EFFECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STRATEGIES WHICH ENABLE TEACHERS TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPROVE STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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THESIS

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EFFECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STRATEGIES WHICH ENABLE TEACHERS TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPROVE STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

of

EFFECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STRATEGIES WHICH ENABLE TEACHERS TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPROVE STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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Brief Literature Review

The purpose of this research was to conduct a case study of teachers to discover effective English language learner strategies used in the classroom which allows teachers to successfully improve student academic achievement. The researcher examined the history and development of English language learners (ELLs), challenges educators face in the classroom, and various theories supporting successful English language strategies. The study focused on three questions: 1) How well are teachers prepared to reinforce practical and effective strategies to promote academic achievement for EL students; 2) What are effective methods for teaching language learning strategies to EL students; and 3) How does current legislation and professional development influence the teacher’s implementation of EL strategies in the classroom?

Many educators are feeling pressure from the high demands for student success. The constant influx of new students, the high demand for accountability in state testing, the need for sustained resources and greater preparedness to teach the students in today’s
classrooms, contribute to the struggle to ensure academic success for students. If students are not taught to meet their needs, they and the institution of education will fail.

**Methodology**

The information gathered for this study was obtained from one elementary school in a large urban school district in California’s Sacramento Valley. The researcher collected the data from staff surveys and observations. The acquired data was gathered from 22 elementary school (K-6) teachers through a questionnaire. Six of them also volunteered to participate in informal observations.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

The findings were supported from current research which verifies strategies to aid teachers who work with English language learners. The staff at Joan D. Elementary specified the need for learning more strategies to support academic success for English language learners. Future research to promote academic success for ELL students is recommended to sustain teachers in meeting the current challenges in education. In addition, further research on strategies and procedures to gain academic success for ELL students is recommended for teachers at Joan D. Elementary School.

____________________________, Committee Chair
Virginia L. Dixon, Ed. D.

____________________________
Date
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Last, and certainly not least, thank you to all my family and friends who offered me encouragement and support throughout the course of this thesis. Through babysitting, motivation, and endless amounts of care and advice my family and friends stood by and made this process seamless.

To each of the above, I extend my deepest gratitude.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the two amazing boys in my life. First to my son, Bennett, who began this journey with me and motivated me to finish. The second, to my husband, Daniel, who made many sacrifices to support me in my endeavors and inspired me to strive. I am forever grateful for their unconditional love and encouragement.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Nationally, there has been continuous struggle, especially in the state of California, to meet the needs of all students in the education system. With higher standards and standards based assessments there has been a strong drive to focus on a quality education for youth. However, along with higher standards come higher expectations and students who speak English as a second language are held to the same expectations, many times without the necessary support.

A survey of state education agencies found that in 2000-2001, more than four million students with limited proficiency in English were enrolled in public schools across the nation, making up almost ten percent of the total pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade public school enrollment (EPE Research Center, 2004). The same report stated that the English language learner population has grown 105%, while the general school population has only grown twelve percent since the 1990-91 school year (EPE Research Center, 2004). These rapidly increasing numbers cause challenges for educators motivated to ensure academic success for language minority children.

The term English language learner (ELL) can be defined as students with a primary language other than English who have a limited range of speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills in English (US Department of Education, 2007). An ELL student is surrounded by language, usually English, in the classroom day to day.
Language is an essential aspect of education. Teachers of English language learners regard language in much more detail than a means of communication. ELL teachers modify their instructional practices to accommodate the students. Teachers accommodate not only because they want to educate all of their students, but also they must do so to meet the federal mandate of the educational needs of ELL students. Historically, the ELL student has come to be viewed in a full context in receiving aid in the classroom. Today, under Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB] (2001), ELLs have now become a designated subgroup for state standardized testing. Now more than ever, schools must consider the academic progress of ELL students when determining their annual yearly progress (AYP) goals. In addition to considering their progress, under Title III of NCLB, school must use the state adopted curricula and create yearly achievement objectives for all ELLs.

Teachers are struggling to meet the needs of this growing population. Many districts and schools have not received the adequate training they need to fully teach the EL student. The 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey indicated that of the 41 percent of teachers who taught ELL students, less than 13 percent had received eight or more hours of training in the last three years in how to teach ELL students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Teachers are “left-behind” when they do not receive sufficient training in how to promote English language acquisition while also teaching the content standards students need to become successful.
Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this research was to understand how prepared teachers were in implementing effective English language learner strategies in the classroom. In particular, this study delved into effective strategies and the challenges teachers face with the growing population of EL students in the classroom setting. The study focused on the following three questions:

1. How well are teachers prepared to reinforce practical and effective strategies to promote academic achievement for EL students?
2. What are effective methods for teaching language learning strategies to EL students?
3. How does current legislation and professional development influence the teacher’s implementation of English language learner strategies in the classroom?

Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): A mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which requires districts and schools to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Annual Measurable Objective (AMO): The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; the law requires states and districts to develop measurable objectives for the state and district for yearly review.

Annual Performance Index (API): Measures the academic performance and growth of schools through state standardized testing.
**Bilingual Education Act (BEA):** A bill enacted in 1968 to provide schools with federal funds to establish programs for students with limited English speaking ability.

**Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS):** A term credited to Jim Cummins; meaning language skills needed to interact in social situations.

**California English Language Development Test (CELDT):** A state standardized test given to students, in Kindergarten through Grade 12, whose home language is not English.

**Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP):** A term also credited to Jim Cummins, meaning the communication that occurs in the classroom.

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA):** A federal statute enacted in 1965, which funds primary and secondary education through the use of professional development, instructional materials, resources to support educational programs, and parental involvement.

**English Language Development (ELD):** A 30 to 45 minute pull out program for English language learners to receive direct instruction in English.

**English Language Learner (ELL):** A person who is learning English as a second language.

**English as a Second Language (ESL):** The study of English by a speaker with a different native language.

**Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA):** A law put into effect in 1974 and served to prohibit discrimination against faculty, staff and students, and requires school districts to take action to overcome barriers to students’ equal participation.
Local Education Agency (LEA): An entity that operates local, primary and secondary schools in the United States.


No Child Left Behind (NCLB): A federal law passed under the George W. Bush administration, attempting to accomplish standards based education reform.

PLC: Professional Learning Community.

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP): An approach to teaching English language learners which integrates language and content instruction.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): A concept developed by Lev Vygotsky, meaning the difference between what a learner can do independently and what a learner can do with guidance.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to teachers at Joan D. Elementary School. Due to studying one elementary school, the results may not be relevant to other schools with comparable demographics. Also, since the researcher is a teacher at the school, there may be biased views. The purpose of the observations completed by the researcher was to gain an insight of what was taught in the classroom for English language learners only. The researcher only examined lesson delivery as it pertained to the study. No further analysis of instruction delivery was completed. In addition, the results are only specified to this particular school and not to other elementary schools within this district.
Significance/Importance of the Study

The study was chosen because English language learners are falling behind in academic achievement compared to their peers in the classroom. There is an overwhelming surge of English language learners in the state of California and without aid, the achievement gap will only widen. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) required states to set high standards and ensure each classroom possess a “highly qualified” teacher. Becoming “highly qualified” is an essential asset a teacher must acquire for English language learners because the teacher becomes so vital for learning English. It is no longer the “sink or swim approach” that takes place in the classroom. The comprehension of second language acquisition can develop the ability of teachers; significant professional development is necessary to gain a full understanding of theory and strategies which can be quickly applied in the classroom.

The purpose of this study is to understand the requirements teachers face and preparation necessary to meet the needs of English language learners. The research will demonstrate teachers’ familiarity of language learning strategies and the actual implementation of the strategies in the classroom through survey research and classroom observations. This study will facilitate future research into learning how to aid English language learners in the classroom and the effective strategies that prove successful in academic achievement, along with developing valuable professional development training to serve English language learner teachers and students.
Organization of the Remainder of the Project

This thesis is structured into five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction of the study, which includes the background, the statement of the problem, definition of terms, the limitations, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature focused on the historical background of English language learners, challenges for educators, and theories supporting academic success. Chapter 3 consists of the methods and procedures used for the study. Chapter 4 describes the results and analysis of the data collected in the study. Chapter 5 presents a summary, conclusions and recommendations for further study.
Chapter 2
REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The impact of today’s high stakes accountability tests have put English language learners (EL) on a high priority for school reform. EL students need not only to become proficient in the English language, but also to meet competency in the same academic standards as native English speakers. Teachers are faced with many challenges based on performance and are further challenged by the sometimes insufficient professional preparation programs. The literature review was divided into three sections. The first section of the literature review will analyze the historical background on educational policies made in the United States from 1954 until the present time. The second section will concentrate on the challenges educators embark upon in the classroom. The third section will focus on literature surrounding theories for successful instruction of English language learners.

Historical Background

Bilingual education was not absent in the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that bilingual education became a significant issue in education policy. Beginning in 1954, the US Supreme Court (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954) outlawed “separate but equal” public schools prohibiting segregation. Although this decision was based on the
segregation of African-American students in school classrooms, it was the turning point for students’ civil rights.

The civil rights movement brought national attention through President Lyndon B. Johnson’s legislation that aimed at reducing poverty, improving education, and supporting ethnic identity (Padilla, Fairchild & Valadez, 1990). Unlike many countries, the United States historically left responsibility for funding and operating public schools largely to state and local governments. Under the US Constitution, federal authority generally takes precedence over state and local authority where national concerns such as civil rights are at stake. Consequently, federal involvement in education was minimal before the 1960s (Crawford, 2004). However, it was not until the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), in which there was a move for greater federal intervention, particularly in the allocation of funds, which the role of the federal government emerged in a larger way.

The ESEA addressed the academic needs of poor children. This was not meant as a general package of aid to all schools; the allocation was directed to the local education agencies (LEAs) with the greatest proportions of poor children. The ESEA began the assimilation of the “melting pot” ideology being replaced with cultural pluralism and ethnic restoration (Padilla et al., 1990). Although the law had been in strong support of enriching the education of English Language Learners, there was also controversy among the authority that the federal, state, and local officials had over public education. On the other hand, there was no argument in the strides the government had taken to ensure academic success. The effectiveness that bilingual education programs were producing
had caused national attention which contributed to the creation of the first Bilingual Education Act (BEA) in 1968.

