

FACILITATING THE TRANSITION OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS
FROM THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE TO ENGLISH

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Abstract

This research demonstrates how teachers, school division policies, and community influences facilitate the transition of middle school Limited English Proficient (LEP) students from their native language to English. Individual interviews were conducted with current ESL students, regular education teachers and ESL tutors. Data were analyzed using the Constant Comparative Method. Findings revealed that students benefit from varied instructional strategies, flexible grading, proper placement and screening. Parent involvement and home language were also found to be important in the transition process. Recommended changes to an ESL program include increased parent and community involvement, teacher training, revision and distribution of the ESL policy guide, and formation of a steering committee including parents, teachers, administrators, community members and the ESL coordinator.

I sincerely thank all committee members for their time and efforts with this paper. My chair, Dr. Travis W. Twiford, deserves special thanks for his tireless efforts and gracious support. Because of his help and guidance this process was a positive experience.

I dedicate this paper to my husband, family and friends.

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CHAPTER I

CONTEXT

My interest in the topic of English as a Second Language (ESL) surfaced while researching my family background, specifically the immigration experiences of my paternal grandparents. Through a trip to Ellis Island, internet research, and conversations with family members I was able to piece together an overview of my grandparents start in this country including their educational experiences. After this family research project I began to look at the issue of educating ESL students nationally as well as locally. This led to my current interest in how schools educate immigrant students.

The topic of ESL is an important educational topic because students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have grown significantly across the United States in recent years. According to the Survey of the States' Limited English Proficient Students & Available Educational Programs and Services 1999-2000 Summary Report, there were an estimated 4,416,580 Limited English Proficient students enrolled in public schools in 2000 (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs [NCELA], 2000). Nationwide this represents approximately 9.3% of the total public school enrollment in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Moreover, the number of LEP students grew approximately 27% from 1997 to 2000. Comparing data from 1990-1991 to 2000-01 the LEP population increased 105% nationwide with the school population increasing 12% (NCELA, 2000). In Virginia, the LEP population actually grew 342% from 1993-2003 (VDOE). The Sunny School District, subject of this study, increased at an even higher rate, with a 500% increase in LEP population from 1993-2003 (VDOE).

The current ESL population is very diverse. The NCELA report summarized data from all states and found more than four hundred languages spoken by ESL students nationwide. Spanish was reported as the native language of 77% of the ESL students. Vietnamese, Hmong, Haitian Creole, Cantonese, and Korean each represented less than 2% of LEP students and less than 10% of the total number of languages spoken by LEP students (NCELA, 2000).

The increase in the number of immigrants to the United States has had a huge impact on our nation's schools. This impact is seen in enrollment numbers, but a more significant impact is found in the demographic make-up of the schools. This shift in demographics provides many challenges for schools, including special programs, bilingual education, ESL programs, curriculum in the core classroom, cultural sensitivity programs, parent outreach programs, and partnerships with local support agencies. This challenge has been heightened with the recent passage of No Child Left Behind legislation, which states:

The purpose of Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act is to hold SEAs, LEAs and schools accountable for increases in English proficiency and core academic content knowledge for LEP students by demonstrating improvement in English proficiency and adequate yearly progress (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p.266).

Laws and Legislation

Many legislative changes have impacted LEP students. ESL began with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., which prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin where federal financial funding was provided. The Office of Civil Rights in 1970 interpreted Title VI to include the provision of language programs for LEP students, thus allowing them access to an education.

There have been many changes to immigration law; however, the one with perhaps the greatest impact on public education was the Immigration Act of 1965, 8 U.S.C. § 1101 et seq. This act abolished national origin quotas. It also placed foreign countries on equal footing with a limit of twenty thousand immigrants allowed per country per year. Immigrants with family ties and those with special work skills were given a priority. The Immigration Act of 1965 increased the number of immigrants and shifted the origin of the immigrant from Europe to Asia and Latin America.

There have been several United States Supreme Court cases on Title VI. One of particular significance is *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974). The Court in a unanimous decision held that a school system failed to comply with Title VI because it did not provide English language instruction to non-English speaking Chinese students enrolled in the system. *Lau v. Nichols* established that students with language difficulties were entitled to an education and that all public schools had to comply with the decision.

Legislation also has addressed the important issue of funding. Funding is an important issue because of the increased immigration population and the number of LEP students now being served. State and local funds are the primary source of funding for LEP services. Federal funds are not as prominent, with most federal funding provided as grants through the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs of the U.S. Department of Education as well as funding under Title III of No Child Left Behind. Title IV of the Emergency Immigrant Education Act of 1984, 20 U.S.C. § 4101, also provides money to school districts with a minimum of 500 immigrant students who have heavily impacted the school system. This funding also comes from the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs.

Most significantly, the Federal Government enacted No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in 2001. This legislation specifically addressed LEP students. The legislation included specific guidelines for identifying and teaching LEP students. However, it did not state which teaching methodology had to be used.

Teaching Methodologies

Once a student is identified as LEP, there are two basic philosophies in education for teaching these students. The first is ESL or immersion, which focuses on placing the LEP student in classes with English speaking students. By placing the student with peers, educators hope to eliminate ethnic boundaries and allow the student to assimilate the language. This concept relies on the student picking up bits and pieces of the language and then working with an instructor for formal teaching. This combination is supposed to accelerate the learning process (Rong & Preissle, 1998).

The second philosophy is referred to as bilingualism. Bilingualism is also referred to as multiculturalism or pluralism. This approach attempts to focus on the individual student prior to mainstreaming them into classes where English is the only spoken language. Small group or individual instruction is used and the teacher helps the student by teaching in their native language prior to mainstreaming into any classes. This small group time also allows the student to make a cultural transition (Rong & Preissle, 1998).

Whether a school system adheres to an ESL philosophy or a bilingual philosophy, the system identifies students in need of language assistance by using the definition of the term “limited English proficiency” (LEP) as defined by NCLB (2001):

An individual who (1) is age 3 through 21; (2) was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English and comes from an

environment where a language other than English is dominant; or (3) is a native American or Alaskan Native or is a native resident of the outlying areas and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on such individual's level of English proficiency; or (4) is migratory and whose native language is one other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individual the opportunity to learn successfully in a classroom where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in our society (p. 274).

There is an ongoing debate about which philosophy, ESL or bilingualism, best serves LEP students. The method chosen by each school district is based on the number of students they serve, financial issues, and philosophy of the school district. However, the decision is an important one because funding for the school district is tied to the progress of the students.

Purpose and Research Questions

Programs are available in public schools using either an ESL or bilingual method of teaching. My research focused on students who were in the third year of an ESL program and were enrolled in a public middle school.

The purpose of my research was to learn how teachers, school division policies, and community influences facilitated the transition of middle school Limited English Proficient students from their native language to English.

My research questions were:

1. How did the content area teachers influence the LEP student with learning English?
2. How did the ESL tutor influence the LEP student with learning English?

3. How did the school division policies influence the LEP student with learning English?
4. Which community influences assisted the LEP student with learning English?

Summary of Chapter and Dissertation Overview

Limited English Proficient students are a growing population. Each school must meet the needs of this group of students. No Child Left Behind legislation has set specific requirements for LEP students and all schools are required to comply. School systems can implement their choice of programs but NCLB will hold all school systems accountable for the results.

I focused my study on the Sunny School District's current ESL program. The population for the study was middle school ESL students who were on level three of their ESL program. The students' primary language was Spanish. Selection criteria also included enrollment in a Sunny School District school for five consecutive years. A copy of this study, including policy recommendations, will be provided to the ESL director at Sunny School District.

The research is organized into five chapters. Chapter I introduces the context and gives an overview of the problem. It also lists my research questions and the purpose of this study. Chapter II provides a current review of literature for my topic. Chapter III establishes the framework for my study. It outlines the data collection procedures and the data analysis methodology. Chapter IV reports the data collected and Chapter V synthesizes the data and provides findings and recommendations based on the synthesis.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

My research demonstrates how teachers, school division policies, and community influences facilitated the transition of middle school Limited English Proficient students from their native language to English. Included in this literature review are studies focused on similar policies, programs, instruction and community involvement. Not included in this literature review are issues dealing with the debate between ESL and bilingual education, financial issues, or legal issues. Studies I reviewed dated from 1980-present, with several studies dated prior to 1990. Although not the most recent information, these studies, prior to 1990, were included because of the relevance of the information to this topic. Much research was done in the 1980's and some of the studies have not been duplicated since that time. The studies that are included in this literature review are divided into three areas: (1) school division policies, (2) instruction, and (3) community influences.

School Division Policies

Immigrant students face many learning challenges. Some challenges are based on language, background, and culture. However, some challenges are a result of the school culture (McDonnell & Hill, 1993). Educators must recognize that immigration changes the cultural make-up of classrooms and schools. Language acquisition also has an impact on the student. According to Miller, P. & Endo, H. (2004), LEP students have to make many adjustments to their new environment. Miller & Endo (2004) call these adjustments "language shock". Language shock is the overwhelming feeling students get when adjusting to a new setting with a new language (Miller & Endo, 2004). The teacher must adapt the curriculum to help these students. To assist the teachers, the schools need to provide in-services and training for teachers

(Delado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Short & Boyson, 2000). The school districts perception of their LEP program and its students is an important part of program success. However, school districts with a positive view of their students and a desire for them to succeed may not necessarily translate into a successful second language program. Even though expectations are high, school systems oftentimes fail to deliver a successful program. Simply wanting the students to do well and having a positive staff attitude is not enough (McDonnell & Hill, 1993). For second language programs to be successful they must be a priority (Carter & Chatfield, 1986). Furthermore, the administration must have a clear vision and focus or the program will not be successful. The leadership must be committed to the program and understand the needs of the LEP students (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992).

One case study of an ESL program, Gitlin, Buendia, Crosland and Doumbia (2003) “The Production of Margin and Center: Welcoming-Unwelcoming of Immigrant Students” focused on a middle school that for research purposes was titled “Kousanar” Middle School. The researchers studied immigrants and how their school treated them. The study reviewed policies and how they had multiple effects on the students of Kousanar Middle School. I chose this study because it focused on immigration and the impact policy had on the students in the district. Kousanar School District was located in the western United States. The authors collected and used multiple types of data. The data collection outside of the classroom included observations and interviews of five ESL tutors, ten Caucasian students, the school’s ESL program director and the school principal. The purpose of the interviews was to find out how these people viewed the ESL program and their opinion of the cultural relationship in the school. The authors attended school events including faculty meetings where ESL was a topic of discussion, school assemblies, and ESL parent meetings. Documents providing information about extracurricular participation and

ESL students were analyzed. School discipline files and policies dealing with busing were also analyzed. The purpose of the various research was to look at the total experience of the ESL students at Kousanar Middle School and how the students related with school personnel and teachers as well as the community (Gitlin et al., 2003). The researchers also interviewed five members of the community, several former ESL directors and three former ESL tutors. Each member of the research team conducted more than twenty observations in the case study classroom (Gitlin et al., 2003).

Once the data were collected the analysis was based on an insider-outsider perspective. Interviews were coded individually and then the research group met together to discuss the data. When there were inconsistencies with data, discussions ensued and the group tried to identify parallels to their research (Gitlin et al., 2003).

The study's historical overview included the development of the ESL program. In 1978 the Kousanar School District began to enroll immigrants from Vietnam, Laos, and Brazil. The immigrant student population was overwhelmingly, 98%, from Southeast Asia. This population of students created challenges for the school district. The district could obtain federal funding if it started a bilingual or an ESL program that complied with federal law. However, the problems with both programs included a lack of teachers who spoke both Asian and English languages and a lack of trained personnel in ESL. When given the choice, Kousanar proceeded with an ESL program. The decision was made in part due to a lack of bilingual teachers as well as an opposition to bilingual education within the district. The program began with a high school but one year later was moved to a junior high school. The school district believed that the program would be more successful with younger students and that the program could have more of an

impact. The junior high school chosen was considered at-risk with a high number of police calls, single-parent families and free and reduced lunch participants (Gitlin et al., 2003).

While implementing the ESL program in this junior high school, the staff worked hard and was dedicated to its success. However, the other factors listed had an impact on the program and the school was closed during the 1979-80 school year. The program was then moved to another junior high school (Gitlin et al., 2003, p.13). The district decided to place the program at a predominately Caucasian school with a high socioeconomic status. Due to the high housing prices in the area, the school had experienced a decline in enrollment and was in danger of being closed. The addition of the ESL students helped to increase the enrollment numbers and provided a sound reason for housing the program at this school (Gitlin et al., 2003).

In 1982 the ESL program began at Kousanar with sixty students in the seventh and eighth grades. The students were placed into one of four levels based on their English proficiency. The highest level of student was mainstreamed and the lowest level was kept in self-contained classes. The ESL classrooms were housed in the outermost wing of the school, separated from a majority of the students (Gitlin et al., 2003).

Most teachers were open to the addition of the ESL program at Kousanar, however, 30% were openly opposed to the program. During an interview with the first ESL director, much of the opposition was based in racial prejudice. Over time these teachers left the school. The interviews of the teachers and directors showed from the beginning a conflict with the ESL students joining Kousanar. Student location in the building and teachers not being provided with adequate teaching materials were some of the concerns. Several of those interviewed referred to the new students as “strangers” entering their “all White middle class school.” The policies as implemented at the school level did not support these students. (Gitlin et al., 2003).

This study also focused on the response from the community. Both sides of the issue were represented. Many citizens openly supported the program in a positive way. These citizens viewed diversity as a positive thing and fostered the addition of the program. On the other side, some community members held to stereotypes and disregarded the cultural background of the new students. An outreach program was implemented in 1981 through a grant. This program was viewed in a positive way by the administration; however, stereotypes were used to plan the programs. The choice of activities impeded the success of the program. Several examples of stereotypes driving the program were activities that involved eating fortune cookies or hitting a piñata. These gestures fell short of making a real difference and simply perpetuated stereotypes. This research showed no real connection between the students and the community. The programs fell short and missed an opportunity for the community to learn something from the students (Gitlin et al., 2003).

The practices of the school in welcoming and unwelcoming students carried to the cafeteria and to the busses. Most of the ESL students had little interaction with the other students at Kousanar Junior High. Given this fact, few friendships were forged. Therefore, when it came time for lunch the ESL students grouped together and the Caucasian students grouped together. There was little interaction. Because the program served the entire school system, many of the ESL students were bussed in from other areas. The population of the students on the bus was predominately ESL, further separating the ESL students from the regular population (Gitlin et al., 2003).

The discipline policies at Kousanar remained unchanged. An administrator expressed in an interview that culture had nothing to do with discipline. According to this administrator, the culture of a student did not have an impact on their school experience. Highlighted was the

administrator's view that there were no problems at the school prior to the ESL venue change. Therefore, the opinion of the administrator was that strict discipline was needed to keep the peace within the school and that the ESL students were a perceived problem (Gitlin et al., 2003).

Interviews with the teachers provided additional insight into the unwelcoming of the ESL students. Although all faculty members agreed to lower class numbers in the ESL classroom, they did not want any additional burdens placed on them. These teachers argued that the curriculum would be watered down if too many ESL students were mainstreamed into the regular classrooms. Some of the non-ESL tutors recommended returning the ESL students to their home schools. Given that the ESL students would stay in the building, the overall opinion was to continue to keep them segregated within Kousanar Junior High (Gitlin et al., 2003).

This qualitative study shed light on the challenges facing ESL students. It examined the concerns of administrators, teachers and community members. The results showed discrimination and prejudice. Of concern were policies that on the surface were inclusive, however, in practice were exclusive and damaging to a much-needed program. While the policies established by the school district focused on inclusion and support of ESL students the way the school administration implemented these policies was not consistent with the policy goals. The author posed a methodological question: "If we as researchers are to understand the complex and subtle effects of schooling on immigrant students, how should our gaze be directed? The study of Kousanar Middle School indicates that some study should be directed outside the classroom." (Gitlin et al., 2003, p.19).

A second study that I included in this review is Markham's (1999) study, "Stressors and Coping Strategies of ESL tutors", which focused on the concerns of the teacher. The recommendations for policy changes were an important component of this research. This study

tied immigration and the impact a program had on teachers. The objective of this study was to identify ESL tutor stressors and the coping strategies these teachers used during teaching. The author used two research questions in this qualitative study asking: (1) what do teachers believe causes work stress; and (2) what are their coping strategies? The twelve participants were not given information about the objectives of the study to avoid any bias. The participants represented three school districts and were elementary and high school level teachers. Teachers were equally divided between urban and rural and equally divided between primary and secondary. All teachers participated in programs with Hispanic students. These programs were taught primarily in English with small portions of information presented in Spanish. All teachers participating in this study had a minimum of four years of experience. By not including first year teachers, the study was able to focus on ESL stress since the participants would not confuse the stresses associated with being a beginning teacher (Markham, 1999).

