 am | Jun 25, 2010 | Yes | Yes | 6 | | | |
| Elementary Drive-In Conference (Grades 3-5 Register Here) | SCH - 8:30 am | Jun 24, 2010 | Yes | Yes | 3 | | | |
| ELL Learning A - Z Webinar | ELL Portable - 3:30 pm | Sep 14, 2010 | Yes | Yes | 2 | | | |
| PLC for Teachers of English Learners | NBE - 4:00 pm | Sep 28, 2010 | Yes | Yes | 3 | | | |
| PLC for Teachers of English Learners | NBE - 4:00 pm | Oct 27, 2010 | Yes | Yes | 3 | | | |
| CEO - ELL Suicide Prevention Training 2010-2011 | Central Office - 6:00 pm | Apr 15, 2010 | Yes | Yes | 2 | | | |
| Summer Institute 2010 | | | Yes | Yes | 24 | | | |

Your requirements are a minimum of 30 hours.

You have earned a total of 61 hours.

Your requirements are **COMPLETE.**

*Report prepared on 24-Mar-11.*

*View by year:* 2010-2011

Figure 2: List of Amy's PD participation 2010-2011

content during class. This type of activity, while on the surface could be seen as redundant, offers students time to confirm or deny their current understandings and provides the teacher with an oral assessment of their students.

Underneath this section, she mentions sentence frames as a visual ELLs can access more easily. Sentence frames, as she has presented here, offer students a variety of ways to engage in activities in class. More precisely, if a student knows the content of instruction but the language required to participate in the classroom activities, providing sentence frames, provide a useful scaffold through which the student can participate more fully in class.

Next, she presents some concepts regarding vocabulary instruction and selection as well as reading comprehension. These two foci are of great import for Amy in that her colleagues struggle with teaching vocabulary and reading comprehension to the ELLs in their classrooms. In fact, in creating this handout for her colleagues, she took this need into account and included this material accordingly. She states, "We all talked about this. The 4th grade teacher says, 'I would like to learn more about this strategy' because she was focusing more on comprehension." In addition, she includes a section of the handout, shown on a larger poster for the actual presentation of this material to the faculty at North Branch Elementary, listing a number of 'less effective' strategies (Figure 4). These were taken directly from the summer workshop. She included this not only for her colleagues, but also for herself.

# EL Poster *Helpful Hints*
## Strategies

**Oral Language:**

- Use "Think/Pair/Share" frequently to ensure that students are discussing what is being taught
- Have students restate (paraphrase) what you are teaching so that the language is in their words

**Recasting:**

Student: "She's like how it plays ball".
- ***Expansions*** **refine the grammar**. She likes how he plays with the ball.
- ***Expiations*** **expand the meaning.**

She admires how well he plays basketball

**Visuals:**

***Sentence Frames***
I believe/imagine/predict
I conclude/suspect/speculate
As ________ already pointed out, I think that...
I want to find out more about/I am beginning to wonder if
________ explained to me/mentioned/shared
I found out that/heard/discovered/realized
I was surprised that
In my opinion
It seems to me that
I agree with _____ that

**Thinking Maps**

Fish

| can | have |
|---|---|
| swim | fins |
| breathe | gills |
| eat | tail |
| get caught | scales |

**Beginning Level:** *Fish have fins. Fish can swim.*
**Intermediate students can combine sentences:** *Fish have fins and a tail so they can swim.*
**Advanced students can practice condensing ideas into academic structures:** *Gills allow fish to breathe, while fins and tails enable swimming.*

**Teaching Vocabulary:**

Word Parts Posters
If you know the word clear, You also know:

| | |
|---|---|
| clearest | clears |
| clearer | clearly |
| cleared | unclear |
| clearing | unclearly |

**Teaching Word Parts**

prefixes | roots | suffixes

| Prefix | Root | Suffix | New Word | Real Word |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Re- | appear | -ed | reappeared | Yes |

Sentence: The ghost in Mike's closet reappeared at nights.

**Making the Match!**

| ROCK | to move back and forth |
|---|---|
| a stone | a type of music |

My teenage brother is always listening to rock.
I have a collection with many different kinds of rocks.
My Mom rocks my baby brother to sleep.

**Word Maps**

←model→
An example for imitation or emulation 1
A miniature representation 2
One who displays clothes or merchandise 3

**Choosing Vocabulary:**

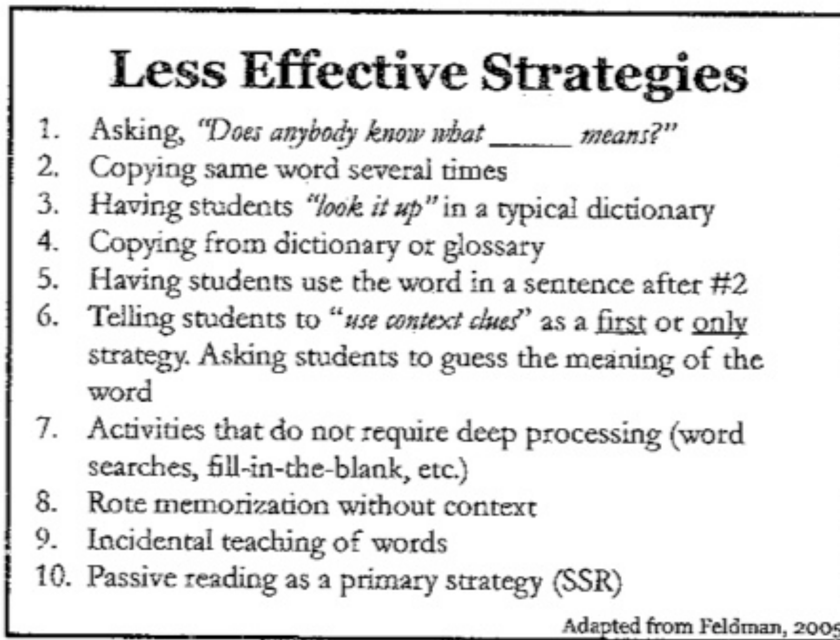
**Tiers II Words for ELL**
+ High frequency, grade-level, and content area words
+ Less obvious cognates
+ Multiple meaning/polysemous words
  - Need to be deliberately taught
  - Students must learn how to use them in various contexts

**Selecting Tier II Words**
Tier II words taught before students read include words:
- that will be frequently encountered in other texts and content areas
- crucial to understanding the main ideas
- that are not a part of the students' prior knowledge
- unlikely to be learned independently through the use of context and/or structural analysis

**Comprehension:**
***For whole class comprehension assessment, use***
- Flashcards
- Erase boards
- Thumbs up/down

**Get the Gist**
**A Summarizing Strategy**
✓ Who or what is the paragraph mostly about?
✓ What is the most important thing about the "who" or "what"?
✓ Put together the answers and tell the main idea in 10 words or less.

Figure 3: Amy's Handout for her Mainstream Colleagues at North Branch Elementary School


# Less Effective Strategies

1. Asking, *"Does anybody know what ______ means?"*
2. Copying same word several times
3. Having students *"look it up"* in a typical dictionary
4. Copying from dictionary or glossary
5. Having students use the word in a sentence after #2
6. Telling students to "*use context clues*" as a first or only strategy. Asking students to guess the meaning of the word
7. Activities that do not require deep processing (word searches, fill-in-the-blank, etc.)
8. Rote memorization without context
9. Incidental teaching of words
10. Passive reading as a primary strategy (SSR)

Adapted from Feldman, 2005

Figure 4: Amy's 'Less Effective Strategies' List

Amy mentions one of the "less effective strategies" specifically, "*Asking, 'Does anybody know what ____ means?'*" She says, "Yes, I did that." When I asked about what she does now, knowing that this may not be very effective, she couldn't think of what she now does instead. I needed to tell her what I had seen through my observation. I actually hadn't seen her ask this question; she did other things. "One thing that I saw, there were sometimes where you don't define things. There was one activity where you had them teach each other, so they actually defined these things themselves to each other. So you don't necessarily have to ask this question, but you hear them doing it so you know." She responded to this, "Maybe this question is just wasting their time."

**Esperanza.**

Like Jane and Amy, Esperanza did not stop at the minimum number of hours she needed to complete. As of the end of this study, she had amassed over 60 hours of PD.

This total does not include the hours she earns participating in Drake County's own PCL program, for which she receives one (1) each week for her participation. The previous year, academic year 2009-10, she attended close to 100 hours of PD (see Figure 5 for a complete list). Many of these hours were connected to the school in which she works or offered by the district.

Esperanza and her PLC met periodically at her school. At the time of this study, Unified Elementary School was piloting the PLC program in the 2nd and 4th grades. In preparation, they went on a retreat and read selected texts regarding PLC participation. The work these teachers did together resulted in a more refined focus on the curriculum they teach in class. Esperanza mentioned a specific process they had followed once to determine a course of action for the 4th grade. "We looked at the ThinkLink results and looked at the different sub-skills there. Language and vocabulary was low, so we wanted to work a lot with context clues." ThinkLink is an assessment that predicts student achievement on a larger end-of-the-year assessment. Based upon the results of this assessment, the PLC in which Esperanza worked divided up the students to offer an enrichment program for the students on using context clues in reading. Additionally, some of this group's choices for focus stem from the curriculum itself and not a more formalized assessment.

| Professional Development – Esperanza | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Date** | **Name of Training/Workshop** | **# Hours Credit** |
| Aug. 27, 2002 | Focus on Achievement | 3 |
| Sept. 17, 2002 | Hands-On Science: Magnets and Motors | 6 |
| Oct. 15, 2002 | Hands-On Science: Technology of Paper | 6 |
| Oct.-Dec. 2002 | COMP Training: Classroom Management | 21 |
| Nov. 19, 2002 | Hands-On Science: Measuring Time | 6 |
| Feb. 5, 2003 | Survive and Thrive for Middle School Educators | 6 |
| June 18-19, 2003 | Changing Behaviors: Strategies to Win | 12 |
| Aug. 7, 2003 | ELL Orientation | 2 |
| Sept. 15, 2003 | Hands-On Science: Animal Studies | 6 |
| December 1, 2003 | Hands-On Science: Land and Water | 6 |
| Jan. 29, 2004 | Guided Reading: 4 Blocks | 5.5 |
| Jan. 13, Jan. 20, Jan. 27, Feb. 10, 2004 | RISE (Responsive Instruction for Success in English) - ELL | 22 |
| Feb. 5, 2004 | Hands-On Science: Food Chemistry | 6 |
| Feb. 6, 2004 | Literacy Presentation-Dr. Mary Bigler | 6 |
| Jan. 14, May 10-11, 2004 | [redacted] Writing Assessment Rubric Scoring | 18 |
| March 4, 2004 | IPT Training (ELL) | 6 |
| Sept. 2003-August 2004 | [redacted] University-Coursework (Linguistic Applications, Middle School Methods, CALLA Method, Issues in Bilingual Ed) | 12 Graduate School Hours |
| June 3-4, 2004 | Social Studies: Content Area Strategies | 12 |
| June 8, 2004 | Literacy Interventions | 6 |
| June 15, 2004 | ELL Workshop | 6 |
| June 17, 2004 | Family Math | 6 |
| June 18, 2004 | [redacted] ArtSmart Program Preview | 6 |
| July 8, 2004 | Cultural Sensitivity Training | 6 |
| July 12-16, 2004 | Marilyn Burns Math Workshop | 30 |
| August 2004-May 2005 | [redacted] Coursework (Grammar, Assessment) | 6 Grad. School Hours |

Figure 5: List of Esperanza's PD participation 2002-2011

| Date | Name of Training/Workshop | # Hours Credit |
|---|---|---|
| September 8, 2004 | ArtSmart Training - Japanese Taiko Drum Unit | 5 |
| September 20-21, 2004 | Literacy Centers | 12 |
| October 14, 2004 | SACS Conference | 6 |
| December 6-8, 2004 | Covey Workshop--Habits of Highly Effective People | 18 |
| February 23, 2005 | ELL - IPT Refresher Training | 6 |
| March 3, 2005 | ELL - RISE Follow-Up | 6 |
| April 1 and 4, 2005 | 4th Grade District Writing Assessment Scoring | 12 |
| April 6, 2005 | ELL - CELLA Training | 3.75 |
| June 2005 | [redacted] University- Coursework (Foundations of Education, Educational Research) | 6 Graduate School Hours |
| August 12, 2005 | Ruby Payne--Framework for Understanding Poverty | 6 |
| August 2005-May 2006 | [redacted] Coursework (Cultural Understandings; ESL Practica--prek-3, 4-8, 9-12; Approaches to Teaching ESL Writing) | 9 Graduate School Hours |
| October 3-4, 2005; March 6-7, 2006 | Balanced Literacy Training | 24 |
| October 3, 2005 | ArtSmart Training - Sones de Mexico Unit | 3 |
| May 15-16, 2006 | District Math Problem-Solving Assessment: Training on Rubric, Scoring | 12 |
| June-July 2006 | [redacted] Coursework (Curriculum Development, Instructional Excellence) | 6 Graduate School Hours |
| October 17, 2006 | NTTI--Integrating Social Studies Curriculum and Technology in the Classroom | 6 |
| October 26, 2006 | ArtSmart Training—Little Donkey Theater Unit | 3 |
| November 7, 2006; February 19, 2007 | Quantum Learning—Days 1 & 2 | 12 |

Figure 5 continued. List of Esperanza's PD participation 2002-2011

| Date | Name of Training/Workshop | # Hours Credit |
|---|---|---|
| January 23, 2007 | K-4 ELL Practical Strategies for Accelerating the Literacy and Content Learning of ELLs | 7.5 |
| February 7, 2007 | Designing individualized comprehension folders with reading specialist + Observing 3rd/4th ELL class at [redacted] Elementary | 6 |
| April 19, 2007 | ELDA Training for 3-12 ELD Teachers | 3 |
| June 6, 2007 | Reading Adoption/Handwriting Workshop - Grades 4-6 | 6.5 |
| July 19, 2007 | Developmental Spelling Analysis (DSA)/Word Study Workshop | 6 |
| July 25, 2007 | Tier III S.D.A.I.E. Avenues Supplemental Textbook and Materials Training-ELL | 6 |
| September 11, 2007 | Quantum Learning—Day 3 | 6 |
| September 12, 2007 | ArtSmart Training—Echoa Unit | 3 |
| September 25, 2007 | ELL Report Card Training | 3.5 |
| October 3, 2007 | Math—Integrating Problem-Solving Workshop | 6 |
| October 23, 2007; November 28, 2007 | ELL Thinking Maps Workshop | 12 |
| January 10, 2008 | Math Hands-On Manipulatives Kit Training | 3 |
| January 11, 2008 | School Improvement Plan Development—ELL Representative | 6 |
| February 12, 2008 | ELDA (English Language Development Assessment) Training--ELL | 3.5 |
| February 21-22, 2008 | Math District Problem-Solving Assessment Scoring | 13 |
| July 21-23, 2008 | We the People Social Studies + Character Education Workshop | 19.5 |
| October 9, 2008 | ELL Portfolio Training | 3.5 |
| December 3, 2008 | ArtSmart Training—Circus InCognitus Unit | 3 |

Figure 5 continued. List of Esperanza's PD participation 2002-2011

| Date | Name of Training/Workshop | # Hours Credit |
|---|---|---|
| February 10, 2009 | ELDA (English Language Development Assessment) Training | 3.5 |
| February 16, 2009 | Quantum Learning--Day 4 | 6.5 |
| April 28, 2009 | State Standards Roll-Out Phase 1 | 6.5 |
| July 22, 30, 31, 2009 | ELL Summer Institute-Experienced ELL Teachers (Kagan Cooperative Learning, Thinking Maps, Cultural Conference) | 19.5 |
| July 23, 2009 | State Standards Roll-Out Phase 2 | 6.5 |
| August 8-9, 2009 | [illegible] Faculty Retreat—Professional Learning Communities | 13 |
| September 29, 2009 | ELL Curriculum & Assessment Training | 3.5 |
| January 4, 2010 | Differentiated Instruction Training | 6.5 |
| January 21, 2010 | Balance Math Training | 3.5 |
| February 22, 2010 | Inclusive Services---Part 1 | 6.5 |
| September 3, 2009—April 8, 2010 (monthly) | Thinking Maps K-4: Path to Proficiency for English Language Learners (Cohort Group) | 21 |
| April 28, 2010 | Inclusive Services—Part 2 | 6.5 |
| September 15, 2009—May 17, 2010 (monthly) | ELL Teacher Representative Meetings—Short trainings, discussions, and policies/procedures/initiatives related to ELL | 7 |
| June 30, 2010 | Differentiating Instruction for ELLs in the Integrated 3-5 Classroom | 6.5 |
| August 6-7, 2010 | [illegible] Faculty Retreat—"75+ Achievement Boosting Strategies" by Dr. Danny Brassell | 13 |
| September 27, 2010 | ELL Cornerstone Textbook Training | 3.5 |
| Fall 2010 | Jason Foundation—Suicide Awareness & Prevention—Online Training | 2 |
| November 19, 2010 | Dave Weber's "Sticks & Stones Exposed: The Truth Behind Words and Relationships" Video Training | 3.5 |

Figure 5 continued. List of Esperanza's PD participation 2002-2011

| November 22, 2010 | Voyager Intervention Program Training (RTI groups) | 1 |
|---|---|---|
| December 8, 2010 & February 23, 2011 | 4th Grade Data Analysis Days with Instructional Coaches | 7 |
| January 3, 2011 | Teaching with Rigor & Bloom's Taxonomy + Technology Training—Examview, Study Island, Discovery Education, Student Data Warehouse | 6.5 |
| February 1, 2011 | Balanced Literacy: Running Records Training | 6.5 |
| 2010-2011 School Year | Technology Trainings—school website, CPS clickers, Gradespeed, ELMO | 4 |
| 2010-2011 School Year | Professional Learning Community (PLC) Meetings—4th grade team (Grade-level common assessments, data analysis, & interventions) | 1 hour per week |
| September 2010—May 2011 (monthly) | ELL Teacher Representative Meetings | 7 |

Figure 5 continued. List of Esperanza's PD participation 2002-2011

**Lionel.**

He sees himself as a member of the community in which he teaches. Having taught the parents of some of his current students, taken legal guardianship over students as specific circumstances arise and call him to action, and overseen a number of his students' mental and physical health concerns, he is also seen by the community as true member and someone who is in a position to provide a greater range of service than his role as a classroom teacher would normally allow. Accordingly, his instruction and PD choices reflect his overall status in the community and the role he feels teachers should play in the personal, academic, and linguistic development of its children. During my interviews with Lionel, he often used the term "personal development" instead of PD. Though he might be confusing these two terms, they way he talks about teachers,

teaching, and the position he has in the local community, it is clear that he views his own learning as personal journey and not a matter of professional activity.