The Bilingual Education Act

On January 2, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Bilingual Education Act into law, indicating the first commitment to supporting educational programs for students with limited English skills. The BEA was not an independent piece of legislation but was added to Title VII of the ESEA. It served primarily to legitimize bilingual education programs, allocate funds for experimental programs, and foster research on bilingual education (Malakoff & Hakuta, 1990). Carter, Flores and Reddick (2004) described such programs:

There is instruction given in, and study of, English and to the extent necessary to allow a child to progress effectively through the educational system, the native language of the children of limited English-speaking ability, and such instruction is given with appreciation for the cultural heritage of such children, and with respect elementary school instruction, such instruction shall, to the extent necessary, be in all courses or subjects of study which will allow a child to progress effectively through the educational system. (Carter et al., 2004, pp. 150-151)

The goals of the act were vague in the fact that the law neither recognized nor defined the type of programs that were needed. Also in question was whether the intention was to speed up the transition into English or promote bilingualism. Senator Ralph Yarborough, the measure’s prime sponsor, did nothing to clarify this issue and told
fellow lawmakers: “It is not the purpose of the bill to create pockets of different languages throughout the country…not to stamp out the mother tongue, and not to make their mother tongue the dominant language, but just to try to make those children fully literate in English” (Crawford, 2004, p. 115). Finally, after similar bills had been introduced, the final legislation for the BEA acknowledged the “problems of those children who are educationally disadvantaged because of their inability to speak English” (Bilingual Education Act, 1968, PL 90--247). Section 702 of the law defined bilingual education as a federal policy, which would be “to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies to carry out new and imaginative elementary and secondary school programs designed to meet these special educational needs” (Bilingual Education Act, 1968, PL 90-247, Sec. 702). As the intention was to encourage varied and innovative programs, rather than mandate strict policy, the law neither defined nor prescribed the types of programs needed. However, it recognized that bilingual programs need not be limited to language arts and noted that “programs impart to students a knowledge of history and culture associated with their languages” (Bilingual Education Act, 1968, PL 90-247; Title VII, Sec. 704 [a][2][e]).

The BEA was an integral part of legislation that facilitated the movement of bilingual education programs. In doing so, it marked a change in policy toward language minorities and undermined the English-only laws that were still on the books in some states (Laosa, 1984). More importantly it suggested that equal education was not the same as identical education, even when there was no difference in location or teacher (Malakoff & Hakuta, 1990).
**Lau v. Nichols**

Even the most perceptive could not foresee at the time of its enactment that Title VI of the Civil rights Act of 1964 would become a principal weapon of linguistic minorities in their battle to ensure equal education (as cited in Carter et al., 2004). Lau v. Nichols was the monumental court case in which Chinese public school students brought suit against the San Francisco School District in 1970. The case originated when a San Francisco poverty lawyer, Edward Steinman, learned of his client’s child failing in school because he did not understand the language of instruction. Along with 1,789 other Chinese students, Steinman filed a class action lawsuit for Kinney Lau. Steinman based his grounds for the lawsuit on the fact that he believed the children were being denied “education on equal terms” (the court’s standard in Brown v. Board of Education) because of their inability to speak English. The two parties were in agreement that the 1,790 Chinese students received no services designed to meet their linguistic needs and that these students suffered educationally. The real question was if non-English speaking students receive an equal educational opportunity when instruction is in a language other than one they speak and understand.

The Federal district and appeals court favored school officials. Yet, according to Ninth Circuit Judge Shirley Hufstedler, plaintiffs did not seek to have their classes taught in both English and Chinese. “All they ask is that they receive instruction in the English language” (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954). Judge Hufstedler went on to paraphrase the plaintiffs’ argument as follows: “Access to education offered by the public schools is completely foreclosed to these children who cannot comprehend any of it. They are
functionally deaf and mute...These Chinese children are not separated from their English speaking classmates by state-erected walls of brick and mortar” (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954), but the language barrier, which the state helps to maintain, insulated the children from their classmates as effectively as any physical bulwarks. Indeed, these children are more isolated from equal educational opportunity than were those physically segregated African Americans in Brown; because these children cannot communicate at all with their classmates or their teachers.

In 1974, the Supreme Court unanimously overruled the lower courts and embraced Hufstedler’s reasoning. “There is no equality of treatment,” wrote Justice William O. Douglas, “merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education” (Crawford, 2004, p. 116). Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the Chinese speaking children were entitled to special assistance to allow them to participate equally in the school program, the court said. “Sink or swim” was no longer acceptable.

Many months after the Lau decision was made, Congress codified the Supreme Court ruling into the Equal Educational Opportunity Act (EEOA) of 1974. This section of the law extended the Lau decision to all public school districts, including those not receiving federal funds. The EEOA required school districts to “take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impeded equal participation by its students in its instructional programs” (EEOA, 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1703f). In spite of this, the law was
not specific as to how and what constituted an “appropriate action” so courts were subject to their perceptions and made case-by-case decisions.

**Outcomes of Lau v. Nichols**

After the Supreme Court decision had been made in *Lau*, a document was prepared known as the “*Lau* Remedies”. The *Lau* Remedies described the obligation of school districts to take affirmative steps to provide appropriate instructional programs to non-English dominant students. It was dictated that bilingual education be a means to correct past practices and deem those past practices not creditable unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

The following court cases drew national attention and have made an impact on bilingual education today. *Serna v. Portales Municipal Schools* and *Aspira of New York, Inc., v. Board of Education of the City of New York*, were two of the first court decisions since *Lau* that developed into court mandated bilingual programs. A third decision, *Rios v. Read*, dealt with the school district’s responsibilities, stating that unless the district’s bilingual programs were effective, a *Lau* violation would be generated the same as if the program had not been offered. Finally, *Castaneda v. Pickard* may be the most definitive of all the court decisions in describing program requirements for language minority students. Several other cases were raised, but many were not primarily concerned with bilingual education.

**Serna v. Portales Municipal Schools**

In 1972, Chicano students opposed the English-only instructional program in the schools of Portales, New Mexico. After listening to testimony from teachers,
administrators, and educational psychologists the courts found a violation of the students’ constitutional rights to an equal education opportunity. The courts ordered that bilingual instruction be offered and rejected the school board’s proposed program as tokenism and agreed with the program submitted by the plaintiffs (Minow, 2004). The Tenth Circuit, after appeals made by the New Mexico State Board of Education, held that the schoolchildren had a right to bilingual education. The court stated that “a student who does not understand English and is not provided with bilingual instruction is therefore precluded from any meaningful education” (Minow, 2004, p. 14). Serna was the first court case to specify bilingual education as a remedy for the Lau decision. It was the first time that a court expressly required bilingual education as a solution to the issue of equal education opportunities for bilingual students.

Aspira of New York, Inc., v. Board of Education of the City of New York

Aspira was a monumental court case deciding who should receive bilingual instruction. In 1972, Puerto Rican and Hispanic students in New York City filed suit again the city Board of Education. The students alleged that the obligations of school officials to bilingual education were fundamentally not being satisfied. Thousands of Hispanic students received instruction in English as Second Language only, and tens of thousands received no instruction to meet their linguistic and cultural needs (Hiller & Teitelbaum, 2004). After many negotiations, the two parties agreed to a decree in August 1974. Under the consent decree, the school board was required to design and implement an improved method for assessing Hispanic students’ skills in English and Spanish in order to identify those students with English-language difficulties who, accordingly, have
rights under *Lau* (Hiller & Teitelbaum, 2004). Students who were eligible, had to receive instruction in core classes required to graduate in Spanish, and the school had to build a program that allows children the ability to speak, read, write, and understand English. The decree also noted that materials and teachers must reflect the qualifications for the culture of the children involved. Teachers and personnel had to meet necessary qualifications and affirmative recruitment was required. *Aspira* made it possible for students to be tested to determine their English proficiency and provide instruction to students who received low scores.

*Rios v. Read*

The premise of *Rios v. Read* was that the Eastern District of New York had rejected the idea of mainstreaming students if it meant that their progress would be impeded temporarily. In the court case of *Rios v. Read* the court stated:

> It is not enough simply to provide a program for language disadvantaged children or even to staff the program with bilingual teachers; rather, the question is whether the program is designed to assure as much as is reasonably possible the language deficient child’s growth in the English language. An inadequate program is as harmful to a child who does not speak English as no program at all.

(75 C. 296 at 15)

For the first time, a district court amplified the holding of *Lau* by making reference to the legislative history of the federal Bilingual Education Act of 1974, in which Congress recognized the far-reaching implications of *Lau* and emphasized “the
importance of bilingual education in the academic and personal growth of the language disadvantaged child” (Hiller & Teitelbaum, 2004, p. 87).

Relying on the court case of Serna, the court summed up:

To put a final perspective on the defendants’ position, it could hardly be argued that if a school district was found to violate the standards of Lau v. Nichols because it had failed to provide any bilingual education for language disadvantaged children, a court would be required to accept without scrutiny whatever remedial program the school district then proposes simply because the district now could claim that it was taking ‘affirmative steps’. (Hiller & Teitelbaum, 2004, p. 89)

With this decision, the school district was charged with inadequate programs; therefore, it was held liable for providing an effective program for the students.

Castaneda v. Pickard

The case of Castaneda v. Pickard was filed against the Raymondville Independent School District (RISD) in Texas, when a father, Roy Castaneda, claimed that the RISD was discriminating against his two Mexican-American children based on their ethnicity. Roy Castaneda believed that his children were being taught in a segregated classroom that was using a grouping system based on criteria that were both ethnically and racially discriminating. He also argued that the RISD failed to establish a sufficient bilingual program to aid in the language barrier that prevented his children from participating equally in the classroom.
In *Castaneda*, the 5th Circuit judges relied on the EEOA to mandate special language assistance, not the *Lau*. They ruled that in passing the EEOA, Congress had thrown its weight behind *Lau*, thus affirming that educational neglect violated the civil rights of language minority children, whether or not they had been victims of deliberate discrimination (Crawford, 2004). The decision added that “good faith efforts” did not discharge school officials of their responsibilities. Because Congress had unsuccessfully defined appropriate action, the court did so, by outlining three criteria for a program serving limited English proficient students described by Crawford (2004):

- It must be based on a “sound educational theory.”
- It must be “implemented effectively,” with adequate resources and personnel.
- After a trial period, it must be evaluated as effective in overcoming language handicaps (p. 127).

The *Castaneda* standard remains in effect today almost arguably throughout the country. It successfully became a system to assess if a program is in compliance with *Lau v. Nichols*.

*Proposition 227*

In June 1998, California voters passed Proposition 227, which prohibited the use of primary language instruction for English Language Learners. The initiative was organized to change the way English Learners were taught. Proposition 227 required students to be placed into a transitional program of “structured English immersion” until parents could receive a waiver to put a child into a bilingual class or permanent classroom. If a waiver could not be granted students were then transferred to a
mainstream English-language classroom. The enactment of Proposition 227 eliminated bilingual education and enacted the English-only attitude which proposed a negative outlook on native language instruction.

Challenges for Educators

Language-minority children, especially those who speak Spanish and are from low socio-economic backgrounds have extreme difficulty in US schools (Goldenberg, 1996). The schools’ response to the challenge of non-English-speaking students has been uneven, irregular, and laced with political, ideological, and methodological controversies such as those swirling around bilingual education (Crawford, 1991). There have been programs here and there that seem to be successful, but with the majority of ELL students below grade level, the lasting results are disconcerting. Spanish-speaking students, even when taught and tested in Spanish, still score at the thirty-second percentile in relation to a national comparison group which was taught and tested in English (Mullis, Campbell & Farstrup, 1993). The statistics for ELLs prove that a crisis exists for language minority students in education.