This qualitative study was conducted using an interview format. Teachers were told their identities would be kept confidential. Three open-ended questions were asked in an unstructured format. The questions were:

(1) Tell me about your typical day on the job in your school, (2) Tell me about some events in your teaching experience that you find stressful, and (3) What do you generally do to cope with job situations that you consider to be stressful? (Markham, 1999, p.270).

Follow up questions were asked to focus information and classify information (Markham, 1999). The interviews took place in the university office and lasted approximately ninety minutes (Markham, 1999).

The interviews were one portion of the data collection. The second portion of data collection was observation. The teacher participants were observed in their classroom settings

before and after the interviews. Notes were transcribed after the visits. The observer focused on classroom location, number of students, and the condition of the building and noise level.

Once all data were collected, an analysis was done to see if there were patterns within the interviews and observations. During this analysis some strands of data had no other matching information. The data were set aside awaiting a tie-in at some future point. The research questions were used as a guide to group the data collected. The researcher chose Strauss and Corbin's Grounded Theory (Markham, 1999) as the process for synthesizing the data.

The study made comparisons between elementary and high school and between rural, urban and suburban schools. The largest percentage of LEP students were found in the urban setting with 24% in the urban elementary school and 20% in the urban high school (Markham, 1999). The second ranking location was the rural group with the rural elementary school educating 21% LEP students and the rural high school educating 15% LEP students (Markham, 1999). The fewest number of LEP students were educated in a suburban school where 9% of the elementary population and 5% of the secondary population were LEP students (Markham, 1999). Research provided by NCELA in 2000, showed that 67% of all LEP students were on the elementary school level and LEP students made up 11% of the total school population (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs, 2000).

In organizing the data from the twelve teachers the author used the three questions to categorize the information. The results of the study showed many factors that caused stress among ESL tutors. Most of the participants had before or after school duties and four of the teachers had no planning bell during the day. Seven of the twelve teachers were itinerant and

split between two buildings. Among the teachers included in the study, most switched rooms during the day (Markham, 1999).

In reviewing the interview data, the stress according to the teachers did not come from the factors described above. The stress, according to the participants, came from the struggle of their students. This included the challenge their students faced to attain English proficiency and the fact that their students were behind grade level. In addition to these stresses the teachers shared that their caseloads were too high and that the administration was not supportive of their work. The author included several powerful quotes supporting these claims. Additionally ESL students often are brought to the United States from bad experiences in other countries. Not only are the ESL tutors faced with their normal challenges, but they also face emotional issues that become part of the challenge, creating additional stress. Further included as teacher stressors were a lack of instructional resources. Teachers reported that worksheets and textbooks were written for English speaking students only and these resources needed to be adapted or reformatted by the ESL tutor prior to teaching the student (Markham, 1999).

Sharing problems with others provided the only apparent outlet to vent frustrations. Ten teachers shared with another ESL tutor or an administrator. Six of the twelve shared with a non-ESL tutor or non-ESL administrator (Markham, 1999).

Although not mentioned as a stressor during the interviews, the data showed that a teacher's work environment also contributed to their stress. The teachers who served large groups of students randomly subdivided them into cluster groups. The teacher taught one cluster while the others worked independently on written work. Sometimes, floating between these groups created stress because of the challenge of keeping students on task. In some settings a paraprofessional was provided. This helped to alleviate some of the stress (Markham, 1999).

A lack of planning time in itself was cited as a reason for stress. However, the lack of planning during the day had several results. First, the teacher felt rushed and subsequently took work home for completion. The second equally important result was a lack of time to work collaboratively and socialize with other staff members. This socialization was markedly one of the most important aspects of relieving stress (Markham, 1999).

Policy recommendations were further included as part of the study. The recommendations were made to administrators and personnel who worked with ESL tutors. Recommendations included a need for support from administration. A second recommendation was to group students according to ability level and to not mix the groups of students. The diverse mix of students created a stressful environment for the ESL tutor where they were pulled in too many directions. The result was a feeling that they were not meeting with success. Recommendations were made to use volunteers in the classroom to help supervise group work. The author also recommended, when possible, that schools divide large groups of students by level of language ability into smaller classes where students are grouped according to their LEP ability level. According to the authors of this report, this grouping would alleviate the stress of the teacher and more quickly prepare ESL students for mainstreaming (Markham, 1999).

The study showed no statistically significant differences between rural and urban teachers as it related to their stressors. There was also no real difference between the grade levels of the teacher. The author did not provide limitations to the study (Markham, 1999).

A third study I included in this review is a study by Dewring, DeCorby and Ichikawa. In that study, the researchers collected data by interviewing teachers and students about the ESL program at their school (Derwing, T. M., DeCorby, E. & Ichikawa, J., 1999). Fifteen ESL students were used for in depth interviews. Six core content teachers and five ESL tutors were

also interviewed. The study was conducted to research the drop-out rates of ESL students. The study also focused on student and teacher perceptions of the ESL program. In addition to the interviews, the researchers also reviewed records of 556 ESL high school students beginning in 1991 and ending in 1996. Students who had not yet graduated were not included in the study. After removing these students the study focused on 516 students. A review of the records showed that only 54% of ESL students completed the requirements for graduation (Derwing et al., 1999).

Interviews with teachers suggested a lack of respect for the ESL tutor as well as negative feelings from content area teachers about placement of the ESL students into their classes (Derwing et al., 1999). Core content teachers suggested that including these students as part of their class would result in lower test scores (Derwing et al., 1999). Interviews with students revealed a fear of being kicked out because of age caps regardless of the level of English proficiency. Students also expressed concerns about how they were treated; citing examples of feeling excluded from the general population of students. Students expressed a need to connect with their teachers and a need for one-on-one contact. Students shared that they felt unwelcome by their teachers (Derwing et al., 1999). Several student comments specifically cited examples of staff members' unwillingness to teach immigrant students (Derwing et al., 1999). The authors recommended smaller class sizes for these students, teacher training, and additional planning time to adapt the curriculum for the needs of ESL students (Derwing et al., 1999). As found by Lucas (2000) and Datnow (2003), professional development is an important part of a successful ESL program (Lucas, 2000; Datnow, 2003).

In a book titled *Multilingual Education in Practice*, Shaw (2003) shared guidelines for helping LEP students. These guidelines were used for planning all aspects of the school program.

The guidelines included:

(1) Establishing an inclusive climate, (2) developing a consistent framework for assessment and instructional practices, (3) valuing multicultural and multilingual literature and materials by teachers and students, (4) providing students with meaningful experiences through which to develop their language abilities, and (5) building informed home-school partnerships. (Shaw, p. 99).

According to Shaw (2003), school policies were an integral part of the success of an LEP program. The school division had to set clear guidelines for implementation of LEP programs. Strong leadership at the school level helped to facilitate the relationship between the community and the school.

The studies in this section show that LEP students face a variety of challenges. Oftentimes, school policies designed to assist this special population have the opposite impact. ESL tutors face unique job struggles. The job struggles as well as the attitudes within the building can impact the LEP program.

Instruction

Included in this section are studies that address effective teaching practices for LEP students. These effective practices include thematic teaching, use of prior knowledge, simplifying speech, cooperative learning, use of visuals, learning strategies and use of feedback. According to a study by Delgado, Gaitan and Trueba (1991), all areas of instruction are important for acquiring a new language. As found in the study, the teacher must modify the curriculum and adapt their teaching style to better assist these students (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991).

High Expectations for Students

Christina Igoa wrote a book about immigrant students and their experiences. Igoa (1995) stated, “We need to humanize our classrooms to best teach our students and facilitate the development of literacy, which is the most self-empowering skill a child can gain in school” (Igoa, pg.9). Researchers have found that high expectations for students set by the teacher are keys to a successful program (Igoa, 1995; Carter & Chatfield, 1986; Reyes, 1992; Grey, 1990).

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies was the focus of a study titled “Children’s Learning Strategies in Language Immersion Classrooms” (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999). This study focused on specific learning strategies that increased English proficiency levels of LEP students. Fourteen immersion teachers and their students were observed. The classes ranged in grade from kindergarten through sixth grade. Not all grades were represented in the study. The schools were chosen from the suburbs of Washington, D.C. The classrooms included Japanese, Spanish and French immersion programs. The students chosen generally had native English speaking families (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999).

This study was part of a six-year longitudinal study. The research questions included:

- (a) Which learning strategies are used by more effective and less effective learners in elementary foreign language immersion programs?
- (b) Do these strategies change over time, and if so, how?
- (c) Do students who use learning strategies more frequently perceive themselves as more effective language learners when compared to students who use strategies less frequently?
- (d) Do students who use learning strategies more frequently also rate higher in language proficiency than students who use them less frequently (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999, p.321).

Data collection included annual think-aloud protocols, classroom visits, observations, questionnaires and teacher interviews. Using the think-aloud process, teachers asked the ESL students what they were thinking about as they completed activities or participated in class. This was a labor-intensive process for the teachers. Chamot and El-Dinary (1999) found that a student might not share exactly what they were thinking, which would produce inaccurate data. The think-aloud interviews were taped and then transcribed (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999).

This study used a coding system to identify strategies used by students in immersion programs. The research provided evidence that first grade students were able to describe their thoughts clearly and in detail. Students were classified as high level or low level based on their ability to decode and use background knowledge. Both high and low level students used twice as many strategies for reading than for writing. Not surprising was that low-rated students focused more on phonics during reading and the decoding of words. Higher-level students relied on their own experiences and background (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999).

There was not a significant statistical difference between low-rated and high-rated students in looking at the strategy they used. However, when comparing high and low-rated students, high-rated students used more strategies than low-rated students. The study showed that 21% of high-rated students used strategies and 7% of low rated students used strategies. The researcher also shared that a low-rated student had a difficult time moving from a strategy that was not working to one that might work. Higher rated students tended to skip over unfamiliar words when reading without getting flustered. Lower rated students were easily confused and disrupted (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999).

Overall, the study made suggestions about learning strategies. All of the strategies were found to be useful at different times. However, most important was the finding that strategies

might be more or less useful based on the level of learning of the student (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999).

The process of asking what someone was thinking provided a limitation to this study. A person's thoughts were not directly observable and might have given unreliable information. As part of the think-aloud procedure students might not be able to describe accurately their thought processes or might choose not to share any information at all (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999).

In one ethnographic study by Harklau (1994) the issue of speech was addressed. The study documented four Chinese students who were enrolled in ESL programs. Chinese students were chosen as the sample because the number of Chinese enrolled was significantly higher, representing one-third of the minority population (Harklau, 1994). The study followed the students from enrollment through the stages of the ESL program. The study focused on all aspects of the ESL program. Data were collected through observations, interviews with students, teachers, and faculty members. Many comparisons were made between the ESL classroom setting and the mainstream classroom setting. Harklau conducted a study titled "ESL Versus Mainstream Classes: Contrasting L2 Learning Environments." This study was important because it demonstrated specific learning strategies and their effectiveness in a mainstream class. This study focused on Chinese students moving from an ESL classroom into mainstream classes (Harklau, 1994).

Chinese students were chosen because this nationality was the predominant nationality within the ESL population. Of the Chinese student population, four students were chosen for the study. The study took place in the re-named "Gateview High School" which was located in San Francisco. The students attending the school represented a variety of nationalities and economic backgrounds. The LEP population of the school was fewer than 100 with an overall school

population of 1,600 students. The students were followed from four to seven semesters beginning in the ESL and moving to the mainstream classes. Samples of schoolwork were collected and reviewed. Formal interviews were conducted with each student. Observations were also completed by the researcher (Harklau, 1994).

The research showed several things about how ESL students learned. Harklau found that the speed of the teacher talking impacted the learning of the student. Students also had difficulty with teachers who rapidly transitioned to another side topic while explaining or sharing other information (Harklau, 1994). While observing the mainstream setting Harklau also found that students were confused when teachers used sarcasm or puns in their speech. Students sat quietly during the times that other students were laughing or showing a reaction to the teacher's comments. Harklau also noted an increased frustration by students when the teacher spoke at a rapid pace or used complicated or technical vocabulary. A related problem was teachers who switched subjects or did not stay focused on one topic for an extended period of time (Harklau, 1994). Harklau also noted while observing the ESL tutor that the tutor clearly made a point to slow down and make sure that students comprehended what she was saying (Harklau, 1994).

According to Harklau (1994), mainstream teachers were hesitant to push LEP students for a response. During observations of classes Harklau noted that mainstream teachers called on non-LEP students more often than LEP students. Harklau noted that when teachers called out for a response from the class, the LEP students seldom responded, not wanting to compete with non-LEP students who yelled over them, even when they had the correct answer (Harklau 1994). Smith (2004) concluded that the LEP student benefited academically from interacting with the teacher and with their peers. Smith (2004) recommended including the LEP student in classroom

conversations and allowing delay time for the student to check a dictionary or compose their thoughts.

In a similar study, Reyes (1992) found that LEP students were successful when the teacher corrected them during the classroom lesson. Reyes (1992) recommended that the correction be relayed without delay. The teacher should be sensitive to the student while correcting the mistake (Reyes, 1992).

Most ESL students are mainstreamed into average classes. However, Harklau's study revealed that ESL students benefit greatly from the increased verbal exchanges in the advanced classes. The variation of teaching methods also engaged the ESL students. One observation during the study was that teachers were hesitant to call on the ESL students. A reason for this was that non-ESL students more quickly and eagerly volunteered to answer questions. Another reason was that teachers did not want to put these students on the spot and therefore did not call on them to answer questions orally (Harklau, 1994).

Teaching Methods

Harklau uncovered many helpful teaching methodologies that assisted ESL students. For example, the use of simplified transitions, such as numbering points in a lecture, assisted the ESL student with sequence. Writing out new words also assisted the student with learning new vocabulary. According to Harklau, it is also important to allow ESL students time to talk and work in groups. This interaction helps to expedite the learning process. The ESL program at the school in Harklau's study used a thematic teaching instruction to help the students. Thematic teaching is a learning strategy that uses multiple content areas to teach one topic. Harklau (1994) recommended a content-area approach to teaching. This method of grouping topics worked well with LEP students in both the ESL and mainstream classes. As also found by Anstrom (1997,

1999), thematic teaching is an effective way to link multiple topics and expand the knowledge base of students.

A report from the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning shared case studies on eight effective schools that served LEP students. Schools were chosen by nomination from experts in the area of LEP at various levels. One hundred and fifty-six schools were nominated. Of this group, 75 schools were chosen for phone interviews. The group was then narrowed to 25 schools based on the results of the phone interviews. The group was further narrowed to 15 schools based on geography and other issues. Researchers visited the 15 schools to collect further information that would assist with the selection of eight schools. Eight final schools were chosen and case studies were completed for each school. In Del Norte Heights Elementary School in El Paso, Texas, students were taught a language arts lesson that integrated math into the lesson. This skill assisted the students in understanding multiple concepts and how they linked to one another (Berman, P., Minicucci, C., McLaughlin, B., Nelson, B. & Woodworth, K. (1995).

Berman et al. (1995) cited eight examples of exemplary school districts. Each case study gave a summary of findings for the school. Findings for each of the eight schools showed that the schools, districts and teachers placed LEP students as a priority. Each of the school districts set high goals for their students and provided support for them to reach the goals (Berman et al., 1995).

Berman et al. (1995) cited several examples of successful LEP programs. Of the eight case studies listed, eight mentioned school leadership as one of the components of a successful LEP program. Each of these schools focused on LEP students and prioritized the program (Berman et al., 1995). As part of the case study, Berman et al., (1995) found that good leadership

involved the ability to change and adapt a program as needed, being flexible with scheduling and staff (Berman et al., 1995).

A case study of Horrace Mann Academic Middle School in California showed examples of using prior student knowledge and experiences to connect with current curriculum. During group projects students were asked to share prior experiences as a basis for the social studies lesson (Berman et al., 1995). Students sharing prior experiences were found to be an effective way to engage LEP students (Krashen, Terrell, 1983; Penfield, 1987).

At Harold Wiggs Middle School in Texas the teacher was careful about maintaining eye contact with students as a check for understanding. She spoke clearly and was careful about pronunciation of words. When introducing new vocabulary she spoke slowly to allow students time to process the new word. Speaking clearly and slowly has been found an effective way to assist LEP students with learning English (Sosa, 2000; Meyer, 2000; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). The teacher also allowed students to guess at the meanings of new words as a way to encourage breaking words into smaller parts to derive meaning (Berman et al., 1995).

