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Interventions, Perceptions of Accommodations, and Motivating Factors Impacting the Achievement and Successful Mainstreaming Transition of English Language Learners

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Running head: INTERVENTIONS, PERCEPTIONS OF ACCOMMODATIONS

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A dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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INTERVENTIONS, PERCEPTIONS OF ACCOMMODATIONS, AND MOTIVATING FACTORS IMPACTING THE ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESSFUL MAINSTREAMING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Desiree Atchley

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Abstract

This study was inspired by the many English language learners who have overcome the struggles of achieving proficiency in English. The district studied is a small school district with approximately 1850 students. In 1999, there were 148 Hispanic students, and this number has more than doubled in the last nine years. For a school that was basically void of diversity twenty years ago, it is now a school in which almost one-fifth of its population is a second language learner. Currently over seven languages are represented in its population, and those numbers continue to grow. The district has faced many challenges as it has progressed towards the embracing and educating of English language learners. First, attitudes of the community had to be overcome. Second, programs had to be developed and implemented to best fulfill the needs of these children, and last, educators had to be trained and equipped to use best practices for teaching English language learners. In the midst of these obstacles, high-stakes testing was implemented, which magnified the challenges. Despite the obstacles, many students in the district are successfully mainstreaming into the regular classroom and achieving academic proficiency as measured by grades, norm-referenced exams, criterion-referenced exams, and standardized language proficiency tests. This study was an in-depth observation of a rural school district's educational programs for ELL students. The purpose was to discover patterns of teaching and learning that help ELL students become proficient. Attitudes, motivating factors, and test data were studied to gain insight for continued school improvement. The information was presented in a descriptive manner, and the study included both qualitative and quantitative data.

February 21, 2009

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family and friends who encouraged and supported my efforts. First, I thank my husband, David, who is my other half. To my Father, Norman L. Trice, and my mother, Dr. Linda Trice, who raised me to love learning and taught me the importance of being the best I can be. To my siblings, Schel Seel, and her husband Stan, and my brothers, Dr. John Trice and Samuel L. Trice, who have been my friends as well as family. To my niece and nephew Alaina Seel and Aidan Seel, who are always around to make me smile. I would like to dedicate this to Linda Summers, who envisioned an ESL program, and who had faith enough to recruit me for the program. Also my ESL colleagues, Sue Clanton, Maryann Pharis, Darla Edwards, and Brenda Norris, who have loved and nurtured these children, and to Cindy Williams who helped me edit my work. To my wonderful ELL students and their families, I could not have accomplished this study without you. You are my inspiration. Last, and most importantly, I would like to thank God, the creator of all people, for giving me life, love, and richness beyond measure.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Background

Teaching students with differentiating abilities can be one of the most difficult tasks assigned to classroom teachers. One factor contributing to the challenge includes the increase in the number of English Language Learners (ELL). For example, one in nine public school students are ELLs, but this will increase to one in four within ten years (Leos, 2006). In addition to the increasing numbers of ELL students, Fratt (2007) declared that not only language barriers, but also requirements under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) which mandates that ELL students pass standardized tests within their first two years of living in the United States have impacted education. Moreover, patterns of movement of various populations from cities to rural communities across the United States have complicated the abilities of school systems to educate ELL students. In addition, there are the added diversities of languages and cultures among the ELL students themselves. In the United States, there are over 400 native languages spoken by U.S. students (Wright, 2006). Therefore, districts across the nation are challenged with providing an equal education for all students.

Studies reflect that schools are struggling in aiding student achievement in language proficiency. In the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), only 29 percent of eighth grade ELL students scored at or above the basic achievement level in reading, while 75 percent of native English speaking students scored at or above. Likewise, there were related gaps in mathematics, which could be linked to language proficiency. As schools are faced with the task of closing these gaps, Leos (2006), former director of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition,

claimed that school leaders should be proactive and aggressive in helping teachers to be trained to teach the ELL student in the classroom.

Theoretical Frameworks of the Study

Major scholars such as Noam Chomsky, Jim Cummings, John Schumann, Stephen Krashen, and Virginia Collar have studied and researched the theory of second language acquisition for over fifty years. In addition, the findings of Leo Vygotsky and Jean Piaget have provided insight as to how children learn, and how their learning transfers to second language development. Even though these scholars provided significant research about the education of ELL students, educators are struggling to meet the needs of all students.