In regard to the content of PD, Lionel stated, “If I get on board with it, we fly with it. If it is something that is extremely boring, most of the time after I have been to the [workshop], I am sitting there going, ‘This makes no sense to me. How I handle things works better than this.’ But you sit through it.” When offered a choice, he will often follow his own interests or those of his students. “It’s mostly whatever we are studying, I will choose that I can help add to that. Some of the ones they send me to I don’t desire to go to.” For example, he is a real-world science and nature buff. He and his fellow teachers are “touring all of the [local] parks either by actual tour or video – 6 hrs. credit. I like to do interesting science kits – Brake fluid and chlorine or burning cow poop – based off our books and stories.” He is referencing a lesson he has done in the past where his students read about cows and then engaged in a project to see how much energy could be released by burning cow manure. He continues his thoughts on PD, “That PD [the parks tour] is stuff that I want to do. The other PD is what is usually asked for us to do. The going to the parks is my idea. Going to Thinking Maps? I’ve been to those things so many times. That’s because I am sent.” Lionel stated that he had attended this session on a few different occasions, but from the student work displayed on his walls and the lessons he provides, Thinking Maps do not figure prominently in his classroom. Though Lionel freely admits that the PDs he attends are normally those offered through the school district, he is not shy about sharing his feeling on some of those offerings. He stated, “Part of the professional development is…I like learning the new ideas that can be interesting. The other stuff is just what you call ‘drudge work.’ You’re going to those

because you have to to show you've been there. Because a lot of the stuff that we've done, we've gone over and over and over and they keep pounding it in there, but we're there because it is required." For instance, he has attended the session on Thinking Maps for the last few years and though he doesn't use them in his classroom, he still attended them, as the sessions are mandatory. While he completes the required number of hours of PD that Drake County requires, he does not feel that all of those opportunities are worth the time spent in attendance. He feels this way mainly because he did not have a choice to attend, a feeling he shares with many teachers in the U.S. (Corcoran, 1995; Little, 1993; Smylie, 1989).

**Summary of finding 1.**

The participating teachers chose PD opportunities that went far beyond the formalized, one-shot format. Indeed, the teachers attended this style of PD, but they also attended long-term, school-site offerings, participated in PLCs at their schools, presented PD to their colleagues both at their schools and across their districts, and participated in activities in the local community. The research literature espouses the need for a wide range of PD for teachers (Cohen & Ball, 1990; Lieberman & Miller, 2001; Little, 1993). The fact that these teachers engaged in PD is not surprising, but their choices help to extend the vision of what is normally accepted as PD for teachers. Acceptable activities that qualify as PD teachers can use to renew their licenses includes national, state, district, and local activities. These activities could include study groups, conference attendance, and research projects. However, while these activities are present, to varying degrees, in the dossiers of the participating teachers, the listed, acceptable PD does not account for Lionel's work in the local community, Jane's Spanish classes, Amy's report

from a conference, or Esperanza's implementation (not training) of the Voyager intervention. To be sure, these activities can be defined as PD in that they lead to instructional innovation and new understandings of what it means to be a teacher. For instance, Lionel developed new ways of interacting with his students that took into account their cultural practices and personal needs. While this work was not necessarily appropriate to claim toward renewing his license, it was no less important to his development as a teacher. Similarly, the new relationships Jane hoped to build as a result of her learning Spanish was no less valuable to her than the workshops she presented to her colleagues. Ultimately, the official PD the teachers attended or presented did not encapsulate the entirety of the work they did in this regard, though it did result in the internalization of new practices and understandings of their work as teachers.

**Finding 2: In-service Teachers of ELLs Choose PD in Response to Specific Influences**

The participating ELL teachers did not choose the PD in which they engaged haphazardly. In fact, fairly specific influences impacted the participating ELL teachers' choices of PD. The teachers chose their PD in response to district, school site, classroom, and legislative forces. The research literature highlights the need for PD to be based in practical, classroom concerns (Little, 1988), and while the data I present here support this claim, I also argue that despite the recommended classroom focus, PD and instruction are mediated by other influences. Taken together, these influences define what ELL teachers, in their respective schools and districts, need to learn, know, and do.

**District-level influences.**

The districts within which the participating teachers worked are clearly mediating factors, determining in many ways the pathways teachers choose to take in their PD. The two schools districts in this study, Drake and Stratton, affected the choices their ELL teachers made through the defining general PD requirements for their teachers, the implementation of specific ELL instructional programming, and the initiation of goal setting activities through yearly reviews. In addition, the school districts convened PLCs and provided instructional coaches to help the teachers work collegially with other teachers.

***Licensure requirements.***

Upon beginning this study I realized almost immediately that the participating teachers main influence in terms of their decision regarding professional develop was the school district within which they worked. From prescribing the number of hours the teachers need to renew their teaching licenses to offering specific opportunities for teachers throughout the calendar year, the school district exerts a tremendous amount of influence over the PD of the teachers they employ. Both Drake and Stratton county schools require that their teachers complete thirty (30) hours of PD each year, and the participating teachers in this study experienced little difficulty in satisfying this requirement.

Of course, this requirement was based upon the specific state requirements that each of the participating teachers also needed to satisfy. These requirements, though a bit different from those of the district, asked each teacher, in order to renew his or her teaching license, to amass 90 points. With the activities mentioned previously, the state

accepted national, state, district, and local activities such as college or university coursework, participation in evaluation programs, self-directed projects, and community and business work. Ultimately, all teachers, to renew their license, were required to fulfill these requirements within a 10-year timeframe. The local district requirements helped ensure that teachers could easily qualify for license renewal.

The fact that the schools districts require their teachers to participate in a certain number of PD hours is not surprising, nor is it strange to see teachers within these districts meeting these requirements. When asked what might explain the differences among teachers in terms of how different teachers go about amassing the required PD hours, Lionel felt that a number of factors needed to be considered. For instance, financial concerns often dictate what a teacher might choose to do over the summer. He said, "The teachers here, a lot of them sign up to do a whole lot of [PD] for the stipend, who are being paid 10 months. See, my last paycheck is Friday. I have to go June, and July, and the first part of August operating off of other things. So a lot of teachers take the stuff in the summer in order for that." It is clear that teachers make certain PD choices due to licensing requirements and pay schedules. He made a provocative statement that "the older they get, it seems the less they take...the younger ones tend to take more than the older ones." While I have no evidence to support Lionel's claim, his statement does speak to the possible differences between new and veteran teachers in terms of the purposes and perceived benefits of PD for teachers at different points in their careers, as well as the needs of each individual teacher. His concern mirrored that of the research literature in that teachers across different grades and subject area reported needed

different knowledge and skills (Batt, 2008, Cho & Reich, 2008, Clair 1995; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005).

***ELL programming.***

*Drake county schools.*

At the time of this study, Drake County schools were working through a programming shift. Before the 2010-11 school year, Drake County schools offered a sheltered program of study for ELLs. As of the year in which the study occurred, the district began implementation of a more inclusive program. As a result, ELLs and native English speaking students attended class at the same time and shifted classes based on English proficiency. While ELLs were taught mainly in mainstream classes, for certain academic subjects such as language arts, they moved into different classrooms to return to their home room at the end of the period. Essentially, it was a pull-out program focused on developing both content area and English language development.

Lionel is a veteran teacher who has been teaching in Drake County Schools for a number of years. As was the case with all Drake County schools serving ELLs, Lionel's school adopted the district-wide, inclusion model for ELL instruction, and not for the first time, he stood in front of a class with students of varied language proficiency. This is not to say that he has never worked with ELLs nor English-speaking students previously. "If I have learned anything good, I will share it with the 4th grade teachers." Lionel did not feel the changes in the ELL programming affected the way he worked in his classroom. When asked whether the changes had affected him, he responded, "I don't think it has because I have been doing this for 15 years." A few years earlier, when Drake shifted their program for ELL to a sheltered model, Lionel was asked to get an ELL

endorsement, but not long into his study, his administrators pulled back on their plans, and he was again in a mainstream classroom. He currently works with higher proficiency ELLs in keeping with the new inclusion model, working with ELLs in language arts instruction as well as the other content areas. Woodruff, on the school website, described the instructional model as such:

> …students who are eligible for English Language (EL) services are integrated in K - 4th grade classrooms with Proficient English speakers. However, they receive Language arts and ESL instruction from a certified EL teacher for one or two hours daily based on the Federal Guidelines. The focus is teaching students to read, write, listen to, and speak English. Grade level math, social studies, and science [are] taught in the integrated setting.

Unified Elementary school, also in Drake County, also moved to a more inclusive model of instruction resembling that of Woodruff Elementary. Esperanza has been a teacher at Unified for nine years. For all of those years, she worked within the district's model of offering ELLs a sheltered program of study. That is, ELLs were in self-contained classrooms and only attended classes with their English-speaking peers during special subjects such as art, music, and physical education.

*Stratton county schools.*

Stratton County School District served a smaller population of ELLs than did Drake County Schools. However, the ELL programming in Stratton is similar to Drake in that ELLs are integrated into mainstream classrooms and receive services from trained ELL teachers. The main difference lies in the fact that while Drake offers specific content instruction within their ELL services, Stratton's program resembles a traditional pull-out program. More clearly, Stratton's program supports content learning in the mainstream classroom and English language development in the ELL classroom.

Amy is a relatively new teacher – during this study she was in her third year as resident ELL teacher at North Branch Elementary School, a school in Stratton School District. By *resident* I mean that Amy had her own classroom within North Branch and operated within an inclusive yet pull-out model of ELL programming in which the students spent most of their day in a mainstream, English-speaking classroom and met with Amy during specified times during the instructional day.

In contrast to Amy's resident status at North Branch Elementary, Jane, an *itinerant* teacher, traveled between two different schools to work with the students at each location. Given the number and attendance of the ELLs in the district, Stratton County created some very interesting modifications in their ELL programming district-wide. Both Amy and Jane provided classroom instruction within their specific programs that supported both their students' English language development, but also the students' increased access to the greater instructional curricula.

***Goal setting.***

Both Amy and Jane, as teachers in Stratton County Schools, underwent yearly performance reviews. Nancy, the Stratton District Instructional Coordinator for ELL programming, conducted these meetings, centered upon the previous year's instruction and professional conduct. One feature of these meetings that both Jane and Amy commented on was "goal setting." Nancy, each year, offered each of the teachers a series of goals for the upcoming year, that would then serve as a basis for discussion in the next review. For Jane, these meetings were incredibly formative in her choices of PD. The goals began fairly simple, however. Jane stated, "[The] first year goal was technology and continue my coursework, because I wasn't sure I was going to bother with my

Masters." In her review meeting with Nancy, conducted in the fall of the 2009-10 school year, Jane's goals were to present a workshop session for her fellow teachers in the district regarding ELL concerns that mainstream teachers would find meaningful. Jane continued in this discussion of her goals, "That was for the second year, and [Nancy] said please continue doing your PDs because they are very helpful for educating the county - the people in them."

The reviews were also based upon a teacher self-assessment. Jane described how these reports were used in her review:

> I had written in my report how valuable I had found presenting these PDs because it came back to help me in my classroom. So what [Nancy] did, is she gets those reports that I give my own assessment and then she turns around and turns them into next year's thing. So for this year it was do a PD with an instructional coach and finish [my] Master's or something like that.

Accordingly, Jane did not stop developing her workshops. In fact, she continued to refine how she thought about PD in general due to the goals as set with Nancy.

The content of Jane's PD presentations was not simply the product of keen research and theoretical contemplation. Indeed, all of her work was theorized and supported by research. However, she identified her PD content through her classroom work with students and her school-site work with her colleagues. She often works with a partner on her workshops (her partner in these endeavors was a not a participant in this study), and they have a three-pronged purpose for offering the workshops that they have presented. She explained that the purposes are "how we can improve our teaching, and how we can help our ELLs and their classroom teachers." "We take an issue that is bugging us and figure out what we can do about it." The issue could be one raised in a workshop she attended or a recent circumstance of her classroom. For example, Jane commented on the vocabulary focus handed down from the district but also the needs in

her classroom, “so many words, so little time.” This one comment formed the basis for one of her workshops on vocabulary instruction. Regardless of where her ideas come from, Jane always has her classroom practice, her colleagues, and her students in mind. She states, ”[I] practiced [various classroom strategies], and [I] challenged [other teachers] to go back to their classrooms, and [I] followed up with PDs.” Again, as she says, “All that [preparation for workshops] helps my ELLs and others.”

Her most recent review, again conducted before this study began, in the fall of 2010-11 school year offered new goals and expectations. Jane explains, “I am expected to present at a state or national conference and am expected to begin working at the state level on ELL issues.” How she addressed part of this goal is discussed in more detail later in this section.

For Amy, these yearly reviews and the goals set within them pushed her in a different direction in terms of her professional learning. On several occasions Amy discussed her goals of possibly entering a Ph.D. program in Education. In fact, she used me as a specific resource regarding the entire process of gaining admission to, participating in, and completing a graduate program. Amy spoke of this at the beginning of the study, in direct response to the goals she and Nancy had discussed previously. The specific goal was “Obtaining my PhD – [Nancy] set that goal for me. My boss sees that in me.” Obviously, this one goal resonated very strongly with Amy, and she spoke about other reasons for pursuing her doctorate, “I think I would be, like through a PhD program, I would learn more and go even, go through the research and I would, in the future, I would share that with other future teachers because I want to share what I know,

and I will know after a PhD program." Amy was in the process of completing her entrance application to a local Ph.D. program when I concluded this study.

***PLCs and instructional coaches.***

When I spoke to Nancy, the Stratton District Instructional Coordinator for ELL Programming, about her professional recommendations for Jane, she spoke of some larger district-level concerns that led her to set these goals for Jane. According to Nancy, the district was not satisfied in its support of the ELLs attending schools in the area. Specifically, ELLs in the district were falling through the cracks of instruction between the mainstream classroom teacher and the ELL teachers. As Nancy put it, the district needed "a really good way to solve, or attempt to solve the problem of…this concept that the ELL children belonged to the ELL teachers and not to the regular ed. teachers also." To attend to this concern, Nancy tried to answer a single question. In her own words, "Who is responsible for which children?" An important question, to be sure, but one Stratton schools aimed to answer more clearly than they had previously through the use of PLCs – Professional Learning Communities.

Stratton School District, which had used PLCs previously in the past, revised this practice, to reduce a dual possibility – 1) mainstream teachers deferring to their counterparts trained to address the specific needs of ELLs and 2) ELL teachers deferring to the mainstream teachers who have far greater instructional contact with the ELLs in the district. The addition of the ELL teachers in the PLCs had not previously been tried in the district. "I wanted my ELL teachers to participate in that because they typically are not asked to participate in those at their schools because most of them travel." Jane also commented on the alienation she felt as an ELL teacher I the district:

> I am not on any team in either of the schools I teach at, so I am not included in any particular team's undertakings – I have tried, but my teaching schedule is such that I am teaching when most team meetings are taking place (related arts, PE times). So, not only do we miss the teamwork at the school level, but at the county level, we itinerant EL teachers aren't included in things.

The basic format of the PLCs in Stratton County involved convening a group of teachers within grade levels and across subject areas once a month to discuss classroom issues, concerns, success, and ideas regarding the ELLs whom the teachers instructed. While Nancy stated that the PLCs were created "to work collaboratively to develop more effective teaching practices for all students," the inclusion of both Amy and Jane in their respective PLCs implied a more collaborative view of classroom instruction for not only ELLs but also for their native English-speaking peers.

In developing the PLCs, Nancy considered academic vocabulary to be a huge issue for the ELLs in the county's schools. She kept this focus in mind when she scheduled a summer workshop for her teachers focused on ELL needs. Nancy mentioned this specifically:

> A lot of [the presenter's] stuff is around academic vocabulary. That tends to be something that our ELLs struggle with in all of the subjects. I thought the teachers could connect with that. 'Oh great, this is about my subject.'" My goal was for the coaches to be a little bit more active in implement [academic vocabulary instruction].

In addition to the introduction of the PLCs, Stratton County School District hired instructional coaches to visit various schools sites and work with teachers both individually and in groups focusing on particular instructional strategies as well as more theoretical concepts. "It seemed like a good fit to get the instructional coaches, the ELL teachers, and then some regular ed. teachers who either had interest or perhaps were leaders in the school to all work together," Nancy stated in a discussion of the PLC and coaching programs.

The official description of the instructional coaches role in the PLC is clearly stated in a letter that went out to all those teachers who might wish to participate. Coaches are to

> work with the teachers to create a demonstration lesson using an effective EL instructional strategy in the regular classroom. Videotape the lesson and/or model the lesson in other teacher's rooms with their students. Assist regular ed. teachers in implementing one effective instructional strategy for EL students (based on CREDE Standards for Effective Pedagogy). Become aware of your own schema regarding diversity. Model that awareness with colleagues.

The model seemed to work well. Nancy commented on the relationship built between one coach and Jane, stating, "They do a lot of work together, and that is a really good team. They think a lot alike, they are both highly intelligent, and very energetic." Working with the instructional coaches has been very engaging for Jane. She said in discussing her view of the instructional coaches:

> They have been and are mentors to me as I am constantly growing as an ELL teacher. We have been partners together as we kick around ideas regarding particular kids, classroom teaching situations, testing issues, or really just about any issue that comes up. What is nice is that we brainstorm and play off each other's expertise.

One specific example of this kind of relationship Jane regularly assists one of the coaches in presenting workshops around the district and at her school.

> [I] attended a 30-minute PD done by [the instructional coach] for the school today on inferring. She's using the book Comprehension Connections. It was great. Better was that she and I talked afterwards about getting the kids ready for the ELDA writing -- we walked through the stuff the kids do in different classes. For example, SCE teaches, school-wide, a writing approach called BME (beginning, middle, and end). That process includes brainstorming, drawing, etc. I do that sort of thing when we write books. Anyway, what I figured out talking with [the instructional coach] is that I should describe what I am trying to do in this way: we are trying to get the kids to open a test booklet with a question and lines on a page without the organizer steps. They need to invent the organizer right then and there. There are some blank half pages that they can use for the four square and for doing little drawings. So what I'm looking for is ways to get them to do spur of the moment writing without the luxury of all the brainstorming, drafting, and helpers that we give them.

This specific example of highlights how the instructional coaches help to broaden the teachers' understanding of instruction and offer support in developing new instructional practices.