Also at Harold Wiggs Middle School in Texas, the teacher asked students to repeat statements to clarify student understanding. She encouraged students to express their opinions verbally and gave many chances for interaction within the classroom (Berman et al., 1995). Sosa (2000) found that defining confusing terminology or abstract concepts in this way was helpful. According to Sosa (2000), some LEP students have particular difficulty with American expressions (Sosa, 2000). Meyer (2000) and Reyes (1994) recommended that a teacher always be aware of their choice of vocabulary and make sure they are clear, checking for understanding and re-teaching when necessary.

Berman et al. (1995) provided several examples of the use of visuals as an effective

teaching tool for LEP students. One teacher at Hollibrook Elementary School shared cutout pictures of language arts vocabulary words. This visual representation assisted students with making the connection and the students easily understood the new vocabulary. Several other examples of visuals included the use of pottery and pictures for a social studies lesson and the use of maps for an English lesson (Berman et al., 1995).

Research also shows that all instruction should not come directly from the teachers; students should have opportunities to work in small groups. According to the research, this interaction often takes more time, but LEP students will progress at a faster rate using this method (Krashen & Terrell 1983, p. 124-127 and Harklau, 1994, Reyes 1992). Berman et al. (1995) shared an excellent example of cooperative learning at Hollibrook Elementary School in Houston, Texas. Students were successful working in groups on thematic lessons. The success of the cooperative learning was based on assigned jobs within groups for each student and a rotation of groups within the classroom. The rotation allowed all students to work together and for LEP students to work with every student, not growing dependent on a small group of classmates. Cooperative learning groups also gave LEP students an opportunity to interact with their peers.

In a study by Duff (2001), observations were the primary source of collecting data. The study focused on high school students in social studies classes. During classroom observations, Duff found that teachers did not have enough time to work one-on-one with the ESL students. These students often sat without receiving any assistance. When the teacher did find time to assist an ESL student, non-ESL students became disruptive and off-task (Duff, 2001). In the same study the observations showed that ESL students worked successfully in groups. According to the study, cooperative learning groups appeared to be a good way for ESL students to interact

with others in a non-threatening setting. However, when a goal of group work was a presentation, the ESL student appeared to withdraw, not wanting to speak in front of the class (Duff, 2001).

A study by Olivo (2003) focused on the concept of talking in the classroom, specifically, students talking without a set purpose as a way of learning the English language. This ethnographic study aptly titled “Quit talking and learn English!?: Conflicting Language Ideologies in ESL classroom” focused on the limitations of one ESL program. In this study, the structure of an ESL program in Canada did not allow for unstructured conversation within the classroom. Olivo (2003) suggested that less structured ESL programs would result in positive language gains for students. Olivo found that unstructured talk within the classroom was worthwhile and advanced the language ability of the student.

Mainstream teachers offered several positive suggestions about how to serve students in the mainstream classroom. One teacher grouped students together in pairs to offer assistance to the LEP student with classroom procedures and general questions (Penfield, 1987). Another successful instructional tool was peer tutoring (Penfield, 1987; Anstrom, 1999).

Anstrom encouraged cooperative learning as a positive instructional tool for LEP students. She recommended, however, that groups be structured with a balance of LEP and English speaking students as well as a balance of LEP students on different English learning levels (Anstrom, 1999).

Based on the foregoing studies, effective LEP instruction is a result of multiple influences. The school division must set high expectations for the students. Moreover, good LEP instruction integrates multiple learning strategies and requires a good working relationship between the teachers and the school administration.

Community Influences

Cassity & Harris (2000) surveyed 20 parents of middle school ESL students about parent involvement. Parents were chosen from a group of 50 middle school ESL students at a school called Thomas J. Rusk Middle School in Texas. These 50 parents were sent a survey and of the surveys sent, twenty-three were returned. The school had a total population of 1,000 students. This school experienced a growth in the Hispanic population of students during a five-year period. The parents were asked, “to identify all those motivators and inhibitors that affect their involvement levels” (Cassity & Harris, 2000, p. 58). The top three results for motivators were (1) inquiry about their child’s behavior, (2) a desire to meet the teachers, and (3) showing they are committed to their child’s learning. The top three inhibitors were (1) transportation issues, (2) time constraints, and (3) staffing available at the school to assist them in their primary language.

The parents surveyed shared that they would like to know about community resources available to assist their students. They also wanted to know specific ways they could reinforce what the students learned in school. Also included in the study were recommendations for schools. One recommendation for school administration was to send correspondence home in the native language and to visit the home to establish a relationship with the family. Another recommendation was for the school to work with local churches and community groups to offer programs for parents. Providing transportation was an important goal for the school since it was named as one of the top inhibitors when parents tried to participate in school activities (Cassity & Harris, 2000).

The study provided several recommendations for schools. One suggestion was to use the community to assist LEP students. Churches and community associations were found to be possible resources. According to the study, schools should set parent conferences at various

times during the year and at convenient times during the day to facilitate busy schedules. If transportation is an issue, the school should provide rides so that parents can be active participants in their child's education. Use of the native language of the parent in written correspondence was also recommended (Cassity & Harris, 2001).

The focus of a study by Olmedo (2003) was on mothers of Latino students. The study gathered data from two sources. The first set of data was collected from four interviews with the mothers of LEP students. These mothers were between the ages of 30 and 45. The interviewer used open-ended questions to obtain information. A focus of these interviews was how the parents participated in the schooling of their children. Another focus was the struggle between the family values and the exposure their students received at school that directly conflicted with their home values. The second portion of the study was an ethnographic study of six grandmothers with great grandchildren enrolled in the school system. The ethnographic study, which was conducted over a full year, chose women between the ages of 66 and 81. Both study groups had participated in a family literacy project in Chicago. The final two interviews were conducted with the teachers at the literacy workshop where the participants attended classes. Also included were informal interviews with teachers at different schools to discuss the parent expectations at their schools.

Parents shared that the values of the school were very different from the values taught at home. The parents felt that in some cases the school did not understand the family culture. One example focused on a change in the school attendance policy. This change impacted the Latino community because Latino students were often absent for weeks at a time. According to the mothers, the absences were necessary to travel to Mexico for funerals or family business. Parents received a letter from the school explaining the new procedures, which would result in non-credit

for a class as well as an explanation of the legal aspect of the truancy. One mother was offended by the tone of the letter, which specifically referenced legal ramifications due to absences. She felt that a decision to hold her child out of school should be a parent's choice and not a legal issue (Olmedo, 2003).

Data from the study showed that the parents expressed a desire and need to assist in the classroom. One mother explained that it was necessary to help in the classroom so that if you needed to complain about an issue later, you had more respect from the administration (Olmedo, 2003). Volunteering also helped the parent better understand how the school ran and the policies of the school (Olmedo, 2003; Markham, 1999).

A study by Penfield (1987) revealed that there was much animosity between the mainstream teachers and the ESL tutors. This was particularly true when mainstream teachers were asked about parent communication with the ESL students. Respondents overwhelmingly said that it was the job of the ESL tutor to communicate with the parent. It was also noted that mainstream teachers expected the ESL tutor to be present during parent teacher conferences (Penfield, 1987). This impacted the relationship between the core content teacher and the parent (Penfield, 1987).

One case study of a California school (Carter & Chatfield, 1986) showed clear community involvement and support of LEP programs within the school. It showed the school as the center of the community, with a mutually beneficial relationship between the citizens and the school. As a further extension of support, the school adopted a "Community School Committee." This committee offered school guidance programs, classes to parents, and encouraged school involvement (Carter & Chatfield, 1986).

Berman et al. (1995) reported on one school as having an exemplary community outreach program. Parents were involved in all levels of the school and volunteered to assist with activities after school as well as during the school day. The program included a “bilingual home liaison.” The liaison was a parent with a student currently enrolled at the school. This parent assisted the non-English speaking parents with school questions and assisted other parents with learning English. The liaison also encouraged parent participation at school events by reminding parents of important meetings and conferences.

The research in this section showed that parent involvement can be impacted by a variety of factors. This research suggests that schools should use all resources and encourage parent involvement. It also suggests that learning about the culture of the immigrant population is helpful in assisting these students.

Summary

The success of an ESL student will require support from the teacher, school and parent (Cummins, 1986). A review of literature provides many suggestions for classroom instruction. These suggestions provide guidelines for LEP and regular education teachers. School district policies driven by high expectations will result in student learning. Schools should implement policies that reflect that the ESL program is a priority for the school district. These policies should include small class sizes and inclusion of the ESL program within the school program. The community must feel that it is part of the student’s education. Parent involvement is integral. Factors impeding parental involvement, such as transportation and correspondence that is not in the parent’s primary language, should be removed.

The review of research uncovered several specific guidelines for successful ESL instruction including speaking slower, repeating information, and allowing for cooperative group

work. The research also revealed how school policies can impact a second language program. It is important for schools to make their program a top priority and support the program with adequate staffing and communication with ESL tutors. This literature review also showed the importance of community and parent support. Schools must make sure that they ask for assistance from these groups by communicating with parents, providing transportation to meetings, and by providing assistance with school communication. Without support from all areas, including the teacher, school division, and community, the transition for the ESL student will be more difficult. The number of LEP students is increasing each year and all educators must make the education of these students a top priority.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

As previously stated, the purpose of this research is to show how teachers, school division policies, and community influences facilitate the transition of middle school Limited English Proficient students from their native language to English. I studied a school district with a population of 40,000 students located in the mid-Atlantic region. For the purpose of this study I will refer to this district as Sunny School District. I reviewed the current district program using interviews with teachers and students as well as a review of district policies to discover how the ESL students in this district learned English. The research questions were:

1. How did the content area teachers influence the LEP student with learning English?
2. How did the ESL tutor influence the LEP student with learning English?
3. How did the school division policies influence the LEP student with learning English?
4. Which community influences assisted the LEP student with learning English?

Population and Samples

Five students were randomly selected from a list of twenty-six students currently enrolled in a middle school level three ESL program in the Sunny School District. Selection criteria included (1) middle school student, (2) level three English proficiency, (3) Spanish speaking as the primary language of the student, and (4) enrollment for five consecutive years within the Sunny School District. The director of ESL instruction for Sunny School District provided one list of level three middle school students meeting the selection criteria. She randomly chose from cards numbered one to five. She randomly chose the number five for the student count. The number on the card was used as a count to select five student names from a list, counting every

fifth name to include in the sample. Demographic information for each student was gathered using the data provided in the cumulative file.

Six ESL tutors were randomly selected from a list provided by the director of ESL instruction for Sunny School District. This was a cumulative list of all middle school ESL tutors randomly listed. The ESL director again chose from cards numbered one to five. The director randomly chose the number four. The number on the card was used as a count to select four ESL tutor names from a list, counting every fourth name to include in the sample. During the research process several teachers chosen for the sample declined to be interviewed. One teacher chosen for the sample was no longer employed by the Sunny School District. All ESL tutors were willing to participate in the study and were interviewed.

Regular education teachers were randomly selected from lists provided by the principals at Sunny School District. In a letter to the principals of each school I requested a list of teachers who serve ESL students in their classrooms. I took all teacher names provided by the principals and constructed one master list of teachers with names randomly listed. The ESL coordinator for Sunny School District chose from cards numbered one to five. The coordinator selected the number five which was used as a count to select five regular education teacher names. The number on the card was used as a count to select five teacher names from a list, counting every fifth name to include in the sample. Teachers and students working and attending my school were not included in the study. But, teachers and students working and attending the school where I am employed were used to validate interview questions. The number of participants chosen for the sample was adequate for the purposes of this study because a saturation point was reached within each set of interviews. I used guidelines provided by Lincoln & Guba (1985) as a

guideline for deciding the point where new information was no longer being introduced. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

A copy of the approved prospectus was submitted to the Supervisor of Student Services (see Appendix A for request letter) at Sunny School District. After receiving a letter of approval from the Supervisor of Student Services I completed the application for Virginia Polytechnic and State University IRB to request approval. After receiving approval from both groups I began to collect the data for the study.

Instruments

Individual interviews were conducted with the students, regular education teachers and ESL tutors randomly selected to participate in the study. I obtained parent permission to interview each student and to review cumulative folders for each student (see Appendix B for parent permission letter). Parent permission forms were provided in both English and Spanish. Student permission was included with the parent permission form. A letter explaining the study was sent to the school principal prior to scheduling interviews (see Appendix C for principal permission letter). I obtained permission from each principal where interviews were scheduled within the school building. I obtained permission from each teacher prior to conducting an interview (see Appendix D for teacher permission letter). All signed permission forms are on file.

The student and teacher questionnaires were designed using the research questions (see Appendixes E and F for interview questions). The questionnaires included a “grand tour” question (Spradley, 1979, p. 86). Also included in the interview protocol were more focused questions intended to illicit responses relevant to each research question (Siedman, 1998). The student interview questionnaire was assessed to confirm the correct readability level. Grade level

readability of the questions were assessed using the Short Passage Readability Formula by Edward Fry (1989). The Short Passage Readability formula placed the student questionnaire at a fifth grade reading level.

All interviews were audio taped. Planned interview questions were used as well as follow-up questions as needed. After each interview I completed a member check by reviewing the information with the student or providing teachers a copy of the transcript. There were no changes to the transcripts as a result of the member checks. A pilot test of the student interviews was conducted using an ESL student not chosen for the sample. A pilot test of the teacher interviews was conducted using ESL tutors not chosen for the sample. The participants for the pilot tests were chosen from my home school. These interviews provided practice with procedures and transcribing information. Minor changes to the questions as a result of the pilot tests were made prior to the main interviews.

The teacher questions were presented to a group of twelve teachers within my school building for validation of the teacher survey questions. The validation survey provided information about the domain for each question as well as the clarity of each question (See Table 1). The goal for validating the instrument was 80% of the questions being accurately placed within the correct domain and that the questions were clear and easy to understand. All questions were placed within the correct domain with percentages ranging from 83% to 100% for each of the ten questions. The clarity for each question ranged between 4.5 and 5.0 on a Likert Scale ranging from one to five.

The student questions were presented to a group of fifteen teachers within my school building for validation of the student questions. The validation survey provided information about the domain for each question as well as the clarity of each question (See Table 2). The goal

for validating the instrument was 80% of the questions being accurately placed within the correct domain and that the questions were clear and easy to understand. All questions were placed within the correct domain with percentages ranging from 80% to 100% for each of the fifteen questions. The clarity of each question ranged between 4.6 and 5.0 on a Likert Scale ranging from one to five.

Table 1

Validation Chart for Teacher Interview Questions

Question	Percentage Correct	Clarity
1	100%	5
2	100%	4.75
3	100%	4.91
4	83%	4.91
5	91%	4.83
6	83%	4.5
7	100%	4.91
8	100%	5
9	100%	5
10	83%	5

A review of the current Sunny School District policies was a part of this study. This included a review of the instructional guidelines of the program as well as a summary of the ESL policy guide. After these policies were summarized they were sorted by domain and included in the final analysis.

Table 2

Validation Chart for Student Interview Questions

Question	Percentage Correct	Clarity
1	100%	4.86
2	100%	4.66
3	86%	4.66
4	86%	4.73
5	93%	4.73
6	86%	4.73
7	93%	4.80
8	80%	4.86
9	100%	4.86
10	100%	4.80
12	100%	4.66
13	93%	5.0
14	86%	4.73
15	100%	4.73

A review of the students' cumulative records was also included in this study. Relevant information pertaining to instruction was noted in a research journal. This included teacher notes and documentation. Cumulative record references did not reference students by name. The student cumulative record was also used to verify selection criteria for inclusion in this study.

Scoring

Scoring was done using the Constant Comparative Method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The data analysis was divided into several parts. After each interview the audiotape of the interview was transcribed and member checks were performed. The transcripts were coded by page number and by letters assigned to each participant. These codes were placed in the upper right-hand corner of the page. After completing, transcribing, and coding each interview I then reviewed all transcripts and identified units of meaning within the data. Each unit of meaning was able to stand on its own without additional explanation. With a red pen I drew lines after each unit of meaning. This process divided each line of the transcript into separate units of meaning. The next step in my process was to review each unit of meaning and in the left margin mark the page of the transcript and the letter assigned to the participant. I also added a notation referencing the name of the school.