Statement of the Problem

To add to the pressure of educating ELL learners, federal assessment requirements under No Child Left Behind (2001) have placed time restraints for language acquisition. Districts also have the added responsibility to implement federal and state laws which impact the education of ELL students, which are in place to protect the rights and privileges of these students. School districts have met many of the educational requirements by law for ELLs, but the annual achievement goals and adequate yearly progress gains are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain. In attempting to meet adequate yearly progress, districts are trying different approaches. According to Adams and Jones (2006), there is a movement to mainstream ELL students and eliminate ESL or bilingual programs. In the past, bilingual and ESL teachers received rigorous training on topics such as linguistics, second language acquisition theories, sociolinguistics, and culturally relevant teachings, but because of the lack of certified personnel, some teachers are only equipped with a few hours of professional development. In many districts,

training has been reduced, and many teachers have not been educated in the research by scholars that stated some students achieve social language in one to two years, but academic language can take some ELL students up to ten years.

Despite the laws regarding the education of ELL students and the research describing how students acquire a second language, educators are still contemplating which strategies are best in aiding student achievement for these students. Even though the movement is to mainstream ELL students, the question is *when* to mainstream ELL students, which programs are successful, and what accommodations and motivating factors can be attributed to enhancing student achievement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to discover relationships between interventions, perceptions of accommodations, motivating factors, and student achievement among ELL students. The study revealed which interventions were most successful in transitioning the ELL students into the regular classroom and which accommodations ELL students preferred. Attitudes which impacted student achievement were researched to determine if there were patterns of motivational factors shared by ELL students who have attained student achievement. It is important for educators to study how ELL students learn and what strategies and approaches can aid them in their acquisition of a second language.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. Which accommodations are preferred among ELL students who have achieved successful language acquisition in relation to instructional strategies, settings, and language acquisition programs?

2. What accommodations and teaching strategies are preferred among teachers of ELL students in the mainstream classroom?
3. What are the motivating factors that most impact ELL students who transition from language programs with accommodations into the mainstream classroom without accommodations?
4. What interventions used on Academic Improvement Plans were successful in transitioning the ELL student to proficiency on a criterion-referenced test?

Limitations

A small sample size was one limitation of this study because the students, graduates, and teachers interviewed and surveyed were from one school district. Data collected from the 12 students interviewed may not be reflective of the general ELL population. In addition, the 35 surveys returned from the teachers provided insight, but many teachers did not respond to the survey. Another limitation may be attributed to the ability levels of the students interviewed. Since these students have experienced student achievement, it is a possibility that the students' aptitude is greater than the general population of ELL students.

Definition of Key Terms

The key terms and definitions used throughout this study are provided. (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008).

Accommodation. Accommodation is a change in how information is presented, or a change in how a test is administered to students with special needs or ELL students.

Accountability. Accountability refers to policies and practices that hold schools and teachers responsible for student performance on mandated tests.

Achievement gap. Achievement gap is the difference in standardized achievement measures between students from different racial and ethnic groups or between students from low income to middle-high income families.

Alternative assessment. An alternative assessment measures student learning by non-traditional means such as portfolios or oral exams.

Basic interpersonal skills. Basic interpersonal skills refers to social language first used by English (or foreign) language learners.

Bilingual education. Bilingual education is a program in which classes are taught in a combination of students' first language and English. The program is designed to aid in second language acquisition. Students in bilingual programs receive part of their daily instruction in English and part in a second language.

Cognitive academic language proficiency. (CALP) Cognitive academic language proficiency refers to academic language students experience in school. CALP develops over a five to seven year period in the language acquisition of English (or foreign) language learners.

Concept map. A concept map is an organizational strategy or tool that represents knowledge in a non-linguistic way.

Criterion-referenced assessments. A criterion-referenced assessment measures student knowledge and understanding in relation to specific standards or performance objectives. For the study this was the state of Arkansas' benchmark exam, or ACTAAP.