Amy, also a member of a PLC, spoke of the benefits of participating in the program. She A 4th grade teacher, a member of the PLC with Amy, when seeing a number of "less effective strategies" for ELLs (see Figure 4) Amy hoped to present to the mainstream teachers at North Branch Elementary, was upset at seeing some of her own practices listed. Amy remembered, "The 4th grade teacher was like, 'I want to be a good teacher, and here I am using these, and this is less effective." This one comment, Amy remarked, was the main reason why this information was included in the presentation and justified her work in the PLC.

Esperanza and her PLC met periodically at Unified Elementary School. At the time of this study, Unified Elementary School was piloting the Drake County PLC program in the 2nd and 4th grades. In preparation, those teachers participating in the program went on a retreat and read selected texts regarding PLC participation. Esperanza stated, "We've been meeting with the coaches. We've worked on creating common assessments, and we were working context clues, and math problem solving, and setting goals." The work these teachers did together resulted in a more refined focus on the curriculum they taught in class. Esperanza mentioned a specific process they had followed once to determine a course of action for the 4th grade. "We looked at the ThinkLink results and looked at the different sub-skills there. Language and vocabulary was low, so we wanted to work a lot with context clues." ThinkLink is an assessment that predicts student achievement on a larger end-of-the-year assessment. Based upon the

results of this assessment, the PLC in which Esperanza works divided up the students to offer an enrichment program for the students on using context clues in reading. Additionally, some of this group's choices for focus stem from the curriculum itself and not a more formalized assessment.

Unfortunately, Lionel did not engage in either a PLC or work with an instructional coach, as Woodruff Elementary School did not engage in either of these practices. Schools in Drake County were not required to implement either of these opportunities. In Stratton, instructional coaches were a district wide support for all teachers, and the PLCs were specifically designed to support teachers across the district in learning how to teach all of their students – mainly their ELLs. The differences between the two districts in this study highlight the variable influence district constraints and affordances can have on the teachers who teach within them.

***Summary of district influences.***

The district in which these teachers worked was an incredibly potent influence upon the teachers' choices of PD. The research suggests that certain programming choices districts make for ELL results in variable student achievement in schools (Collier, 1992; Ramirez, 1991). However, other factors require consideration in determining the overall success of ELLs in schools (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1991). Of course, this study did not investigate student achievement, but these factors are at issue in discussing researching the influences a district has on its teachers. In brief review, there are eight features of schools and districts that lead to effective instruction for ELLs, and certainly, these features are in some way represented in the PD teachers attend. The two districts represented in this study attended to their ELLs in different ways; the two

districts engaged in different practices and defined the roles and responsibilities of the ELLs in different ways. For example, in Stratton County, ELL teachers provided both English language instruction to their students and pedagogical support to their mainstream colleagues. Working in concert, the ELL programming and the efforts of the district office mediated both Jane and Amy's fulfillment of these two roles. By providing instructional coaches across the district and working with teachers to set goals for professional growth, the district did not simply provide a wider range of PD for its teachers, it also provided its teachers the opportunity to determine their own PD choices. For example, in presenting PD workshops, Jane determined for herself what issues to explore and how to present her understandings to others. Her choices did not always reflect the district offerings. In Drake County, the ELL teachers were also mainstream teachers and in serving these dual purposes, by virtue of specific ELL programming, they chose PD accordingly. For instance, Esperanza utilized her work in her PLC to address her students' needs, as identified on various assessments, and their work in mainstream classrooms.

**School Site.**

The participating teachers viewed their roles as ELL teachers in terms of larger factors such as federal mandates, but also of the local needs of the schools they taught in every day. These roles and responsibilities focused on larger schools issues of collaboration and idea sharing, as well as more practical issues such as changes in grade level from year to year. Further, interactions between colleagues also influenced the teachers in ways that determined in many ways what it meant to be an ELL teacher at their respective schools.

#### ***Sharing.***

The role of each of the teachers in this study was defined differently at the school level. The principal at North Branch Elementary in Stratton County, Karen, expected Amy to fulfill her role in a very specific way. Obviously, the teachers at all of the schools needed to participate in PD activities. In this regard, Karen said, “The expectation is to come back and share.” She continues, “If it is a workshop that isn’t something that’s going to benefit the school and the kids, that may not be a workshop that the teacher would go to.” In essence, Amy’s responsibility was very clear. The purpose of PD was specific, and while she was free to choose from a variety of PD offerings, she needed to consider not only her own growth as a teacher but the growth and development of her colleagues. For Amy, then, PD was an opportunity to expand her own repertoire of instructional practices to address classroom issues such as student diversity, as well as an opportunity to take into account the various experiences of the mainstream classroom teachers whom she supported. As a result, many of the PD choices Amy made were connected to their overall value to the school as well as her own PD as a teacher. Karen asked the teachers to consider the value of the PD in terms of “how important the workshop is to the direction of the school’s vision and goals and what the school’s needs are. We work with our ELL teacher so that everybody is very clear on what those goals are.” In other words, the goals of North Branch were to ensure the success of every student in providing the most effective instruction possible. Of interest here was the inclusion of Amy, the ELL teacher in this goal. As Nancy, a Stratton County School

District official, had stated (and discussed above), the ELL teachers were not always incorporated in larger school activities. This comment pertained to the fact that in Stratton County many of the ELL teachers are itinerant and move from school to school during the day. Amy, however, stayed at one school. Her residency at North Branch facilitated her ability to take up the role her principal needed her to fill. At North Branch, Amy was to provide English language instruction to her students and support the instruction of her mainstream colleagues. The support of her fellow teachers often came in the form of content instruction to the ELLs at her school as well as sharing ELL pedagogical practices Amy learning in her PD. The principal at North Branch Elementary spoke of this blend by stating, "differentiation is an expectation, not an exception." Accordingly, Amy designed her classroom instruction and chose PD opportunities based upon two main influences. She maintained a focus on the ELL instructional standards as put forth by the Stratton County School District as well as provided support for her mainstream classroom colleagues.

***Practicalities.***

Lionel viewed the role of teachers and how PD choices are made within schools in more practical terms – what grade teachers taught. He felt that teachers choose PD "based off of what they are going to be asked to do the following year." He continued, "See, [another teacher] is going to 3$^{rd}$ [grade], and I know she has signed up all summer long." He based this statement upon the other teacher going back to 3$^{rd}$ grade. "[Another teacher] is moving forward, so she is taking stuff to that would pertain to refresh her for 4$^{th}$ grade." Some teachers, he said, might be switching grades and summer was a good time to do PD to prepare for this kind of change.

Of course, events such as a grade change, or changing demographics of the community or classroom, can precipitate a need for specific PD. Teachers at different educational levels often cite that they require specific knowledge and skills that are not universal to all teachers in all grades (Batt, 2008, Cho & Reich, 2008, Clair 1995; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005). Accordingly, outside of the content of the PD required for any particular grade, school-site influences such as this do mediate the ways teacher go about choosing the PD they attend. Interestingly, too, teachers recognize this need and seek to address it with or without apparent mandate from administrators or other district interference.

***Collegial interaction.***

Esperanza's experiences on site at Unified were of a different sort from those of Amy and Lionel. Unified was participating in a PLC program as well as an instructional intervention called Voyager. These programs determined, for Esperanza at the school level, what she needed to know and do as an ELL teacher. Research suggests that interaction with colleagues in this fashion leads to instructional innovation (Clark, 2001; Florio-Ruane & Raphael, 2001; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001; Little, 2003), and PD that allows for increased collegial interaction is more effective (Little, 1988; Abdal-Haqq, 1995; Richardson, 2003). She also presented a school-wide intervention to lower achieving readers - Voyager. She worked with a group of students every day within this intervention and received training on how to implement the intervention. The intervention – Voyager – aims to increase reading comprehension for students who are not reading at grade level. Esperanza worked within this program with a group of students each day. "Those are the kids they have identified based on their DIBELS and

Running Records scores, and it's almost all my kids. That's their RTI process." When asked about the program she said, "I think the kids are getting a lot out of it, because its got the phonics in there. It's got some reading comprehension skills."

She attended training for the Voyager program, and while this was scripted intervention, Esperanza also investigated ways this training could connect with what she did outside of the intervention. She stated:

> Especially since almost all of [the students] are in it. I can say, 'Oh, like that story we were reading in RTI, or the one about all the different places in the world…we found each of them on the globe. We can connect it. Some of it overlaps, we are making circle maps with different prefixes the one time, and then another time its talking about 'mis-' being a prefix and all the different words for it. So, we can kind of overlap or spiral review from one to the other.

In other words, the overlaps were not necessarily methodological in nature; rather the content overlapped, which opened up methodological choices and possibilities, such as her use of Thinking Maps to bridge the content from Voyager and that of her regular curriculum. Scripted instruction such as the kind implemented through the Voyager intervention can be limiting to teachers in that unexpected student questions and needs do not always fit into the program. In this case, Esperanza implemented classroom practices to connect her students to the content of the Voyager curriculum in ways that were supported through the intervention. For instance, she appropriated other texts and Thinking Maps to help expand her students' access to the material covered in Voyager. All of these choices Esperanza made as a result of her participation in both her school site PLC and work in the Voyager intervention.

While working with her fellow teachers across the district has been a focus for her, Jane has begun to consider more site-based possibilities. For instance, before the study began, she had facilitated an online book club for teachers across the district

focusing on building vocabulary in ELLs. We discussed this activity, and though she thought it was useful for all involved, she had already begun to think of new ways to offer a similar exercise, possibly with a different book, with the teachers specifically at her school. Taking a site-based approach, in her opinion, would yield the most interesting and meaningful workshops that actually could lead to more effective instruction. "Best is for me to present [a workshop], since by presenting/teaching I learn the most. I have to really model the strategies I'm promoting. I am challenged to be at my best, and get to know faculty better." In other words, in presenting various workshops, Jane was challenged not only to address issues that were of particular importance to her classroom as well as to other teachers at her schools, but she was also forced to practice what she preached.

This concern for the needs of her colleagues led her to attend two PDs focused on classroom assessment. "I needed to understand [DIBELS] because I had teachers coming to me for two years going, 'What about this?'" Tests were a worry for Jane, but these PDs and working with the instructional coach has given her some perspective. "[Discussions with the instructional coach] also calm me down when I start over worrying about test scores – literacy instruction and ELL test scores on DIBELs or STAR reading assessments don't always mesh well." Regarding what she learned from these workshops and how she supported her colleagues, Jane stated, "now I'm armed with the knowledge to say, 'You can DIBEL that kid, but until this and this and this happen…If the kid can't hear five sounds, you [are not going to] get a good DIBELs score." In other words, her knowledge of the DIBELs assessment opened up new possibilities in discussing the instructional needs of the ELLs in her schools. More importantly, she

could provide some explanation as to why some of the students might not score very well and what might have been at issue. Interestingly, as I discuss again below, Jane investigated various assessments leading her to understand more clearly the needs of her students and those of her colleagues. In other words, the limits she saw in DIBELs helped Jane support her colleagues to understand more about their students' literacy and linguistic development and to conduct more valid assessments of their ELLs.

***Summary of school-site influences.***

The participating teachers' work within their specific schools determined the roles and responsibilities of ELL teachers as defined and supported by specific school-site influences. These influences included a tradition of sharing knowledge, the practicalities of teaching, and collegial interaction. The impact of these factors led teachers to engage in specific PD for specific purposes. For instance, in Unified Elementary School, an ELL teacher provided effective instruction that supported both content and language development. Accordingly, this expectation guided the Esperanza's work in her PLC. For Amy, how her role was defined at North Branch determined the scope of her PD in that she needed to take into account her own needs as well as those of her fellow teachers. While Lionel viewed the mandated PD offered at his school, he also acknowledged the need to engage in certain activities to address practical issues teachers faced such as switching grades. Interestingly, certain opportunities were not available to him based on the lack of certain influences. In his case, his school did not participate in the PLC program in Drake County, and, as such, his PD opportunities were constrained. These findings echo those found in the research. Institutional constraints affect not only the PD

offered to teachers but also the content of and manner in which it is offered (Datnow et al, 2003; Montes, 2002).

**Classroom influences.**

The participating teachers' PD decisions were also influenced by classroom factors. In teaching ELLs, these teachers invariably engage with students who come from different backgrounds, cultures, and languages. Accordingly, these students bring with them different perspectives and experiences with which many teachers are not familiar. The differences between the students and teachers in these regards influenced the ELLs teachers to seek out new sources of information and new means of PD to increase their own cultural awareness. Additionally, the specific needs of these students drove the teachers to learn different content as well as new instructional delivery methods to engage students from different backgrounds.

***Cultural Awareness.***

The most immediate response to their students' needs any of the participating teachers made was by Jane. She chose to begin learning Spanish, as that was the language of many of her students. She did not hope to teach either Spanish (as content) or in Spanish (as method); rather, she wanted to be able to build relationships with her students and their families through communication in Spanish. She commented on this choice, "I would like to write my own letters to Latino parents and be able to speak with them in Spanish. And it's just fun to be able to speak another language." Of course, Jane is already a fluent English and French speaker. In fact, every teacher participating in this study spoke either a different language, allowed for students to use different languages, or had knowledge of the language learning process. However, while not every teacher is

able to spend the amount of time it might take to learn to speak a language fluently, there are certainly other means through which this communication can be facilitated. For instance, all of the schools and district represented in this study offered translation services in language other than English. The Drake County School District website was translated into a variety of languages – Spanish, Arabic, and some others this researcher could not identify. Stratton County offered information translated in Spanish.

Addressing student needs also took the form, for these teachers in terms of increasing cultural awareness. Jane spoke of a particular PD workshop she developed to address some concerns she had regarding her own, as well as her colleagues', misunderstandings concerning the ELLs in their classroom. She said, "I decided [I] wanted to offer a PD on this cultural book because we were running into some real situations with teachers where we really felt they needed to understand these kids a little more." The book she presented was titled, *Remix: Conversations with Immigrant Teenagers* (Budhos, 1999). Briefly, this text presents a series of narratives from young immigrants outlining their individual struggles and successes in American culture. The source of this text choice was a course Jane had taken during her graduate study, and she received immediate and enthusiastic approval. In speaking about the first workshop she presented on this topic, the misunderstandings she had seen previously noticed, reared their head once more. "The first one we did, we had a group…who got up and we asked them to lead the discussion about their kids, and they kept making fun of their names, they made fun of their situation." In other words, the misunderstandings came from a lack of empathy and understanding of the particular circumstances from which immigrant students (ELLs students for the teachers in the district) came. Jane continued:

> We just don't throw them questions. We have them analyze the different kids and the stories and come up with similarities. What works and what doesn't; who helps them and who doesn't. I read a couple of letters from parents that are very heartfelt but in very poor English to demonstrate to them that these parents really do care about their kids. And we let them talk about…the ELLs they have worked with.

One take-away that Jane hoped her fellow teachers would gain from their work with book was, as Jane put it:

> At the start, we don't always know how to pronounce their names, the kids names, we don't always understand their culture, but we have to be respectful. We made it clear we were talking about the cultural issues and emotional issues that these kids face, and we are not going at all into the need to teach them differently and how you learn how to teach differently.

The main question Jane received as a result of this particular PD workshop was "What do I do now?" This main question is something Jane continually sought as a result of developing this presentation, hence her focus on building relationships with the students and their families.

***Curriculum and delivery.***

Amy's view her students' needs revolved around learning styles and her need to address different ways in which students approached learning. On her seemingly inexhaustible motivation in seeking PD, she said, "I can't find [the perfect strategy] because there are different kids, and they have different ways to learn." In other words, Amy participated in as many PD as she can to learn as much about the wide variety of approaches to teaching as she can. She felt this was paramount given the diversity she saw in the children she taught every day. Further, by pursuing a wide range of PD opportunities, she was better able to support her colleagues and offer them additional possibilities in providing effective instruction to their students.

An example of how Amy fulfilled her desire to engage a variety of students came from an activity she learned through working with one of her colleagues. In her lesson

she presented specific language focused on ‘giving directions’ and sequencing events. She then asked her students to construct a figure out of some art materials and write out the directions needed in order to reconstruct it. The students shared the directions and attempted to build each other’s structure. I asked Amy about this activity. She said:

> This technique is called Whole Brain Teaching. The core sides of this technique are gestures and student interaction. A 5th grade teacher went to the workshop and then shared with us at our school last fall. I hear most of the teachers in our school are using this strategy. I do this type of teaching with grammar/literature/social studies concepts. It is useful in all contents as you do it together with the class, and then students teach each other. Definitely, this could be a very powerful language-learning tool for them as well as an assessment for me. I can see how much they understand and deliver the knowledge to each other. It is great for speaking skills and developing cooperation among students.

In this example, Amy incorporated direct instruction – her presentation of directions and sequencing – as well as cooperative learning – the group work of sharing and discussing specific directions. This example highlights the differentiation in Amy’s instruction and how she addresses the different needs of her students.

Another way Amy addresses the different learning styles of her students is through the use of technology. She is still on the look out for more PD opportunities in this area - technology. In fact, she has a bit of computer equipment in her classroom, given to her by the district, that she doesn’t know how to use. “It’s like a portable smart board. Right now I just project and change slides, but if I write on the slide…I can’t. I can’t mark anything. [This] opens a blank paper and you can write on it, like a board, I guess. I need to look for that. It’s a technology thing that’s just sitting here.” In other words, she has technology in her classroom that allows her to innovate her current practices and offer more student engagement in her lessons. Currently the work she projects is static, but as she states above, she would like for her students, and herself, to be able to make additions, revisions, and other marks on the board to create a more

communal participation wherein the students also have a had in adding to the curricula, instead of having their work erased to make room for the next projection.

Esperanza's approach to teaching and learning based upon her instructional needs mirrors that of Amy in that she seeks out a variety of resources to provide meaningful vocabulary instruction to her students. She remarked:

> [Her class does] a combination of word study and more traditional spelling approaches. We do some word sorts, analyzing patterns in words (i.e. VCV, change y to i and add es, etc.), and giving students a list of words for the week. The list of words usually has a common theme such as short a words versus long a words or compound words or suffixes. This can tie into the language skills we are studying at the time, and we use the words as vocabulary words too (putting them into sentences, play "I'm Thinking of a Word" game). Students don't just learn to spell those words then, but they learn the spelling patterns to extend to other words (we give bonus words on the weekly test that use the same pattern but aren't words students studied). Students also learn meanings of some words they aren't familiar with. We play games with the words, put them into ABC Order, and do other activities that make them more meaningful than just this is your list of words to memorize this week.