The next step of the process involved cutting the transcripts on the red lines and attaching the strips to colored cards. These cards were moved to a vacant classroom, which I used for the sole purpose of manipulating the data cards using the walls. Included in the room was large chart paper. The chart paper was used to list trends with phrases, words and topics that were noted during the review of the data. Using the chart paper I exhausted all ideas pulled from the data. This “discovery sheet” was used as the first step in the data analysis. Also posted on chart paper was a list of the research questions and the purpose of this study. With the individual cards I used the Constant Comparative Method of analyzing data. As a first step in this process, I read each card, titled a category, and placed it under the category. As I read each additional card, I either placed it in a current category or started a new category. During this process I compared each card or unit to all other units of data to find similar meanings or themes. Data that fit into more

than one category were photocopied on pink paper, a new card was made, and then the two cards were placed in two separate categories. A star was noted on the original card with a notation of where I split the data. As categories emerged, rules of inclusion and exclusion were specified and written above each category. These rules were later reworded as proposition statements.

After all data had been placed in categories, all cards were reread and categories were split or merged depending on the review of the data. According to Maykut & Morehouse (1994) the rule for reviewing categories is that cards grouped in each category should be distinctly similar. The cards in each category should be distinctly different from all other categories. After categories were set, all cards were coded and listed under their new category. Beginning from left to right each category was assigned a number. Each card in that category was marked with that number using a green pen in the right corner of the card. This procedure was repeated for each set of interviews.

Next, I reviewed the Sunny School District policy guide and summarized the findings of the review. These summaries were typed and the same procedure was followed. These findings were printed on colored paper to signify that they were policy guidelines. I separated the information into categories using a red pen and cut the pieces apart. I sorted this data also using the Constant Comparative Method.

Notes from students' cumulative records as well as other relevant notes transcribed in the research journal were summarized. The information was typed and the same procedure was followed. These findings were printed on colored paper so I knew they were cumulative record and research journal information. I separated the information into categories using a red pen and cut the pieces apart. Again, I sorted this data using the Constant Comparative Method.

Once all data were placed in a category I wrote proposition statements with selection criteria describing each grouping of data. These proposition statements clarified the meaning of each category and served as guidelines for organizing and reporting data into units.

Validity

Interviews conducted with ESL students, classroom teachers and ESL tutors provided the basis for the research. This research included a review of the Sunny School District documents as well as notes from student record reviews. This variety of research sources served to triangulate the data.

Analytical Procedures

After the single case analysis the themes were cross-cased to find similarities and differences. A matrix was used to record the data for each response. Cross-case analysis results will be presented for each research question. Findings are presented case by case. Information for each case includes cumulative record notations, results of interviews, and any policy guide references.

CHAPTER IV

REPORT OF FINDINGS

This chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section gives a brief overview of the process. The next four sections provide summaries of interviews for content area teachers, ESL tutors, students and community. These four sections are followed by a summary of the ESL policy guide. The chapter concludes with a summary of common themes that emerged from the interviews and policy guide review.

Overview of Process

The purpose of this research is to show how teachers, school division policies, and community influences facilitate the transition of middle school Limited English Proficient students from their native language to English. I studied a school district with a population of 40,000 students. For the purpose of this study I refer to this district as Sunny School District. I reviewed the current program using interviews with teachers and students as well as a review of policies to discover how the ESL students in this district learned English. The research questions were:

1. How did the content area teachers influence the LEP student with learning English?
2. How did the ESL tutor influence the LEP student with learning English?
3. How did the school division policies influence the LEP student with learning English?
4. Which community influences assisted the LEP student with learning English?

Individual interviews were conducted with students, regular education teachers and ESL tutors selected to participate in the study. The student and teacher questionnaires were designed using the research questions (see Appendixes E and F for interview questions). The student interview questionnaires were assessed to confirm the correct readability level.

Scoring was done using the Constant Comparative Method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Interviews conducted with ESL students, classroom teachers, and ESL tutors provided a basis for the research. This research included a review of the Sunny School District documents as well as notes from student record reviews. This variety of research sources served to triangulate the data. Triangulation of the data was used to show how themes emerged from a variety of sources that supported or failed to support similar data.

Summary of Content Teacher's Comments

Five content area teachers were interviewed for this study. The data were sorted into provisional groups. This initial sort resulted in twenty-one provisional groups (Table 3). The provisional groups evolving from this initial sort included between one and seven responses per provisional group. During this step of the process the goal was to pull apart the interviews and sort comments into individual groups. The discovery sheet was used as a guide for the initial groupings. This process resulted in a detailed inventory of the data. The cards included in each provisional group were named with a standard phrase.

The data were organized in the table as a list of provisional groups with the frequency of responses from content area teachers to the right of each provisional group. In the table, the frequency of responses signifies how many individual cards were placed in each group. To clarify, the number listed in the table is a frequency of cards that match each provisional group; they do not reflect the number of total participants who shared a particular response. A low number in the right column would signify few matches to a particular group. A high number in the right column would signify a large number of matches to a particular group.

Table three shows 20 provisional groups. These groupings show the interview data from the content area teacher interviews. Several groups reflect issues that consistently appeared as

Table 3

Content Area Teacher Provisional Groups

Provisional Groups	Responses in Category
1- ESL and content area teacher use core curriculum	4
2- There is no outside help provided for students	5
3 – A church assisted	1
4 – ESL parents are not involved with schooling	5
5 – Overview of the teachers experiences	5
6 – School is supportive of ESL program	3
7 – Student grading is a serious issue	4
8 – Teacher must remember to slow speech	2
9 – No opinion about administration support	4
10 – ESL tutor does not work closely with content teacher	2
11 – Reading orally is a good instructional strategy	1
12 – Recommendation for more ESL time	2
13 – Vocabulary is a big challenge	4
14 – Students pulled from electives and not core for instruction	2
15 – Hands-on is a good instructional tool	2
16 – There should be a better screening process for students	2
17 – Use of visuals as an instructional tool	3
18 – Cooperative groups as an instructional tool	1
19 – One-on-One as an instructional tool	7
20 – Content area teachers receive no training	5

a result of the research. The group showing one-on-one as an effective instructional tool had seven responses, the most within this grouping. Several had five responses including outside help for students, parent involvement, teacher training, and teaching experience. Four had four responses each and included the use of the core curriculum, grading issues, administrative support and the challenge of teaching vocabulary. The remaining groups had one to three responses each.

The content area teacher provisional groups were reviewed again to group similar data together. After all data had been placed in preliminary groups, all cards were reviewed and the groups were split or merged based on common themes. According to Maykut & Morehouse (1994) the rule for reviewing data is that information placed in each group should be distinctly similar. This sort resulted in eight consolidated categories (Table 4). The categories evolving from this sort included between four and twenty responses per category.

The data in the table were organized as a list of consolidated categories with the frequency of responses from content area teachers to the right of each category. The frequency of responses signifies how many individual cards were placed in each category. To clarify, the number listed is a frequency of cards that match each category; they do not reflect the number of total participants who shared a particular response. A low number in the right column signifies few matches to a particular category. A high number in the right column signifies a large number of matches to a particular category.

These consolidated categories show the interview data from the content area teacher interviews. Several categories reflect issues that consistently appeared as a result of the research.

Table 4

Content Area Teacher Consolidated Categories

Consolidated Categories	Responses in Category
1 – Overview of teaching experience	5
2 – Instructional Strategies/Challenges	20
3 – Content Area teacher training	7
4 – ESL & Content Area Teacher working together	6
5 – Scheduling	4
6 - ESL Parent Involvement/Communication with Home	5
7 – Policy Issues	13
8 – Outside groups assisting students and adults	6

One category, instructional strategies, was significantly represented with 20 responses. Another category, policy issues, had 13 responses. Another category, teacher training, had seven responses. Two categories with six responses each, including the ESL and content area teacher working together and outside groups assisting students and adults. The remaining categories had between four and five responses each, including an overview of teaching experience, scheduling issues and parent involvement.

Summary of ESL Tutor's Comments

Six ESL tutors were interviewed for this study. The data were sorted into provisional groups. This initial sort resulted in 39 provisional groups (Table 5). The categories evolving from this sort included between one and eight responses per group. During this step of the process the goal was to pull apart the interviews and sort into individual groups. The discovery sheet was

Table 5

ESL Tutor Provisional Groups

Provisional Group	Responses in Category
1 – Overview of Training	7
2 – Overview of experience	6
3 – Adequate classroom space	3
4 – Inadequate classroom space	2
5 – Students challenged with reading	4
6 – Books available for all subjects	1
7 – Books not available for all subjects	2
8 – Students need test assistance	2
9 – Lack of communication with central office	3
10 – Outside groups do not help students	4
11 – Kids do not want to miss core to come to ESL	2
12 – Parent involvement minimal	6
13 – Hands-on as instructional tool	2
14 – Repetition as instructional tool	1
15 – Visuals as instructional tool	3
16 – Audio taped books as instructional tool	1
17 – Games as instructional tool	6
18 – Special education screening a challenge	1
19 – English not spoken at home	3
20 – Teacher needs to speak clearly and avoid slang	1

21 – Break down information as instructional tool	1
22 – Cultural awareness	1
23 – More time with ESL tutor	1
24 – No assistance for students - adults have options	3
25 – Sending students at non-scheduled time	1
26 – School procedures are successful	7
27 – ESL tutor assists with homework	1
28 – Content teachers not supportive of pull-out of core classes	3
29 – School procedures are not successful	2
30 – No planning time with content area teachers	1
31 – ESL tutor supports core curriculum	8
32 – ESL tutor discusses country as instructional tool	2
33 – ESL tutor wants more parent communication	4
34 – ESL and content teacher work together	7
35 – Content area teachers support pull-out of students	1
36 – Individualizing instruction a challenge	4
37 – Better communication between content area and ESL tutor	1
38 – Use of translator	1
39 – One-on-One as instructional tool	3

used as a guide for the initial groupings. This process resulted in a detailed inventory of the data.

The cards included in each category were named with a standard phrase.

The data in the table are organized as a list of provisional groups with the frequency of

responses from ESL tutors to the right of each provisional group. The frequency of responses represents how many individual cards were placed in each group. To clarify, the number listed is a frequency of cards that match each provisional group; they do not reflect the number of total participants who shared a particular response. A low number in the right column signifies few matches to a particular group. A high number in the right column signifies a large number of matches to a particular group. Table five shows thirty-nine provisional groups. These groups show the interview data from the ESL tutor interviews. Several groups reflect issues that consistently appeared as a result of the research. The group for ESL tutors supporting the core curriculum included eight responses. Three groups had seven responses each, including an overview of training, successful school procedures, and the ESL tutor and content area teacher working together. Three groups had six responses each, including an overview of experience, minimal parental involvement and games used as an instructional tool. The remaining groups had one to four responses.

The data in the table are organized as a list of groups with the frequency of responses from ESL tutors to the right of each category. The frequency of responses is how many individual cards were placed in each group. To clarify, the number listed is a frequency of cards that match each group; they do not reflect the number of total participants who shared a particular response. A low number in the right column signifies few matches to a particular group. A high number in the right column signifies a large number of matches to a particular group.

The ESL tutor provisional groups were reviewed again to group similar data together (See Table 6). After all data had been placed in preliminary groups, all cards were reread and the groups were split or merged depending on the review of the data. According to Maykut &

Morehouse (1994) the rule for reviewing data is that information placed in each group should be distinctly similar. The cards in each group should be distinctly different from all other groups.

This sort resulted in thirteen consolidated categories.

Table 6

ESL Tutor Consolidated Categories

Consolidated Category	Responses in Category
1 – Overview of teaching experience	6
2 – Instructional Strategies	22
3 – ESL tutor training	8
4 – ESL & Content Area Teacher working together	8
5 – Scheduling	4
6 – ESL Parent Involvement/Communication with Home	10
7 – Policy Support	7
8 – Outside groups assisting students and adults	10
9 – Classroom and Materials	8
10 – ESL tutor supports content area curriculum	18
11 – English not spoken in home	3
12 - Communication with Central Office	3
13 – Student Challenges	11

The consolidated categories evolving from this sort included between three and twenty-two responses per category (see Table 6). Several categories had a significant number of responses. Instructional strategies had 22 responses. ESL tutors supporting content area

curriculum had eighteen responses. Challenges included 11 responses and ESL parent involvement and policy support each had 10 responses. All other consolidated categories had between three and eight responses each.

Summary of Students' Comments

Five ESL students were interviewed for this study. The data were sorted into provisional groups. This initial sort resulted in 35 provisional groups (Table 7). The provisional groups evolving from this sort included between one and thirteen responses per group. During this step of the process the goal was to pull apart the interviews and sort into individual groups. The discovery sheet was used as a guide for the initial groupings. This process resulted in a detailed inventory of the data. The cards included in each provisional group were named with a standard phrase.

The data in the table were organized as a list of provisional groups with the frequency of responses from students to the right of each provisional group. The frequency of responses signifies how many individual cards were placed in each group. To clarify, the number listed is a frequency of cards that match each group; they do not reflect the number of total participants who shared a particular response. A low number in the right column signifies few matches to a particular group. A high number in the right column signifies a large number of matches to a particular group.

Table seven shows 35 provisional groups. These groupings show the interview data from the ESL student interviews. Several groups reflect issues that consistently emerged as a result of the research. The group showing use of puzzles and games as an instructional tool had the most responses with 13. Three provisional groups, which included student understanding, friends assisting with learning English, and grading issues, had seven responses in each group.

Table 7

ESL Student Provisional Groups

Provisional Groups	Responses in Category
1- Students did not know language and did not fit in with peers	5
2 - Brothers and Sisters do not speak English	1
3 - Parents do not speak English	2
4 - Grandparents do not speak English	1
5 - Student teaching parent to speak English	2
6 - Adjustments to new culture	1
7 - Success with math	1
8 - ESL tutor helped with homework	1
9 - ESL tutor helped with tests	3
10 - Grammar and Vocabulary challenging	5
11 - Step-by-step directions as instructional tool	2
12 - ESL tutor talked about country and family	3
13 - Student adjusted to school without incident	1
14 - Use of visuals as an instructional tool	2
15 - ESL posed little challenge	5
16 - Puzzles and games as instructional tool	13
17 - Use of pictures as instructional tool	1
18 - English class assisted with learning English	1
19 - Early frustrations where student did not understand	7
20 - Lecture and notes were difficult for learning	2

21 - Father helped with English	1
22 - ESL tutor tied lesson to family and country	2
23 - Extended family assisted with learning English	1
24 - Rules at school are same as home country	4
25 - Challenged by teachers rate of speech	1
26 - Step-by-step good instructional strategy	6
27 - ESL tutor assisted with core curriculum	5
28 - Friends helped with learning English	7
29 - Parents helped with learning English	5
30 - Group work good instructional strategy	1
31 - Private tutor prior to moving to United States	1
32 - Going to ESL causes student to miss fun with content class	1
33 - ESL students focus on assigned grades	7
34 - ESL students experience test anxiety	3
35 - ESL students like school and district	4

One provisional group, step-by-step instruction, had six responses. Four provisional groups had five responses each and included the ESL tutor assisting with the core curriculum, parents helping with English, grammar and vocabulary as a challenge, and fitting in with peers. The remaining provisional groups had between one and four responses each.

The ESL student provisional groups were reviewed again to group similar data together (See Table 8). After all data had been placed in preliminary groups, all cards were reread and the groups were split or merged, looking for common themes, depending on the review of the data.

According to Maykut & Morehouse (1994) the rule for reviewing data is that information placed in each group should be distinctly similar and the cards in each group should be distinctly different from other groups.

Table 8

ESL Student Consolidated Categories

Consolidated Category	Responses in Category
1 – ESL tutor instructional strategies	11
2 – Content area teacher instructional strategies	21
3 – ESL tutor taught core curriculum	6
4 – Friends assisted student with learning English	7
5 – Family/extended family assisted student with English	10
6 – Home language not English	6
7 – Testing and assessment	13
8 – School policies same as home country	4
9 – Challenges with content area classes	4
10 – Student did not understand and had vocabulary issues	10
11 – ESL tutor made student feel successful	5
12 – Students did not adjust	7
13 – Students adjusted with good experiences	4

This sort resulted in 13 consolidated categories. The consolidated categories evolving from this sort included between four and twenty-one responses per category (see Table 8). The categories with the highest frequency were content area teacher and the use of instructional

strategies with 21 responses. The next highest category with 13 responses was testing an assessment. The ESL tutor and the use of instructional strategies were next with 11 responses. Two categories had 10 responses each and included family and extended family assisting the student with English and the student having difficulty with vocabulary. The remaining categories had between four and seven responses each.

The data in the table were organized as a list of groups with the frequency of responses from students to the right of each group. The frequency of responses determined how many individual cards were placed in each group. To clarify, the number listed is a frequency of cards that match each grouping; they do not reflect the number of total participants who shared a particular response. A low number in the right column signifies few matches to a particular provisional group. A high number in the right column signifies a large number of matches to a particular provisional group.