Culturally relevant thinking. Culturally relevant thinking is a method of teaching that incorporates the cultural knowledge, experience, and frames of reference of

ethnically diverse students to make learning more relevant for students with diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial, and social class backgrounds.

Differentiation. Differentiation is the practice of designing a curriculum to meet the needs of diverse learners based on student readiness, interest, and learning styles.

Dimensions of learner model. This is a model of learning developed by Marzano et al (1988) that links content area knowledge, metacognition, and critical and creative thinking with taxonomy of thinking skills and thinking processes.

English as a foreign language (ELF). ELF is the study or teaching of English to non-native speakers.

English as a second language (ESL). ESL is a program designed for students who are English language learners with native languages that are not English. ESL usually involves pulling students out of the regular classroom for English instruction.

English language development (ELD). ELD refers to a curriculum of instruction for English language learners.

English language learners (ELL). ELL refers to students whose first language is not English in U.S. schools that are being educated to master English. They may be immigrants or children born in the United States.

Flexible grouping. Flexible grouping is a strategy for varying groups for instructional purposes such as heterogeneous grouping or grouping by ability levels.

Formative assessment. Formative assessments are ongoing observations and methods of evaluation designed to measure student understanding of a concept or task in order to identify areas that require intervention.

Immersion. Immersion is an instructional practice in which students are immersed in a non-native language classroom in order to learn to speak, read, and write in that second language through exposure to conversation and instruction in the second language.

Limited English Proficient (LEP). This term is used to describe students limited in their ability to read, write, speak, and understand English as determined by a standardized test.

Metacognition. Metacognition is the process of thinking about thinking. Students evaluate their current and previous knowledge, identify gaps, and develop a plan to increase current knowledge and a system for assessing learning. .

Multicultural education. Multicultural education philosophy and curriculum expands traditional white Western European curricula, and exposes themes and subjects from diverse cultural, ethnic, racial, and gender perspectives to students. An important element of multicultural education is to provide equal educational opportunities so that all students can succeed in an increasingly diverse and pluralistic society.

Multiple Intelligence Theory. This theory was developed in 1983 by Dr. Howard Gardner who advocated that traditional ideas of intelligence, largely based on IQ testing, were too limiting. Gardner proposed a range of different intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic.

Norm-referenced assessment. A norm-referenced assessment is designed to measure an individual student's performance or test results and compare the performance to those of a norm group at the classroom, local, or national level.

Performance assessment. Performance assessments measure student performance on concrete tasks or activities as opposed to standardized multiple-choice tests where students apply a range of skills and knowledge to solve a problem. Assessment is based not only on the results of the task but also on the processes of task performance.

Scaffolding. This refers to an instructional technique in which a teacher breaks complex tasks into smaller sections, models the task, and creates connections to students' existing knowledge. Scaffolding supports students in their learning until they are ready to pursue a task independently.

Sheltered instruction. Sheltered instruction is an approach to teach language to English language learners by modifying the core curriculum in the regular classroom to meet the language needs of those learners. Academic subjects are taught using English along with supplementary aids such as graphs, models, hands-on materials, and visual aids.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Zone of Proximal Development is the gap between what a learner has already mastered (the level of development) and what a child can achieve (potential development) with the direction of an experienced and competent assistant such as a teacher or more capable peer (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008).

Summary

Outstanding educators recognize that students have individual differences in learning. Despite these differences, districts are striving to work together to help all students achieve. This study provided an insight into the methods, strategies, and teaching practices that help ELL students to narrow the achievement gap and transition from a

second language program to the mainstream classroom. Literature relating to the education of ELL learners was reviewed in the following chapter. Chapter Three described data collection for the study, while Chapter Four reported on the results. The researcher summarized the findings in Chapter Five and demonstrated how this study will be used to further the investigation in order to impact the successful mainstreaming of second language learners.

CHAPTER TWO - REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this descriptive study was to discover relationships between interventions, perceptions of accommodations, interventions, and motivating factors which affect successful transitioning by ELL students into the regular classroom. According to Pollock (2007), today's classrooms are a different place than in the past. She stated that educators now celebrate diversity and open the doors of public schools to all children, despite their culture, socioeconomic status, or ability. As classrooms have changed, curriculum has expanded to meet all students' needs, and teachers are striving to help all students in their classrooms learn and develop. Pollock (2007) believed in order to be successful teachers need to incorporate different learning tools as well as keeping the effective teaching methods already in use.