Esperanza developed this eclectic set of practices in response to her students' need to develop greater academic and English vocabulary skills. She specifically address this need as the source for her work and said, "Since the district does not have an adopted spelling book anymore, I combine resources from an old spelling series, word study materials, teacher-made lists, etc." In other words, Esperanza needed to look for outside knowledge and resources to develop the specific practices she implements in class.

Student needs were a high priority for Lionel. One issue that Lionel sought to address pertained to the assessments for which he spent so much time preparing his students. While he spent most of his instructional time presenting activities that mirrored the types of questions and tasks the year-end test would ask the students to do, he also noticed that the students did not understand the basic format of the tests. Accordingly, he addressed their need to understand the assessments by presenting them with relevant

information regarding the grading of the tests. In one of his lessons, Lionel presented his students with a writing prompt. In this case, the prompt was a reflection on a local event that happened one year earlier. After the students finished their writing, he introduced the scoring protocol for the writing section the students would complete later in the semester. He explained the particular of the scoring rubric – 0-6 scale, writing must be on topic, and writing must have a beginning, middle, and an end. This information came to him from the administration at Woodruff Elementary as well as testing documentation he had at his disposal. For the rest of the lesson and as a group, the students critiqued and scored their own writing. Lionel's view that his students needed to know about the tests they would be taking as a way to increase their achievement on those tests determined the knowledge he needed to gain. In this case, specific knowledge regarding the scoring of writing sections and how to get his students to recognize how their writing could be improved accordingly.

***Summary of classroom influences.***

Classroom influences such as the need to innovate instructional methods or to Increase cultural awareness are powerful forces that impact the PD needs of ELL teachers. The research suggests that classroom issues and the work teachers do in response is a valuable focus in PD (Bryant et al, 2001; Clair, 1998; DaSilva Iddings & Rose, 2010; Levine & Marcus, 2007; Mahn, McMann, & Musanti, 2005). These participating teachers, though through different means, responded to their specific classroom influences differently. Interestingly, Lionel and Esperanza, teaching in schools where ELL performance on standardized tests was a high priority, chose to respond to student need in vastly different ways. While Esperanza addressed student achievement

through academic content instruction, Lionel chose to achieve the same goal through instruction aimed at clarifying the means of assessment. By contrast, in Stratton County, Amy and Jane, still focused on their students' achievement, addressed different classroom issues, namely, concerns regarding cultural awareness and differentiating instruction to meet variations in students' style of learning.

**The legislative arena.**

The legal responsibilities of the participating teachers, and indeed all ELL teachers, is clear. As described in Chapter 2 and earlier in this chapter, the instructional programming schools must provide for ELLs, while not specifically prescribed, is certainly defined. Other legislative factors, however, found their way into the professional lives of the participating teachers. The spring semester at North Branch and Stoney Creek in Stratton County, and Unified and Woodruff in Drake held the end-of-the-year tests, which took up much of the instructional focus and added their share of stress to the teachers, administrators, and students. In addition to these assessments, the work of teachers in the state also faced increased scrutiny. Calls for new and improved measures of teacher evaluation surfaced, and these calls, coupled with the already present and strenuous student assessments, impacted the participating teachers in interesting ways. Specifically, this section relates the experiences of two of the participating teachers, Jane and Lionel, as they participated directly or indirectly with the legislation under which they conducted their work.

***First to the top program.***

In 2010, the state in which I conducted this study was selected to receive federal funding within the Race to the Top Program. As such, the state Board of Education began

to look at both teacher performance and student learning. In response, Jane, at the urging of their school district, joined a team of teachers, administrators, and others to outline the procedures of measuring the state's growth measures for teachers of ELLs. Specifically, these two teachers critiqued the use of the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) and offered recommendations for both student and teacher evaluation based on the results of the ELDA and the assessment of ELLs and their teachers across the district and the state. Jane commented:

> In doing this research, we found some serious flaws with the ELDA. At least, we think they are. There is a new (improved?) shortened, condensed version out this year. So, if you look at the numbers, it can sometimes take missing only one or two questions to change a level because there are so few questions overall…Yes, that means that a teacher will meet growth if a kid gets one question right vs. the teacher whose kid misses one. I don't know if I am stating this well, but the bottom line is, it is kind of scary to think that we are putting so much weight -- a kid's evaluation, a teacher's evaluation, on such small differences.

In other words, through her work in researching the various evaluation possibilities for ELL teachers, Jane developed new understandings regarding how ELL teachers should be evaluated and what evidence should highlight effective ELL instruction.

Some of the other concerns raised by her work in this group were in regard to the evaluation of ELL teachers and how a general lack of understanding of what ELL teachers do pervaded larger discussions at the state level. For example, she discussed remarks made by evaluators of ELL teachers within a discussion of what ELL teachers actually teach. Jane offered a comment by one such evaluator, "I think we should consider having ELL teachers teach to the [statewide end-of-the-year assessment] objectives instead of ESL standards. It will make it easier to evaluate them." In response to this statement, Jane wrote, "The ELL team strongly urges that the [statewide end-of-the-year assessment] scores be rejected as a measure of ELL student growth and ELL

teacher effectiveness." The explanation for this recommendation, as argued by Jane, centered on a fundamental understanding of the content ELL teachers were tasked with presenting to their students. She continued, "The goal of the ELL teacher is to facilitate and explicitly teach English language acquisition so that students can profit from regular grade level content instruction." In other words, an ELL teacher is responsible for teaching the English language to students with the express purpose of facilitating grade-level content learning. She further explained:

> [the statewide end-of-the-year assessment] provides no measure of ELL teacher effectiveness nor can it be used to guide and strengthen ELL programs and teacher decisions. A strong ELL teacher working in a low performing school will be penalized for low…scores. Conversely, a weak or ineffective ELL teacher can be rewarded if s/he is working in a high performing school. Furthermore, until a student has the listening, speaking, reading and writing proficiency ability for his or her regular classroom program, he or she cannot begin to demonstrate grade level content competency as measured by a standardized test. This is especially disconcerting for ELL teachers and students at the higher grades due to the increased complexity of academic thinking and language proficiency required, as well as the amount of time needed for ELLs to achieve this proficiency.

What Jane argued for here is the recognition that ELL teachers are not the same as other teachers in that their instructional focus is in some ways different from their mainstream counterparts. Further, she illuminated the possible inequities in evaluation processes based solely upon measures that focus on testing data. In her comments, Jane called for the consideration of other issues such as school funding, ELL population shifts, English language proficiency, academic standards, and expectations for student achievement to be taken into account in the evaluation of ELL teachers. Ultimately, the state opted for use of the ELDA over other assessments to measure ELL achievement, and ELL teachers are also observed throughout the school year.

***NCLB and adequate yearly progress.***

For all of the participating teachers, NCLB legislation was present in their instructional lives. While meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was not much of an issue for some of the schools due to lower ELL populations, ELLs in both districts did not make the benchmarks for Reading/Language Arts and Math. No more was this felt than in the Drake County schools represented in this study. During the spring term of the school year, instruction in classrooms focused greatly on the content of the end-of-year assessment. Lionel, for instance spent most of his instructional time teaching the content and supporting the skills present on the test. Much of his instructional time toward the end of the year tried to marry the year-end curriculum with the year-end assessment. When asked how he knew what to focus on, he responded that in various meetings on campus, “they tell you what is going to be asked. They give you the standards and then we the questions saying, ‘Alright, this year we are going to talk to you and test on Mean.’” This example is telling in that it provided Lionel with a basic set of concepts he could review during the final semester all the while adding the new material into his instruction. “From January until the [test] you go back over just what they say is going to be on the test. And you keep repeating that plus adding what needs to be added in January, February, and March.” In other words, much of the professional learning that happened around testing time centered, for Lionel, on how to best prepare his students in terms of what material might be important to know and how to make sure the curriculum was also continued at the same time.

At some point during every visit I paid to Lionel’s classroom, he focused his students on the upcoming assessments. Testing during the spring term at Woodruff is

very prominent, and the school site support is huge. On days when students take practice tests, the principal comes around and brings snacks to classes as they take the tests as well as during their break times. One day, for instance, he wrote up on the board a number of tongue twisters and asked the students, “Which one is an ‘alliteration’ sentence?” The lesson continued with Lionel, his students, the principal (as she had come entered the classroom at this point in the lesson), and myself coming up with various examples and non-examples of alliteration. Alliteration is indeed part of the academic standards for 4$^{th}$ grade in Drake County, as well as subject matter the students would find on the test they were to take later in the semester. In this way, Lionel, was able to fuse both the content of the assessments and the academic standards of the district.

***Summary of legislative influences.***

In sum, the legislative influences on teacher learning are significant. On one hand, teachers participate indirectly in the legislative arena in that the teachers do not necessarily determine the manner in which their students are assessed, though the mandated assessments affect the work teachers do in schools. None of the teachers in this study participated in any way in the construction of the year-end tests, thought they were all subject in some way to them. On the other hand, teachers can participate directly the legislative arena through work in committees designed to elicit teacher feedback and insight. Only one of the teachers in this study participated in this way, and while the particular insight she provided was not immediately taken up, she developed new understandings of what her work as an ELL teacher was and how others perceived the work she did. Couple these influences with those initiated at the district-level, though

determined legislatively (i.e., Teacher licensing and ELL programming requirements), and the impact on teacher learning is dramatic.

**Summary of finding 2.**

Four main influences impacted the PD of the participating ELL teachers. These factors included district, school-site, classroom, and legislative influences. In concert, and on their own, these four institutional concerns offered (and removed) opportunities for teachers to pursue PD *and* provided the teachers the opportunity to develop new topics and methods to continue their learning. At the district level, the amount of PD each teacher needed to complete and the acceptable methods for doing so made clear the need for teachers to learn as they taught. Further, the programming choices made at by the district provided each teacher with a specific instructional focus. Within a pull-out model, the nature of the instruction Amy and Jane provided was different from Esperanza and Lionel who taught in a more inclusive model of ELL programming.

The local needs of each teachers schools also determined what the teachers needed to do, know, and learn. The amount of collegial interaction, possibly through PLCs, the assessment needs to the school, and other practical matters led the participating teachers to make certain decisions regarding both the content of their PD but how they gain new knowledge and skills. In addition, classroom influences defined the teachers' instructional priorities and how they interacted with students, their families, and the communities. Lionel and Jane took the relationships they built with students and the local community seriously. Lionel, for instance, spent considerable time working and living as a true member of the community, and Jane desired to increase her ability to communicate with her students and their families.

Lastly, the legislative arena affected directly and indirectly the work these teachers did as well as determined the parameters of what ELL teachers needed to do professionally. All of the teachers worked to prepare their students for federally mandated standardized tests, but Esperanza and Lionel felt this need most acutely. In response, these two teachers needed to seek out new information and work to develop new skills to account for this influence. Jane, on the other hand, participated more directly in this arena and developed new understandings of teacher and student evaluation techniques.

Ultimately, more than just what happens in the classroom with students affected what these teachers did and chose to learn. In fact, even in schools where these influences were similar, the teachers approached their PD differently. More clearly, the roles and responsibilities attributed to ELL teachers that these institutional factors propagate defined the content of and the means through which these teachers continued their learning.

### Finding 3: In-service Teachers of ELLs Use What They Learn from PD in the Classroom

The participating teachers often appropriated practices they learned in their various PD activities. While this is not a surprising finding, I argue that based upon the previous finding that teachers choose PD in response to specific influences how teachers translate what they learn in the PD choices is similarly affected. For instance, Esperanza and Lionel taught in the same school district and attended the same district-wide PD offerings. One such instance was a workshop on Thinking Maps. As reported earlier, both Esperanza and Lionel attended this session, yet they did not utilize Thinking Maps in a

similar fashion in their classrooms. In fact, Lionel did not use Thinking Maps at all, and Esperanza, as I discuss below, used them extensively across a variety of subject areas.

**Jane's vocabulary focus.**

Jane used her classroom as a crucible to develop the workshops she presented to her colleagues. One of her main concerns was the vocabulary development of her students. She developed a number of classroom strategies as well as a district-wide PD for her colleagues aimed at increasing her students' word knowledge. In this case, Jane's presentation addressed the larger district focus on academic vocabulary. The main source of her instruction in this regard comes from the work of Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002). In their book, *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*, these authors present a perspective on vocabulary learning that encourages teachers to present students with engaging classroom activities leading toward academic proficiency. This text, as well as many of the other ones Jane appropriated in her PD presentations, either came as recommendations from Nancy in the Stratton District office or from other PDs Jane attended. The district provided all necessary materials such as textbooks and support for outside PD or conference attendance for Jane and her collaborators to be fully prepared to present, and instruct, on a given topic. To focus more specifically on the academic vocabulary development of her students, Jane innovated the traditional classroom staple – the Word Wall. As seen in Figures 6 and 7, she covers her wall in language. From student work samples to poems addressing content area subjects such as the water cycle, Jane's room was a very *word-full* environment. These figures provide an example of how Jane's focused her students on the vocabulary they saw during their day and in the text they read. In Figure 6, there is poster of words beginning with the ch-

sound. Words such as “ch-ching,” “cha cha cha,” “chase,” and “chair” provided the students with valuable phonics knowledge they could apply to other areas of the literacy learning.

Figure 6: Word Wall in Jane's Classroom, Part 1

Figure 7: Word Wall in Jane's Classroom, Part 2

Jane also built a poster titled "Amazing words." These words, while written by Jane, were chosen by the students from within the texts they read with class. These words included "sly," "brisk," "mutter," and "wallow," among others. Next to the poster is a sentence, "The mountains towered over you." The word "towered" was underlined on the wall. In these cases, Jane hoped to focus her students on not just words that carried the main meaning of their texts, but also the less common words that helped create specific, nuanced meaning. Next to this poster, Jane and her students had the beginnings of a "Math" word wall with the names of the basic shapes already printed on it. This poster, while intended for her younger students, stayed on the wall for all of her students to see. Interestingly, the converse was also true – the younger students were also surrounded and often focused on the vocabulary the older students identified and post on the wall.

Next to the Math poster in Figure 7, Jane's class posted a Science wall. The words on this wall reflected both their work on the water cycle with "condensation." "evaporation," and "erosion," and their unit on animals. Underneath this poster, the class set up their "Reading" wall. On this poster were words associated with reading, but more importantly, words that the students could use in discussing the strategies they employed while reading. For instance, words such as "infer" and "predict" were available to students to use during their work with Jane, and she made the students refer to the wall whenever the need arose. Lastly, there was an incomplete "Social Studies" wall, no doubt completed after I concluded this study.

To be sure, this variation on a traditional Word Wall was interesting in that it offered students a more contextually driven vocabulary focus that mixed language and

content area vocabulary development. However, Jane did not stop here. Once the wall became too full of words or the classes began a new unit, Jane took down all of the words and engaged the students in various review activities. For instance, the class mixed all of the words up into a sort of deck of vocabulary cards. The students took turns quizzing each other with the various words they pulled out of the pile. Within these activities, Jane also asked the students to discuss the circumstances surrounding them placing the word on the wall. By the time a particular word wall 'ended,' the students had participated in the selection of words within a text or unit of study, they had discussed the meaning of each, and they had reviewed at length each word attending to the specific context in which they initially discovered the words.

**Amy's dual focus.**

Amy's designed her classroom instruction based upon two main influences. She maintained a focus on the ELL instructional standards as put forth by the Stratton County School District as well as provided support for her mainstream classroom colleagues. While the principal at North Branch Elementary spoke of her school as an inclusive school where "differentiation is an expectation, not an exception," Amy provided additional support to the students and their teachers. As such, her instruction offered a dual focus on language and content-area instruction. As in Figure 8, Amy's focus on the linguistic development of her students was clear. Under the white board were three (3) posters, all focused on grammatical issues in English. The first one, on the far right, outlined the various linking verbs, with a few additions at the bottom of the list. Next to it was a poster defining pronouns in all of their forms. The yellow poster was a diagram of a sentence highlighting subjects and predicates. To the left of Figure 8, just underneath

the alphabet strip, were two more posters that offered further linguistic support for Amy's students – one on Adjectives and the other on irregular plural nouns (e.g., man/men, mouse/mice). Posters such as these were on the walls all around the room.

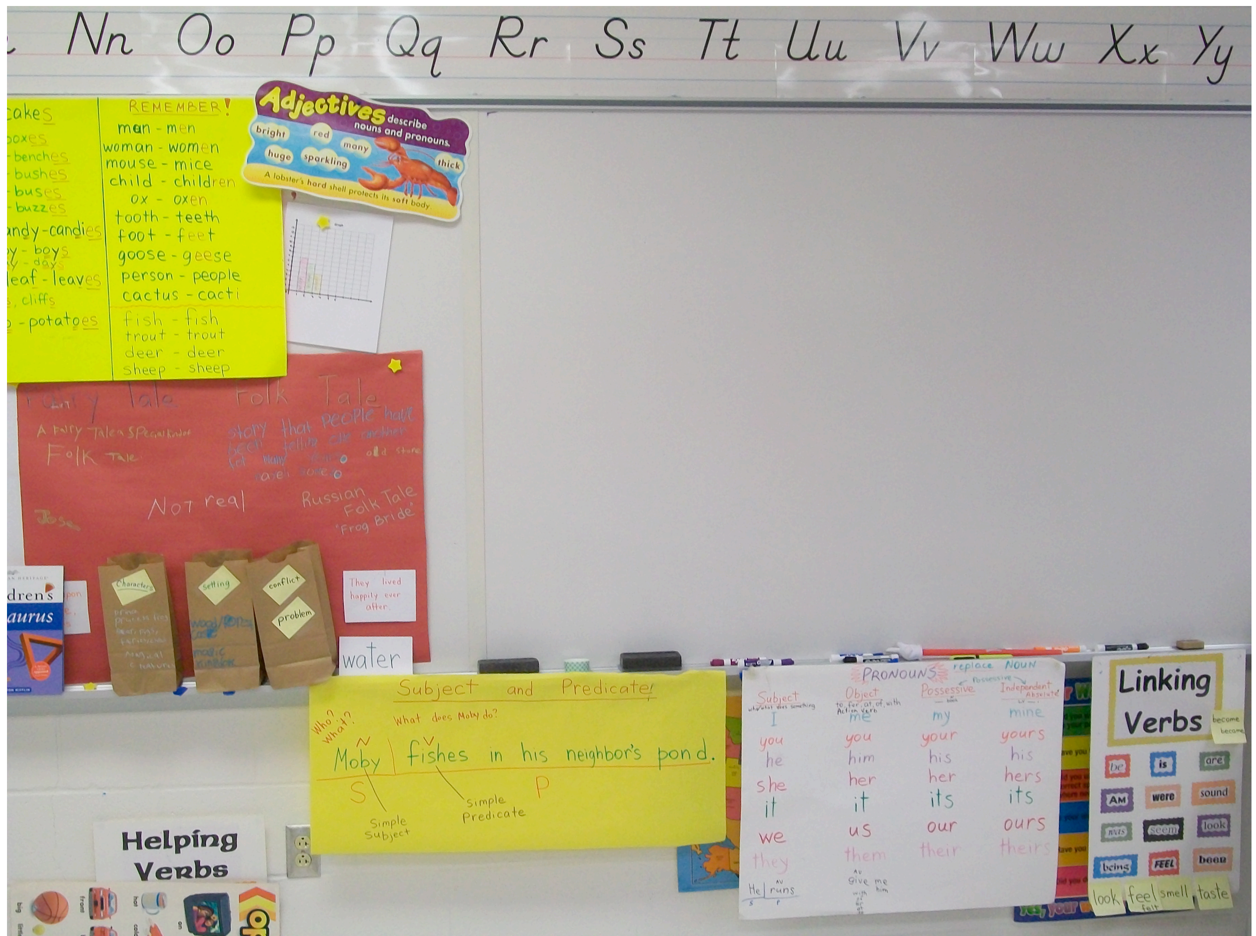



Figure 8: Amy's Whiteboard and Language Focus

Integrated with the linguistic focus, Amy engaged her students in content instruction as well. The students learned about the water cycle and neighborhoods and communities. (see Figure 9). However, she not only focused on the content (i.e., evaporation, condensation, precipitation), but she also infused a language focus. For

instance, in the water cycle curriculum she presented, she also offered support in the form of cause and effect relationships. As can be seen in the student work to the left in Figure 9, the water cycle was coupled with work on plant growth and the effect sunlight, water, dirt had on plants. This linguistic focus provided the necessary linguistic support for content area instruction that aided the students in their comprehension of material taught outside of Amy's classroom.