Summary of Community Comments

This section represents a compilation of the interviews from ESL tutors, content area teachers and students (Table 9). Direct interviews were not held with community members and parents. References to community and parents were pulled from interviews with ESL students, ESL tutors, and content area teachers. The Sunny School District policy was reviewed. If there was a policy that aligned with a topic it was marked with a yes in the table. If there was not a policy that aligned with a topic it was marked with a no.

Data in this table was organized by content teacher, ESL tutor, and student interviews. References made from these interviews were organized to show the number of responses to each category. The frequency of responses represents how many individual cards were placed in each group.

Table 9

Community Summary

Category	Data Source			
	Content Teacher	ESL Tutor	Student	Policy
1 – Friends Assisted	0	0	7	No
2 – Family/Extended Family Assisted	0	0	10	No
3 – Home Language Spanish	0	3	4	No
4 – Parent Involvement/Communication	7	10	0	No
5– Outside Groups Assist	6	7	0	Yes

To clarify, the number listed is a frequency of cards that match each grouping; they do not reflect the number of total participants who shared a particular response. The Sunny School District policy was reviewed. If there was a policy that aligned with a topic it was marked with a yes in the table. If there was not a policy that aligned with a topic it was marked with a no.

Summary of Policy Guide

The Sunny School District provides an ESL policy guide to each ESL tutor and administrator. Copies of the policy guide are not provided to content area teachers, however, a school copy is maintained by the school administrator. The ESL policy guide, written in 2004, includes the purpose and philosophy of the program, which states, “The purpose of the ESL program is to help students who are non-native English speakers develop English language skills as quickly as possible in order to be successfully mainstreamed in regular classrooms” (P2). The

instructional philosophy of this school district favors an immersion program. This immersion program uses the grade level curriculum as a basis. The ESL student is taught by the content area classroom teachers with support of the ESL tutor.

The policy guide is a reference providing details about all aspects of the program. The following issues are addressed in the guide: (1) identification of ESL students, (2) instructional guidelines, (3) terminology, (4) standards, (5) instructional strategies, and (6) information for parents. The policy guide also includes all relevant forms for identification of ESL students and progress reports for the ESL students.

Identification of ESL Students

ESL students are identified using a Home Language Survey, which is completed at the time of enrollment. The results of the Home Language Survey become a part of the student's permanent cumulative student record. A copy of each home language survey is given to the ESL tutor at that student's school. The ESL tutor screens the surveys, and if a student is identified with a possible need they are given a diagnostic test to determine if they need ESL services.

Instructional Guidelines

Instructional guidelines provide a general overview of the immersion program. The guidelines include the need for tutor training that will assist the tutors with serving ESL students. Therefore, the guidelines also reference the relationship between the content area teacher and the ESL tutor. A positive relationship is necessary for the ESL student to benefit from their educational experience. The guidelines also charge the ESL tutor with helping the ESL student to adjust socially to the school (P9).

Terminology

The policy provides definitions for LEP, ESL and monitor status. The policy defines LEP

and ESL as they have been previously defined in this study. The policy defines monitor status as, “Students who are exited from the ESL program are monitored for two years while integrating totally within the regular school program. These students continue to participate in the federally mandated testing during this period” (P10).

Standards

The policy guide provides a list of English language proficiency standards. These standards cover grades kindergarten through grade twelve. These standards are used as a guideline for developing programs to meet the needs of ESL students (P15).

Instructional Strategies

Included in the policy guide is a list of instructional strategies. These are recommended strategies that will help the LEP learner. These strategies cover specific learning strategies, cultural issues, peer tutoring, and parental involvement (P50).

Parent Information

The last section of the policy guide provides a list of items for the parent of the LEP student. The list focuses on what the parent of the LEP student should know about learning English. The policy guide includes a reference to the home language. The policy guide recommends using the home language to make sure that the student understands the school policies and rules so that they can be successful in school. There are also recommendations for extra school activities that will allow the student to interact with English speaking students (P52).

Policy Guide Review

A review of the current policy guide is a part of this study. The policy guide was sorted into provisional groups. This initial sort resulted in 22 provisional groups (Table 10). The

Table 10

Policy Guide Provisional Groups

Provisional Groups	Responses in Group
1 – Teacher Training	3
2 – Teacher Communication	5
3 – Student Comprehension	4
4 - Label Objects	1
5 – Small Group Assistance	2
6 - Check for Understanding	2
7 - Show Respect	1
8 - Maintain Eye Contact	1
9 – Basic Equipment Training	1
10 – Games and Hands-On Activities	5
11 – Positive Reinforcement	1
12 – Tie To Country	4
13 – Cooperative Grouping	2
14 – Curriculum Focus	3
15 – Classroom Environment	4
16 – Scheduling	4
17 – Testing	2
18 – Screening	3
19 – Grading	2
20 - Parent Contact and Communication	3

21 – Acclimation	8
22 – Outside Assistance	2

provisional groups evolving from this sort included between one and eight responses per group. During this step of the process my goal was to pull apart the policy guide and sort into individual groups. This process resulted in a detailed inventory of the data. The cards included in each provisional group were named with a standard phrase.

The data in the table were organized as a list of provisional groups with the frequency of references from the policy guide to the right of each provisional group. The frequency of references represents how many individual policy guide cards were placed in each group. A low number in the right column signifies few matches to a particular policy. A high number in the right column signifies a larger number of matches to a particular policy.

Several groups reflected issues that consistently emerged as a result of the review. Acclimation emerged with eight responses, the most in this section. The groups showing communication and the groups showing games and hands-on activities had the next greatest number of responses with five. Two provisional groups, which included student comprehension and tie to country, had four responses in each group. The remaining provisional groups had between one and three responses each.

The policy guide provisional groups were reviewed again to group similar data together (See table 11). After all data had been placed in preliminary groups, all policy guide cards were reread and the groups were split or merged by looking for common themes in the data.

According to Maykut & Morehouse (1994) the rule for reviewing data is that information placed

in each group should be distinctly similar. The cards in each group should be distinctly different from all other groups.

Specific policy guide references are included in Table 11. Which includes a list of policy guide references and the frequency of each reference.

Table 11

Policy Guide Consolidated Categories

Consolidated Category	Responses in Category
1 – Teacher Training	3
2 – ESL & Content Area Teacher Communication	5
3 – Student Comprehension	4
4 – Instructional Strategies	19
5 – Curriculum Focus	3
6 – Classroom Environment	4
7 – Scheduling	4
8 – Screening and Testing	5
9 – Grading Procedures	2
10 – Acclimation	12
11 – Outside Assistance	2

EMERGING THEMES

Themes emerged from a review of interviews with ESL tutors, ESL students and content area teachers interviews. Themes relating to the community (Table 9) were pulled from interviews with ESL tutors, ESL students and content area teacher interviews. Also included in

this section is a review of policy and cumulative record notes. Tables 4, 6, 8 and 9 were reviewed and consolidated into 23 common themes. Table 12 includes a list of these 23 themes. These themes are listed in the left column. The next three columns show responses from the interviews of content area teachers, ESL tutors and students. Each column shows the actual number of teachers or students who responded followed by a slash and the total number of students or teachers interviewed. The remaining column identifies if there is policy that supports the theme. That column is represented by either yes or no, based on a current policy reference.

The following sections are summaries of the 23 themes. Included at the beginning of each section is a summary of the source of the data for the section. References to the table and category are provided so there is a clear line showing the source of the data. This is referenced as the data source.

Teacher Experience

The data source for this information is Category 1 in Table 6 and Category 1 in Table 4. The five content area teachers interviewed shared details about their teaching experiences with ESL students. Overall classroom experience ranged from 8-21 years. All teachers have two or four ESL students in their classrooms this school year. All teachers recalled several ESL student experiences prior to this school year. One teacher shared “I’ve had ESL students almost every year . . . since I’ve started teaching as a regular classroom teacher” (C16). Another teacher stated:

My first experience was actually student teaching when I was in college. When I first arrived at the school, they were doing standardized testing. So for the week they put me in charge of working with a student who was there from Vietnam. So I was thrown into it but really

Table 12

Category Summary

Themes	Data Source				Policy
	Content Teacher	ESL Tutor	Student		
	R/N	R/N	R/N		Yes or No
1 – Teacher Experience	5/5	6/6	0/5		No
2 – Teacher Training	5/5	6/6	0/5		Yes
3 – Teacher Communication	2/5	3/6	0/5		Yes
4 – Student Comprehension	5/5	0/6	4/5		Yes
5– Teaching Reading	0/5	6/6	0/5		No
6 – Small Group Assistance	3/5	0/6	1/5		Yes
7 – Games/ Hands-On	2/5	3/6	5/5		Yes
8 – Use of Visuals	3/5	3/6	2/5		No
9 – Tie to Country	0/5	2/6	2/5		Yes
10 – Detail Rich Lessons	0/5	0/6	5/5		No
11 – Curriculum Focus	3/5	6/6	3/5		Yes
12 – Assistance with Testing	0/5	3/6	3/5		No
13 – Positive Reinforcement	0/5	0/6	4/5		No
14 – Classroom Environment	0/5	6/6	0/5		Yes
15 – Policy Issues	2/5	3/6	4/5		No
16 – Scheduling	2/5	5/6	1/5		Yes
17– Screening	1/5	0/6	0/5		Yes
18– Grading	2/5	0/6	3/5		Yes

19 – Acclimation	0/5	2/6	4/5	Yes
20- Home Language Barriers	3/5	0/6	4/5	No
21 – Family/Extended Family	5/5	6/6	5/5	No
22– Friends	0/5	0/6	5/5	No
23 – Outside Assistance	5/5	6/6	0/0	Yes

enjoyed working with him and was amazed at how quickly he could learn words with books, pointed out pictures, and things like that (C2).

The six ESL tutors had diverse backgrounds. Two of the six had teaching experience prior to becoming an ESL tutor (T5 & T6). One teacher shared:

I have worked the last six years in this school district with ESL students teaching them English. I've also worked abroad doing ESL foreign language with students who are adults, which is slightly different. These ones are middle school. I have taught primary and intermediate as well (T5).

Another tutor shared, “In the past I've only taught adults and college-aged students, tutored, never had an entire classroom full of ESL students. This is my first experience with middle-grade, middle school ESL students” (T6). Four of the six tutors had no educational background (T1, T2, T3, & T4). One tutor was in the business sector prior to becoming an ESL tutor and stated:

Since my background is not in the teaching profession and . . . we had limited materials to help us, it was a thing of feeling out what the child needs, where he is in the grade level, and then trying to get him acclimated into the core subjects . . . (T1).

Teacher Training

The data source for this information is Category 3 in Table 6, Category 3 in Table 4, and Category 1 in Table 11. Teacher training is an integral part of the Sunny School District policy. The policy guide states, “All Sunny School District ESL tutors are trained in methods and techniques effective with LEP students” (P53).

Accordingly, it is not surprising that ESL tutors referenced a variety of training experiences (see Table 10). Four of six tutors referenced a cultural training college class at a local university. The class focused on cultural awareness. One tutor explained that if you understand the culture you can better educate students, stating, “[I had training in] children’s studies on a particular country background, religions, taboo, gestures, different things, and if you understand where they’re coming from you can better advise them or help them in learning” (T1). Another tutor referenced the college class by saying, “I’ve also taken a class through a university that specifically gave me some eye-opening information about cultural differences, which I found to be very helpful” (T3).

ESL tutors also shared training experiences that provided assistance with testing procedures (T3, T4, & T6). One tutor stated, “I received training in testing, how to administer the tests in reading and how to score the test” (T4). Another teacher shared, “I’ve gone through testing, as far as how to administer testing when they first come into the program as well as training with SOL testing” (T3).

Similarly, assistance with instructional strategies was referenced by three of the six ESL tutors (T3, T5, & T6). One ESL tutor attended a workshop that focused on instruction and stated, “The workshop taught individualized games and activities and things that you can utilize in the classroom, which I found to be very beneficial” (T3). One tutor referenced one-on-one assistance

provided by the director of ESL, sharing, “She [the ESL director] comes into the room and talks with us about how best to work with these students. She sends us newsletters and mini-newspaper articles and activities . . . to help the kids learn the language” (T2). The teacher also shared that the director of ESL supports training by stating, “She’s [the ESL director] for any training opportunities that come along” (T2).

Conversely, content area teacher interviews showed that content area teachers have received no formal training in working with ESL students (C1, C2, C3, C4, & C5). Although all teachers shared that they have not received training, two of five content area teachers said that they would like ESL training. One teacher stated:

I would like to see more in-services for teachers. I would like instruction myself as to strategies to use to work with an ESL student. When I’ve had them, they’ve just shown up in the class, and it’s sort of up to me to help that child. I would really like some help with that instruction (C2).

Another teacher shared:

When someone is in there that literally can’t speak English, then I know I’m not sure how I should teach and maybe a certain amount of training would be helpful there. I’m not sure what to do. I’m just kind of winging it (C1).

Although training for content area teachers was mentioned by all teachers and several requested training, training specifically for content area teachers is not mentioned in the Sunny School District policy.

Teacher Communication

The data source for this information is Category 12 in Table 6, Category 4 in Table 4, and Category 2 in Table 11. Support between the tutors and the ESL coordinator was referenced as

very positive (T1, T4 & T5). One ESL tutor shared, “After we got a new supervisor, she has organized things much better. We get materials, specific books, specific to our needs to help different children” (T1). Another teacher stated, “We have support where we didn’t have support before” (T5).

Communication between tutors and content area teachers was also mentioned (T5, T4, C1, & C3). Two content area teachers shared that their level of contact with the ESL tutor was inadequate (T5 & T4). One teacher shared the following about the ESL coordinator at her school, “She doesn’t ask for their grades, she doesn’t ask what we’re working on” (C3). ESL tutors expressed concerns about the content area teachers not supporting their efforts and diminishing the ESL students’ chance at success. One teacher said, “When you approach certain teachers, sometimes you come away with a negative comment, like, ‘they always need window cleaners’, so you try your best to get the student up to standard and beyond” (T5). Another tutor suggested the need for a better communication system with content area teachers and shared that it is difficult to establish rapport with other teachers because of the different teaching schedules (T4).

Student Comprehension

The data source for this information is Category 9 and 10 in Table 8, Category 2 in Table 4, Category 2 in Table 6 and Category 3 in Table 11. All content area teachers interviewed shared that their greatest challenge is making sure ESL students understand classroom instruction. To help with student comprehension, the Sunny School District policy guide recommends speaking clearly and using correct English (P50).

One teacher shared the following comment about student comprehension:

My biggest challenge is just not being sure what he really understands. Frequently I'll walk over and say, 'Do you understand what I mean by that?' A lot of times he'll nod his head yes and smile, but [I am] just wondering if he really comprehends as an English teacher (C2).

Another teacher said:

My challenge seems to be to make sure that they understand the concepts I'm trying to teach (C3).

The student interviews confirmed the teacher's suspicions with four of the five students sharing that they were often confused with vocabulary and were not able to understand the lesson (S1, S2, S3 & S4). One student stated, "This is my first foreign language school. At the beginning, I felt very uncomfortable because I didn't understand very well the English" (S2). Another student shared, "I didn't understand what the teachers were saying. It is like if I talk to somebody in Spanish, they wouldn't understand a thing I said. That is how mostly I felt" (S3). One teacher referenced the need to speak slowly so the ESL student could understand the lesson (C4). A student shared the same concern, "When I first came here I had a hard time learning in class. The teacher spoke fast and it was hard to follow" (S5).

Teaching Reading

The data source for this information is Category 2 in Table 4 and Category 2 in Table 6. Teaching reading was referenced as the main challenge facing ESL tutors (T1, T2, T3, T4, T4, & T6). One tutor shared:

Most of the children can read English. They don't understand the words after they read them. So you have to get them to understand what they are doing and how they are going to do it, and that depends on what level the child is [on] (T1).

Another tutor stated, “Another challenge is they can be here for a couple of years and be able to speak and pick up speaking English very quickly and comprehending listening skills, but they still may have difficulty reading and writing English” (T6). One tutor had a concern about an issue tied to reading level. She shared, “Many students come from varied backgrounds and socioeconomic learning abilities. I believe two of my children might have some sort of learning disability, but that is very hard to sort out given their English proficiencies or non-proficiencies” (T4).