The literature was reviewed in order to discover how ELL students learn and what strategies and approaches can aid in acquisition of a second language. This chapter discussed research by second language acquisition theorists and laws impacting the education of ELL students. The review included information on best teaching practices, interventions, accommodations, and differentiated learning. Last, the chapter reported findings on brain-based learning, motivational factors, and instructional settings.

Second Language Acquisition Conceptual Background

The development of second language theories has been researched for over fifty years. The leading scholars included Chomsky, Cummings, Schumann, Krashen, and Collar. Added to those theories are the developmental theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, which gave insight to the transfer of learning from first language to second language.

Chomsky (1965) determined that there were two dimensions of language. One was language performance, which is what can be observed, and the other was language competence, which is the inner structure. Performance deals with a particular language by paying attention to what a person says, and competence is a deep language that must be analyzed through careful thinking. Competence included principles that apply to any language. Furthermore, Chomsky stated that language acquisition is determined innately. A child is born with knowledge of language rules called the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). Smith and Miller (1966) added to these studies by defining LAD as the ability to know the difference between a speech sound and other sounds, organize words, phrases or sentences into patterns that can be understood, understand that one type of linguistic system is possible and others are not, and build the most simple possible language system for communicating with others. Slobin (1992) thought that any language is learned by following steps that are common to all languages such as word order, tone, agreement with subject and verbs, noun and noun clauses, question formation, and negatives.

Another scholar, Cummins (1989), identified four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but added that a person could be separated from these skills and still be using language through cognitive competence in the language, or the ability to use language for reasoning and thinking. Cummins branded two acronyms: (BIC), or basic interpersonal communication skills which is the ability to hold basic conversation in everyday interaction, and (CALP), cognitive academic language proficiency, which is the academic language rules used in schools. The researcher believed that there were two types of environments in which students learned. The first

was context-reduced, where verbal or other feedback has been reduced, and the other was context-embedded which relies on external interpersonal cues. Cummins (1989) thought that a student could learn a second language better if he was knowledgeable in his first language. In other words, the more developed a student is in his first language, the easier learning will transfer to the second language. Later studies also added the impact of socio-economic status or the intellectual nourishment of the home, and how this played a large role in the development of a second language.

In contrast, the work of Schumann's (1978) centered on the Acculturation Model. This model focused on the student's interaction with the culture and community while in a language program. He claimed that language acquisition was a result of external factors and did not deal with the internal cognitive processes present while learning a language. Moreover, Krashen (1982) theorized that new language learners need messages they can understand and do not need to produce the language right away. Krashen believed that pictures, gestures, and signals would help comprehension, and even though some students were going through silent periods, they would still grasp the language more quickly if these were used. His research affirmed that forcing students to repeat words and immediately pronounce words accurately was a waste of time. Krashen's work showed that children learn second languages in the same natural order that they learn their first language, such a child learning the letter "m" before the letter "r".

Collier's (1989) Prism Model included ideas from the other researchers while adding four components for educators to use in developing a program and curriculum for ELL students. The model included external factors such as self-esteem and anxiety which agreed with Schumann's (1978) studies. Another component incorporated the linguistic

use of a student's first language (L1) to develop high language proficiency as well as to develop academic vocabulary, concepts, and thinking skills. The use of a student's first language in the development of a second language was in agreement with Cummins' (1987) research.

In addition, the research of Vygotsky and Piaget has been integral in understanding the development of second language skills. Vygotsky illustrated that there is a transfer of linguistic characteristics and knowledge acquired from students' first language to their second language development. Vygotsky acknowledged how language and culture facilitate learning, and the learning of language is integral to the development of thinking. Vygotsky's work affirmed that the knowledge learners retain is related to their interests, social interactions, and culture. Piaget's work centered on the natural development stages of a child's thinking skills, and his finding can be transferred to the learning of a second language (Hewlett-Gomez, 2004).

However, government policies do not always reflect the research. As districts are faced with the increasing challenge of educating ELL students, it is important for educators to incorporate the research of the scholars who have studied second language acquisition as a foundation for teaching second language learners.