Figure 9: Amy's Content Focus

Amy married content and language consistently. Again in Figure 9, in a unit focusing on neighborhoods and communities, she also presented certain language forms

into the content. In this case, she helped the students refer to the structures within the community through their locations. More specifically, she offered a selection of prepositions (i.e., under, over, between, across) to help the students speak and write about the knowledge they already have – knowledge of their own communities.

Amy and her students also worked through a unit on fairy tales and folk tales. Together, and captured in Figure 8, Amy and her students outlined the features of these genres, identifying a folk tale as “not real” and a “story that people have been telling one another for many years.” The students identified a fairy tales as a “special kind of folk tale.” Also on this poster the students created three (3) pages labeled with certain literary elements – characters, setting, conflict, and problem.

Technology held a prominent place in Amy’s classroom; she presented most if not all of her lessons on the white board via a projector. She did not use a traditional screen for her presentations but instead used the white board as her screen. This practice was very ingenious in that it approximated smart-board technology, and the students were able to physically approach the board and write directly on it in response to the projected material. This practice also offered multiple opportunities for students to revise their work, present information, and share a group reading. For instance, for one lesson, Amy focused the students on adverbs. She projected a number of sentences on the white board, and the students identified the adverbs in each sentence. Once they completed their work, the students switched positions and doubled checked each other’s work, highlighting possible errors or confusion for the other students. The students then returned to their own work and considered revisions. All the while, Amy stood back and referred the students to their peers for explanation. This particular practice found it origin in a PD

session Amy was preparing to report on to other faculty members at North Branch. Specifically, she wanted to tell her colleagues to offer ample opportunities to their students to discuss the content of instruction (see Figure 3).

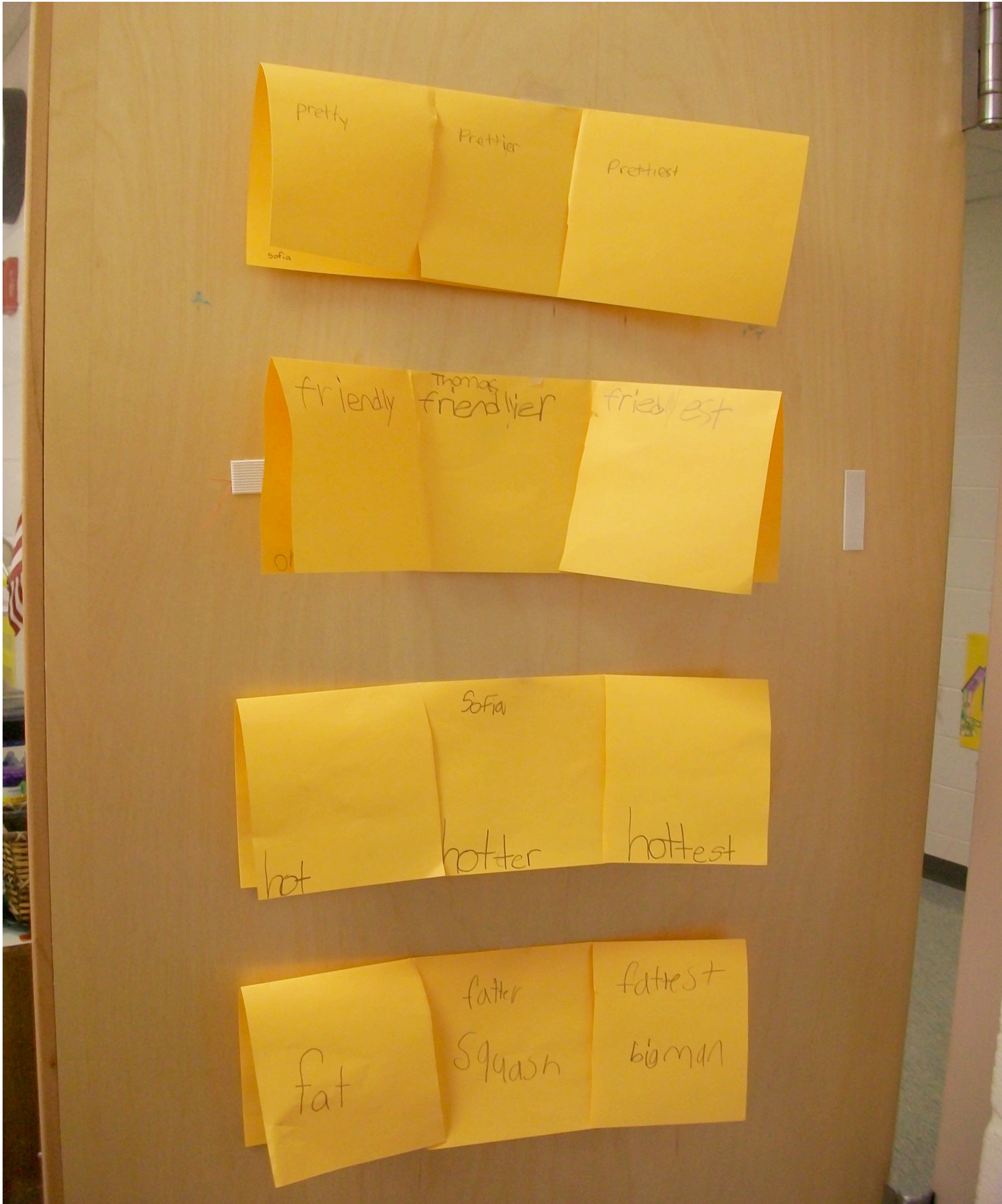



Figure 10: Amy's Word Parts

Another practice that found it origin in this PD session was the section regarding word parts. In Figure 10, her students started with a single word and extend their knowledge by creating both the comparative and superlative forms (e.g., pretty, prettier, prettiest). Overall, Amy was very consistent in providing her students with opportunities for valuable oral language production coupled with explicit linguistic instruction that made clear specific forms and functions of the English language.

**Esperanza's multifaceted focus.**

One workshop offered by the district was focused on *Thinking Maps* (see Hyerle & Alper, 2011 for more on Thinking Maps). Incidentally, this particular workshop was a staple session in the Drake County school district for a few years. To be brief, Thinking Maps offer a series of graphic organizers that provide students a number of visual means to organize classroom content. Esperanza used these maps frequently in her classroom. At the beginning of the study, blank, sample maps were posted around the room, but were taken down as end-of-the-year assessment approached. The students often completed a map connected to a particular vocabulary word or instructional concept. For instance, one lesson Esperanza presented in her classroom focused on the prefix 'dis-.' She projected a large circle on the white board. Inside this circle was another circle. In this middle circle was written the prefix 're-.' Esperanza showed the students this map along with another one they had completed previously on 'un-.' In a new map, she wrote 'dis-.' In small groups, the students wrote down and discussed as many 'dis-' words they could. The students used their vocabulary lists to help them get started but it was not very long before they listed a number of words not represented in anything in the classroom. When

time ran out, Esperanza wrote all of the words they had on the board addressing ones that started with 'dis-' but not as a prefix. She offered a few questions to help spur the students' thinking and asked them to put their work in their language folder. She did the same type of work with suffixes as well.

She developed other variations of these maps as well. In a lesson on adjectives, she stated

that she would have them write the adjectives and then find the referent. "[I do an activity] where they have to do it backwards, you have to guess which object you are describing." She worked with her school PLC on new ways to use the maps to connect to content area instruction also. "We had a cohort group and we went once a month and talked about ways to use the 'tree map' with ELLs, or ways to use the bubble map with ELL students, and how to use our actual content. There are things I still do in my classroom." Esperanza certainly maintained a consistent focus on both content-area instruction and language support through her use of Thinking Maps. "Some of the content in science and social studies – doing the branches of government, doing a tree map [classifying], or layers of the earth, we've made a brace map [whole-part relationship]." Once the maps were made to organize the content, the students made larger posters to post on the walls. These science words were above the classroom door, though the individual maps were gone. In Figure 11, the students posted the layers of the earth, water cycle and soil terms, and other geological vocabulary above the door. All of these were done with Thinking Maps and then posted in plain sight.

Figure 11: Content-area Vocabulary in Esperanza's class

Despite the fact that she mainly taught languages arts to her ELLs, Esperanza also ensured her students received content instruction as well. She felt this was an easy fit. “Having social studies and the reading block was good because they seem to go right together. The American Revolution passage to help with reading strategies is fine.” While this was easy to say, Esperanza actually did this very thing in a lesson one day in class. She began with a discussion in review of their work the previous few days, and it led them to the Bill of Rights. The students were to read about the Bill of Rights (Figure 12), and Esperanza asked, “Could you use a strategy when you read?” The students offered a

number of strategies they had worked on in class. Terms such as “skip the trip,” “bag and tag,” and “fly over” refer to the various ways students can approach a reading. For instance, “fly over” was a skimming technique, and “bag and tag” was an information identification strategy. These strategies and others like them were listed in more detail in Figure 13 and were distributed to the teachers at Unified Elementary by the Reading Specialist. Teachers were to use them at their discretion to help their students with specific test-taking strategies in preparation for end-of-the-year test. Esperanza chose to use them as general reading strategies that her students could use any time, not just on the test. Once the students finished their work, they discussed the answers to the true and false questions in terms of their answers and where the answers came from and the strategies the students employed in finding them.

As stated earlier, the most common content she presented, outside of language arts, was Social Studies. For instance, she offered a reading about Vasco da Gama. This work was part of a larger unit on famous explorers. During this lesson, she began with a review of the other explorers in the Unit. The class had built a tree map of the explorers, and they were very quick to shout out their knowledge of the explorers and their discoveries – de Soto and the Mississippi River, Hudson and the Hudson River, de Leon and the Fountain of Youth (though not discovered). After this, the students read a passage (Figure 14) about Vasco da Gama and completed a series of questions about the story (Figure15). While they did this, Esperanza projected the passage on the board. She then read the passage, stopping at each paragraph to have a student retell that particular section of the reading. She had some words picked out for review, but the students also asked some questions regarding the word “scurvy.” Other words she highlighted are

"India" and "hero." During this entire exercise, the students were underlining the parts of the passage that contained the answers to the questions they went over as a class at the conclusion of the lesson.

Name ______________________________ **Bill of Rights**

# Freedoms and Rights

**North Carolina and Rhode Island would not approve the U.S. Constitution without a bill of rights.**

After the Constitutional Convention of 1787, some people still felt that the U.S. Constitution needed something more. They thought it needed a bill of rights to protect people's freedoms. In fact, two states refused to approve the Constitution without this change.

James Madison led Congress in creating such a document. He looked at more than 100 ideas! He chose 15 that he thought were the most vital. Madison presented these to Congress.

After much debate, 12 amendments were sent to the states for approval. It took the states two years to decide! At last, ten of the 12 amendments were confirmed and added to the Constitution. These ten amendments became law on December 15, 1791. The Bill of Rights became part of the Constitution!

**Color a parchment to show whether each sentence is true or false.**

| True | False | |
|---|---|---|
| | | 1. It took the states less than two years to accept the Bill of Rights. |
| | | 2. James Madison helped form the Bill of Rights. |
| | | 3. The Bill of Rights became part of the U.S. Constitution at the Constitutional Convention. |
| | | 4. The states approved 12 amendments. |
| | | 5. Some states would not approve the Constitution without the Bill of Rights. |
| | | 6. The Bill of Rights is a permanent part of the Constitution. |

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Figure 12: Example of Esperanza's Bill of Rights Reading

## Test-Taking Tips and Strategies "Cheat Sheet"

**"Fly-Over":** refers to skimming or "flying over" the passage and questions when first approaching a section in order to gain a general idea of what the passage is about and what the questions will be asking. It is important that this is done quickly – the focus is on gaining a general idea only!

**"Bag-n-Tag":** Refers to circling ("bagging") the part of the passage related to a particular question, and then writing the number beside to "tag" it. This can make the task of re-reading much less daunting, as well as help students to more easily identify a part of a passage that may help them answer a particular question.

**"Read-n-Weed":** Though this can be used in several ways, it generally refers to reading a question carefully and weeding out the answer(s) that are obviously incorrect. For example:

> 64. **Eli wrote down how many lunches were served at his school each week for five weeks.**
>
> **2,003 1,909 1,882 2,107 1,999**
>
> **Which shows these numbers in order from least to greatest?**
> A. 1,882 < 1,909 < 1,999 < 2,003 < 2,107
> B. 2,003 < 2,107 < 1,909 < 1,999 < 1,882
> C. 2,107 < 2,003 < 1,999 < 1,909 < 1,882
> D. 1,882 < 1,999 < 1,909 < 2,003 < 2,107

After reading the choices, choices B and C could quickly be weeded out because they begin with a 2,*** number, which indicates that the numbers in these choices are clearly not ordered least to greatest. This strategy helps to quickly decrease the number of choices a student has to analyze.

**"Skip the Trip":** Refers to skipping hard or confusing questions. Too many times students get "tripped up" on these types of questions and become frustrated or spend too much time on a single question. Students will be taught some "red flags" that might signal a need to skip and come back, as well as how to mark that they need to come back.

**"Watch the Little Things":** simply refers to looking at each answer carefully when answers seem very similar. This may be used in conjunction with Read-n-Weed or independently. A specific example might be the following:

> 26. **Read Sentence 3.**
> When danger is present, they will give their life to protect their masters.

Figure 13: Strategies in Esperanza's class

# Vasco da Gama

(1469?–1524)

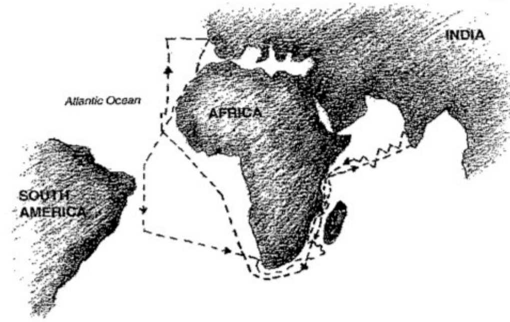
**Precious** stones, spices, and pearls were the treasures of India. Europeans badly wanted to find a way to this country by sea. Muslims in Asia had blocked the land route. However, sailing around Africa would be a long and dangerous trip. Who would want to go?

In 1497, King Manuel of Portugal chose a man named Vasco da Gama to sail to India. Da Gama had been a sailor since the age of fifteen.

No one wanted to sail with da Gama. The explorer Bartolomeu Dias had already sailed to the southern tip of Africa called the Cape of Good Hope, but couldn't go any farther. His story made others not want to try again. So da Gama had to use men who had been in jail to help sail his four ships.

Da Gama left on July 8, 1497. Four months later, he sailed around the Cape of Good Hope into new waters. The ships sailed along the eastern coast of Africa. Sometimes, the African Muslims they met fought with them. But da Gama found a trader who would show them safely to India.

The trip was over 11,000 miles long. The men were at sea for a long time. Some of them became very sick with scurvy. Scurvy is an illness that comes from not eating fresh meat or fruit. It was not an easy trip.




Da Gama made it to India on May 20, 1498. The Indian leader was friendly to them at first. But then he became angry. He learned that da Gama didn't have gifts to give him. Da Gama had to go back to Portugal.

The return trip was worse. Half of the men died from scurvy, but da Gama made it home. He was a hero to his people. They gave him many riches. He was sent on two more trips to India to set up a trading post. Portugal finally had found a route to India. On his last trip, da Gama died in India at the age of fifty-five.

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Figure 14: Vasco da Gama Reading in Esperanza's class

# Vasco da Gama

Name: ______________________

1. Choose a good title for this story.
   A. The Effects of Scurvy
   B. The Cape of Good Hope
   C. The Gifts for India
   D. To India by Sea

2. Answer the following questions.

   Why didn't anyone want to sail with da Gama?

   ______________________

   Why was the Indian leader angry with da Gama?

   ______________________

   What causes scurvy?

   ______________________

   Where did da Gama die?

   ______________________

3. Number the following events in the order they happened.

   _____ African Muslims attacked da Gama's ships.
   _____ Da Gama used men in jail to help him sail his ships.
   _____ Half of da Gama's crew died on the trip back to Portugal.
   _____ Da Gama was chosen to sail to India.
   _____ Da Gama sailed around the Cape of Good Hope.

4. What does the word **precious** mean in the story?
   A. New
   B. Cheap
   C. Fake
   D. Valuable

5. Why do you think da Gama's men were getting sick with scurvy?
   A. The men didn't like fresh meat or fruit.
   B. They were at sea for so long that they couldn't get fresh meat and fruit.
   C. Most of men had been in jail.
   D. Da Gama didn't care about their health.