Small Group Assistance

The data source for this information is Category 2 in Table 4, Category 2 in Table 6, Category 2 in Table 8, and Category 4 in Table 11. Three of five content area teachers shared that one-on-one experiences are successful with ESL students (C2, C4 & C5). One content area teacher stated, “I really think the one-on-one [is successful]. Just checking with him, ‘Do you understand what I mean?’ I think is really important” (C2). One student shared, “Being with others like having partners for certain activities helps you learn more” (S4). A content area teacher shared the same opinion about cooperative groups (C1). This is supported by the Sunny School District policy guide which recommends interactions with English and non-English speaking students (P50).

Games and Hands-On Activities

The data source for this information is Category 2 in Table 4, Category 2 in Table 6, Categories 1 and 2 in Table 8, and Category 4 in Table 11. Within the ESL classroom all students shared that hands-on activities and games helped them with learning the lesson (S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5). One student shared, “Sometimes we play like math games, like bingo with numbers, and parts of speech bingo. That helped me a lot” (S3). One student shared that projects

helped him learn (S1). Three of six ESL tutors confirmed that games and hands-on activities are a useful instructional tool. Two tutors shared that adding variety helps to motivate the student. One tutor said, “We use a lot of games to make it fun for them so they’re not bored to tears and help them with . . . homework assignments as well. It’s very encouraging to them” (T2).

When asked about instructional strategies two ESL tutors referenced a strategy they use when students are first enrolled in the program and have minimal language skills. For these students they taught basic words with the use of objects (T2 & T3). One tutor shared:

Initially I do very basic things. I would take them outside; take them around the building, point out things. This is a tree. It sounds very elementary, but they don’t know. If they can see it, feel it, . . . and get hands-on experience; they tend to absorb it much faster than if you just point to a picture in a book (T2).

Two teachers referenced games specifically used to strengthen vocabulary skills. One example of a puzzle was shared by tutor T4 stating: “I have one boy in particular that likes word games and puzzles. I have a book of brain teasers I bought that uses idioms, analogies, play on words to strengthen his vocabulary (T4)”.

Teachers and students believe that games and hands-on activities help them learn in the content area classroom. This is supported by the district policy, which references this technique. The policy guide reads, “Use lots of demonstrations and manipulatives, etc. to practice and explain or show what you may be referring to in class” (P50). Three of five students gave specific examples of activities in the content area classroom. When asked about what helped the student learn they responded, “I did good with classes where we used games and experiments” (S5). Two of five content area teachers shared that they use games and hands-on activity as a strategy with teaching ESL students (C1 & C5).

Use of Visuals

The data source for this information is Category 2 in Table 4, Category 2 in Table 6, and Categories 1 & 2 in Table 8. The use of visuals was referenced by three of five content area teachers as a strategy for assisting ESL students (C1, C2, & C5). One content area teacher shared, “A good strategy for working with ESL students is one-on-one instruction as much as possible, using visuals as well so that he can connect words with pictures and images” (C2). Two of five students shared a similar opinion about visuals being a good learning tool (S3 & S5). One student shared, “I can do good with stuff I can see. I like maps and geography” (S5).

Use of visuals as an instructional strategy was also referenced by three of the six ESL tutors. This strategy was utilized to help the beginning student as referenced by one tutor who said, “I use the pictures at first. After a while, I cover up the pictures and just have them sound out the words” (T6) One tutor used maps as a visual, stating:

Another big thing I do is pull out maps and really look at what we are talking about, very visual. If the child is visual, try to bring as many different senses into what we’re learning so that they can get a better grasp since usually the United States is not their primary country (T4).

Another tutor uses the computer, stating, “I found some great web sites on the computer for ESL students. They can play for just basic vocabulary” (T2). The use of visuals was supported by one student who shared, “To help me learn she used pictures and books with pictures and posters. Stuff hanging on the wall about my country” (S5).

Tie to Country

The data source for this information is Category 2 in Table 8, Category 2 in Table 6 and Category 4 in Table 11. Two of five students referenced tying the lesson to their home country.

One student shared a positive experience saying, “When my geography teacher teach the part of South America. They ask me was I from Mexico, if I visited most of Mexico. This was a very good moment for me, the best” (S2). Another student shared, “One of the best days was when we studied the area I used to live. I got to share stories and saw pictures of my old city” (S5).

Appropriately, the Sunny School District policy guide supports making a tie to the student’s culture, the policy guide states, “Take advantage of their cultural backgrounds. Encourage them to share their knowledge of their culture with the rest of the class” (P51).

Two ESL tutors also shared their recommendation of discussing the students home country as a way to help with learning English (T1 & T6). ESL Tutor six said:

With the ones who have no English, the best thing that I found with these students is just talking to them about their home. They like to talk about their families. They like to talk about the country they came from (T6).

Another tutor shared, “Try to relate to their own backgrounds. I do that a lot so that they feel more comfortable in . . . transitioning from their own language to English” (T1). Two students referenced tutors discussing their country and family in class (S2 & S5). One student shared, “She helped me most of everyone. She talked much about my family and where I lived. She knows everything about me” (S5).

Detail Rich Lessons

The data source for this information is Category 2 in Table 8. All students referred to content area teachers explaining and giving details about the lesson (S1, S2, S3, S4, & S5). One student stated, “I like it when we read the books, or they explain something I didn’t know” (S2). Another student explained:

Well, in 5th grade when I came here, I only had one teacher because you know how in elementary school you only had one, and she knew I came from a different country, so she kind of taught and explained in a way that I understand, and a lot of other people didn't really know she was teaching in a certain way because of me (S4).

Curriculum Focus

The data source for this information is Category 3 in Table 8, Category 10 in Table 6, Category 4 in Table 4 and Category 5 in Table 11. The curriculum focus within the ESL classroom according to all tutors is the content area class curriculum (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, & T6).

One ESL tutor shared:

I look at their homework and make sure that we are at least parallel to what they [content area teachers] are doing. For example, if they're studying poetry or similes and metaphors, we might pull out a poetry book and see if we can identify some of those in poetry books separate from what they're doing in class....That's what I try to do so there's some re-enforcement of what's going on (T4).

Another ESL tutor stated, "ESL tutors would be the ones that would back up what the primary teacher does" (T1). This curriculum focus is maintained by the ESL tutor and teacher working together to plan ESL classroom activities that will support the content area curriculum. Three of five content area teachers shared that the ESL and content area teacher work together (C2, C4, & C5). One content area teacher shared, "The ESL tutor often comes to me and asks what specific areas the student needs to work on. They're very good about if I have something the student has trouble with; I'll give it to the ESL tutor" (C2). Another content area teacher explained, "Well, here we're constantly talking with each other and we receive suggestions on how to better meet a students' need or compensate for lack of their English understanding" (C5).

Five of the six ESL tutors also shared that the tutors and the content area teachers work together (T1, T2, T3, T5, & T6). One tutor stated, “If the teacher feels like they’re having a problem in a particular area, she lets me know. That way I can address that” (T1). Another ESL tutor shared, “I might ask the teachers for assistance on what . . . I specifically need to cover that are . . . most beneficial in the time that I have with these kids” (T3). One teacher gave a slightly different opinion but still supported the curriculum stating:

I will go and ask the teacher what they’re working on. How they’re working on it, what they’re doing whether it is worksheet based or game based, but I am very hesitant to say I have ever experienced a teacher coming to me and saying, ‘We are doing this. We are doing that. Can you reinforce?’ There is no reverse communication. It is only a one-way path (T5).

Three of five ESL students shared that the content area curriculum was the focus of the ESL lesson. One student stated, “My teacher helps with any subject, I mean, like history, I had to remember something for my project or my test or something. So she would help me study and stuff” (S4). Reinforcing the core curriculum was also referenced in the Sunny School District policy guide which states:

The ESL program is not separate from the classroom curriculum. The tutor works with the student in order to support the classroom curriculum. The classroom teacher and the ESL tutor should be in constant contact to insure that time is well spent to maximize the student’s achievement (P47).

Assistance With Testing

The data source for this information is Category 7 in Table 8 and Category 2 in Table 6. Three ESL students referenced anxiety about tests. When asked what they liked least about the

content area class one student shared, “It was hard to review something for a test when I don’t know something or I can’t explain, I need to look it up in the dictionary to explain with my words, so sometimes it is a little hard” (S2). One student shared ways the ESL tutor assisted with test preparations stating, “She said I need to study more.....and make a fun way of remembering it” (S1). Three ESL tutors shared strategies for helping students prepare for tests. One tutor stated, “One child needs a lot of repetition, and she always needs help with how to take tests. These kids often don’t have the clues that an English-speaking child does. How to sort out answers on a multiple choice test” (T4). Another tutor shared:

We just try to break it down into little tid bits, and I’ll take the SOL’s for the seventh grade part of history, and say, okay. You need to know this, this, this, and this. You don’t need to worry about all this extra stuff (T2).

Positive Reinforcement

The data source for this information is Category 11 in Table 8. Four ESL students made specific references to the ESL tutor providing positive reinforcement and making them feel positive about learning. Three students shared that they did not struggle in the ESL class (S1, S4 & S5). One student stated, “My ESL tutor made learning easy”(S1). Another student shared her opinion about leaving the ESL class, “I don’t go to ESL . . . everyday. Now I just go every other day, and my ESL tutor told me I didn’t need to take ESL anymore, but then I told her I still want to” (S1).

Classroom Environment

The data source for this information is Category 9 in Table 6 and Category 6 in Table 11. The location and setting of the learning area within each school varied (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, & T6). The Sunny School District policy guide states, “The student and tutor will meet in an area

separate from the classroom for the instructional period” (P9). The policy guide also states, “The tutor will need to meet with the school principal to determine a suitable location prior to the beginning of tutoring sessions” (P53). However, one tutor shared that the space assigned was inadequate, “We are really not given as much status as a teacher. This year I’m . . . placed in a room that is a storage unit, and it’s not actually a room. So I don’t have a view” (T5). On the other hand, two of the six tutors referenced adequate classroom facilities (T1 & T6). One shared, “This school is very good for the fact that I have a room” (T1). Another tutor shared steps the school took to find a workable space for her students, stating “When I first came here, we had to meet in the library. It was noisy with reading groups coming in. It was very distracting to them” (T6). A large classroom was assigned, but the teacher expressed concerns about the size and location of the room, stating:

I asked for a classroom, and I was given a very large windowless classroom with 35 desks stuck at the back of the building, and I said, I have to work with them one-on-one.

They cannot feel this isolated in a room with no window. They need to be where they feel safe (T6).

The tutor’s current room is a second office of an administrator used for discipline. The tutor shared:

He [the assistant principal] very kindly turned this office over to me for a classroom, and it’s perfect. It’s just absolutely perfect for a classroom for ESL because I do meet with them one-on-one. There are windows into the hallway. They can see other students, and they feel safe in here (T6).

Another issue referenced was supplies and resources. Two of the six teachers referenced additional copies of books that were provided by the school. One shared:

Sometimes they don't have their books, and that's why it's important for me to have the books because then I can pull them off the shelf. They know what they are supposed to be doing, but they may not bring the book (T1).

Another tutor shared concerns about the library, stating "Schools tend not to have as many books for the low-level readers that ESL students tend to be. Therefore, you end up going out and buying books for those low-level readers" (T5). She also shared:

I don't get the help and re-enforcement that I see the other school teachers getting, and I know they get. I know that the schoolteachers have a lot more resources, and they get a lot more cash. I get no cash from the school or the school administration or school board system. So anything that is in my room is mine (T5).

The Sunny School District policy references the issue of supplies and gives specific guidelines for supply requests. The policy states:

The ESL tutor in each school will turn in an end-of-the-year supply inventory to the ESL supervisor. The supplies will need to be kept in a specified location in each school, which will be determined by the school principal and the ESL tutor. Each individual school may also require the ESL tutors to inventory any supplies which belong to the school (P54).

One content area teacher felt that students should spend more time with the ESL tutor until they can better communicate in the content area classroom (C1). The Sunny School District policy guide states, "The student may be tutored up to an hour a day during the regular school hours each day that school is in normal session" (P46).

One ESL tutor expressed concern that students "dropped-in" during unscheduled times. She spoke to the teachers and found that if students were confused and asked to visit the ESL tutor, they allowed the student to leave class. This issue was resolved after the ESL tutor shared

her schedule with the content area teachers (T6). A final issue was a feeling that there was little time to work with other teachers. Teacher T5 shared, “It is hard to communicate with other teachers due to the fact that I have no free time. Therefore, I have no planning bell” (T5).

Policy Issues

The data source for this information is Category 7 in Table 6, category 7 in Table 4, and Categories 8 & 13 in Table 8. The policies referenced in this section are cumulative. The questions reference all policies. Three of the six ESL tutors shared support for the current policies (T2, T3, & T6). One teacher stated, “I think that our administration shows support by recognizing that there’s a growing population of ESL students, and that they are having an impact on our SOL scores” (T3). Two teachers made specific references to their individual schools providing supplies and materials to help with instruction (T2 & T6). Two content area teachers also expressed support for the current policy (C2 & C5). One teacher provided positive comments about the ESL tutor assigned to her school, stating “I think providing us with really good ESL tutors makes our program successful, being there [to answer] questions that we might have” (C2). Unfortunately, two content area teachers said that they knew little about ESL policy (C3 & C4). When students were asked about the policies at Sunny School District, four of the five students gave positive responses (S1, S3, S4, & S5). One student shared, “It’s been a really good experience, and it has helped me a lot. I’ve been getting better at studies since I came to my school” (S3).

When students were asked about adjusting to school rules in Sunny School District all students responded that this was not a difficult adjustment (S1, S2, S3, S4, & S5). One student stated in a matter of fact way, “The rules were the same as my other school” (S5).

Scheduling

The data source for this information is Category 5 in Table 6, Category 5 in Table 4 and Category 7 in Table 11. The Sunny School District policy guide states, “The student may be tutored up to an hour a day during the regular school hours each day that school is in normal session” (P46).

Despite this policy, two of four content area teachers shared that they would prefer that ESL students not be taken out of a content area class to attend ESL tutoring. One stated, “I had a student who was having a real problem with science, and the reason he was having the problem with science was because science was the class he was pulled out of two or three days a week” (C4). One teacher made the recommendation, “I’d like to see them taken out of an elective class” (C4). One student stated, “Sometimes I miss fun stuff in my regular classes” (S1). ESL tutors also expressed concerns about which classes students were missing while receiving ESL services. One said, “You don’t want them missing core classes if you can help it. [For these kids]...taking the SOL test has a huge impact with these children” (T4). Another expressed frustration about how to accommodate all students, stating “I have to work with them in the confines of my day, and they don’t necessarily like having to come out of their elective class to accommodate my schedule” (T3).

She also shared:

Their core teachers don’t like having to release them out of their regular education classes necessarily. So that’s the big test challenge is trying to keep everyone happy and still get everything accomplished . . . we need to get accomplished (T3).

The opposite was cited by another ESL tutor who said, “The regular education teachers are great, and they actually like our help. They think it’s wonderful that we’re helping them” (T2).

Screening

The data source for this information is Category 7 in Table 4 and Category 8 in Table 11. In regards to screening students for placement in the program, the Sunny School District policy guide states “A tutor is assigned when the student is identified as LEP by way of a diagnostic test” (P9). The policy guide also states “Students are tested yearly with a state approved instrument to determine the student’s current level of competency in each of the four English linguistic skills” (P9). However, one content area teacher expressed concerns about the screening process and how much tutoring time was allocated per student. The teacher felt that students were all treated the same in regards to tutoring and placement. She felt that there needed to be a more detailed screening process stating, “I think if there is a more thorough screening process when a child comes to really see what level they are working on and placing them accordingly, instead of just placing them all the same way” (C1)

Grading

The data source for this information is Category 7 in Table 4 and Category 9 in Table 11. Content area teachers shared concerns about the “L” grading policy (C2, C3, & C5). The Sunny School District policy guide states, “While a student is receiving full ESL tutorial services, the student should be given a satisfactory grade for a subject if the student is making satisfactory progress” (P47). It also states, “If the student is not making satisfactory progress in a subject, the student will be assigned a grade of “L” which represents “Language Learner” (P47). Two of the five content area teachers (C3 & C5) expressed concerns about the “L” grade, one stating, “I

think some of the kids use it as a crutch because they know they're going to pass despite their grades" (C5).

Students shared several responses to grading issues. Three of the five students monitored the importance of the letter grade (S1, S3, & S4). One shared stress related to performance, stating, "One time we were taking a test on English, and I didn't know a lot, and my hand was shaking and trembling. I had make a lot of mistakes, and I had gotten a bad grade" (S3). Another student shared that the ESL tutor rewarded them when they earned good grades in content area classes, stating, "She said she's like proud of me for having good grade and I just came here" (S1).