Entering a new environment can be intimidating for young children. The lives of many young children can be further complicated by having to communicate and learn in a language that is unfamiliar (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 1995). Previously, children who entered US Schools whose home language was not English were likely to immerse themselves in the mainstream of schools, primarily through the use of English (NAEYC, 1995). At times this immersion had
negative views toward certain languages and students tended to “give up” on their home language. Early childhood educators must recognize the feeling of loneliness, fear, and abandonment children may feel when they are plunged into a setting that can isolate them from their home community and language (NAEYC). They believed that the disruption of family communication patterns can lead to the loss of intergenerational wisdom; damage to individual and community esteem; and children’s potential nonmastery of their home language or English.

Problems also tend to arise with transition. Transition is defined as the period of time in a student’s schooling when language minority students in native language programs make the shift from instruction that relies heavily on the native language to instruction that is exclusively in mainstream English (Goldenberg, 1996). Students who had previously been in programs that make at least some instructional use in a native language most likely did not have concerns. However, for those students who did not receive native language instruction in their early years, the timing, manner, and dynamics of the transition to English were likely to be important (Goldenberg).

During transition, students’ classroom participation and achievement go down; uncertainty, confusion, and special education referrals tend to go up (Gersten, 1996). Transition is a crucial period in the education of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, but one which educators have little reliable foundation for policy and practices (Goldenberg, 1996). There is evidence that it takes students from five to seven years in order to become sufficiently competent in a second language to succeed in mainstream classes (Cummins, 1980); abrupt removal of primary language instruction can be
detrimental to LEP students’ academic progress (Ramirez, 1992). Therefore, the transition years are ones which are overwhelming with frustration and difficulty not only for students, but also for teachers.

Taking action to help alleviate linguistic and cultural diversity can be demanding and difficult. Although not always evident, solutions to these demands can be further complicated by a specific need of a child, the family, or the educational program. At times, the challenges may also be overwhelming for a teacher to understand and deal with. Nevertheless, despite the complexity, it is the responsibility of all educators to assume the tasks and meet the challenges. These challenges must be viewed as opportunities for the early childhood educator to reflect, question, and effectively respond to the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse children (NAEYC, 1995).

Accountability Legislation

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush authorized the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Within this new law, the government’s role in education changed dramatically. No Child Left Behind set a goal for all children learning to read and do math at grade level or better by 2014, with schools held accountable for meeting it. Under the NCLB law:

- Schools test all students annually in Grades 3 through 8 and once in high school;
- Data is disaggregated so the progress of all students can be measured and improved;
• States and districts have freedom to use federal education funds on top priorities; and
• Parents of children in poorly performing schools have new options, including free tutoring or the choice to enroll in another public or public charter school (US Department of Education, 2007).

Within the legislation, education faces the strongest accountability measures for teachers to date. NCLB required that ELL students (referred to as limited English proficient (LEP) students in the federal law) be placed in “high quality language instruction educational programs that are based on scientifically based research demonstrating the effectiveness of the programs in increasing (a) English proficiency; and (b) student academic achievement in the core academic subjects” (Title III, § 3115(c)(1)). The law also required that ELL students be included in each state’s high-stakes standards-based testing program, that they be tested in a “valid and reliable manner,” and provided with ‘reasonable accommodations’ (Title I, § 1111(b)(3)(C)(ix)(III)). Schools are held accountable for ensuring that ELL students make “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) each year towards the ultimate goal in 2014 when 100% of all students—including ELLs—will be expected to pass their state’s test each year. Schools which fail to ensure that ELL students (or other subgroups of students) make AYP each year face serious sanctions, including state or private takeover of the school. Thus, schools with large numbers of ELL students are under immense pressure to raise test scores each year.
There has been a great deal of debate in California (Judson & Garcia-Dugan, 2004; Krashen, 2004; Mahoney, Thompson & MacSwan, 2004; Wright & Pu, 2005) and across the country (Abedi, 2004; Crawford, 2003, 2004; Wiley & Wright, 2004; Wright & Pu, 2005) about the appropriateness and the effectiveness of these policies for ELL students. Policy makers have vigorously defended the policies and claim they are improving education for ELL students (Horne & Dugan, 2003; Judson & Garcia-Dugan, 2004; US Department of Education, 2007. Scholars, researchers, and advocates for ELL students have contested these claims and provided evidence that these policies may be causing more harm than good (Combs, Evans, Fletcher, Parra & Jimenez, 2005; Krashen, 2004; Mahoney et al., 2004; Wiley & Wright, 2004; Wright & Pu, 2005).

Largely absent from this debate were the voices of classroom teachers who had been given the charge to implement these policies at the classroom level. The lack of teacher voices in this debate is a key omission, as it is the classroom teachers who have first hand knowledge and experience of how these policies are being implemented and how they are influencing the education of ELL students. Classroom teachers know the students these policies claim to be benefiting. Oftentimes, when individual teachers speak out, their views are dismissed, or policymakers may simply claim the teachers’ views and classroom experiences are not representative of other teachers and schools throughout the state (Judson & Garcia-Dugan, 2004; Krashen, 2004; Mahoney et al., 2004; Wright & Pu, 2005).

Public Law 107-100, the NCLB Act of 2001 made clear that states, districts, schools, and teachers must hold the same high standards for ELL students as for all other
students, and that educators must be accountable for assuring that all students, including ELL students, meet high expectations. By mandating that ELL students be included in annual state assessments, be subjected to annual assessments of ELP, and be included in reporting of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) performance targets, the federal legislation operationalized attention to the needs and progress of ELL students in both English proficiency and school subject matter (Wolf, 2008).

Changing Demographics

Another challenge among educators is the constant influx of new students. In California alone, there was a rapid change in demographics during the last few years. California leads the nation in the number of immigrants who have settled in the state, as well as an increase in undocumented persons from many countries. In 1980, of all American children between the ages of ten and 19, 78.8% were non-Latino Whites, 14.2% were African Americans, 7.8% were Latinos, 1.5% were Asian Pacific Islanders, and .8% were Native Americans. By 1992, comparable figures were 68.8%, 14.8%, 12.1%, 3.4%, and one percent, respectively (US Bureau of the Census, 1994). Increases in the proportional representation of racial and ethnic minorities are projected to continue over the next several decades. For example, it is projected that between 2000 and 2010, the Latino, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American populations will increase by 30%, 12.4%, 42%, and 13.7%, respectively in contrast to an increase in only 2.8% in the non-Latino White population (McLoyd & Steinberg, 1998).

Mobility in this constant growth only adds to the challenges. Students who are highly mobile, move six or more times in their K-12 educational experience and come
from a wide variety of backgrounds. The children include children of migrant workers, families who have experienced domestic violence, families in unstable work and home situations that have resulted from poverty, military families and immigrant families. National data on third graders revealed that one-half million children attended more than three schools between the first and third grade. Thirty percent of the children in low-income families changed schools versus eight percent of children well above the poverty line. High mobility hits urban children particularly hard. Inner city students are more likely to change schools frequently (United States General Accounting Office, 1994). Approximately twenty-five percent of urban third graders were highly mobile, compared to approximately one seventh of suburban and rural students. Some urban schools reported student turnover rates forty to eighty percent (Stover, 2000).

The impact of high mobility is devastating to the academics of children. Studies have shown that it can take anywhere from four to six months for a child to make progress academically, after a transfer to another school. Students with high mobility experience isolation after a move, which impacts school attendance and performance (Homes for Homelessness, 1999). Students who move more often have lower attendance rates. A twenty percent absentee rate has resulted in achievement scores twenty points lower than their stable peers (Family Housing Fund, 1998). Lastly, mobile students are twice as likely to repeat a grade, and mobility even negatively impacts the academic achievement of settled students (Jacobsen, 2001). Teachers and school districts face many challenges in the classroom administration, as well as in district planning and budgeting. Student transiency may represent significant strains on the school district staff.
and on the overall capacity of districts to provide an adequate educational experience to all students. Student mobility has negative effects for transient students, schools, teachers, and classmates:

- Mobility is associated with lower student achievement (Fowler-Finn, 2001).
- An achievement gap exists between schools with a high mobility rate and those that are more stable (Kerbow, 1996).
- Classroom instruction in schools with higher mobility rates are more likely to be review oriented and have slower instructional pacing from month to month and grade to grade (Kerbow, 1996).
- High School students who change schools are at least twice as likely not to graduate—research indicates that only 60 percent will graduate (Rumberger, Larson, Ream & Palardy, 1999).
- In all income categories, highly mobile students are more likely to be retained a grade than children who do not change schools (Fowler-Finn, 2001).

Although about three million children are born each year, up to 40 million Americans move in that same time period (Hodgkinson, 2001). Many cultures are on the move but groups that outweigh the majority tend to be Hispanic and Asian immigrants. These groups have a higher tendency to relocate, given that new family members migrate to the United States at a growing rate (Hodgkinson).

Another issue especially for Southeast Asian students is the insufficient funding and assistance to hire qualified instructors in the case of bilingual programs and failure to expand existing programs (Flores, 2004). Some parents will try to relocate their children
to another school with more sufficient programs, however many students will drop out of school.

Many cultures try to assimilate into mainstream education. According to Flores (2004), Southeast Asian students have a reputation or having optimistic attitudes toward education and are for the most part are successful academically. In reality, though, not all students are excelling, often because of home and even school induced problems. Several parents struggle to become involved because many teachers do not speak their native language. Once this occurs, it is easy to remove the child from the school. If no ties are made with the parents and or the students what is the point of getting them to stay and be connected to one school.

Another immigrant population that plays a role in school transiency and English language learning is the Russian population. As recently as 2002, and as far back as 1830, a large influx of Russian students began to occupy schools in California’s Sacramento Valley. However, for the Russian population, public schools seldom achieved complete cultural homogeneity in the classroom (Tyack, 1997). Students in the Russian culture were often challenged in the public school system and caught in conflict over American ideals and the wishes of their families. Often, parents challenged the logic of those who sought to erase all signs of their heritage and moved their children (Tyack).

It is difficult not only on the teacher, but to students and parents to incorporate and enrich all aspects of every culture represented in the classroom. When teachers and the education system fall short of preserving all cultures, parents tend to check out or move their children to different schools.
“A revolving door of new students forces teachers to devote attention to remedial work rather than new lessons” (Stover, 2000, p. 54). Schools that receive high mobility—as high as 70 percent—spend a great deal of time on activities that impede instruction (Fowler-Finn, 2001). Teachers confront issues like these on a daily basis and struggle to balance the ever-changing classroom equitably.

**Professional Development**

One of the main professional-development challenges that teachers face involves adjusting content and instruction to accommodate the surging population of English Language Learners (ELLs). In the US, the 1993–1994 and 2004–2005 school years, ELL school populations increased 68 percent to more than 5.1 million, compared to a 7.8 percent increase among non-ELL students (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2005). Because most ELLs are “mainstreamed” into content-area classrooms, the rapidly increasing population of non-native speakers makes instructional change legally and morally imperative to provide all students with meaningful learning experiences.