**Bonus:**
Have you ever been afraid to do something? Write about what it was and how you did it.

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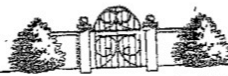
Figure 15: Vasco da Gama Questions in Esperanza's class

Name ____________



CHARLOTTE'S WEB

Before Breakfast

## Changing Short Vowels

Read each sentence. Then look at the word that comes after each sentence. Change the vowel in the word to form a new word that will make sense in the sentence. Write the new word on the blank in the sentence.

Example: Several *pigs* were born during the night. pegs

1. Mr. Arable planned to kill the ____________. rent
2. The grass was ____________ that morning. wit
3. Fern ____________ after her father. run
4. The pig was very ____________ at birth. smell
5. Avery said the pig was no bigger than a ____________. rut
6. Fern took the ____________ off the carton. lad
7. Mrs. Arable ____________ the table for breakfast. sit
8. The pig's ears were ____________ on the inside. punk
9. Fern ____________ the pig next to her cheek. hold
10. Avery carried a ____________ and a wooden dagger. gin
11. Mrs. Arable found an old baby ____________. battle
12. Fern's eyes were ____________ from crying so much. rid
13. Mr. Arable said he would ____________ kill the pig. nut
14. Mr. Arable only gave pigs to those who got out of ____________ on time. bid
15. Fern loved having the pig for a ____________. put

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Figure 16: Charlotte's Web vowel handout in Esperanza's class

Despite a consistent content focus and since Esperanza was basically tasked with teaching language arts to her ELLs, she did, of course, present literature units. One of the texts the entire class read with Esperanza was Charlotte's Web. Class discussions mainly centered on the plot and themes present in the book while homework often addressed language issues. As in Figure 16, Esperanza used the text to highlight particular linguistic content. In this case, the content at issue was short vowels. More specifically, the students needed to change the vowel in a particular word to make it work within the framework of the plot of the story.

For Esperanza, language and its use in the classroom was and wasn't an issue. More clearly, most of her students spoke English to each other in the classroom. On occasion they used their home languages, which Esperanza did not mind. "It happens based on the situation. If you have a group of Hispanic girls sitting together, for example." She, herself, used Spanish in class with the students. It was the only language other than English that she knew and she mainly used it for classroom management purposes, asking students to sit down or to pay attention. She also used Spanish to clarify assignments with students with lower English proficiency. Ultimately, English was the main language used in the classroom. This is not to say that other languages are not allowed in her room. As one might expect, the students taught her things from time to time. "They have taught us how to sing in Spanish and Arabic. Culturally its good for all of them."

She related to me a story that exemplifies how language was viewed in her classroom. She had some Arabic-speaking students in her classroom. One of the students was not able to speak or write English very well yet, so Esperanza allowed the student to

complete one of the writing assignments in Arabic, the one language the student knew how to actually write. A problem arose, according to Esperanza, in that none of the other Arabic-speaking students could read Arabic. “The non-English speaker had to read it out loud to the other child that spoke Arabic who told me what she was saying.” This example highlights Esperanza’s focus on language and content and her ability to separate the two. In this case, the content was most important while the language the students displayed her knowledge through was immaterial. Esperanza showed off this ability through her own use of different languages in class as well as allowance for her students to do so.

**Lionel’s personal approach.**

Lionel’s instruction can be categorized as meaningful. It is meaningful to the students he teaches in that he allows for students to make connections to, bring in examples of, and work on problems which address their immediate needs and concerns outside of the school environment. Many of the lessons Lionel presents either connect to an experience his students share through his instruction, their reading, or some of their experiences from outside of school. He often brings in newspapers, classified ads, and advertisements to work with the students in a variety of subjects.

He often sites local goings-on as the source of his decisions in the classroom and indeed his view of the teaching profession and his responsibility within it. He is incredibly proud of the relationship he has with the local community, especially the local Hispanic community. His pride is not simply a result of his work in the classroom, but of his role as a father figure to his students and their families. In fact, he has played a large part in the home lives of a number of children at Woodruff. When asked about this, he

replied, “I have custody of 5 previous [Woodruff] students.” For each of these children, his children, English is not their native language. While he does not speak Spanish in his classroom, he takes much of his experiences at home and applies them to his instructional work. One such insight is seen in the way he speaks in class with his students. “If mine decide to cut loose in Spanish real fast, then I lose them. So, I take that at home and bring it back in here that I have to slow down so they can catch up.” In other words, his experiences outside of the classroom in which he is unable to follow Spanish speakers when they speak at a normal pace, too quick for him to understand, lead him to see his own English use in a similar light. The faster he speaks, the harder it is for his students to understand him. “[The students] are about a step behind us and they are trying really hard to catch up.” In class, he will often go into a high-speed jibberish that is a mix of English and Spanish lasting literally 2 seconds. This is an attention-getter for his students and a cue he then takes to slow himself down and try an relate again to his students in a way they can understand.

Of course, language use is not the only impact the local community has had on him. It is not uncommon for his students to go to his home. The students will often visit him if something is happening at home that is not safe or comfortable for them. He tries to emulate the practices of the community in this regard. “The Hispanics bring everybody in as a family. They are all together or they try really hard to support each other.” In essence, he is just another member of the community, one to whom people can go with their problems and indeed, successes, someone people can count on to help if they need it and support them in the things they wish to accomplish. His participation in this vein has not gone unnoticed by the members of the local community. “I get invited a lot to get-

togethers here in the community. A lot of the students have been to my house, but many of the students are 'family'. They are not related but they are connected."

Lionel's students also see him as a different sort of teacher. In his words, they say, "You can fuss at us because we know that you love us. Other teachers fuss at us, and we are not even sure they like us." When students first enter his classroom, even those that have never had him for a teacher, they go up to him give him a hug. He normally begins their time with him with a question about their day or weekend, or some other recent event in their lives that he knows about. He knows about their mannerisms and their eyes. He specifically mentions the Hispanic students and their habit of smiling. "If you fuss at them, they smile. Most people think that is being disrespectful." He is also sharp-tongued when a student steps out of line or when they do something that is outside of the normally accepted routines and responsibilities. "I expect tons of responsibility out of them." When asked to explain this comment, he responded, "I teach as if they are all mine." In many ways, this statement is true.

**Summary of finding 3.**

The participating teachers chose to appropriate what they learned in PD in various ways. For instance, Jane chose to implement a rigorous curriculum based in extensive vocabulary instruction. This focus, supported by the district and practiced at the school level as well, led her to innovate her instructional practices and the specific manipulation of her classroom's word wall. Amy and Esperanza presented instruction that focused on both English language learning and content area learning. Amy's dual focus supported her students' needs as well as the needs of her fellow teachers. Esperanza also held this focus but for different reasons – among others, district-defined ELL programming.

Lionel's approach to teaching was more personal in nature, and while he spent most of his instructional time on preparing his students for the federally mandated, year-end exams, the relationships he built with his students was apparent in his interactions with them. Ultimately, the practices these teachers implemented in their classrooms were not a random assortment of activities; rather, the teachers responded to the various influences in their professional (and personal) lives and chose to appropriate specific practices in their classroom. For this reason, we see variations in these practices. For instance, Esperanza utilized Thinking Maps extensively, Lionel did not, nor did Amy or Jane. These findings suggest that the extent to which teachers will translate what they learn in PD depends in some way upon the influences under which they work.

# Chapter V

## Discussion, Conclusions, Strengths and Weaknesses, and Implications

In this, the fifth and final, chapter, I present a discussion of the findings of the current study as well as a conclusion, and implications for the various stakeholders in schools. I begin by presenting a summary of the study, its purpose, theoretical framework, research questions, and methodology. I continue by summarizing the findings of the study and a description of the ecology of ELL in-service teachers and its influence on teachers' PD decisions and choices. Lastly, I offer some concluding thoughts and implications for in-service teachers of ELLs, teacher educators, school-site and district-level administrators, and educational researchers.

### Study Overview

This dissertation study focused on the PD of in-service ELL teachers. Over the course of a school semester, I endeavored to uncover the various influences on a group of teachers' PD decisions and choices. The basis for this study lay in the fact that the school-age population of ELL in our nations schools has increased dramatically over the last 20 years leading to a shift in instructional focus for many teachers. More specifically, teachers have increasingly needed to develop classroom practices geared towards the inclusion and academic achievement of these students. Students from minority backgrounds do not achieve the same, or comparable, school success as their white classmates. Despite this occurrence, however, teacher education programs, certification

requirements, and PD offerings have been slow to catch up to the changing demographics of today's student body. About one third of states have standards of practice for ELL instruction, fewer than this number assist classroom teachers who wish to pursue additional endorsements to teach ELLs, and only a handful require teachers to be competent in ELL pedagogy (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008). Ultimately, teachers do not feel prepared to instruct students for whom English is not a native language (Parsad, Lewis, & Farris, 2001). For pre-service teachers, not yet in the classroom, many teacher education programs across the country are trying to ameliorate these concerns. However, the issue is not so clear for in-service teachers of ELLs who are already in the classroom. These teachers face a changing classroom environment, increased licensure requirements, and incredible pressure to see their students achieve in schools.

This study was borne out of the above concerns and sought to provide more clarity on how and why, instead of what, in-service teachers of ELLs learn. The research literature has identified how to present effective PD as well as the numerous subjects, skills, and perspectives forwarded by PD sessions. Unfortunately, the literature does not provide much discussion of the influences that lead teachers to participate in the PD in which they do. This study addresses this concern by asking these four (4) questions:

1. In which PD opportunities do ELL teachers choose to participate?
2. What institutional factors impact ELL teachers' choice of PD?
3. In what ways do these factors converge to influence ELL teachers' choice of PD opportunities?

4. In what ways do ELL teachers utilize what they learn through PD in their classroom?

The theoretical framework guiding this study was a blend of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978,1986) and ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1976, 1977, 1979). Sociocultural theory espouses the notion that learning and development is a socially mediated activity. I employ the three (3) main constructs of this theory, the ZPD, Mediation, and Internalization, to highlight the process through which teachers develop new ways of thinking about their work as teachers. Much of the research conducted within this theoretical perspective focuses on direct and personal interactions between individuals. To expand on this view of learning and development, I also employ an ecological perspective in this study. In doing so, I extended my view beyond person-to-person interactions and their influence on learning to include larger institutions and activities in which teacher directly and indirectly participate. Bronfenbrenner (1994) posited that environmental systems link together to form larger systems that exert influence on an individual who resides somewhere within the environment. These two perspectives, linked in this way, allow for a view of teacher learning that includes institutional influences to be seen as mediating forces that contribute to and in some ways determine the direction of teacher learning.

In light of the literature, theoretical frame, and research questions, I chose to conduct this study within a qualitative paradigm. Strauss and Corbin (1998) stress that this methodological view emphasizes processes over products, and since this study aims to uncover how and why teachers engage in PD, this choice is more than appropriate. As such, I conducted interviews with teachers and administrators, observed classroom

activities, and collected numerous classroom and school artifacts. The data I collected were analyzed and coded in line with the research questions and theoretical framework. That is to say, I viewed the data with the purpose of identifying the various systems that existed in some way in the professional lives of the participating teachers as well as the influence these systems had on the teachers' PD decisions and choices. Further, I analyzed the data to highlight classroom practices that find their origins in these decisions and choices.

## Discussion of Findings

### In which PD opportunities do ELL teachers choose to participate?

It is clear that the participating teachers engaged in a number of PD opportunities. From school- and district-offered sessions to teacher-developed workshops, these teachers attended, for various reasons, activities focused on a wide range of topics. I present in Table 3 a compiled list of the PD the participating teachers attended during the last few years. Some of the choices listed here and in Figures 1, 6, and 10 were not choices at all in that the school or district required teachers attend. However, the teachers elected many of the listed PD for attendance or presentation.

Jane attended PD focused on ELLs as well as mainstream students. Among other sessions, she attended Reading Street for ELL Students, ELL Professionals: Working with Administrators, Teachers, and Other School Staff, New and Apprentice ELL Training, and ELL Professional Development, as well as Art Teachers: Book Arts/Binding and Creating a Visual Journal, DIBELS for K-2, and I've DIBEL'D, Now

What? In addition, she also participated in a school site PLC and presented on the topics of cultural understanding, SIOP/CALLA, and vocabulary learning. She was incredibly active in her PD.

Table 3: Types of Professional Development Chosen by the Participating Teachers

| Types of Professional Development |
|---|
| Assessment Training Workshops (i.e., DIBELS, I've DIBEL'D, Now What?, ELDA) |
| Conference Sessions (i.e., TESOL, IRA) |
| District-wide events |
| Educational Methodology Programs (i.e., Quantum Learning, Reading Street for ELLs) |
| ELL-focused workshops (i.e., ELL Professional Development, Differentiating Instruction for ELLs in the Integrated 3-5 Classroom, Thinking Maps) |
| Faculty Retreats (i.e., 75+ Achievement Boosting Strategies, PLCs) |
| Inter-school exchanges |
| New Teacher Orientations |
| Foreign Language Learning |
| Community activities |
| PLCs |
| Regional Educational Conferences (i.e., SWTESOL) |
| Scholastic Coursework (i.e., Cultural Understandings, Approaches to ESL Writing) |
| School-site/District-level Committees (i.e., Textbook Adoption Committee, ELL Teacher Rep. Meetings, School Improvement Plan Development – ELL Representative) |
| School-wide Instructional Interventions (i.e., Voyager) |
| Suicide Prevention Trainings |
| Summer Institutes |
| Teacher Meeting Presentations |
| Teacher-developed workshops (i.e., SIOP/CALLA, Book studies, & Vocabulary PD) |
| Webinars (i.e., ELL Learning A-Z) |

Like Jane, Amy was also very active in her PD in that she attended a number of PDs focused on ELLs and mainstream students. She attended sessions such as Classroom Instruction That Works for ELL Students, ELL Professional Development, and an ELL Learning A-Z Webinar, as well as district-wide events and K-2 Teachers: Elementary Drive-In. She had amassed a total of 61 hours of PD.

Esperanza was also active in her PD combining graduate study and formal PD workshops. In addition to a number of formal sessions on ELL topics, assessment, and instructional interventions, she participated in school-site committees and a PLC. Also in Drake County Schools, Lionel confessed that he normally did not attend PD beyond what the school and district required. However, when given a choice in attendance, he opts for sessions that are interesting to him as a science buff and to his students as they work through the curriculum.

It is also clear that teachers do not engage in their PD in the same ways. More specifically, some of the ELL teachers in this study participated in much more PD than was required of them; some others attended the minimum number of hours as mandated by their school district. While some who read this work might think the minimum in terms of PD is less than optimal, I do not hold this view. This study is not to be read as an indictment of teachers, or their schools and districts. I argue that the extent to which teachers engage in extended learning is influenced by the systems in which and near which the teachers participate.

**What institutional factors impact ELL teachers' choice of PD?**

In this study I have identified four (4) microsystems in which the participating teachers conduct their work – the classroom, the school site, the district, and the legislative arena. Within these systems, the teachers participate directly within these systems in many ways (i.e., interact and work with their colleagues, receive reviews of their work). Below, I discuss each microsystem and its impact on the teachers.

#### ***The classroom.***

This microsystem defines the teachers' direct participation in the lives of the students. The classroom is the center of student-related activities for the teachers and incorporates both in-school and out-of-school activities. The ELL teachers in this study are greatly affected by the events within this system, and many of the their PD choices come from their experiences with their students. For instance, Jane began learning the Spanish language as a result of working with her students and their parents.

While Jane's choice to learn Spanish originated in her classroom work with her students, the classroom influenced her to a larger extent in determining the content of the PD she presented to her colleagues. She, together with a colleague who did not participate in this study, isolated concerns she had in her own classroom and developed PDs for her fellow teachers in response. She based one such choice, her presentations on Robust Vocabulary, on her students' need for more rigorous vocabulary instruction. From here, Jane practiced some of the instructional strategies herself before developing her PD session. It is clear, in this case, that Jane is greatly affected by what happens in her classroom and makes PD decisions accordingly.

Esperanza uses Spanish in her classroom and has looked to develop more instructional practices for ELLs through continued PD attendance and graduate study. More specifically, Esperanza was able to divine through her student's work in class subjects of concern and interest. As a result of these new insights, she participated in specific ways in her PLC. Either in developing new and common assessments or a

specifically tailored intervention for her students, the classroom microsystem determined Esperanza's PD decisions.

Amy chooses a wide variety of PD in search of the perfect practice for ELLs. She focuses on her work in the classroom, marrying the content and language demands of the curriculum, and attends PD looking to find instructional strategies appropriate for her students. For example, her use of the projector and white board in an innovative way that allows a typically monolithic artifact, a PowerPoint presentation, into an interactive activity offers her students ample opportunities to produce oral language and interact with their peers.

Lionel relates to the specific needs of his students through the experiences he has with local community members. For instance, he participates in a number of events hosted by the local community and through these interactions he is able to build close relationships with his students. He is also able to capitalize on community resources and knowledge to help students access the school curriculum. The needs of his students help define the PD choices he makes. He has found, for example, that his students respond to non-traditional methods and demonstrations, which explains his brake fluid and chlorine activity and "burning cow poop."

***The school site.***

The school site is another system in which the teachers participate directly. Activities that occur within the walls of the schools themselves are included in this system. For instance, while the PLCs find their creation in the district system (discussed below), they conduct their work on campus at the individual schools. The PLCs offer the teachers a chance to work with their fellow teachers to design instructional practices and

assessments as well as to discuss classroom events and students concerns. Esperanza used her participation in a PLC to implement classroom activities based upon her attendance of the Thinking Maps sessions over the summer. Further, this same teacher, in concert with her colleagues in the PLC, was able to determine content her students struggled with and devise a site-based intervention to work through it. In response and through the influence of the classroom mircosystem, new student needs can be seen and reconciled through the PLCs and other PD. The Voyager intervention offers Esperanza one such opportunity. The Voyager intervention is a series of scripted lessons that do not offer much in the way of innovation. However, since many of the students Esperanza meets for Voyager are in her regular classroom, overlaps occur. At these times, she can employ certain instructional practices that address some of the students needs illuminated during the intervention. Further, she has been able to connect the content of her instruction through the intervention to the regular curriculum through the use of Thinking Maps.

The school-site microsystem also influenced Amy and her PD. Amy worked with her colleagues to develop a handout and presentation to the other teachers on site. While this work began in response to a specific PD opportunity, the PLCs offered another moment for PD. In creating the presentation, Amy began to view her own instruction in new ways in order to share her knowledge and skills with her faculty. This type of work is supported at North Branch through their policy of teachers sharing their learning with the rest of the teachers on site. This particular policy determined not simply the PD Amy chose but the way she viewed her own learning, not as an isolated practice, but one that required a larger perspective and addressed the needs of her colleagues as well as her own.