Acclimation

The data source for this information is Category 13 in Table 6, Category 12 in Table 8, and Category 10 in Table 11. According to the Sunny School District policy guide, one of the goals of the ESL program is to help children adjust socially. The policy guide states, "The ESL tutor is responsible for helping the child in all instructional areas as well as adjusting socially to the school" (P9). One teacher specifically referenced the need to prepare students for success in the United States. She said, "I help with social graces because it may very well be different where they come from" (T2). She mentioned eye contact as a way to help students fit in with their new environment (T2). One incident shared by another teacher involved a student being bullied. The mother came to visit her and was very upset. A translator was involved to help calm the mother and gather facts so the school could solve the problem (T5). This incident was also referenced by the student during his interview session. He shared, "One kid kept picking on me . . . and they started calling me a snitch and all of that" (S3). He also stated, "When I used bad grammar and talk Spanish and all of that and I didn't learn a lot, they started picking on me

because I felt that I wasn't fitting in" (S3). Other students similarly shared that they sometimes did not feel like they fit in with other students because they did not speak English (S2, S4, & S5).

Home Language Barriers

The data source for this information is Category 6 in Table 8, Category 11 in Table 6, Category 6 in Table 4 and Category 3 in Table 9. When asked about the primary language spoken in the home, four of five ESL students shared that Spanish was the primary language (S1, S2, S3, & S4). This was supported by the home language survey in each cumulative folder (S1, S2, S3, & S4). One student said he, "Was the first person to learn English out of my whole family group" (S3). Three of five content area teachers shared that students lived in homes where the primary language was not English (C1, C3, & C5). One content area teacher felt that students were not on grade level because they were not hearing English in the home. She stated, "They do not have the re-enforcement at home because the parents predominantly do not speak the language. They do not have the home re-enforcement" (C5).

A final communication issue involved cumulative records. Teachers relayed that student records from the home country are often sent in the students' first language. Records then need to be interpreted and re-written. This takes time and the teacher has to wait for the results from the transcriber (T6). She states, "Their records were sent to us in their foreign language....so we have really no idea of what their capabilities were" (T6). A review of the cumulative records supported this claim, showing records sent written in Spanish (S1, S3 & S5).

Family and Extended Family

The data source for this information is Category 5 in Table 8, Category 6 in Table 6, Category 4 in Table 4 and Category 3 and 4 in Table 9. Three of five students referenced their father's help with learning English (S2, S4, & S5). One student declared, "My father helped me

most. He helped me some before we moved here. He worked here first and then my family moved here” (S5). Three students referenced their mother helping them (S1, S2, & S4). Student S1 stated, “My mom tries to speak English at home, my mom always wants me to read a book . . . at least ten minutes a day” (S1). Students also referenced uncles, brothers and cousins as helping with learning English (S1, S2, & S5). During the interviews one student explained how he was teaching his mother to speak English. He said, “. . . Now I’m teaching [my mother], and she has gotten a lot of it. Right now I’ve been teaching her from my class work . . .” (S3). During a follow up about how he feels about teaching his mother, his response was, “It makes me feel good. It makes me feel like butterflies in my stomach. It’s a good thing” (S3).

All ESL and content teachers shared that parental involvement was minimal (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5). One teacher said, “I would say overall the parents are not as supportive because they are struggling to learn the language” (T3). Four teachers stated that the father is more likely than the mother to be involved with the school (C1, T2, T3, & T4). One teacher said:

It is usually the fathers that you have to deal with . . . but the mothers are very protective over their children as well. They want to make sure they’re getting adequate services. It’s hard for them to let you know that because they have language barriers (T2).

Three of the six ESL tutors made recommendations for improved communications between school and home (T2, T3, & T4). One teacher asserted, “I think we could do a better job. We meaning everybody, including the school, of communicating with these parents because they don’t speak English” (T4). One teacher expressed that information should be sent home in the home language. She stated, “Most things that go home need to be in Spanish. There are so many things they don’t understand” (T4).

Friends

The data source for this information is Category 4 in Table 8 and Category 1 in Table 9. All ESL students cited friends as helping with learning English (S1, S2, S3, S4, & S5). One student said, “My mom’s best friend helped me. Her son comes here, and they helped us out a lot” (S3). Another student shared, “My mother has an American neighbor, they are friends. She comes over many times and we speak English” (S2). The references to assistance by friends were all friends outside of the school environment (S1, S2, S3, S4, & S5).

Outside Assistance

The data source for this information is Category 8 in Table 6, Category 8 in Table 4, Category 5 in Table 9 and Category 11 in Table 11. The Sunny School District policy guide states that the, “Office of Adult Education offers ESL classes for adults during both the day and evening. These classes are free of charge” (P48).

While adult education classes exist, all ESL tutors explained that they were not aware of outside groups that assisted students (C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, & C6). All five content area teachers said that they were not aware of outside groups that assisted students (C1, C2, C3, C4, & C5). However, three of the six ESL tutors said that there were resources available for adult learners (T3, T5, & T6). One tutor said, “I only know of the resource center that parents can go to. I do not know of any children-based organizations” (T5).

This chapter summarized the data collected from interviews with ESL students, content area teachers and ESL tutors. Also included in this chapter is a review of the policy guide. Chapter five includes a summary of findings with recommendations on how the district can alter its current program to address specific problem areas.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This chapter is divided into eight sections. The first five sections analyze the findings. The sixth section provides recommendations. The seventh section reports limitations and areas of future study. The final section is a conclusion.

The purpose of this research was to show how teachers, school division policies, and community influences facilitated the transition of middle school Limited English Proficient students from their native language to English. I reviewed the current Sunny School District program using interviews with teachers and students as well as a review of policies to discover how the ESL students in this district learned English.

The research questions were the guide for reporting results. The research questions were:

1. How did the content area teachers influence the LEP student with learning English?
2. How did the ESL tutor influence the LEP student with learning English?
3. How did the school division policies influence the LEP student with learning English?
4. Which community influences assisted the LEP student with learning English?

Individual interviews were conducted with students, regular education teachers and ESL tutors selected to participate in the study. The student, content area teacher, and ESL tutor questionnaires were designed using the research questions (see Appendixes E and F for interview questions). The student interview questions were also assessed to confirm the correct readability level.

Scoring was done using the Constant Comparative Method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Interviews conducted with ESL students, classroom teachers, and ESL tutors provided a basis for the research. This research included a review of the Sunny School District ESL policy

guide as well as notes from student cumulative record reviews. This variety of research sources allowed me to triangulate the data. Triangulation of the data is important to show how themes emerge from a variety of sources that support or failed to support similar data and to reduce the possibility of researcher bias.

The Sunny School District provides an ESL policy guide to each ESL tutor and administrator. The policy guide, published in 2004, includes the purpose and philosophy of the program, which states, “The purpose of the ESL program is to help students who are non-native English speakers develop English language skills as quickly as possible in order to be successfully mainstreamed in regular classrooms” (P2). The Sunny School District policy guide did not exist prior to 2004. Prior to 2004 information was distributed as needed, but was not organized in its current format. The philosophy of this school district favors an immersion program. This immersion program uses the grade level curriculum as a basis. The ESL student is taught by the content area classroom teachers with support of the ESL tutor.

The policy guide is a reference providing details about all aspects of the program. The following issues are addressed in the guide, (1) identification of ESL students, (2) instructional guidelines, (3) terminology, (4) standards, (5) instructional strategies, and (6) information for parents. The policy guide also includes all relevant forms for identification and progress reports for students.

The Content Area Teacher and their Influence on the LEP Student

The data show that content area teachers assisted the student with learning by using a variety of instructional strategies. These include, (1) small group or one-on-one assistance, (2) games and hands-on activities (3) use of visuals, and (4) slow speech and articulation.

Content area teachers reported that they use small group assistance as an instructional tool. The policy recommends seating ESL students with other English speaking students (P50). Prior research data supports this approach by stating that cooperative groups are a good instructional tool (Duff, 2001, Anstrom, 1999, Harklau, 1994, Krashen & Terrell, 1983, Reyes, 1992, Berman et al., 1995).

Content teachers indicated that games and hands-on activities are tools for assisting students (C1 & C5). Students also indicated that this is an effective strategy. The policy references this instructional tool by recommending manipulatives and demonstrations as a tool for explaining concepts to students (P50).

Use of visuals proved an effective way to assist students with learning English. Content area teachers stated this as a teaching strategy. Students expressed this as a technique they felt helped them with learning English. Prior research demonstrated that visual representation assisted students with making the connection to understand new vocabulary (Berman et al, 1995). Prior research also revealed the use of pictures and maps as a technique (Berman et al., 1995).

Content area teachers referenced the need to speak slowly so that ESL students could understand the lesson. An ESL student who explained that he had difficulty learning when the teacher spoke fast also identified this as a problem. Prior research supported this and referenced the speed of the teacher talking as impacting the learning of the student (Harklau, 1994). Prior research also showed that speaking slowly and clearly was an effective way to assist LEP students with learning English (Sosa, 2000; Myers, 2000; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). This technique is supported by the policy guide which references speaking simply and clearly (P50).

The ESL Tutor and their Influence on the LEP Student

The data show that ESL tutors also use a variety of strategies to assist ESL students. These strategies include (1) games and hands-on activities, (2) use of visuals, (3) tie to country, (4) curriculum focus, (5) assistance with testing, and (6) positive reinforcement.

ESL tutors referenced using games and hands-on activities as an instructional tool. According to this research games and hands on activities assist students with learning. All students referenced games and hands-on activities as an effective instructional tool.

This research also revealed the use of visuals is a positive learning tool. The data show that ESL tutors use visuals as an instructional tool. One student acknowledged that use of visuals assisted him with learning. Prior research also supported the use of visuals as an effective instructional tool for LEP students (Berman et. al., 1995).

This research also showed that tying the lesson to the home country of the student engages the student and assists with learning. Both students and ESL tutors believed that tying the lesson to the home country was a positive learning tool. Prior research showed that connecting current curriculum with prior experiences is an effective way to engage LEP students (Krashen, Terrell, 1983; Penfield, 1987).

This research showed that ESL tutors tie their individual lessons to the general education curriculum. All ESL tutors shared that the general education curriculum is the focus of their lessons. Content area teachers shared that the ESL tutors supports them in this endeavor. ESL students shared examples of how the ESL tutor assisted them with content area curriculum. The policy states that the foundation of the ESL curriculum is the content area curriculum and that the content area curriculum is the basis for instructional goals in the ESL classroom (P47). Prior

research supported adapting the lessons to the curriculum as a necessary instructional tool for teaching LEP students (Derwing et al., 1999; Gaitan & Truba, 1991; Short & Boyson, 2000).

This research revealed that testing is a major stress area for students. Students shared this as a stressful experience and that their ESL tutor assists them with testing. The ESL tutor provides assistance to their students and help students prepare for tests. ESL tutors referenced this assistance as a necessary support for their ESL students.

The ESL tutor provided positive reinforcement for their ESL students. Students shared that the ESL tutor was positive and provided support. Students also shared that this support helped with their self-esteem.

The School Division Policies and their Influence on the ESL Student

The school division policies influenced the ESL student with learning. According to this research, the student is impacted by (1) teacher training, (2) classroom environment, (3) grading, and (4) acclimation.

ESL tutors receive training. The Sunny School District policy references the importance of ESL tutors being trained in instructional methods that will help their ESL students (P53). ESL tutors in the study had taken a college class focusing on culture. ESL tutors had training in testing. ESL tutors had been provided assistance with instructional strategies. Content Area teachers reported that they received no ESL training. Content area teachers expressed a desire for ESL training. Prior research supports training for teachers that will assist them in serving the ESL population (Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Short & Boyson, 2000; Derwing et al., 1999; Lucas, 2000; Datnow, 2003).

The Sunny School District policy references the need for the teacher to meet in a designated area for instruction. It states that the area should be separate from the content area

classroom and away from distractions. However, the findings relating to environment were mixed. Many ESL tutors were satisfied with their classroom environment, however, some were not. An ESL tutor shared that her setting was not optimal. Most ESL tutors indicated that they had adequate facilities. A teacher shared a story of how the assistant principal gave up a second office so she could have his space. Prior research supports the need to adapt a program as needed. Being flexible with scheduling and staff is a sign of good leadership (Berman et al, 1995). ESL tutors indicated that additional books and supplies were needed. An ESL tutor shared that she needed supplies. Prior research supports that for ESL programs to be successful they must be supported by the administration (Carter & Chatfield, 1986; Minicucci & Olsen, 1992; Berman et al. 1995).

This research showed that grading creates a stressful environment for students. ESL students shared examples of how important grading was to them personally. However, the current policy creates concerns with content area teachers. The policy states that students should be assigned a “L” while they are receiving full ESL services unless they are earning a satisfactory grade on their own. But, teachers have concerns about this policy because they feel that students may not try as hard as their potential if they know they will not be penalized.

The Sunny School District policy references the need for the ESL tutors to help their students adjust socially. ESL tutors referenced examples of this need for socialization. One example relayed by the ESL tutor and supported by a student was bullying. A translator was provided by the school to calm a Spanish speaking parent after a bullying incident. But, students stated that in general they adjusted to their new environment. Students did share that there were moments they felt they did not fit in because they spoke a different language.

The Community and their Influence on the LEP Student

The community influences the LEP student with learning English through, (1) home language of student, (2) family and extended family, (3) outside assistance, and (4) communication and involvement.

Spanish was the primary language spoken at home according to the ESL students interviewed. This was also supported by content teachers who shared that Spanish was the primary language spoken in the student's home.

According to the ESL students, the father helped them with English. Students also referenced the mother's assistance with learning the language. A student shared that he was teaching his mother to read. Uncles, brothers and cousins were all referenced by students as helping with learning English.

According to the interviews, friends outside of school also assisted the students with learning English. However, ESL tutors were not aware of outside groups assisting students. Content area teachers were similarly not aware of outside groups assisting students. But, ESL tutors shared that they were aware of adult education opportunities. In interviews, however, the tutors stated that they did not share this information with parents or students. The Sunny School District policy references adult education classes which are free of charge to the public (P48). Research shows that parents want to know about community resources like this so they can assist their children (Cassity & Harris, 2000).

Finally, parent involvement is minimal according to all ESL and Content Area teachers. Half of the ESL tutors recommended better communication with parents. Cumulative records in Spanish were an obstacle to assessing student placement. When records were sent from another country in Spanish there was often a delay in translating this information. Evidence of

information sent from the prior school written in Spanish was found in several student cumulative records (Records S1, S3 and S5). The information sent from the prior school is very important and can assist the tutor and content area teacher with serving the student.

Findings

Findings are included in this section. If there is a school policy tied to the finding it is referenced.

1. Instructional strategies assist the ESL student with learning. Content area teachers, ESL tutors and students referred to a variety of instructional strategies. There are policies that specifically reference some of these instructional strategies. Games and hands-on activities, tying the lesson to the student's home country and small group assistance were found to be effective instructional strategies. There are policies that support each of these instructional strategies. Use of visuals, testing assistance, detail rich lessons and providing positive reinforcement are effective instructional tools. However, there is not a specific policy which supports these topics.
2. Family and extended family were not involved at the school. All ESL tutors and content area teachers supported this finding. ESL tutors, students and content area teachers agreed that there is little involvement at the school level with family and extended family members of ESL students. Students referenced parent assistance at home; however, no students referred to parent involvement at the school level. Moreover, the home language of most students was Spanish. Two interview groups, students and content area teachers, referenced this as problematic. The policy does not specifically address this issue. In fact, all three interviewed groups referenced this area despite the fact that it was not addressed in the Sunny School District policy.

3. The content area curriculum was the focus of the ESL student instruction. Teachers and students supported that this was the focus. All interviewed groups referenced this area of concern. Significantly, there is a policy reference that supports use of the content area curriculum as the basis for ESL instruction.
4. ESL tutors are trained in the Sunny School District. All six ESL tutors that I interviewed said that they had training. However, content area teachers were not provided training to assist with ESL instruction. All content area teachers referenced a lack of ESL training as a concern. Interviewees mentioned this topic repeatedly. The Sunny School District policy does recommend training for ESL tutors. Both ESL tutor interviews and content area teacher interviews referred to this topic in their interviews.
5. There is no outside assistance available for students. All content area teachers and ESL tutors that I interviewed said that there is no outside assistance. The Sunny School District policy does not reference outside assistance for students, but it does reference services for adults.
6. Students and teachers supported the current policies. Students, ESL tutors and content area teachers all referenced their support for current policies. Unfortunately, there is not a specific policy that addresses this topic.
7. Student comprehension of the English language and teaching reading is a problem in this district. There is a lack of understanding of the English language, which was mentioned both by students and content area teachers. Student comprehension was referenced in content area teacher interviews and student interviews. Teaching reading was also the primary concern of all ESL tutors. While there is not a policy that addresses reading, there is policy that specifically addresses student comprehension.