Given the recent and dramatic increase in the number of ELLs in classrooms, educators should be prepared to respond to changing student demographics while they maintain their focus on preparing active democratic citizens. In a recent study from the Center for Future of Teaching and Learning, Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly and Driscoll (2005), found that over the last five years:

Many EL teachers received little or no professional development designed to help teach EL students and the quality of training was unbalanced. Furthermore, 43%
of teachers with 50% or more EL students had received no more than one in-service on instructional strategies to teach ELLs. For teachers with 26-50% of ELLs in the classroom, half had no or only one training in English Language Development (p. 17).

The fact that little or no in-service is provided to educators with high numbers of ELL students in the classroom is one more challenge that educators face on a day to day basis and one more obstacle for them to confront.

Under the NCLB legislation, teachers face many pressures in ensuring all students meet proficiency. English language learners are targeted to meet requirements of NCLB and teachers are under extreme accountability. The American Federation of Teachers (2002) indicated that research has repeatedly shown that teacher quality is critical to student achievement. Professional development to improve instruction should be systemic, embedded, teacher-driven, focused on student needs, based on state or district standards, and inclusive of opportunities for practitioner input into its design and delivery. However, NCLB currently provides three options for meeting education requirements, but fails to mandate the delivery of, or participation in, professional development for paraprofessionals. The minimal professional development recommendations in the law are not required to be job-specific or aligned to the skills and knowledge required to perform the job. Thus, recently hired and new paraprofessionals, despite the fact that they have acquired a certain number of college credits or passed a specific test, still do not receive the training and professional development they need.
Professional Learning Communities

As stated above, professional development is a key strategy to improve student learning; however, teacher collaboration has been acknowledged as one of the most effective ways to improve academic success. Schools have become more and more accountable for their actions. Yet, many schools fail to work together towards a common goal for success. Collaboration is a goal for many schools across the country to better student success.

Thompson, Gregg and Niska (2004) have found that many K-12 schools are working toward becoming a Professional Learning Community (PLC) with the expectation that student learning will progress when educators take action that will improve student learning and achievement. Dufour and Eaker (2004) stated:

A ‘professional’ is someone with expertise in a specialized field… ‘Learning’ suggests ongoing action and perpetual curiosity… In a professional learning community, educators create an environment that fosters mutual cooperation, emotional support, personal growth as they work together to achieve what they cannot accomplish alone. (p. 14)

Professional learning communities are encouraged to pursue personal and professional development as a part of their regular job responsibilities. Within a professional learning community, leaders include professional development by requesting teachers to discuss and share differing classroom application. Through those interactions, teachers are able to enhance their knowledge in a more informal method and incorporate professional development. Most importantly, all teachers are encouraged to take
responsibility for their own learning and development and this is considered to be a norm of the school’s culture (Thompson et al., 2004).

Communication is a key element to the planning process of the PLC. The degree of communication is evident as teachers begin to discuss and create communities that focus on the specific needs of a campus, department, or classroom.

Based on all of these considerations, when building a PLC, many educators fall short of the basic ideals associated with collaboration (Van der Linde, 2001). Teachers begin to isolate themselves and distance themselves from the main goals of their job responsibilities (Wood, 2007). Professional development often becomes routine. Embracing the concept of a PLC assists schools and teachers to become more involved in a cycle of continuous improvements (Scholtes, 2003).

Theories Supporting Academic Success

Utilizing effective strategies are an important method of acquiring a new language. Strategies are often deliberate and goal oriented particularly when it comes to obtaining a new or foreign learning task. Once a learning strategy becomes familiar through repeated use, it may be used with some automaticity, but most learners will, if required, be able to call the strategy to conscious awareness (Chamot, 2005). In second language learning there are two important factors for teaching and obtaining knowledge. First, by analyzing strategies used by second language learners during the language learning process, educators can acquire knowledge into the metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective processes involved in language learning. The second reason
supporting research into language learning strategies is that less successful language
learners can be taught new strategies, thus helping them become better language learners
(Grenfell & Harris, 1999). The use of learning strategies can give students a new way of
organizing or approaching difficult tasks, and provide them with additional resources for
gaining greater competency in important skill areas. Additionally, it can help them
remember important information or simply focus their attention on the learning tasks.

Several noted researchers have provided evidence for successful programs for
second language learners. Krashen, Cummins, and Vygotsky were three researches that
effectively understood the process of successful learning structures for ELLs.

Krashen (1987) was a widely known and well-accepted theorist of second
language acquisition, and an expert in the field of linguistics and specializes in theories of
language acquisition and development. Krashen’s theory of second language acquisition
consists of five main hypotheses.

1) The acquisition-learning hypothesis
2) The monitor hypothesis
3) The natural order hypothesis
4) The input hypothesis
5) The affective filter hypothesis

The acquisition-learning distinction is the most fundamental hypothesis used for ELL
students (Krashen, 1987).

According to Krashen (1987), there are two independent systems of second
language performance: ‘the acquired system’ and ‘the learned system’. The ‘acquired
system’ or ‘acquisition’ is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. “It requires meaningful interaction in the target language-natural communication-in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act” (Krashen, 1987, p. 283).

The ‘learned system’ or ‘learning’ is the product of formal instruction which it comprises a conscious process resulting in conscious knowledge ‘about’ the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules. Krashen (1987) believed that “‘learning’ is less important than ‘acquisition’” (p. 284).

Krashen claimed that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self image, and a low level of anxiety are better equipped for success in second language acquisition (as cited in Hong, 2008). However, low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to “raise” the affective filter and form a “mental block” that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition (Hong, 2008). Krashen believed that positive affect is needed, but not adequate on its own, for acquisition to take place (as cited in Hong).

In 1983, Cummins established a framework concerning language proficiency (in native language [L1] and a second language [L2]) to academic performance. “The potential of such a framework is that, in principle, it permits findings from many different contexts to be integrated and to contribute more effectively to the development of a theory of language proficiency and its cross-lingual dimensions” (Cummins, 1983, p. 134).
Cummins (1980) believed there were two levels of language proficiency: The Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). The basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) concept represents the language of natural, informal conversation. BICS are used by students when talking about everyday things in concrete situations. These are situations in which the context provides cues that make understanding not totally dependent on verbal interaction alone (Cummins, 1980, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangus, 1981). CALP is the type of language proficiency needed to read textbooks, to participate in dialogue and debate, and to provide written responses to tests.

BICS and CALPS do not necessarily differ in the way they develop. According to Cummins (1999) “All children construct their conceptual foundation (knowledge of the world) from conversational interactions they are exposed to, largely in the home. Developing critical literacy skills and deepening understanding of concepts is similarly constructed from discussions about conceptual issues” (p. 5).

However BICS and CALPS do adhere to different developmental timelines. An immigrant child will usually reach a plateau in development of fluency and phonology after several years of acquisition. Once the plateau has hit, development slows significantly compared to early development. “Literacy and vocabulary knowledge (CALP) continue to develop at least throughout our schooling and usually throughout our lifetimes” (Cummins, 1999, p. 3).

Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, developed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), stressing the importance of interactive academic conversations and activities. The
ZPD refers to the difference between an individual’s abilities to work independently and her ability to work in collaboration with an adult or peer. Indicated in the ZPD, learning becomes scaffolded when a learner works in collaboration with a learner who has a slightly higher academic competence. In the school context, the development of the child’s zone of potential relies on two elements. One is Vygotsky’s insistence that most learning involves social interaction, or working in collaboration with others. This supports the significance of group work and collaboration. The second related issue is the importance of discussion or communication.

Vygotsky believed when children first experience an idea, behavior, or attitude in a social setting, that experience is internalized and becomes a part of the child’s mental functioning (Doolittle, 1995). Vygotsky (1978) suggested that children in their earlier years think the way they perceive and remember, while in subsequent years children perceive and remember the way they think. Ultimately, according to Vygotsky, “humans are internalized culture” (as cited in Blanck, 1990, p. 47).

The use of whole activities, the need for social interaction, and change are three components of the zone that are needed to fully understand the educational implications (Moll, 1990). Vygotsky believed that children need to study, teach, and learn in higher mental functions through the use of whole activities. Vygotsky pointed out the role of play as a whole activity that allows for substantial learning and development.

Play creates a zone of proximal development of the child. In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though
he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play
contains all development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky continued to express that the activity must demonstrate an authentic
situation. There has to be a need for development to take place, even if it involves play.

With respect to learning culturally relevant writing skills:

Teaching should be organized in such a way that reading and writing are
necessary for something…Reading and writing must be something the child
needs. Here we have the most vivid example of the basic contradiction that
appears in the teaching of writing…writing is taught as a motor skill and not as a
complex cultural activity…Writing must be “relevant to life” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.
117).

Another belief was that children learn through the interaction of others. Vygotsky
(1981) concluded, “Any higher mental function necessarily goes through an external
stage in its development because it is initially a social function” (p. 162). He believed that
an interaction made by adults and other children was how children experienced
knowledge and skills of communication. Children begin to internalize the information
gained through a social interaction and then use it to guide their own behavior.
Consequently, social interactions became the focal point for the zone of proximal
development.

Finally, Vygotsky (1987) believed the main purpose for the zone of proximal
development was change and growth in the individual. The goal of instruction was to
encourage growth and development. “The only good instruction received in childhood is
one that precedes and guides development” (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 48). The zone of proximal development progresses as a child masters tasks and appears to challenge other tasks with considerable help. In the end, collaboration with another individual, adult or more knowledgeable peer, leads to development in culturally appropriate ways (Doolittle, 1995).

Considerations for Instruction

Krashen’s Acquisition vs. Learning Hypothesis

According to Krashen, in order for students to acquire a second language, teachers must focus on communication rather than on the rote memorization of rules (as cited in Ariza, 2002). Students must be deeply engrossed in meaningful and understandable contexts. Just “knowing about” the language does not help to develop communicative competency, it is using the language in meaningful interactions. Therefore, teachers must provide these meaningful interactions to occur in the classroom.

Krashen argued that language that is merely “learned” is not the language that is spoken. Language “learning” or knowledge of grammatical rules or use of much drill-and-pattern practice does not account for spoken language (as cited in Ariza, 2002). For example, many students in the United States who study foreign languages in high school simply learn to conjugate verbs but are not able to speak the language. The emphasis was placed on “learning about” the language and not in “using/speaking” the language in a natural way (Ariza, 2002).
Ariza (2002) created five implications for the classroom teacher based on Krashen’s Hypothesis of acquisition vs. learning:

1. Thematic instruction: If students are engaged in a theme, they will achieve many opportunities to understand the content and concepts. They will be able to have a different perspective with several uses of content/vocabulary/language structures (p. 78).

2. Teachers have to put an end to the use of rote memorization for acquisition of learning to take place (p. 78).

3. Students need several encounters with practicing new concepts and languages. Acquisition of knowledge can not occur if only used one time (p.78).

4. Teachers need to ensure there is an integrated curriculum. For example, if students begin to learn about mammals in science, then mammals should be learned about in reading, social studies, and mathematics. Students will obtain many opportunities to acquire the knowledge and develop second language competence throughout the entire school day for as long as the integration takes place (p. 78).

5. It is important to focus on the need to communicate. Students have a need to communicate with other students and/or with the teacher. Cooperative groups are conducive to creating an environment for meaningful interaction (p. 78).