Impact of State and Federal Regulations

Even though scholars have enabled educators to gain insight into the way a student develops second language skills, educators face the challenges on how to transfer these theories to the classroom. Not only do educators struggle with instructional matters, they also have to be aware of the legalities of teaching ELL students. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 mandated that all persons despite race, color or national origin are

entitled to receive the same benefits under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. Almost all public schools in the United States receive some form of financial assistance, so this law demands an all-inclusive education for all children. In addition, this Act prohibits denial of equal access to education because of a language minority student's limited proficiency in English (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Other laws impacting ELL services include the Office of Civil Right's May 25, 1970 memo which adds that districts must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency. *Lau v. Nichols* 1974 was a decision which included identifying and evaluating the English language skills of language minority students, determining appropriate instructional plans, evaluating when LEP children are ready for mainstream classrooms, and determining professional standards for teachers. *Lau v. Nichols* 1974 created confusion because schools did not know how to carry out the identification and instructional plans for these students. Meanwhile, Congress passed the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 in response to the *Lau v. Nichols* 1974 decision. Once again, guidelines for the implementation of the law perplexed school districts. Due to the confusion created by the passage of these laws, the Lau remedies were created as a standard of approach for school districts to follow. The first step is for schools to identify and evaluate a child's English language skills. Next, the school must develop an instructional program which would allow the ELL student to develop second language acquisition. In addition, exit criteria must be established, and professional standards must be met by teachers of language minority students. (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Following the Lau decision and Equal Educational Opportunity Act, *Rios v. Read* 1977 established that while teaching Hispanic children the English language is

acceptable, it couldn't inhibit a student's right to meaningful education before proficiency in English is obtained. This means that grade level content must be accessible to English language learners. All of these acts led to *Castaneda v. Pickard* 1981, which is the standard for schools today. A three part test was developed by the Courts to determine if the school's program meets the needs of minority students. To meet the criterion, the school must pursue a program grounded in educational theory and recognized by experts to be a legitimate program, practice the program effectively, and evaluate the effectiveness of the program (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

In 1985, a further Memorandum by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) provided a description of the procedures in making determining whether the district is in compliance with Title IV in regard to the education of limited English proficient students. The Memorandum stated that school districts and teachers would need to consider two items when designing an alternative language program: whether the district needs a special language program, and whether the districts alternative language program is likely to be effective in meeting the needs of its language minority students. OCR's 1991 Memorandum was not a significant change but established the need for teacher training and exit criteria. Other laws such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act dealt with those LEP students who needed special education or related aids and services (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

More recently, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 focused on a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education, and reach at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. This act dealt with the following issues: 1) Standards and benchmarks for

LEP that were aligned with state standards; 2) Annual achievement objects that are related and aligned to Title I achievement standards; 3) Annual assessment requirements in English; 4) Adequate yearly progress; 5) Annual measurable achievement objectives for LEP students; 6) Measurement of progress for LEP students in English and core contents; 7) Promotion of parental involvement; 8) Improvement plans for the modification of curriculum, program, and method of instruction, and 9) Teachers are fluent in English and any other language used for instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Federal and state laws have greatly impacted the education of second language learners in the United States. The laws are guidelines to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity for education. However, the laws have also created setbacks for ELL students because of the demand of adequate yearly progress on criterion-referenced and norm-referenced exams. Moreover, since many different languages are represented in the ELL population, it is difficult to teach students in their own language simply because of the lack of certified bilingual teachers. In addition, states adopt which program should be implemented in the school. Some states incorporate a bilingual program, while others have ESL programs.

Effective Teaching Practices

No matter what instructional strategies are used, the most important factor affecting individual student achievement in the classroom is the classroom teacher (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Whitaker (2004) identified fourteen indicators of a great teacher. Some of them were the connecting with students, clear expectations and consistency, discipline, high expectations, respect for all persons, and a positive

atmosphere. Whitaker (2004) added that great teachers work at keeping their relationships positive and ignore unimportant conflict without escalating the situation. Teachers must have a plan and purpose and be able to monitor and adjust these when needed. Great teachers ask themselves how their decisions affect others, keep testing in perspective, and center on the real issue of student learning. Last, exceptional teachers care about their students and understand motivational factors such as emotions and beliefs influence learning.