Jane recognized the value of the school-site and its influence on her own work in developing her PDs. While presenting to teachers across the district is important in its own right, Jane enjoys a more local, school-site focus. PD focused at the school-site level offer unique affordances in terms of the ongoing support teachers receive in implementing what they learn in PD. As she has said, and explicated above, she tries things out in her own classroom, presents PD to her colleagues, and then challenges them to try new practices out in their classrooms. A school-site focus, as Jane envisions it can offer opportunities for teachers to come back together at this point and discuss successes and failures, and develop new ways of appropriating the material learn in PD.

The school site experiences of the teachers in this study highlight structures through which the roles and responsibilities of an ELL teacher are made clear. In this way, ELL teachers are expected to not only pursue PD for their own benefit, but also for the benefit of the other teachers. Content from other PD opportunities can be reorganized and reappropriated through sharing and discussion with other colleagues. This reorganizing then becomes its own PD in that teachers are able to come to new understandings of their instruction. This development is especially salient for ELL teachers as their colleagues do not always possess the same knowledge and skills, and they are often called upon, as we see in this study, to support their fellow teachers in support of linguistically diverse students. School site features such as PLCs, policies that stress knowledge sharing, and a common vision among school personnel regarding instruction play a large role in determining not only what ELL teachers choose to learn but how they view the content of PD they attend.

***The district.***

The teachers participate directly at the district level, though with much less frequent regularity. In the case of two of the participating teachers, Jane and Amy, they spoke at length with the Instructional Director of ELL Programming of Stratton County regarding their classroom instruction and professional performance. Through this process, they engaged in goal setting activities that laid out PD directions for each teacher and offered clear expectations of what being a teacher in the district required. In other words, these reviews, in concert with other influences, helped define the roles and responsibilities of an ELL teacher. Interestingly, these goals were not focused solely on the teacher as a single, isolated individual working amongst other similarly positioned individuals; rather, the goals make explicit the role of the teacher as not simply one of instruction, but one of leadership (e.g., designing workshops to present to teachers across the district). The expectation was, for an ELL teacher, to share his/her skills and knowledge with students as well as with colleagues. Further, as these goals were met, the responsibilities extended beyond the school site and district to include a more regional, and indeed, national range of influence.

The district microsystem is not limited to single, personal interactions regarding yearly reviews. The school districts in this study also responded to larger concerns such as the instruction that is carried out in all of its classrooms. As mentioned previously, both districts had instituted PLC in their schools. The purpose of the PLCs was to help ameliorate a growing confusion as to which teachers were responsible for which students' education and to refocus the teachers on the learning of every student, instead of

relegating the learning of some students only to certain area specialists (i.e., ELL teacher, Special Education teacher, Reading specialist). The PLCs provided the ELL teachers (Jane, Amy, and Esperanza only) multiple pathways to both learn from their colleagues and share their own knowledge with the other teachers. In many ways, the PLC, as instituted by the district, helped form a more global understanding of what a teacher's role and responsibility were – to be a member of a larger community focused not only on the learning of its students but also of its members regardless of the particular content one taught.

***The legislative arena.***

At the beginning of the study, the legislative arena would have been considered an exosystem in that the teachers did not directly participate in many legislative actions. However, as the study progresses Jane began working with a group on the state's policies in the Race to the Top program. At this point for her, the legislative arena became a microsystem. Her work in helping to define evaluation methods for ELLs and their teachers required her to learn more about the particular assessments already in place and those being proposed. Jane engaged in this work at the urging of Nancy, her district contact, as a part of her ongoing performance review. The goal was to participate in larger educational activities at the state or federal level.

This microsystem determines the roles and responsibilities for ELL teachers by defining the educational programming schools can implement for ELLs, mainly mandating that ELLs receive instructional support in learning the English language. The participating teachers, while working in two different school districts, are subject to the legal requirements of their position. Interestingly, while the research literature does not

discuss how the needs of ELL teachers who work within various program models differs, this study suggests the models in which teachers work does indeed influence their continued learning in some way. For instance, while Amy's role as a resident ELL teacher allowed her to pursue very specific PD to the benefit of her colleagues at North Branch Elementary, Jane continued her itinerant status by presenting to teachers across the Stratton County School District. For instance, Amy reorganized information she learned from previous PD she had attended to present a number of ELL specific strategies to her fellow teachers at North Branch. The subject of her work with her colleagues included strategies deemed both effective (see Figure 3) and les effective (Figure 4) for ELLs. Ranging from simple techniques such as not asking, "Does anybody know what___means?" to providing ELLs with sentence frames to support ELL language development, Amy provided her counterparts at North Branch support in instructing the ELLs in their classrooms more effectively. Jane supported the work of teachers across Stratton County in presenting on topics such as cultural awareness. In her Remix workshops, the lived experiences of immigrant children took center stage in mainstream teacher discussions. Jane's thrust in these presentations was to expand the perspectives of her mainstream classroom colleagues and affect positive change in their attitudes and beliefs toward ELLs (see Byrnes et al, 1997 and Montero & McVicker, 2006 for more on how PD can affect teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward ELLs).

Also, the end-of-the-year assessments, required by federal law, affect the instruction implemented by the participating teachers. Lionel focused most of his time on combining test preparation with instructional standards of practice. Esperanza also focused on these assessments, but, as with Lionel, she did not stop teaching new content

as the test approached. Instead, they worked with their colleagues to develop their lessons. Lionel met with the faculty at Woodruff where they discussed what to focus on based on previous exams, the needs of their students, and the required curriculum. Esperanza received some test taking strategies from the reading specialist at her school, which she appropriated even during instruction that was not focused on the test. These strategies (Figure 13) were meant to help her students take standardized reading tests better. However, as explicit strategy instruction is effective for ELLs in that they can use these strategies to learn both academic content and language (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994), the uses Esperanza put them toward in other contexts such as general literacy instruction was also appropriate for the ELLs in her classroom.

**In what ways do these factors converge to influence ELL teachers' choice of PD opportunities?**

These 4 microsystems converge to define the ecology of in-service ELL teacher learning. Teachers engage in a variety of activities within a number of microsystems that link to form a mesosystem. Other microsystems (exosystems) impact teacher's professional lives as well.

The convergence of these systems exerts a heavy influence on and mediates teacher learning and choice of PD opportunities. Figure 17 depicts the various systems and the convergences these data suggest in their entirety. The microsystems converge in various ways. For instance, the district and the school-site link, creating a mesosystem, that includes the PLCs, collegial support, and the roles and responsibilities of an ELL teacher. At the same time, the classroom microsystem overlaps with these two systems, influencing the direction of the PLCs and again, the roles and responsibilities of the ELL teacher.

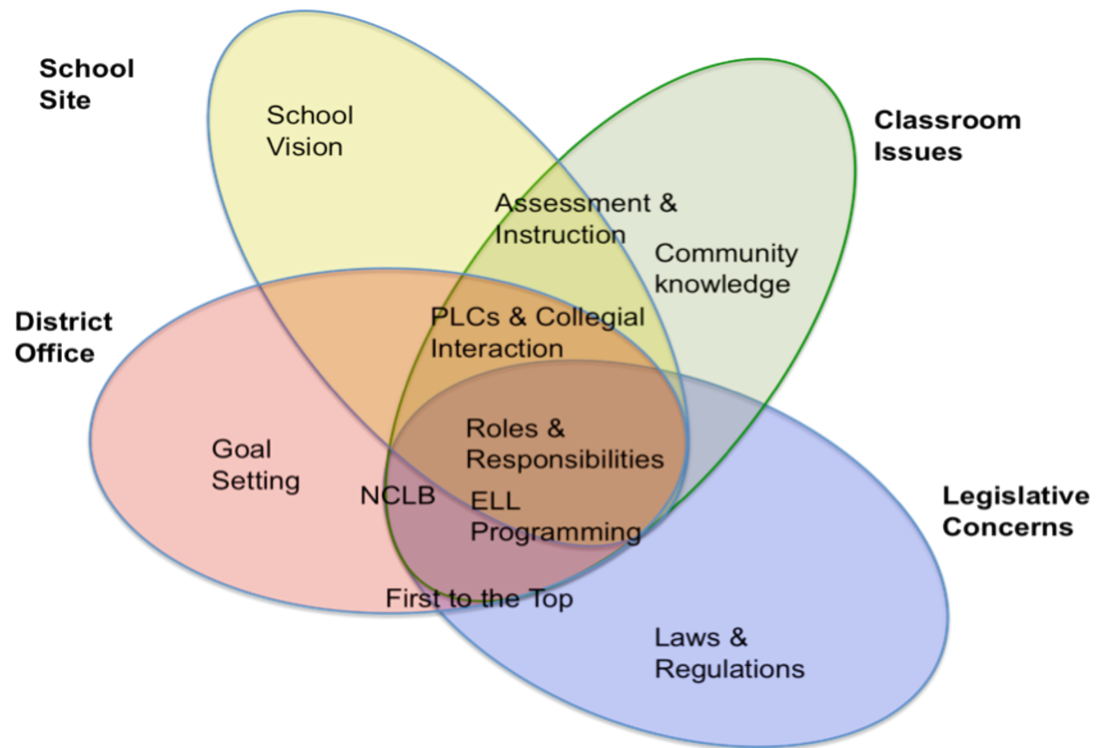


Figure 17: Ecological Map of Influences on In-Service Teachers of ELLs

The school site system also links with the classroom microsystem in defining the assessment and instructional needs of the teachers. The legislative arena, while including the laws and regulations all of the ELL teachers must follow, also contributes to their roles and responsibilities.

Of interest, however, is that these systems do not influence each teacher in exactly the same way, nor are these influences of the same magnitude. While Figure 17 does depict the ecology of the participating teachers together, it does not detail the specifics of each teacher's experiences. For example, Jane was urged by her district to present PD to the other teachers across the district. She chose the topics for presentation based on her

experiences in the classroom. She also participated in PLCs and offered instructional support to her colleagues on site at her schools. Lastly, the impetus for the PLCs, was occasioned by an increased responsibility across the district for ELLs in their schools, came in part from the legal requirements set forth to ensure equitable instruction for all students. As Lucas et al (1991) posit, when schools and districts make ELL instruction a priority and school staff (including mainstream classroom teachers) receive PD on issues related to ELL instruction, the academic achievement of ELLs is supported more completely. ELL teachers and the knowledge and skills they possess are a key contributor in this regard based upon the choices of PD they make. That being said, ELL teachers may be the only teachers in their school settings with the requisite knowledge and skills to instruct ELLs effectively (Batt, 2008). In Stratton County, for example, the PLCs were designed specifically to include ELL teachers so as to expose other teachers to an expanded view of instruction for diverse learners. In this case and as we see with the teachers in this study, the expertise these teachers had was leveraged for the development of their mainstream classroom colleagues and the academic success of all students, not just ELLs. For instance, Jane's presentations offered mainstream teachers across Stratton County opportunities to learn from her own classroom experiences. She shared specific strategies stemming from her vocabulary workshops she found to be effective in building her ELLs' academic vocabulary. One such activity was the Word Wall discussed above.

Within these interactions, Jane determined not only the content of her PD but also the method through which she would learn the content – attendance and presentation. For Jane, her specific ecology was dominated by the district microsystem. Of course, her classroom microsystem affected her learning and instruction, but much of this influence

was spurred on by the goal setting activities and PD presentations in which she participated, all of which originated from her direct participation with district administration. The district microsystem, also through goal setting activities, opened up possibilities for Jane to participate directly in the legislative arena in a more substantive way than the other ELL teachers in this study. The other three teachers were in some way subject to legislation. By this I mean that these teachers did not necessarily have any voice in the implementation of NCLB or the form of the tests their students needed to take at the end of the year. Jane, of course, did not have this kind of voice either, but Jane was able to participate directly in making recommendations as to how ELL teachers were to be evaluated. In doing so, she expanded her own perspective on her roles and responsibilities and saw the limited perspectives that others held of ELL teachers. Further, her work in this area led to greater understanding of specific assessments (i.e., ELDA, DIBELs) in determining both student achievement and teacher effectiveness.

Amy's ecology, on the other hand, was dominated by the school-site microsystem. While teaching in the same district and participating in the same activities at the district level as Jane, Amy's PD decisions were more influenced by the specific roles and responsibilities defined at North Branch Elementary School. Amy provided the legally mandated instructional support for her ELLs, and the support she provided her colleagues was in part based upon the instructional needs of her students in the classroom. More specifically, Amy felt her students needed academic instruction in all content areas, but as the students she taught also qualified for language support services, English language instruction was also a required aspect of their schooling. At the urging of her district, she participated in PLCs that fed back into her role in her school and in her

classroom. However, her school and its administration defined very clearly her role as one of support not just to the students but also to the other teachers. Because she understood the needs of ELLs to be rooted in both academic content and English language learning she chose to focus her efforts on providing instruction that included both foci. Further, in working with her mainstream classroom colleagues, she chose to present to them ways to encourage both academic achievement and English language development at the same time. As it takes a number of years for ELLs to achieve comparable academic success as their English-speaking peers (Collier, 1987), Amy's choices of PD and the classroom practices she employed offered substantial support for her colleagues in the instruction, as well as for her students in their learning. An example of this was seen in her use of the whiteboard in her classroom. She turned the whiteboard into a tool both for presenting new information and facilitating increased student interactions and oral language production.

Esperanza's professional life was also influenced by these systems in different ways. The federal guidelines in place prescribing school achievement levels for students played a role in defining the value of the end-of-the-year tests at Unified Elementary School. Their ELLs were not making benchmarks in Reading, with only 8% scoring Proficient or advanced on federally mandated assessments. These data contributed to the installation of the Voyager intervention to help students learn to become more proficient readers. Voyager, a scripted intervention, did not inherently offer moments of integration with other content Esperanza taught, nor did it allow Esperanza to capitalize on what the students already knew and could do. We know that students from diverse backgrounds engage in a variety of complex literate practices that do not always find their way into

schools, and the practices seen in schools are not always those that diverse learners need (Jiménez, 2001). As such, Esperanza attempted to make more effective use of the intervention as a source of information her students could connect to through other content. Reading strategies such as those that offer ELLS the ability to connect and respond to texts they read are effective in supporting increased reading comprehension (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008).

As she was implementing the Voyager program, Esperanza attended a district-offered PD focused on a particular brand of graphic organizers, which Esperanza used regularly in her classroom. Graphic organizers are useful to ELLs because they provide "clear and explicit organization of content" (DaSilva Iddings & Rose, 2010, p. 90) that increased ELLs' access to academic content. Through her attendance in a school site PLC, she was able to develop new instructional foci and practices that she then implemented in her classroom. These foci and practices are particularly important to ELLs in that they were based in the immediate skills and knowledge of her students and their need for content and language instruction. In sum, I would argue that the four microsystems in Figure 17 form a more balanced ecology than Jane or Amy (and Lionel, discussed below) with no single system dominating the others. A single district-offered workshop, a school-site intervention and PLC, and the needs of her students within specific ELL programming all impact Esperanza as she developed new ways of organizing her teaching and learning.

Lionel's professional life was influenced heavily by one particular microsystem – the classroom. The classroom microsystem, for Lionel, was defined in terms of the needs of his students both in and out of the classroom. He was a leader in his community and

this translated into leadership in his classroom and his school. His students, and even those he did see in his classroom, relied on him for support in and out of school. While he did not attend as much formal PD as the other teachers in this study, his learning extended well beyond the sessions in which he chose to participate. His status as a community member was certainly defined by larger legislative and societal concerns, such as immigration, language policy, and child custody laws, and his understanding of the needs, norms, and practices of his community found its way into his work as a teacher. For instance, in knowing how his students used smiling to show particular emotion, he was able to recognize specific differences between embarrassment and disrespect. With this knowledge, Lionel avoided any cultural confusion and was able to built a close-knit community in his classroom. While he did not view the ELL programming requirements as a major influence on him, Lionel was greatly affected by and concerned with legislative forces in the form of federally mandated standardized tests. However, the dominant microsystem in the ecology of Lionel's professional learning was the classroom.

The linkages between these microsystems are not trivial nor are they exhaustive. These microsystems interact in many ways that influence teachers' PD decision making. From Jane's learning about teacher and student assessment through her participation at the state level to Lionel's learning how to interact in a highly nuanced fashion with his students by spending time with them and their families outside of the school, what these teachers learn in some way results from their interaction within larger systems of activity. These systems, converging in unique ways for each teacher make up the ecology of their professional life.

The main influence that existed in these linkages was the definition of the roles and responsibilities of ELL teachers. While not all of the participating teachers took up the same roles and responsibilities, the roles they did inhabit were clearly defined as well as highly encouraged, supported, and sustained over time. All of these influences helped to define what an ELL teachers was - an ELL teacher actively engages in activities that not only further her/his own perspectives, knowledge, and skill sets, but also provides ongoing support to his/her colleagues in developing and implementing effective instruction for ALL students. This definition was exemplified by Jane presenting workshops across the district, Amy discussing effective and ineffective strategies with mainstream teachers, Esperanza working within her PLC to develop connections between a school-wide intervention and other classroom practices, and Lionel building relationships with his students and their communities. This definition requires that teachers continue learning for the benefit of themselves, their colleagues, and their students. However, it does not prescribe *how* teachers are to do this. While traditionally defined PD normally takes the form of workshops or groups sessions that cover a specific topic or range of topics, some of the PD activities in which these teachers participate do not fit this mold. To use Lionel's term, "personal development" can include workshop-style PD such as the district-offered workshops the teachers take during the summer and throughout the school year, as well as such activities as learning Spanish or participating in local community events. Though teachers may not be able to apply the latter set of activities toward their licensure requirements, they are no less valuable in shaping their classroom instruction.

### In what ways do ELL teachers utilize what they learn through PD in their classroom?

This study provides a number of examples of ELL teachers using what they learn through PD in the classroom. Jane focused heavily on the vocabulary learning of her students through innovative use of her Word Wall. Amy focused on supporting her colleagues through language and content instruction. Esperanza worked with her fellow teachers in a PLC to apply Thinking Maps in her curriculum, applying them to both language and content area instruction. Lionel brought his experiences in the local community to bear in building relationships with his students to encourage student engagement and success.