Cummins’ Bilingual Education

Cummins (1992) believed that bilingual education needs to foster children’s social and academic speech in their second language while simultaneously cognitively
developing the learner in their first language. In this environment, the child will be able to maintain academically with her peers in the core curriculum. Students need ample opportunity to succeed in their second language and permitting them to expand cognitively in second language development will allow them to do so.

Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky’s concept of the zone of proximal development was centered on the idea that development is defined both by what a child can do independently and by what the child can do when assisted (as cited in Daniels, 1995). The zone of proximal development has a number of implications for teaching in the classroom. Based on Slavin’s (2008) research, teachers can use information about levels of Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development in organizing classroom activities in the following ways:

1. Practice can be provided in the zone of proximal development for individual children or groups of children. For example, hints and prompts that helped children on assessments could form the basis of instructional activities (p. 47).

2. Cooperative learning activities can be planned with groups of children at varying levels who can aid in learning (p. 47).

3. Scaffolding (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976) is a method for helping the child in her zone of proximal development in which the adult provides cues and prompts at differing levels. With scaffolding, the adult does not simplify the task, however the role of the learner is simplified “through the graduated intervention of the teacher” (Greenfield, 1984).
**Sheltered English Instruction**

Beginning in the 1980s and beyond, educators expressed an interest in sheltered English instruction as a way to make content attainable for ELL students. When the term was first utilized in association with ELL students, students were considered “sheltered” because they studied in classrooms separate from “the mainstream” and did not compete academically with native English speaking students (Freeman, Freeman & Gonzales, 1988). Today in classrooms, ELL students are required to sit alongside their English speaking peers, take the same formal and informal assessments, and are liable to learn the same content standards. Sheltered English instruction has become a valuable teaching tool to aid in learning English, and simultaneously, learn content material in English.

In 1999 the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) was developed following intensive observation of sheltered English teaching across the United States (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). The SIOP distinguished thirty important elements of sheltered instruction under eight components. Echevarria, Vogt and Short developed the following model:

Teacher preparation:

1. Teachers write clearly defined content objectives for students. These objectives are reviewed at the beginning of a lesson and students should state at the end of the lesson whether the objectives have been met.

2. Concepts taught should be appropriate for the age and educational background of students, Teachers must consider the students' L1 literacy, second language proficiency, and the reading level of the materials.
3. Supplementary materials are used to promote comprehension. These include charts, graphs, pictures, illustrations, realia, math manipulatives, multimedia, and demonstrations by teacher and other students. Content must be adapted to ELL’s needs through use of graphic organizers, outlines, labeling of pictures, study guides, adapted text, and highlighted text.

4. Meaningful activities integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities in listening; speaking, reading and writing.

Building background:

1. Concepts should be directly linked to students’ background experience. This experience can be personal, cultural or academic.

2. Links should be explicitly made between past learning and new concepts.

3. Key vocabulary is emphasized. New vocabulary is presented in context. The numbers of vocabulary items are limited.

Comprehensible input:

1. Use speech that is appropriate for students' language proficiency.

2. Make the explanation of the task clear using step-by-step manner with visuals.

3. Use of a variety of techniques to make content concepts clear. Teachers need to focus attention selectively on the most important information. Introduce new learning in context.

4. Help students learn strategies such as predicting, summarizing.
Strategies:

1. Provide ample opportunities for students to use learning strategies. Learning strategies should be taught through explicit instruction. You want students to develop independence in self-monitoring.

2. Consistent use of scaffolding techniques throughout the lesson. Introduce a new concept using a lot of scaffolding and decrease support as time goes on. Restate a student's response or use think-alouds.

3. Use of a variety of question types, including those that promote higher level thinking skills.

Interaction; Provide the following for ELLs:

1. Frequent opportunities for interactions about lesson concepts which encourage higher level thinking skills.

2. Grouping which supports language and content objectives. Cooperative groups, buddies, pairs, large and small groups.

3. Ample wait time for responses.

4. Opportunities for clarification in native language, if possible.

Practice/Application; lessons should include:

1. Hands-on materials or manipulatives for student practice.

2. Activities for students to apply content and language knowledge in the classroom.

3. Activities that integrate all language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
Lesson delivery:

1. Content objectives supported by lesson delivery.
2. Language objectives supported by lesson delivery.
3. Students engaged 90% to 100% of the period.
4. Pacing of the lesson appropriate to students’ ability level.

Review and assessment:

1. Review key vocabulary through the use of paraphrasing, systematic study, and word study books.
2. Review key concepts during and at the end of each lesson.
3. Provide feedback orally and in writing, supported by facial expressions and body language.
4. Assess informally on the spot through teacher observations, anecdotal notes, or informal conversations.
5. Authentic assessment needs to include a number of indicators to show competency of content objective. The use of a rubric is suggested to define the level of learning.

Summary

Throughout history there has been a struggle for an equal education for English language learners. Today as the NCLB requirements push for a greater accountability system for English language learners, many issues arise on how to ensure success for EL students. History has shown how English language learners have had to overcome the
inequalities in the classroom. With new legislation, ELL students were able to set a goal for academic achievement and begin to feel successful in the classroom. With new legislation the responsibility of the teacher had grown. Teachers have become pivotal in attaining academic achievement for EL students. The literature has given effective instructional strategies to aid in the development of proficiency for EL students. It is not without many challenges that a teacher must endure to meet the needs of the diverse students in the classroom. The SIOP model for sheltered instruction provided several approaches for teachers to better engage EL students. Many educators undergo a series of demands without a lot of support given to them. The professional development provided for teachers as stated in the literature documents the extent to which many teachers in the United States are ill equipped to teach non-English speaking students. Moreover, there is a deficiency in the training which many teachers obtain in preparation and in teaching of the disciplines.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology used to complete the study. The chapter is divided into the following sections: population and sample, the design of the study, how the data was collected, the instrumentation selected, and the analysis of the data. Both qualitative and quantitative procedures were used; a survey was given in the form of a questionnaire and observations and interviews were done with six teachers.

Population and Sample

School and District

Joan D Elementary, a preschool through sixth grade elementary school was located in an urban unified school district in the Sacramento Valley. The main campus was built in 1950. The school has 17 permanent classrooms which include a multipurpose room, a library, and an administrative building. The school also has twelve portables; three portables classrooms were constructed in 1997 and three in 1998 for class size reduction. The number of students attending is 647. Joan D. has a diverse student population, which includes more than 60% English Language Learners.

For the last two years, Joan D. has been allotted class size reduction in Grades K-5. A primary grade ratio is 20 to 1, while intermediate grades ratio is 28 to 1. The school
has afforded continuing this opportunity through categorical funds and continues to do so for the 2008-2009 school year. Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, sixth grade returned to Joan D. due to No Child Left Behind regulations. With the return of sixth grade, enrollment has significantly increased.

The mission statement for Joan D. is “Building Excellent Academics and Responsibility in Students” which stands for the Joan D. mascot, BEAR. The staff at Joan D. School is “committed to providing all students opportunities to reach high standards, which will prepare them for success in life and work”. The goal is to provide the building blocks students must acquire to move to the next level of their education. Joan D. continues to “ensure every child a safe learning environment, which includes an atmosphere of high motivation, focused learning, and opportunities to celebrate success”.

Ms. Jane Smith is the principal of Joan D. and has led in this role for two years. In the preceding year, she held the position of assistant principal for one year. Previously, Jane Smith was an elementary teacher for eight years. Mary Casey is the new assistant principal in the 2007-2008 school year. Mary was formerly an elementary teacher for seven years. Jane Smith and Mary Casey have continued to keep Joan D. out of Program Improvement with the help of the leadership team they head. The 2008 Annual Percentage Index was 704, up two points from 702 in 2007. The leadership team consists of grade level leaders who meet monthly to discuss school development and curriculum matters. Grade level leaders then articulate to the grade levels to ensure that the school provides success for all students.
Teachers

The staff consisted of 32 certificated teachers, one librarian, one physical education teacher, seven classified employees, four paraprofessional employees, four office/clerical employees, and three campus supervisors. All staff members have certificated credentials. The teaching staff is 100% No Child Left Behind certified and all teachers have English Language Authorization.

Students

The student population consists of 13.9% African American, 0.8% American Indian, 14.1% Asian, 0.0% Filipino, 60.3% Hispanic/Latino, .5% Pacific Islander, ten percent White (not Hispanic), with .5% Multiple or no response. Over eighty-four percent of the student population is considered socioeconomically disadvantaged, 54% of the students are English language learners, and eight percent are identified with disabilities.

Programs

The state adopted curriculum for California is used at Joan D. for language arts and math. John D. currently uses “Open Court” for language arts and “Saxon Math” for mathematics. A newly adopted curriculum took place in the 2007-2008 school year for social studies. In Grades K-6, the school implements the Macmillian/McGraw Hill social studies program. Presently, the district is in the midst of adopting a science curriculum for Grades K-6. Because of the high population of English Language Learners in the district, there is also an English Language Development (ELD) curriculum used at Joan D, “Moving into English” was first adopted in the 2004-2005 school year and since has been used as the primary curriculum for ELD. Additionally, the site offers several
programs such as START (after-school mentor program), EXCEL (extended day tutoring), Saturday School (tutoring), and Mesa (extended day science program) to meet the needs of all students.

All students who qualify for special education services are referred to the student study team (SST). The SST consists of the resource specialist, the special education teacher, administration, and two certificated teachers. Teachers of students who need services are required to have met with the SST before they are designated to obtain services. Those students who qualify for services will receive an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which is developed to meet the needs of that particular student. Students who do not qualify will receive services from aides in the classroom or will have a 504 plan written to accommodate their needs. A 504 plan is written to accommodate any specific need a child requires within the funds of the school site and or district. 504 plans are written to assist a specific academic or physical need when a student does not qualify under special education services. Joan D. provides pull out programs for students with disabilities in speech, and special education. The students are pulled out to receive services based on the SST referral or the IEP set in place.

New to the district and Joan D. is the school’s Learning Center. The Learning Center serves the students through small group instruction. In the Learning Center the resource teacher assists students who need intervention and do not qualify for special education services. Through the Learning Center, Joan D. has been able to accommodate more students who need additional support in language arts and mathematics.
At this time, Joan D. does not have a computer lab, but all classrooms contain computers with Internet capabilities. In the 2007-2008 school year, Joan D. received a grant and updated all computers. Each classroom now consists of at least four computers in primary grades and five in intermediate grades.

Design of the Study

The researcher used a case study approach and included two methods of data collection: teacher observation and surveys. The study’s design consisted of a 13-item survey given to 22 classroom teachers. Once the surveys were finished, six observations were completed. The survey contained thirteen Likert scale items pertaining to the training teachers have had in English Language Development and the current implementation of EL strategies. The end of the survey was left open for teachers to explain any other difficulties they felt they encountered while teaching ELL students. The researcher observed the teachers during English Language Development, a time set aside during the instructional day specifically designated for ELL students.