Since teachers have been identified as the single most important factor in student learning the question is:'How do classroom teachers best serve the needs of the English Language Learner?'Danielson (1996) outlined four domains of teaching responsibility. These domains are also applicable for the ELL learner. The domains create a community of learners where all students feel respected and valued. Planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities are included in Danielson's outline. The planning and preparation domain includes demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, demonstrating knowledge of students, setting instructional outcomes, knowing knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, and designing student assessments. Domain one demonstrates how a teacher designs instruction and makes it accessible to all students. The teacher must assess where the student is academically, and then arrange appropriate learning activities, materials, and strategies. These must all be aligned with instructional goals, and the teacher is responsible for documenting student's progress.

Domain two encompasses the classroom environment. A beneficial learning environment should include, respect and rapport, a culture for learning, classroom and

discipline procedures, and the organization of physical space. Students need to feel safe, and there should be an environment that promotes the excitement of learning.

Glasser's (1998) choice theory suggested that people are born with specific needs that they are genetically instructed to satisfy. According to Glasser, people have four basic psychological needs that must be met in order to be emotionally healthy: belonging or connecting, power or competence, freedom, and fun. Applying Glasser's theory to the classroom and creating a classroom that enables students to meet these needs will increase the likelihood that students will actively engage in learning (Rogers, Ludington, & Gram, 1997).

Danielson's third domain deals with instruction itself. Communicating with students, questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, using assessment in instruction, and demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness are the five parts of the third domain. Preparation for teaching is essential for implementing effective instruction. Planning for teaching is an idea that is attributed to Johann F. Herbart (1776-1841). This philosopher is distinguished for developing a highly ordered mode of instruction that supported the idea that people could learn moral development with the right guidance (Ornstein & Levine, 1987). Herbart developed the curriculum correlation which became the foundation for modern curricula. It included the integration of concepts in core areas, or scope and sequence of content. His followers advocated five instructional steps: 1) Prepare, 2) Present, 3) Associate, 4) Systematize, and 5) Apply. His theories evolved and changed throughout the years, but as educational research-based instructional strategies developed, Pollock (2007) identified six steps that are a step by step approach to approach instruction: 1) Setting objectives for the lesson; 2) Connect to prior knowledge;

3) Teach new information; 4) Apply the knowledge; 5) Generalizing or summarizing, and 6) Using homework for instructional purposes.

The last of Danielson's domains is professional responsibility. Responsible teachers reflect on their teaching, keep accurate records, communicate with families, participate in a professional community, develop professionally, and show professionalism. These skills are demonstrated through their interactions with other faculty members, families, other professionals, and the larger community. Since the teacher has been identified as the most important influence in the classroom, it is important for teachers to know what has been proven to be best practices for teaching, because without an effective teacher, students can not learn.

Interventions

Interventions refer to systematic and intentional efforts to provide supplemental health, education, and social services to at-risk children and their families. The at-risk designation is usually associated with poverty, but can include other factors such as the education of the parents, limited English proficiency, or other medical problems. (Neuman, 2003).

The NCLB Act (2001) has specific criteria for interventions used in a district. Interventions should include:

> 1) Employing systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment; 2) Involving rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn; 3) Measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by

> the same or different investigators; 4) Evaluating interventions using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls; 5) Ensuring experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and/or 6) Interventions have been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous and objective review (ECS Education Policy Site, 2009).

These criteria are used when planning interventions for a student. The interventions should be reviewed, analyzed, and assessed to determine whether they are right for the district. The following interventions were used in the district studied by the researcher.