This study suggests that the extent to which the teachers appropriate what they learn in PD depends on how the various systems in which the teachers work define the roles and responsibilities of the ELL teachers. For instance, Lionel and Esperanza work in the same school district and attend many of the same workshops. However, while Esperanza uses Thinking Maps consistently in her classroom, Lionel does not. This is not a failing in any sense on Lionel's part; rather I argue that the roles and responsibilities of an ELL teacher as defined in his classroom, his school, his district, and the legislative arena support a different set of classroom practices. More clearly, Lionel's professional ecology encouraged his building close relationships with his students and his providing of instruction geared toward student success on standardized tests. The use of Thinking Maps in these efforts, while possibly effective, were not a specific focus for him, and, as such, not necessarily a practice he relies on to achieve the above to goals. Esperanza, on the other hand, used Thinking Maps in her classroom based on the work she did in her

PLCs wherein the graphic organizers were a specific focus of the group and seen as an effective means of instruction.

### Strengths and Limitations

The current study builds upon what we know about ELL teacher PD, and while I agree that ELL teacher PD needs to center in some way upon classroom concerns, I also argue that a PD program need not exclude other concerns and must, in fact, address the various contextual needs ELL teachers satisfy with their instruction. Additionally, the current study illuminates the finer relationships between what, how, and under which circumstances teachers learn. These understandings, which embrace the notion that teaching and learning certainly do not occur in a vacuum, pushes the field to investigate further the varying degrees to which the classroom, the administration, the peer-group, and the political arena influence the act of teaching and learning to teach ELLs in American schools. Possible benefits to the field of teacher education exist in the illumination of the ways in which teachers continue learning after they have completed their university study. For example, if teacher educators understand more fully how teachers are influenced by their PD, we can provide our teacher candidates with tools and knowledge that allow them to more professionally interact within their schools and engage in conversations centered upon student learning and an increased instructional repertoire. These interactions can lead to increased opportunities for learning and, as a result, lead to more effective instruction and increased student learning.

The current study is also limited in that I selected a small number of sites within only one region of the country. This study is not meant to describe fully the

microsystems, and other meso-, exo-, or macrosystems in their totality. As such, the study is not immediately generalizable to any and all other instructional contexts. However, I do believe this limitation is mitigated in that while the specifics of the microsystems upon which this study focuses may not fully resemble those of other microsystems operating at other schools across the country, the linkages between the microsystems may signal similar linkages, and thusly, similar influences on teacher learning and instruction.

## Conclusions and Implications

In conclusion, this study suggests that in-service teachers of ELL are indeed interested in continuing their PD and are willing to take leadership roles in their schools, districts, and communities. Whether the actions teachers take stem from encouragement from interactions with the local community or recommendations from school administration, the desire teachers have to influence the lives of those around them must be supported. By 'supported' I mean that teachers benefit from as united a network of systems as possible. In other words, the more systems (i.e., microsystems, mesosystems, or exosystems) that converge on a particular course of action, the more teachers will respond and take action. For instance, one of the teachers in this study planned a successful PD sessions for her fellow teachers. While she acted at the urging of the district administration, her continued participation in this endeavor would not have been possible had the other systems (e.g., the school site, the classroom concerns, collegial relationships) not allowed for it. Ultimately and for better or worse, this study suggests that teachers will in fact fulfill the roles and responsibilities they are encouraged, supported, and indeed, expected to take.

Continuing in this section, I wish to also present the implications this study has for in-service teachers of ELLs, teacher educators, and school-site and district-level administrators, as well as for those who wish to extend this line of research.

**Implications for in-service teachers.**

While not all schools districts function as the two within which the teachers in this study work, all school districts position their ELL teachers, either implicitly or explicitly, in some way within their programming. As a result of this study, I would recommend that in-service teachers of ELLs work to develop their own vision of their work in their schools and district, whether in line or at some odds with the prevailing notion of what teachers of ELLs are supposed to be, know, and do. Furthermore, these teachers should also seek out PD opportunities, either provided by the school or district or discovered on their own, that allow them to develop into the teachers they are expected to or wish to be. I am not arguing in this dissertation that the roles other teachers, schools, and districts expect their ELL teachers to take up are in some way incorrect or limited; rather, I argue that teachers, as members of a larger ecology have the power to affect some change in the functioning of the systems in which they reside as well as in some they do not. That being said, this study offers some insight into how the PD choices teachers make as a result of the myriad influences on their professional lives can affect their roles and responsibilities.

I recommend that ELL teachers who are expected to take up leadership roles in their schools and districts pursue PD opportunities that allow them to extend not only their own classroom practices but also the practices of their colleagues. For instance, at professional conferences these teachers could choose to attend sessions that focus on work that does not explicitly focus on ELLs. In this way, ELL teachers can begin to

bridge their own work with the work of their colleagues. I would also recommend that ELL teachers initiate relationships with their mainstream classroom counterparts and engage in more site-based collaboration. An example of this recommendation could include the creation of book clubs or other study groups that allow for the sharing of insights, a two-way street of support, that offers both the ELL and mainstream teacher opportunities to take up leadership roles in their schools.

Not all ELL teachers, however, are expected to be leaders in their schools and districts, and while some of these teachers may wish to be, their work is not always supported. In these cases, I would recommend that the ELL teachers engage their supervisors (i.e., principals or other district-level administrators) in goal-setting activities during review periods. More specifically, instead of waiting for leadership roles to come their way, teachers can help bring these roles to realization by offering their own goals, which can include leadership activities such as regional and national conference attendance, PD session presentation, or other collaborative activities with their fellow faculty members.

I would also urge in-service teachers to develop or extend their view of teaching as a lifelong learning activity. One way to foster this vision would be to establish a different view of where knowledge resides. For example, some teachers may only participate in PD activities that are required by the school or school district, satisfying the district minimum standards for continued professional licensure. While there is nothing inherently wrong with this approach, it can be limiting in terms of the roles teachers can play and the influence they can have on larger school institutions. Essentially any agentive power teachers have in these institutions is removed and replaced with a vision

of “teachers-as-recipient.” Teachers then would only learn when and what others deemed important. Little consideration, then, would be taken for organic and local classroom and school-site concerns. What I propose is a view of any interaction as a potential PD opportunity, as it would allow teachers to be more selective in their learning and offer a wider range of possibilities. Teachers would be encouraged to participate in PD that they chose instead of simply waiting for the next district offering.

***Implications for teacher educators.***

First, teacher educators can connect feedback on coursework more explicitly to the professional realities of being a teacher as well as continuing to focus on guided reflection. Reflection in this vein would need to focus upon the in-and –out-of-classroom experiences the teacher candidates and how these experiences inform not simply classroom practices, but also professional behaviors. For instance, simply having a pre-service teacher discuss what happened in his or her day and how he or she might approach the next day can provide some valuable insights. However, this only focuses on classroom instruction and downplays the other roles teachers play in schools. I would recommend reflective activities expand to include sources of knowledge and how a pre-service teacher might consider learning more about a particular topic or concern. Additionally, other foci in this practice could include reflection on interactions with other teachers or the insights gained in collaborative activities on site in schools.

Pre-service teachers can also develop a more nuanced vision of themselves as teachers and members of a school system through increased engagement with school-site staff and administration. Field experiences could include activities and assignments that place students in contact with more schools personnel than their cooperating teacher.

School librarians, office staff, counselors, and other support staff on site and at the district level all influence the teaching and learning in schools and can help pre-service teachers establish a clearer vision of the kind of teachers they want and are expected to be.

***Implications for school-site and district-level administrators.***

This study highlights the opportunities teachers have and choose in furthering their learning after they enter the classroom. I would argue that if both a school's administration and faculty develop a more nuanced vision of the role all members of the school community have within a school, then the PD of the teachers onsite will have a much greater impact on the instruction for and learning of its students. Some of the practices presented in this study offer a starting point for considering how schools can achieve this vision. By viewing all teachers as valued members whose goal is not simply to improve student learning or that of any individual teacher, everything any one teacher learns over the course of their PD is available to all of the other teachers. Schools, such as those presented in this study, can install a consistent practice of "attend, return, and present" for its personnel – any teacher who attends any PD activity is expected to return to the school site and present what they learned to their colleagues. In this way, teachers are encouraged to not only pursue learning they find interesting but also to find the value in the activities in which they engage for a wider audience.

In contrast, not all schools and school districts expect their ELL teachers or any teachers, for that matter, to be leaders at their schools or in their districts. These schools and districts could benefit from the knowledge and skills their teachers possess. As mentioned earlier, many teachers feel they are not prepared to work with students who do

not share their specific backgrounds, specifically those students who do not speak English. These teachers could benefit from the specific skills their ELL teaching colleagues possess. In fact, given the recent requirements school districts have put into place, the ELL teacher(s) may be the only faculty member(s) on which the rest of the school (e.g., staff and faculty) can rely on to support their work with ELLs in mainstream classes and other school situations. Accordingly, schools and districts should begin all members of the school community as a possible leader and place a greater value on more ground-up, or teacher-initiated influences on school culture, classroom practices, and district functioning.

***Directions for future research.***

Practices such as mentioned above (e.g., attend, return, and present) offer interesting possibilities for research. Researchers could focus more specifically on the mechanisms that explain how teachers appropriate what they learn in PD opportunities and develop new and innovative classroom practices. In other words, through local PD work between teachers within schools, researchers could investigate the specific features of PD that encourages teacher learning and evolution of classroom instruction.

Researchers choosing to investigate this line of thinking could also be able to view teacher learning in more unofficial yet no less meaningful settings. For instance, parent-teacher interactions might be viewed for the powerful PD opportunities they can be. Indeed these interactions might provide the impetus for a PD decision. However, I am advocating for a view of interactions such as these that considers the interaction a mediating force in and of itself. More specifically, while an interaction might illuminate the need to learn a new language, the interaction itself does not provide that kind of

learning. In the case of a parent-teacher interaction, a teacher might learn more directly the specific lived experiences of the community and students he or she teaches. These insights can then be presented to other teachers and a larger understanding can be gained across the school or district. Of course, there are more possibilities than parent-teacher interactions. As this study suggests, there are a number of different systems in which teachers conduct their professional duties, and any one of these and as well as the innumerable others teachers participate in and around could be considered.

Researchers could also investigate pre-service teachers' conceptions of themselves, their students, and their role within the teaching profession. Further, research extending this study should also continue to focus on how both pre- and in-service teachers navigate the larger systems in which they reside and how these system mediate teacher learning.

This study seems to downplay the mediating role teachers play within their ecology. This is not to say that teachers play minimal role in shaping the field of education, quite the contrary. I would argue that teachers an incredibly influential role in the realm of education. For instance, the instructional choices they make in the classroom determines student learning which them feedback into more instructional choices. Further, teachers work on textbook committees, on assessment options, and school-site councils. They serve as faculty advisors to students clubs and participate in many ways with the Parent-Teacher Association. I recommend that researcher investigate further the mediating role teachers play within the ecology of their professional lives. Doing so would empower teachers and teacher educators to redouble their efforts to fight for needed change in an educational system that all too often positions teachers as

meaningless, ineffective, and to blame for what some might consider the shortcomings of the public system.

Lastly, for researchers looking to continue this line of work and recommendations for teachers, school administrators, and school districts, I also wish to present four questions. My hope is to not limit the ways researchers and those working in schools can consider the data I present in this dissertation; rather, I want to provide a framework within which researchers, teachers, and other school personnel can consider the roles they play in the larger institutions in which they conduct their professional lives.

The first three questions are as follows:

Question 1: How can in-service teachers of ELLs, and teachers in general, more effectively continue their PD?

Question 2: How can the concept of 'teacher-as-learner' be fostered more fully?

Question #3: How can the first two (2) questions be addressed *before* teachers enter the classroom?

More interesting, however, would be investigations of the extent to which the mediating roles are reversed, essentially asking the question, Question 4, "In what ways do teachers mediate the development of school site visions, district level operations, or larger, national and legislative work?" I believe this final question is of particular import as it offers teachers a more powerful position in systems of activity beyond their classroom, one that offers teachers the ability to shape and define a profession that cannot function without them.

## Appendices

Appendix A – Overview of data collection procedures

| Research Questions | Data collection measures (Phases) |
|---|---|
| In which professional development opportunities do ELL teachers choose to participate? | Teacher Interviews (1, 2, 3)<br>Planning Session observations (1) |
| What institutional factors impact ELL teachers' choice of professional development? | Teacher Interviews (1, 2, 3)<br>Administrator Interviews (1, 3)<br>Artifact Collection (1, 2, 3)<br>Classroom Observation (1, 2, 3) |
| In what ways do these factors converge to influence ELL teachers' choice of professional development opportunities? | Teacher Interviews (1, 2, 3)<br>Administrator Interviews (1, 3)<br>Documents and Artifacts (1, 2, 3) |
| In what ways do ELL teachers utilize what they learn through professional development in their classroom? | Teacher Interviews (1, 2, 3)<br>Planning Session Observations (1, 2, 3)<br>Classroom Observations (1, 2, 3) |

Appendix B – Personal Information Questionnaire

**PERSONAL INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Pseudonym:**________________________________________ **Date:** _____________

**Educational history:**____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

**Hometown:**_______________________

**Other places you've lived:**

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

**Age:** _____

**Race/ethnicity:** ___________________________________

**Teaching experience** (grade level, number of years, place, responsibilities)

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

**Foreign language background** (number of years studied, level of proficiency obtained)

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

___________________

**Time spent abroad** (indicate where, how long, purpose)

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

___________________

**What experiences do you have working with culturally and/or linguistically diverse learners?**

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

___________________

**Prior coursework related to diversity and/or English language learners** (list courses)

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

## Appendix C – Belief survey about ELLs and language learning

### BELIEFS ABOUT ELLS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Instructions: On a scale from 1 to 5, please indicate your beliefs regarding the following topics. Please circle only one number for each item.

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = No preference
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

1. It is more important for immigrants to learn English than to maintain their first language.

**1** 2 3 4 5

2. Whenever possible, second language learners should receive instruction in their first language until they are proficient enough to learn via English instruction.

1 2 3 **4** 5

3. All students should be encouraged to become fluent in a second language.

1 2 3 **4** 5

4. Students should not be allowed to speak a language other than English while in school.

1 **2** 3 4 5

5. Teachers should place great value on students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

1 2 3 **4** 5

6. Parents from low-income families do not generally care about education.

**1** 2 3 4 5

7. Teachers should focus all their attention on teaching ELLs correct English.

1 **2** 3 4 5

8. The keys to successful second language learning are motivation and hard work.

1 2 **3** 4 5

9. Teachers who work with ELLs do not need special forms of knowledge and practice.

**1** 2 3 4 5

10. Parents and community members should play a minimal role in the school.

1 **2** 3 4 5

Appendix D – Initial teacher interview questions and prompts

1. Tell me how you choose to further your education as a teacher.
2. Which of these opportunities do you find most/least effective? Why?
3. Tell me about the last school-sponsored professional development focused on ELLs you attended. What was the topic? What was your impression of the workshop? Have you been able to incorporate any of what you learned into your instruction? Why/Why not?
4. Tell me about the work you do in collaboration with your colleagues regarding the literacy instruction for ELLs. What do you discuss? How well do you think collaboration results in effective teacher learning and instruction? Are there people you talk with more often then others? To what end?
5. If you could do more/less of one particular learning opportunity, what would it/they be? Why?
6. Tell me how your summer planning went. What revisions have you made to your previous years' plans? Why did you choose to make these revisions?
7. Tell me about <insert specific classroom practice observed>.
8. Is there anything else I have not asked that you feel is important regarding your professional development?

Appendix E – 2nd teacher interview questions and prompts

1. Tell me about any recent professional development you attended? What did you learn from these opportunities? How do you plan to incorporate what you learned into your instruction?
2. Tell me about your staff meetings. What did you discuss? What instructional changes will you make as a result of these interactions? Did you work with particular people more often than others? With whom and to what end?
3. What changes have you made to your plans since the beginning of the school year? Why were these revisions made?
4. What else do you want to learn in regards to teaching ELLs? How could you proceed in learning about those topics?
5. What has been the most helpful this year so far in providing you with learning opportunities?
6. How have your professional development choices and decisions been received by your fellow teachers and administrators at the school-site and/or district level?
7. Tell me about <insert specific PD mentioned previously>.
8. Tell me about <insert specific classroom practice observed>.
9. Is there anything else I have not asked that you feel is important regarding your professional development?

Appendix F – Final teacher interview questions and prompts

1. Tell me how this term is shaping up. What changes do you expect to make to your short-term/long-term plans? What prompted these changes?
2. Reflect back on your summer planning. How do you feel about the plans you made during the summer now that you have put them into place?
3. Tell me about your students. What changes have you decided to make based on your work with them? What seems to be working? Not working? What do you think explains your conclusions? How else have your students influenced what you do in the classroom?
4. What do you feel you still need to know more about regarding the instruction of ELLs?
5. How do you feel would be the best way to learn this information?
6. Tell me about <insert specific PD mentioned previously>.
7. Tell me about <insert specific classroom practice observed>.
8. Is there anything else I have not asked that you feel is important regarding your professional development?

Appendix G – Principal/Administrator interview questions and prompts

1. Tell me about your ELL program. How are your students performing? What do you think explains the results?
2. What do you think your teachers need to know or do to teach your ELLs more effectively? How do you support their learning?
3. What opportunities did your teachers have available to them this summer? Why were these chosen?
4. Tell me about the summer. What do you think your teachers learned?
5. What are you goals for your teachers' learning? For your ELLs?
6. How do you foster collaboration between your teachers? What do you think your teachers gain from working with their colleagues?
7. Which professional development programs do you think were most needed/effective? Why?
8. What programs would you like to have made available to your teachers? How do you choose the programs your teachers can attend?
9. Tell me about this school year. What early challenges/successes have you had? Have things gone as planned? What decisions have you made in response to these factors?
10. What concerns have teachers raised regarding the ELLs in their classes? How do you plan to address these concerns?
11. What future learning opportunities would you like to see for your teachers? Why?

Appendix H – Schedule of research activities

<table>
<tr><th>Phase</th><th>Month</th><th>Research procedures</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">I</td><td>December/January</td><td>Obtain IRB application approval<br>Recruit participants<br>Visit classrooms for the first time<br>Conduct initial teacher interviews<br>Conduct initial principal interviews<br>Administer questionnaires and surveys</td></tr>
<tr><td>January</td><td>Begin classroom/planning observations<br>Collect document and artifacts</td></tr>
<tr><td>II</td><td>February - March</td><td>Conduct 2nd teacher interviews<br>Continue classroom/planning observations<br>Continue document and artifacts collection</td></tr>
<tr><td>III</td><td>April (End of Spring term)</td><td>Conduct final teacher interviews<br>Finish classroom/planning observations<br>Complete document and artifacts collection<br>Follow-up communication as needed</td></tr>
</table>

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