Instrumentation

On May 1, 2008, a teacher survey was given at Joan D. Elementary. The survey was given at the end of a staff meeting to all teachers attending. The approximate number of teachers who attended the meeting was 25. A short explanation was given to the teachers on how to fill out the survey and the letter of explanation was given to aid in the purpose of the study. The teachers were told that they needed to return the survey,
completely filled out, and if returned by the due date they would receive breakfast (bagels and juice) for their time and support as a sign of appreciation from their colleagues.

The survey was collected and of the 28 teachers at Joan D. Elementary, 22 surveys were submitted and completed. Teachers who did not attend the staff meeting were given the opportunity to complete the survey via email or a paper copy located in the office. Teachers were given three days to complete the survey and the allotted time given to answer the question varied from five to 15 minutes.

The purpose of the survey was to identify what teachers believed students needed in order to acquire the English language. The survey used Likert sort items to assess the degree to which teachers felt they were prepared to teach students who spoke a language other than English. The teachers were asked to rate their experience on a scale from 1 (disagree completely) to 4 (agree completely). At the end of the survey, teachers were given an option to fill out in their own words what they felt was necessary to teach English language learners.

The purpose of classroom observation was to discover what strategies are implemented to make teachers successful in teaching second language learning. The researcher observed six classroom teachers during a 30-minute block of instruction. After each lesson, the researcher correlated the observations and the eight categories in the SIOP model.
Data Collection

Administering the survey and observations were different in each gathering of information. The survey was given on May 1, 2008 at a school staff meeting. The researcher explained the purpose of the survey and the method for answering the questions. The survey was collected the day of the meeting; 22 surveys were submitted and completed. Teachers who did not attend the staff meeting were given the opportunity to complete the survey via email or a paper copy located in the office. Teachers were given three days to complete the survey and the allotted time given to answer the question varied from five to 15 minutes.

Observations were set up on a volunteer basis following the survey. The researcher obtained permission to observe the six teachers during the English language development time. The teacher then gave a specific day and time that coordinated with the researcher to attend the classroom.

Data Analysis Procedures

The survey was set up with 14 items. The first thirteen items were Likert Scale statements. Each item was associated with the following statements: 1-disagree completely, 2-somewhat disagree, 3-somewhat agree, and 4-agree completely. The fourteenth item was an opportunity for teachers to express any additional conclusions about teaching English language learners. Once the data was collected, the information was then tabulated and put into percentages. The researcher used the survey and the observations to compare how classroom implementation and actual use occurs in
instruction of language learning strategies. The survey and observations were then analyzed to find the commonalities between the use of language learner strategies and the success established in the classroom implementation.
Chapter 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction
The following chapter explains how the data were collected using a teacher survey with 13 Likert Scale items and one open ended item. The data also includes five observations of classroom teachers as they relate to the research questions presented in Chapter 1. The data has been divided into three main sections: Likert Scale items, open ended items, and the observations made by the researcher.

Analysis of the Survey
The survey was arranged on a Likert Scale and teachers rated their feelings about how well they were prepared to teach language acquisition and English language development based on a variety of questions. The Likert scale contained the following choices: 1- Disagree completely, 2- Somewhat disagree, 3- Somewhat agree, 4- Agree completely.

Item One asked teachers if they felt they welcomed the idea of learning new English language learner strategies to aid in student achievement.

Table 1
Staff Responses to Survey Item One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers (N=22)</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of this item demonstrate that all of the teachers surveyed felt they were open to learning new techniques in the teaching of English language learners.

Item Two asked the teachers if they felt there was enough of a focus on language acquisition in the current program.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers N=22</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree Completely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree Completely</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicated that nine or 41% of the teachers felt that there was not enough focus on language acquisition in the current program that is used to teach ELL students. A total of 78% of teachers believed somewhat or completely that students are not acquiring the English language effectively. Two or nine percent of teachers agreed completely that there is enough focus on language acquisition and three or 14% of teachers somewhat felt that there is enough focus.

Item Three asked teachers if they preferred the classroom to run smoothly and have students make their own decisions.
Table 3

Staff Responses to Survey Item Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers N=22</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree Completely</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this item showed that teachers want to have a classroom that runs smoothly where students are able to make their own decisions. Twenty or 90% of the teachers agree completely and two or nine percent somewhat agree that classrooms are to run smoothly with students making their own decisions. None of the teachers stated that they did not want their classrooms to run smoothly or have students make their own decisions.

Item Four asked the teachers if they felt students needed additional support in social skills.

Table 4

Staff Responses to Survey Item Four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers N=22</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree Completely</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results from this item demonstrate that teachers felt students need additional support in learning social skills. Two or nine percent somewhat agree that students need
additional support in social skills and twenty or 90% completely agree that students need additional support in social skills. Zero teachers disagreed with Item Four.

Item Five asked the teachers if they felt the use of realia in the classroom prepares students for learning.

Table 5
Staff Responses to Survey Item Five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers N=22</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree Completely</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this item show that the majority of teachers felt that the use of realia in the classroom benefits students for learning. Two or nine percent somewhat agree that students benefit from the use of realia in the classroom and twenty or 90% completely agree that students benefit from the use of realia in the classroom. Zero teachers disagreed with Item Five. Item Six asked the teachers if they made efforts to involve their students in their learning.

Table 6
Staff Responses to Survey Item Six

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers N=22</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree Completely</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of this item indicated that teachers want and felt that they need to make efforts to involve their students in their learning. Two or nine percent somewhat agree that teachers need to involve their students in their learning and twenty or 90% completely agree that teachers need to involve their students in their learning. Zero teachers disagreed with Item Six.

Item Seven asked the teachers if they were given more explicit training for ELL students would they be able to help students more.

Table 7
Staff Responses to Survey Item Seven

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers N=22</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree Completely</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results explained that the majority of teachers felt if they were given more explicit training, they would be able to help students better. Two or nine percent somewhat agree that teachers need to have more explicit training to help students and twenty or 90% completely agree that teachers need to more explicit training to help students. Zero teachers disagreed with Item Seven.

Item Eight asked the teachers if they believed the use of graphic organizers aid in student learning.
Table 8
Staff Responses to Survey Item Eight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers N=22</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree Completely</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this item indicated that the majority of teachers felt that graphic organizers aid in student learning. Two or nine percent somewhat agree that graphic organizers aid in student learning and twenty or 90% completely agree that graphic organizers aid in student learning. Zero teachers disagreed with Item Eight.

Item Nine asked teachers if they believed that if student’s L1 was proficient, there would be an easier acquisition of their L2.

Table 9
Staff Responses to Survey Item Nine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers N=22</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree Completely</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results demonstrated that teachers felt if students were proficient in speaking their first language, they would have an easier time acquiring their second language. Three or 14% of the teachers agreed somewhat that students would have an easier time in language acquisition if they were proficient in their first language and nineteen or 86%
completely agreed that students would have an easier time in language acquisition if they were proficient in their first language.

Item Ten asked the teachers if ELD is an important component for student success.

Table 10

Staff Responses to Survey Item Ten

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers N=22</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree Completely</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results explained that teachers felt ELD is an important component for student success. One or four percent of teachers somewhat disagreed, two or nine percent somewhat agreed, and nineteen or 86% agreed completely.

Item Eleven asked teachers if the school staff stresses the importance of ELD.

Table 11

Staff Responses to Survey Item Eleven

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers N=22</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree Completely</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree Completely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results demonstrated that the majority of teachers felt the school stresses the importance of ELD. Thirteen or 59% agreed completely, six or 27% somewhat agreed, two or nine percent somewhat disagreed, and one or four percent disagreed completely.

Item Twelve asked the teachers if ELD as a pullout program was successful for ELLs.

Table 12

Staff Responses to Survey Item Twelve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers N=22</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree Completely</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree Completely</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this item showed that there were mixed views on whether teachers felt ELD as pullout program is successful for ELL students. Seven or 32% of teachers agreed completely, nine or 41% somewhat agreed, three or 14% somewhat disagreed, and three or 14% disagreed completely.

Item Thirteen asked teachers if they felt they would benefit learning about how to implement a program geared towards language acquisition for ELL students.
Table 13

Staff Responses to Survey Item Thirteen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N=22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree Completely</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree Completely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this item indicated that the majority of teachers felt they would benefit learning about how to implement a program geared towards language acquisition for ELL students. Sixteen or 72% completely agreed, four or 18% somewhat agreed, one or four percent somewhat disagreed, and one or four percent completely disagreed.

Summary of Teacher Survey

The analysis of the teacher survey demonstrates the need for teachers to begin to receive additional training with the use of effective ELL strategies. One hundred percent of the teachers agreed that learning new English language learner strategies would aid in student achievement. As well, 90% of teachers agreed that if teachers were given more explicit training for ELLs they would be able to help students more. Also 90% of the teachers felt students need additional support in social skills, the use realia prepares students for learning, the need to make efforts in involving students in learning, and the use of graphic organizers aid in student learning. Because of the overwhelming responses by the teachers, it is evident teachers believe there is a need for change.
Analysis of Teacher Observations

Classroom observations took place in five classrooms. The observations were done on teachers from Joan D. Elementary School in an urban school district in California. The observations were arranged by teachers who volunteered to participate in the study during a staff meeting. The observations have been labeled Observation A, Observation B, Observation C, Observation D, and Observation E. For the purpose of these observations, the researcher studied the teachers based on the SIOP model presented in Chapter 2. The researcher analyzed the lesson based on the eight components of a SIOP lesson; teacher preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment.

Observation A

The teacher in Observation A has taught at Joan D. Elementary for thirteen years. Of those thirteen years the teacher has taught both kindergarten and first grades. The teacher teaches a class of 19 first grade students with nine of them designated as English language learners. As indicated by the CELDT, six are identified at the Beginner level, two Intermediate, and one as Early Advanced. The first grade team at Joan D. Elementary participates in a grade level switch of students for the last thirty minutes of the day. At this time, Teacher A teaches thirty minutes of instruction to the Beginning Level students. Teacher A stated she had been trained in teaching the ELD curriculum and had been to numerous trainings on how to teach ELL students. The curriculum used is a state adopted program to align with the English-Language Development Standards for first
grade. The program, *Moving into English*, published by Harcourt, is divided into seven strands of listening, reading, and writing.

The researcher observed Teacher A during an English language development lesson. The lesson was for thirty minutes and was taught from the *Moving into English* curriculum. The lesson was from a Day One lesson planner and was centered on introducing the topic of classroom materials and building vocabulary. The following table demonstrates the use of the language learning strategies applied in the classroom.

Table 14
Language Learning Strategies (Teacher A)

**Teacher Preparation**

- Teacher had objectives written on the board. At the beginning of the lesson, objectives were stated and reviewed by teacher.
- Students repeated the objective out loud.
- Teacher displayed a picture card for vocabulary words.
- Teacher and students sang a song about the items they have in the classroom.

**Building Background**

- Teacher asked questions to the students about items in the classroom. “Is this your chair?” Or, “Is this a pencil or crayon?”
- Teacher showed picture cards of item in the classroom and had volunteers name each picture and point to the matching item in the classroom.
- Three vocabulary words were introduced. Teacher wrote sentences on the
board with each vocabulary word written within the sentence.