Explicit Teaching

In research, interventions studied which had the strongest outcome used explicit teaching, monitored progress, and allowed students the opportunities to practice. The interventions also used strategies that support second language acquisition of English language skills (Graves, Gersten, & Haager, 2004). Explicit instruction refers to task-specific, teacher-led instruction that demonstrates how to complete a task and incorporates both basic and higher order thinking skills (Thompson & Vaughn, 2007). In explicit teaching, teachers articulate learning objectives, model the lesson, and assess what was taught. According to Thompson and Vaughn, this method has been found to be

effective with ELL learners, even those who are in the beginning stages of second language acquisition. A teacher who incorporates these strategies helps students to acquire metacognitive skills, which facilitate the development of proficient reading strategies. Thompson and Vaughn (2007) emphasized the importance of phonological awareness, decoding skills, fluency, and vocabulary development in reading. If these are taught and practiced, students will improve fluency and automatic word recognition which will allow them to focus on reading comprehension. Teaching reading strategies is important in aiding comprehension. ELL students use the same cognitive strategies as native speakers, so teaching students a framework for using these strategies before, during, and after reading helps students comprehend text (Grabe, 1991).

Reading Next (Biancarosa, G., & Snow, C., 2004,) a report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York identified explicit teaching as one of the fifteen essential elements aimed at improving reading instruction. Authors of the publication defined explicit comprehension instruction as the strategies and processes that proficient readers use to understand what they read, including summarizing, keeping track of one's understanding, and a host of other practices. Some of the strategies included in the report were asking questions based on a portion of text the group reads, and clarifying any confusion about words, phrases, concepts while using the text to support the clarification. Summarizing the content to evaluate what has been read, and predicting what will happen next or what can be learned from the text are suggested strategies (Palincsar & Herrenkohl, 2002).

Peer Tutoring and Response Groups

What Works Clearing House (2007) reviewed 887 studies of 153 reading programs for students in grades K-3 that are intended as strategies for reading improvement. After reviewing the studies, the researchers identified peer tutoring and response groups as having a positive effect for effectiveness in English language development. Peer tutoring and response groups are defined as the pairing of students to teach each other academic skills. The students can be English only, bilingual, or English language proficient. The two students assume the roles of tutor and tutee, and each student has a shared responsibility for a task. The task emphasizes peer interaction and discussion to complete the task.

In the article,"Peers Helping Peers,"the authors identified peer assistance as a method for improving learning for all students. In peer assistance, peers aid other students by helping them read directions, gathering classroom materials, or transcribing notes. Peer assistants can also move furniture or assist a classmate who is in a wheelchair. Peer assistance is used primarily for students with disabilities and those students should only be helped when necessary (Mastropieri, M.A., Scruggs, T.E., & Sheri, L., 2007).

Development of Reading Fluency

Another intervention used in aiding second language acquisition is the development of reading fluency. Fluency includes three components: accurate and automatic word recognition, appropriate inflection, and comprehension. In a recent National Assessment of Educational Progress report on our nation's reading ability (NAEP, 2004), fourth grade Hispanic students scored on average, twenty one points lower than white fourth graders. Even though this is a huge difference, the gap is closing. In 1975, there was a thirty four

point difference. One critical element identified as increasing performance was fluency instruction (Thompson & Vaughn, 2007).

According to Thompson & Vaughn (2007,) there are three levels of text that students read during fluency activities. They are 1) Independent-level texts-those text which students can read easily with few errors (95% accuracy); 2) Instructional-level text-more challenging text where students read about 90% of the text correctly; and 3)Frustration-level text-students read fewer than 89% of the words correctly. Thompson and Vaughn stated that when students are engaged in fluency activities, they should read text that is on their independent or instructional level and at the same time be allowed to identify words they do not understand and reflect on text to aid in comprehension. Any interesting type of material should be used so that students can develop fluency and practice good reading strategies (Allington & Cunningham, 2002).

Fluency practices that to directly teach fluency to English Language Learners included explicit instruction, maintaining and generalizing skills, scaffolding fluency practices, providing adequate time to practice, pre-teaching unfamiliar words, engaging students and providing choices, and using cooperative learning strategies. Thompson and Vaughn (2007) wrote that improved reading outcomes come from encouraging students to re-read previously read texts and listen to audio recordings of texts read by native English speakers. Students should re-read texts both orally and silently and read familiar and unpredictable texts. Teachers can also use sentence strips from a story that has already been read to learn to sequence. Thompson and Vaughn also listed several practices that provide opportunities for students to reread passages. Students can read with a model reader such as the teacher, an assistant, a volunteer, or an older student. The

reader must be someone who can read the passage with automaticity and accuracy. The model reader reads the passage, and then the other student follows. The student then rereads the passage as quickly as he can without mistakes. Following this, the model reader and student can discuss and summarize the passage.