8. The classroom environment is an adequate facility for teaching ESL students. ESL tutors stated that the facilities were adequate. Six interviewees referenced this topic, all from the same ESL tutor interview group. There is policy that references environment.
9. Student acclimation is not occurring in the district. ESL students specifically said that they were not fitting in at school. ESL tutors and students both referenced this topic. The policy addresses the issue of acclimation. Also, only friends outside of school assisted the student with learning English as supported by student interviews. However, there is not a policy that specifically addresses this issue.
10. Students and content area teachers share concerns about grading policies. Content area teachers maintain that the policy creates an environment where the students do not work hard. Students felt overwhelming pressure to perform. Additionally, two content area teachers and three students referenced grading. There is a policy which addresses this issue.
11. ESL tutor and content area teacher lack communication skills. Both ESL tutors and content area teachers referenced communication as a positive and negative experience. The references came from two interview groups, ESL tutors and content area teachers. There is policy which references necessary communication between the ESL tutor and the content area teacher. However, communication issues resulted in scheduling conflicts within this school system. These conflicts include pulling ESL students out of core instruction to receive ESL services. All three interviewed groups referenced this area, despite policy that addresses the issue of scheduling.
12. Cumulative records are sent to the school system in a language other than English. ESL tutors referred to this concern. There is not a policy which addresses this topic. Because

student records from their home country are often sent in their first language, records need to be interpreted and re-written. This process is time consuming and the teacher has to wait for the results from the transcriber. This delay results in a delay of progress for the student.

Recommendations

This section includes recommendations for further study. Based on the data generated in this study, identified weaknesses must be addressed. I recommended the following changes to the current Sunny School District ESL program.

1. Content area teachers and ESL tutors should include games, specific details, hands-on activities and cooperative grouping to daily instruction. It is recommended that schools provide manipulatives and visual resources for use in the content area and ESL classroom. Schools should purchase software and train staff to utilize this software program that will assist the student with test taking skills. Schools should provide training for content area teachers and ESL tutors by focused on tying lessons to the home country of the student, or their family and experiences, as an instructional tool for assisting LEP students.
2. Based on the data generated, schools should implement special programs designed to address the needs of ESL parent involvement at the school level. Providing transportation may be necessary to allow parents an opportunity to participate. Because the home language for most students is not English, schools should share educational opportunities with parents that will assist the parents with learning English.

3. Provided ESL tutors copies of the grade level curriculum and copies of student and teacher editions. ESL tutors should be included in staff development training in content area subjects. The findings show a weakness in this area.
4. ESL tutors and content area teachers must be trained to teach the LEP population. The findings show a weakness in this area. Training for all ESL tutors should be consistent. All ESL tutors should have the same training requirements which should be aligned with the goals of the program and the grade level curriculum. Content area teachers must be trained to address the needs of ESL students in the regular classroom.
5. It is recommended that schools should survey community organizations to assess if there are outside groups that provide or would be willing to provide services for LEP students. The school system should publish this list and provide copies to all LEP families and school staff members.
6. The school system should update the ESL policy guide annually and provided a copy to all content area teachers and ESL tutors. It is recommended that a steering committee charged with revising the policy guide should be formed, which includes ESL tutors, content area teachers, parents, administrators and the ESL coordinator.
7. ESL tutors and content area teachers must be trained to address English comprehension and reading comprehension. The school system should teach specific learning strategies that will assist with increased comprehension by the ESL student. The school system should adopt a reading program that specifically addresses the needs of LEP learners.
8. It is recommended that the school system evaluate individual school programs to ensure continuity among schools. This evaluation should include physical environment and

- materials. It should also include an evaluation of the ESL tutor and the content area teacher. The school and central office staff should forge a close working relationship.
9. The school system should form a division level curriculum committee to address the assimilation needs of ESL students. A committee comprised of guidance counselors and ESL tutors from each school should serve as authors. As part of this program, the LEP students should be assigned a buddy to assist with the transition. English-speaking students should be encouraged to befriend LEP students. Relationships within the school will help the LEP students more quickly adjust to their new environment.
 10. The grading policy for the district must be amended to address the pressures of the student and the views of content area teachers regarding alternative grading for LEP students. By providing flexibility with the grading policy the ESL tutor and content area teacher can work together to assist the student. Schools should also allow for adjustments to the grading policy if the ESL tutor and content area teacher agree with a grade change. These changes should be approved by an administrator.
 11. It is recommended that ESL tutors be assigned a common planning period to meet with the content area teachers. This group planning time would be beneficial to the teachers and the students. The findings show a weakness in this area. If the planning time is not an option, schools should design a communication form which is exchanged on a weekly basis between the ESL tutor and the content area teacher.
 12. Review the current role of the foreign language teacher within the school system. The potential for helping ESL students should be examined. An example of additional help provided by foreign language teachers is translating cumulative records written in a language other than English.

13. The school board should incorporate the policies listed in the ESL policy guide. The research revealed that this document is separate from the school board policies.
14. It is recommended that the school system assemble a strategic planning committee including ESL parents, administrators, content area teachers, ESL director, ESL tutors, students and community groups. The purpose of the committee should be to plan together to accomplish goals for communication, instruction, parent involvement and community assistance for LEP students.

Limitations

1. One limitation of this study was the narrow focus on one population of students. This study focused on only one school district. Within the one school district the study focused on a limited grade span. Within this population sample, the ESL students chosen all had Spanish as their first language.
2. Another limitation of the study was small sample size based on the number of LEP students enrolled in this school system. This population is small in comparison to the total enrollment of students.
3. The random selection criteria limited the ability to correlate information within an individual school. The ability to draw comparisons within individual schools may have provided more detailed information. Comparisons could be made with schools to show positive or negative implementations of the program.
4. Another limitation was the focus on ESL. There are two competing theories about educating LEP students, bilingual education and immersion. ESL is an immersion program. This study only focused on immersion.

5. A final limitation was the LEP population itself. Although many students interviewed were clearly able to express their views, there may have been some confusion during interviews because students had not mastered the English language.

Further Study

1. I recommend a study on the impact of gender on ESL student achievement. This focus of this research should be the impact of a male teacher on a Spanish speaking male ESL student.
2. A study with a focus on ESL students with potential learning disabilities should be conducted. Students can work for several years with a learning disability with support staff not knowing if the problem is an English proficiency issue or a learning disability. Students should be tested for a disability in their home language. A study could focus on the needs of the special education LEP population.
3. ESL Student academic success compared to the level of parent involvement would provide valuable information to schools. This study could compare homes where English is spoken to homes where English is not the primary language.
4. The impact on self-esteem as tied to grading practices with the ESL student is worthy of exploration. A study of different grading policies with a comparison of the impact of each would provide useful data.
5. The impact of classroom teaching strategies and the level of performance of students is a valuable topic. The study would compare LEP learners with regular students.
6. The impact of friendships outside of school on performance in school is a potential topic. LEP students referenced friendships outside of school, but did not reference friendships in school as factors that assisted them with learning English.

Conclusion

This study provides information for school systems struggling to serve their LEP population. This research identifies a list of instructional strategies that specifically focus on the needs of LEP students. School systems can use this information to address parent involvement, staff development and policy issues that have surfaced as a result of a growing immigrant population.

This study is important for two primary reasons. The first is the significant increases in the LEP population, which is impacting every state in America. The second reason is No Child Left Behind legislation, which separates LEP students into a subcategory. The expectation for this group under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has shined a spotlight on this unique group of students. School systems need information that will assist them with teaching LEP students and ultimately reaching Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals under NCLB. School systems must develop and implement a plan that specifically addresses the needs of these students.

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Appendix A

Sunny School District Request for Consent Letter

Date

Supervisor of Student Services
School Administration Building
Sunny School District

Dear:

I am currently enrolled in a doctoral program at Virginia Polytechnic and State University. My dissertation topic is facilitating the transition of Limited English Proficient students from their native language to English. The purpose of my research is to learn how teachers, school division policies, and community influences can facilitate the transition of middle school Limited English Proficient Students from their native language to English.

My study will require interviews with approximately five ESL students on the middle school level as well as approximately ten teachers that serve ESL students. I am requesting permission from Sunny School District to conduct this research study. I have attached a copy of my prospectus for your review. Included in the prospectus are the letters to parents requesting permission to interview their children. Also included in the prospectus are letters to teachers and administrators.

I will submit a request to the Institutional Review Board for Virginia Polytechnic and State University for approval and will provide a copy of that approval at your request.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I have worked closely with the coordinator of ESL for Sunny School District, and plan to share my research with her department.

Sincerely,

Jean A. Infantino

Appendix B

Parent/Student Request for Consent Letter

Date

Dear _____:

I am currently enrolled in a doctoral program at Virginia Polytechnic and State University. My dissertation topic is facilitating the transition of Limited English Proficient students from their native language to English. The purpose of my research is to learn how teachers, school division policies, and community influences can facilitate the transition of middle school Limited English Proficient Students from their native language to English.

My study will require interviews with English as Second Language (ESL) students on the middle school level as well as teachers that serve ESL students. I have approval from Sunny School District to conduct interviews with current ESL students. I am writing to ask permission to interview your child. The interviews will be scheduled under the direction of the ESL tutor and school principal. The interviews will be audio taped.

This is a voluntary study and your child is not required to participate. If you do allow them to participate I will schedule a time to interview your son or daughter. The interview will take place at their middle school.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your son or daughter can withdraw from this study at any time. Your child will not be treated differently if they choose not to participate. During the interview your child can ask questions. The risks are minimal for this study; I simply want to learn how your child has performed in the ESL program for Sunny School District. I hope the results of my research will help to strengthen the Sunny School District ESL program.

This information will be kept confidential and any results published will not reflect your child's name or any information that would identify him as a participant.

I hope you will consider allowing your child to participate in this study. If you give permission you can still withdraw from the study. None of the data about your child will be included in the research piece.

Sincerely,

Jean A. Infantino

Permission to Interview

Student Name _____

I give permission for my son/daughter to be interviewed by Jean A. Infantino. I understand that the interviews will be audio taped. I also give permission for Jean A. Infantino to review my son/daughter cumulative folder. I have read the attached letter and understand that my son/daughter can withdraw from this study at any time.

Parent Signature Date

Student Signature Date

Parent/Student Request for Consent Letter

Spanish Version

Estimado Señor y Señora _____ :

Yo soy matriculada actualmente en un programa doctoral a la Universidad de Virginia Polytechnic. El tema de mi disertación se trata de la transición de los estudiantes de inglés limitado desde su idioma nativo al inglés. El propósito de mi investigación está aprender como profesores, políticas de división de la escuela, y como las influencias comunitarias pueden facilitar la transición de estos estudiantes en la escuela media.

Mi estudio requerirá entrevistas con los estudiantes de ESL del nivel media así también con los profesores que sirven a los estudiantes de ESL. Yo tengo la aprobación de las Escuelas Públicas para hacer entrevistas con estudiantes actuales de ESL. Yo estoy escribiendo para pedir el permiso de tener entrevista con su niño o niña. Las entrevistas se programarán debajo la dirección del principal de la escuela y también con el profesor de ESL.

Este es un estudio voluntario y no es requerido que su niño participe. Si Usted le permite participar, yo organizaré un tiempo para entrevistar a su hijo o hija. La entrevista tendrá lugar a su propia escuela media.

Participación en este estudio es totalmente voluntario. Su hijo o hija puede retirar de este estudio a cualquier tiempo. También los estudiantes que escogen que no van a participar, no serán tratados en ninguna manera diferente si ellos escogen participar. Durante la entrevista, su niño puede pedir preguntas. Así, este estudio no contiene riesgos. Yo simplemente quiero aprender como su niño ha desempeñado en el programa de ESL para las Escuelas Públicas.

Esta información se guardará confidencial y cualesquiera resultados publicados no se reflejarán el nombre de su niño ni lo identificaría como participante.

Yo espero que Ud. Considere permitirá a su niño participar en este estudio. Si Ud. da permiso, puede retirar del estudio luego y así ninguno de los datos sobre niño se incluirá en la investigación.

Sinceramente,

Jean Infantino

El Permiso para Entrevistar

El nombre de estudiante _____

Yo doy permiso para mi hijo/hija para ser entrevistada por Jean A. Infantion. Yo he leído la carta adjunta y comprendo que mi hijo/hija puede retirar de este estudio a cualquier tiempo.

La Firma de los Padres del Estudiante

La Firma del Estudiante

La fecha

Appendix C

Principal Request for Consent Letter

Date

Dear _____:

I am currently enrolled in a doctoral program at Virginia Polytechnic and State University. My dissertation topic is facilitating the transition of Limited English Proficient students from their native language to English. The purpose of my research is to learn how teachers, school division policies, and community influences can facilitate the transition of middle school Limited English Proficient Students from their native language to English.

My study will require interviews with ESL students on the middle school level as well as teachers that serve ESL students. I have been granted permission from Sunny School District as well as the Institutional Review Board for Virginia Polytechnic and State University to interview ESL students. I will obtain written permission from each parent. I would like to work with your ESL tutor to schedule these interviews.

I will follow up with a phone call to discuss this process in detail. If you grant permission, I would request a list of all teachers that currently serve ESL students in your building. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this study.

Sincerely,

Jean A. Infantino

Appendix D

Teacher Request for Consent Letter

Date

Dear _____:

I am currently enrolled in a doctoral program at Virginia Polytechnic and State University. My dissertation topic is facilitating the transition of Limited English Proficient students from their native language to English. The purpose of my research is to learn how teachers, school division policies, and community influences can facilitate the transition of middle school Limited English Proficient Students from their native language to English.

My study will require interviews with ESL students on the middle school level as well as teachers that serve ESL students. I have approval from Sunny School District to conduct interviews. I am writing to ask permission to interview you. The interviews will be scheduled under the direction of the school principal.

This is a voluntary study and you are not required to participate. If you choose to participate I will schedule a time for an interview. The interview will take place at your middle school. The interview will be audio taped.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You can withdraw from this study at any time. You will not be treated differently if they choose not to participate. During the interview you can ask questions. There is minimal risk with this study; I simply want to learn more about how students perform in the ESL program for Sunny School District. You can withdraw from this study at any time.

This information will be kept confidential and any results published will not reflect your name or any information that would identify you as a participant.

I hope you will consider participating in this study. You can withdraw from the study at any time. After withdrawing, none of the data about you will be included in the research piece.

I will contact you to follow up with this letter. If you grant permission to participate I will schedule a time for an interview. Thank you for your consideration with this matter.

Sincerely,

Jean A. Infantino

Permission to Interview

Student Name _____

I give permission to be interviewed by Jean A. Infantino. I understand that the interview will be audio taped. I have read the attached letter and understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time.

Teacher Signature Date

Appendix E

Student Interview Questions

1. Tell me about going to school in Sunny School District?
2. Describe any experiences when you struggled with English?
3. Describe times in the regular classroom when your knowing English made it difficult to learn.
4. Share times when you felt you did not fit in at school.
5. Tell me about positive and negative experiences in the regular classroom – good things and bad things that have happened?
6. What activities did the regular core teacher do in their lessons that helped you to learn English?
7. How did your family or other people in your family help you with learning English?
8. Is English spoken in your home? Follow up: who speaks English and is this the primary language?
9. What did you like most about the things that happened in the core classroom? The least/worst?
10. How did the school rules cause any problems with learning English?
11. What kind of things did the core teacher do to help you the most with learning English? Why?
12. Tell me about positive and negative experiences in the ESL classroom – not just this year but in past years too?
13. What was the hardest part (struggle) of your lessons with the ESL tutor? What was the easiest part?
14. Who helped you outside of school with learning English and how did they help?
15. Which classroom activities do you feel helped you learn English – if you had to pick one?

Appendix F

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Please give an overview of your experiences with teaching ESL students.
2. Give examples of how the administration and the school support or fail to support the ESL program.
3. Are there outside groups that are involved in assisting students with learning English? If so, who are they and what do they do?
4. How do the schools policies assist or hinder you as a teacher in helping students learn English?
5. What teaching strategies are most effective with teaching ESL students?
6. Describe any training you have received for working specifically with ESL students?
7. In what ways do ESL and Regular Education teachers work together?
8. What changes could be made with school procedures or policies to better serve these students?
9. What are the challenges facing you when teaching ESL students?
10. Are ESL parents involved with assisting their students with learning English? If so, how?

Appendix G

Copies of transcripts cited in this paper are available upon request.