Comprehensible Input

- Speech was appropriately used for the beginning level of English Proficiency.

Strategies

- Teacher restated student responses.
- Teacher had students restate vocabulary sentences.
- Teacher sang song repeatedly.

Interaction

- Teacher provided think time for students pointing to objects in the classroom.
- Teacher allowed students to whisper to a partner for guidance.
- Teacher paired students in groups of two to find objects in the picture.
- Teacher allowed for students to speak to other students in native language.

Practice/Application

- Students used picture cards for manipulatives.

Lesson Delivery

- Content objectives were stated by teacher and students.
- Students were engaged 85% of the time during the 30 minute lesson.
- Pacing was disrupted by two phone calls during lesson delivery.

Review/Assessment

- Teacher informally assessed students while teaching. Teacher asked
questions suited to the vocabulary and topic.

- Teacher restated objective and asked students to repeat objective again.

Observation B

The teacher in Observation B taught at Joan D. Elementary for nine years. Of those nine years the teacher taught kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and third grade. The teacher currently teaches a class of 18 first grade students with ten of them designated as English language learners. As indicated by the CELDT, eight are identified at the Beginner level, and two are Intermediate. Teacher B notified the researcher that the teacher was trained in the ELD curriculum and had been to at least ten or more trainings in instructing English language learners. As stated in the previous observation, the first grade team at Joan D. Elementary participates in a grade level switch of students for the last thirty minutes of the day. Currently, Teacher B teaches thirty minutes of instruction to the Intermediate Level students. Teacher B also uses the *Moving into English*, the state adopted curriculum.

The researcher examined Teacher B during an English language development lesson. The lesson was from a Day Two lesson planner and concentrated on developing language structures on how to make introductions. The next table explains the use of the language learning strategies applied in the classroom.
Table 15

Language Learning Strategies (Teacher B)

Teacher Preparation

- Teacher had objectives written on the board. At the beginning of the lesson, objectives were stated and reviewed by teacher. Teacher acted out the words in the objective.
- Students repeated the objective out loud. Students acted out the words in the objective.
- Teacher displayed a sentence frames on sentence strips for students on board.
- Teacher and students sang a song about the items they have in the classroom.

Building Background

- Three vocabulary words were introduced. Teacher wrote sentences on the board with each vocabulary word written within the sentence. Teacher then wrote sentence frames on strips with the vocabulary word missing. Students had to choose which sentence frame best matched the vocabulary word.
- Students completed this activity on the carpet with the teacher.
- Teacher reviewed the concept of classroom materials from previous lesson.
- Teacher sang song about items in the classroom.

Comprehensible Input

- Speech was appropriately used for the beginning level of English Proficiency.
- Teacher wrote on the board the step-by-step process on how introduce themselves on the board.
Teacher modeled which step came first and used hand signals, and then which came last.

**Strategies**

- Teacher sang song repeatedly.
- Teacher allowed the students the opportunity to complete sentence frames and act out introducing themselves with a partner.

**Interaction**

- Teacher provided think time for students to act out introductions.
- Teacher allowed students to whisper to a partner for guidance.
- Teacher paired students in groups of two to make introductions to themselves.
- Teacher allowed for students to speak to other students in native language.

**Practice Applications**

- Students used sentence frames for manipulatives.
- Students held vocabulary words on index cards and placed in appropriate sentence frame.
- Students completed a workbook page on introductions. Teacher guided students through the first problem and the rest of the page was done independently.

**Lesson Delivery**

- Content objectives were stated by teacher and students.
- Students were engaged 95% of the time during the 30 minute lesson.
- Pacing was appropriate for time limits.
Review Assessment

- Teacher informally assessed students while teaching. Teacher asked questions suited to the vocabulary and topic.
- Teacher restated objective and asked students to repeat objective again.
- Teacher monitored student responses in workbook when working independently.
- Teacher played game at the end of lesson to reinforce introductions.
- Teacher had students write who they were on a piece of paper and draw a picture of themselves and show it to another student.

Observation C

The teacher in Observation C has taught at Joan D. Elementary for six years. In the last six years the teacher has taught third grade. The educator teaches a class of 21 students with ten of them designated as English language learners. As indicated by the CELDT, one is identified at the Beginner level, two are Intermediate, four as Early Advanced, and three as Advanced. Teacher C reported that the teacher attended a two-day training on how to teach the ELD curriculum and had been to five professional development trainings for ELL instruction. The third grade team at Joan D. Elementary participates in a grade level switch of students for the last thirty minutes of the day. At this time Teacher C teaches thirty minutes of instruction to the Early Advanced/Advanced Level students.

The researcher examined Teacher C during an English language development lesson. The lesson was for thirty minutes and was taught from the English Language
Support Guide from the Open Court Language Arts curriculum. The lesson was from a Day One lesson planner and was focused on building vocabulary and using language structures connecting compare and contrasting skills. The table below reveals the instruction that occurred from the beginning to the end of the thirty minute lesson.

Table 16

English Language Development Lesson (Teacher C)

Teacher Preparation

- Teacher had objectives written on the board. At the beginning of the lesson, objectives were stated and reviewed by teacher. Teacher also had kid friendly objective written underneath to check for understanding.
- Students repeated the objective out loud.
- Teacher displayed a sentence frames on sentence strips for students on board.
- Teacher had picture cards on board for vocabulary.
- Teacher prepared a two column chart for compare and contrast based on animals.

Building Background

- Five vocabulary words were introduced. Teacher wrote sentences on the board with each vocabulary word written within the sentence.
- Teacher matched picture to the vocabulary word, then students completed the same activity.
- Teacher gave a copy of the sentences on a piece of paper to the students. Students had to underline context clues in the sentences.
Teacher reviewed the vocabulary and comprehension skill from previous lesson.

Teacher provided sentence frames for compare and contrast (i.e.,) the items are ___ because ___, ___ is similar to ____, ____ is different because____).

**Comprehensible Input**

Speech was appropriately used for the Early Advanced/Advanced level of English Proficiency.

Teacher wrote directions on the board on how to complete vocabulary worksheet.

Teacher had students summarize the directions after she had stated them.

Teacher modeled using pictures objects that compared and contrasted.

Students were paired and asked to group objects together based on similarities and differences.

**Strategies**

Teacher restated student responses.

Teacher had students restate vocabulary sentences.

Teacher paired students by native languages.

Teacher provided think time in group setting.

Teacher allowed the students the opportunity to complete sentence frames together in the group setting as well as individually.

**Interaction**

Teacher provided think time for students to complete sentence frames.
Teacher allowed students to whisper to a partner for guidance.

Practice/Application

- Students used sentence frames for manipulatives.
- Students held vocabulary words on index cards and placed in appropriate sentence frame.
- Students completed a worksheet on vocabulary. Teacher guided students through the first problem and the rest of the page was done independently.

Lesson Delivery

- Content objectives were stated by teacher and students.
- Students were engaged 98% of the time during the 30 minute lesson.
- Pacing was appropriate for time limits.

Review/Assessment

- Teacher informally assessed students while teaching. Teacher asked questions suited to the vocabulary and topic.
- Teacher restated objective and asked students to repeat objective again. Students had to use kid friendly and academic language to repeat objective.
- Teacher monitored student responses in worksheet when working independently.
- Teacher played game at the end of lesson to reinforce compare and contrast.
- Teacher had students write a two column chart and compare and contrast an apple and banana.
Observation D

The teacher in Observation D has taught at Joan D. Elementary for ten years. He has taught third grade for his duration at Joan D. Elementary, and taught second grade before that at a previous school. Teacher D told the researcher he had been trained in many training strategies for ELLs but had not been trained to use the ELD curriculum. The third grade team at Joan D. Elementary participates in a grade level switch of students for the last thirty minutes of the day. At this time Teacher D teaches thirty minutes of instruction to the English only students. His classroom is comprised of 24 students all of which have been designated as speaking only English.

The researcher examined Teacher D teaching a lesson in writing. The lesson was for thirty minutes and was taught from the Open Court Language Arts curriculum. The lesson was from a Day Four lesson planner and was based on editing and proofreading a paragraph. Below, the table explains the process the teacher went through to teach the writing skill from the beginning to the end of the lesson.

Table 17

Writing Lesson (Teacher D)

Teacher Preparation

- Teacher had an edit/proofread chart on board.
- Writing standard was written on the board.
- Students read out loud the standard for writing strategies.

Building Background

- Teacher read chart on board on how to edit and proofread.
▪ Students repeated how to edit and what marks to use out loud after whispered to a partner.

▪ Teacher reviewed the paragraph on chart paper from previous lesson.

  Comprehensible Input

▪ Speech was appropriately used for the level of English Proficiency.

▪ Teacher color coded the paragraph for editing.

▪ Students matched the colors on their own paragraph for topic, details, and closing sentences.

▪ Teacher had students summarize the directions after he had stated them.

▪ Teacher modeled how to edit a paragraph using one he had written whole class in previous lesson.

  Strategies

▪ Teacher restated student responses.

▪ Teacher had students restate directions.

▪ Teacher paired students by academic levels.

▪ Teacher provided think time in group setting.

▪ Teacher allowed the students the opportunity to edit/proofread independently.

  Interaction

▪ Teacher provided think time for students to repeat edit marks and retell directions.

▪ Teacher allowed students to whisper to a partner for guidance.

▪ Practice/Application
Teacher guided students through edit/proofread process.

Teacher and students color coded paragraph and edit marks.

Lesson Delivery

- Writing standards were stated by teacher and students.
- Students were engaged 80% of the time during the 30 minute lesson.
- Pacing was appropriate for time limits.

Review/Assessment

- Teacher informally assessed students while teaching.
- Teacher monitored student paragraphs when working independently.

Observation E

The teacher in Observation E has taught at Joan D. Elementary for two years. During her time at Joan D. she has only taught second grade. Teacher E informed the researcher that she has not had any training on how to teach the curriculum, and has only attended two trainings on instructing EL students. The second grade team at Joan D. Elementary participates in a grade level switch of students for the first thirty minutes of the day. Teacher E teaches thirty minutes of instruction to the Early Intermediate students. Her classroom consisted of 13 students.

The researcher observed Teacher E teaching a lesson for thirty minutes and was taught from the Moving into English curriculum. The lesson was from a Day Two lesson planner and centered on the topic of times of day. The table describes how the teacher taught the Early Intermediate students to compare the times of day from beginning to the end of the lesson.
Table 18

Times of Day Lesson (Teacher E)

Teacher Preparation

- Teacher had picture cards for vocabulary words.
- Teacher made graphic organizer for times of day.
- Teacher used workbook page to reinforce times of day.

Building Background

- Teacher asked students what they had learned the previous day about times of day.
- Teacher had students whisper to their partner what they do during specific times of the day.

Comprehensible Input

- Speech was appropriately used for the level of English Proficiency.
- Teacher read directions out loud for students in workbook page.
- Students read the questions out loud with the teacher out of workbook.

Strategies

- Teacher restated student responses in workbook page.
- Teacher provided think time in group setting.
- Teacher allowed the students the opportunity to work on two problems from workbook page independently.

Interaction

- Teacher provided think time for students to find the answers in workbook
page.

- Teacher allowed students to whisper to a partner for guidance.

### Practice/Application

- Teacher guided students through the first couple of problems in workbook page.
- Teacher and students worked together to write down and brainstorm the times of day on the board.

### Lesson Delivery

- Students were engaged 88% of the time during the 30 minute lesson.
- Pacing was appropriate for time limits.

### Review/Assessment

- Teacher informally assessed students while teaching.
- Teacher monitored student workbooks when working independently.

### Summary of Teacher Observations

All teachers observed instructed students using one or more components of the SIOP model. However, it was evident based on the experiences the teachers had and trainings they received who was able to incorporate more strategies in a lesson. Of the five teachers, each one felt they could receive more training to better serve the EL population at Joan D. Elementary.

The strategy that seemed to carry over in all lessons observed was the stated and written objective or standard for the lesson. All but one teacher had written objectives,
stated them, and then had the students repeat what the lesson objective for that day was going to be. It was clear that the teachers at Joan D. Elementary felt having and knowing the objective for a lesson was an important piece to the instruction.

Another tactic the researcher witnessed in all classrooms was the use of realia. The teachers all used either a picture to describe an item, used hand gestures, or graphic organizers to relay the concept of the lesson.

Additionally, the researcher saw clear evidence of strategies for interaction used throughout all lessons. Whisper to a partner, choral reading, think alouds, and pair share activities took place in all modes of instruction. Each teacher incorporated many opportunities for communication in the classroom, in both English and native languages.

Overall, a majority of teachers do use ELL strategies in the classroom, but do not integrate each of the eight components researched in the SIOP model. It is more of a “hit or miss” approach with no clear consistency among classrooms or teachers. The teachers with more experience knew more as far as how to teach the curriculum, but did not necessarily possess the knowledge of what strategies to use to instruct ELLs. The teacher with the least amount of experience and training did not produce the quality of instruction using the eight components of the SIOP model as did the other teachers.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to compile research on effective English language learner strategies based on previous legislation, the challenges educators face today, and various modes of learning models. This researcher has seen the effects of ill-prepared teachers who have not received proper training for the EL students of today. With the growing accountability and push for highly qualified teachers, the researcher has observed the risk EL students face. This study more importantly, searched for effective methods to aid not only the EL student but also the teacher in the classroom. The researcher explored the following three questions:

1. How well are teachers prepared to reinforce practical and effective strategies to promote academic achievement for EL students?

2. What are effective methods for teaching language learning strategies to EL students?

3. How does current legislation and professional development influence the teacher’s implementation of English language learner strategies in the classroom?

The acquisition of language is essential to children’s cognitive and social development. English language learners, regardless of what first language is spoken, need to develop and learn to flourish in academics. However, programs used in today’s
classroom do not always support the ELL student. Many students of young ages are having difficulty transitioning between their home and educational setting which largely affects their ability to read, write, speak, and acquire a new language. There is a need for teachers to employ a variety of strategies in speaking, reading, writing, and listening to increase achievement for ELL students.

No educational philosophy or program is worthwhile unless it focuses on two primary concerns: 1) raising the achievement of all students and thus providing them with an equal and equitable education, and 2) giving students the opportunity to become critical and productive members of a democratic society. (Neito, 1992, p. 67)

Reading is an essential skill that one must possess to be successful in today’s society. Effective reading instruction is built on a foundation that recognizes that reading ability is determined by many factors (National Research Council, 1998). Early childhood educators, particularly teachers of English language learners, face the challenge of how best to respond to these factors.

The research suggests that EL students have difficulty learning in US schools and acquiring the English language. However, the response of many schools to this need has been sporadic and unsuccessful in attaining achievement. In order to alleviate this problem, teachers must recognize the needs of students and begin to implement a program that will prevent EL students from falling further behind.

The review of the literature concerning effective language learning strategies outlines a basis for teachers to use in building an essential and comprehensible program
for EL students. Teachers must become proactive and begin to utilize more strategies for ELLs in the classroom. Through practice and application, teachers can begin to become familiar with the use of effective EL strategies, and students will begin to become more successful in learning.

Conclusions

The review of the literature clearly identifies there is a need to be concerned about current curricula and instruction for ELL students in many school districts. The implementation of the suggested techniques in this study will increase academic success for students. Practice and classroom discussions will give students a strong foundation to socialize in the community (Skinner, 2008). “It is important to provide the language student with opportunities to participate actively in the life groups who use the language he seeks to learn” (Kritsonis, 2007, p. 116). Childhood environments that support early literacy development and excellent instruction are important for all children. Excellent instruction is the best intervention for children who demonstrate problems learning to read. A simple remedy—language acquisition instruction—can have a powerful effect on student’s comprehension, thinking, knowledge of the world, and choices in higher education and life careers.

Recommendations

The main goal of early childhood educators is to ensure academic accomplishment and guide each student to his maximum potential. Education, according
to Cummins (1989), implies “drawing out children’s potential and making them more than they were” (p. vii). Education programs must acknowledge a student’s strengths and be able to demonstrate how a student is valued and appreciated. Teachers must shape the skills a young child possesses and build upon the diversity they already contain.

According to the National Research Council (1998), the critical importance of providing excellent reading instruction to all children is at the nature of good primary reading instruction. Reducing the number of children who enter school with inadequate literacy related knowledge and skill is an important primary step toward preventing reading difficulties.

As a result of this study, the researcher advises the following recommendations for the teachers at Joan D. Elementary.

1. **Strong leadership is essential.**

   The researcher believes this site needs to develop a leadership team with a positive “can-do” attitude. Administration and the leadership team need to model a welcoming attitude and meaningful communication with all staff members and parents. Before the school can become successful in implementing effective programs, a positive learning environment needs to be created.

2. **Continued education and quality professional development for teachers of English language learners.**

   The researcher recommends that additional exploration should be completed regarding to professional development for teachers of English language learners. The findings in this study demonstrated effective models of strategy implementation. The
school site can take these findings and correlate them to the mission, vision, and objectives of their ELL students. The literature revealed that teachers are faced with the challenge of accommodating the current EL population without the sufficient training. For that reason, the school site needs to ensure that teacher quality is promoted with valuable models of professional development. Further research needs to be conducted to find trainings that will meet the needs of EL students and improve the methods that are in current use.

3. Implementation of second language learner strategies into all modes of curriculum to strengthen the student as a whole.

As seen in classroom observations, teachers spend the majority of the time implementing effective strategies of instruction during the purposed block of English language development. The research has shown that strategies which promote achievement should be used in all areas of instruction. It is vital for the EL student to be able to relate his learned knowledge to all disciplines. Once an EL student can learn a strategy with automaticity he will be able to recall and use the strategy when needed. Therefore, the ability to use learned strategies will aid the EL so he can apply it to all elements of the curricula.

4. Additional training for teachers on how to supplement and manage the use of EL strategies in the classroom.

The researcher believes that the administration should provide specialized training at the site for teachers so they can effectively manage how to use the strategies logically in the classroom. Not only do students need to be able to use the tools taught to them, but
educators need to be able to know exactly how to apply the strategies into the lessons taught. Many teachers are given the tools to teach, but may not know where to apply them in learning. It is not only important to learn the strategies that better support the students, but also to know where and when to employ them into instruction.

5. Incorporation of supplemental resources into the current state adopted curriculum and standards.

With previous legislation and administration, a climate nearing fear entered some districts and schools teaching the curriculum faithfully and without supplementary material. At this site alone there has been a heavy emphasis on “teaching to the standards”. Especially now with the state standardized testing, schools and teachers are pressed for constantly increasing results for the students. In order to accommodate students of all needs, teachers should at times deviate from the adopted program and use supplemental material as they pertain to the standards. EL students are of top priority when it comes to the use of supplemental material. The researcher is suggesting that administration, along with the teachers, investigate materials that will better support the EL students and then as a whole site add the material to enhance the curriculum and standards set in place.

6. Constant communication with administration and educators into what strategies are working and which can be eliminated.

The researcher feels that setting up monthly curriculum and grade level meetings to discuss best teaching practices, positive feedback, and assessment data as they pertain to the use of EL strategies will better prepare the teacher of ELL students. A line of
communication needs to stay open into what is successful and what can be fixed. Constant assessment and analysis of data will reinforce quality teaching at the site.

The researcher believes the recommendations stated above are relevant to future study in the implementation of effective strategies for English language learners. Although it is necessary to further explore the use of “effective strategies”, this researcher feels at this site there is a need for continued concentration into the application of assisting the teachers of English language learners. It is important to look beyond the program label. Teachers need to be qualified to teach ELL students. Additionally, they need sufficient materials and a variety of tools in their teaching belts. The above considerations can aid school districts in executing effective educational programs for all students.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Cover Letter
March 25, 2009

Dear Teachers,

I am currently pursuing a Master’s in Educational Leadership at California State University, Sacramento. As part of my Master’s requirements I am working on a thesis studying English Language Learners strategies and I need your support. I am investigating effective strategies for English Language Learners to be supplemented with the district adopted curriculum.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would take a few moments to complete a short survey. These results will then be analyzed confidentially and used in my research. The data is completely confidential and will remain anonymous. The data will be used to focus on my thesis and to guide the school’s planning process for the 2009-2010 school year. Please return the surveys to me no later than April 17, 2009. If you have any questions about the research please do not hesitate to call me at (916) 433-XXXX. Thank you for your support and I appreciate your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Christina Allison
Graduate Student
CSU, Sacramento
APPENDIX B

Teacher Survey
Teacher Survey

Please circle the grade level(s) that you teach.

Kinder 1 2 3 4 5 6

Respond to the following statements by rating them on a scale of 1-4. Circle your rating. You may write additional comments on the lines provided at the bottom of the survey.

1 = disagree completely
2 = somewhat disagree
3 = somewhat agree
4 = agree completely

1. I welcome new English language learner strategies to aid in student achievement.
   1  2  3  4

2. I feel that there is enough focus on language acquisition in the current EL program at my site.
   1  2  3  4

3. I want my classroom to run smoothly and students to make their own decisions.
   1  2  3  4

4. I feel that students need additional support in social skills.
   1  2  3  4

5. I believe the use of realia in the classroom prepares students for learning.
   1  2  3  4

6. I make efforts to involve students in their learning.
   1  2  3  4
7. If teachers were given more explicit training for ELLs they would be able help students more.

1 2 3 4

8. I believe the use of graphic organizers aid in student learning.

1 2 3 4

9. I believe that if student’s L1 was proficient; there would be an easier acquisition of their L2.

1 2 3 4

10. ELD is an important component for student success.

1 2 3 4

11. The school staff stresses the importance of ELD.

1 2 3 4

12. ELD as a pullout program is successful for ELLs.

1 2 3 4

13. I feel I would benefit learning about how to implement a program geared towards language acquisition for ELLs.

1 2 3 4

Please add any additional comments that would benefit the researcher in your understanding of teaching EL students:
REFERENCES


*Bilingual Education Act, PL 90-247 (1968).*