Second, students can engage in choral reading. In this practice, students read a designated passage aloud. In choral reading the teacher and students preview and make predictions about the passage, and then the teacher reads the passage aloud. Next, the students and teacher read aloud, while the teacher reads softer and allows the students to take the lead in reading. After these steps, the passage can be divided up into pairs or groups (Thompson & Vaughn, 2007).

Readings on tape are where students are encouraged to follow the text while the story is read aloud is beneficial to fluency. Thompson and Vaughn (2007) wrote that students should have a choice in the text, vocabulary should be previewed, and added that books that are culturally relevant to the background of the students should be used. Fluency is also increased by using reader's theater. In this method, students rehearse a script from a book, play, short story, or poem. Thompson and Vaughn stressed that teachers should make sure that ELL students have mastered the oral language necessary to present in front of others with success so they can be confident in their abilities and avoid embarrassment. Partner reading, a method where students read and reread passages with a classmate, is another effective strategy for fluency. In this method, teachers can pair a proficient reader with a less proficient reader. The proficient reader can assist ELL students with work meaning, if needed.

There are several assessments used to assist and monitor progress of oral fluency. Some include AIMSweb Assessment System (AIMSweb Progress Monitoring and Improvement System), the Texas Primary Reading Inventory Fluency Probes (University of Texas Systems and Texas Education Agency, 2005), Monitoring Basic Skills Progress: Basic Reading (Fuchs, Hamlett, & Fuchs, 1997), the Gray Oral Reading Tests, 4th ed. (GORT-4) (Wiederholt & Bryant, 2001), and the widely used DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) and Retell Fluency, 6th ed. (Good et al., 2003).

Out-of-School-Time Programs

School districts across the country are implementing out-of-school-time-programs (OST) as an intervention to supplement the education of at-risk or low achieving students. Even though these programs have been in place for years, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has focused new attention on Children's OST activities. Schools with students who are not reaching proficiency are eligible to provide supplemental educational services. These services must occur outside of the regular school day, and must provide evidence that they are being used effectively to raise student achievement (Lauer, et.al., 2006). These programs are sometimes implemented through after school tutoring and summer school.

OST programs were originally implemented as a response to the needs of low-income, at-risk children. According to Lauer, et. al., (2006,) the history of the need for the programs evolved because of unsafe neighborhoods where there was less likely to be an after school caregiver. Since the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), however, these programs are being designed as an intervention to meet the needs of those students who are failing grade level expectations.

In a meta analysis of effects of out-of-school-time programs for at-risk students, Lauer et al. (2006) found the following conclusions and implications: 1) OST programs can have positive effects in aiding student achievement for at-risk students; 2) Schools should look at the factors such as program duration, cost, and implementations issues when choosing between an after-school and a summer school program and study the feasibility of one-on-one and small-group settings; 3) Students from elementary and secondary grades benefit from OST programs for reading improvement, but there are indicators that improvements in mathematics occur primarily at the secondary level; 4) OST programs do not need to focus just on academics; social interaction can be beneficial; 5) OST program implementation needs to be monitored in order to determine the appropriate investment of time for specific strategies and activities; 6) OST programs that have one-on-one tutoring for at-risk students have positive effects in reading achievement; 7) Research synthesis of OST programs should examine published and unpublished research and evaluation reports to determine the accuracy of the effect of OST programs on student achievement; and 8) Future research and evaluation studies should document characteristics of OST programs and their implementations.

Renaissance Learning Accelerated Reader

Accelerated Reader is a formative assessment of reading comprehension by using self-selected books which are aligned with a student's reading level. In this program, three levels of reading goals are integrated into the classroom. First, individual student goals are set based upon a STAR reading assessment. This assessment gives teachers guidance to set point and level goals for each student. Next, goals are set for the classroom as a group, where classrooms work together to attain a goal. If classes or students achieve

their goal, they can be rewarded as a Model then Master Classroom by Reading Renaissance. Last, the school can set yearly goals and can apply to Reading Renaissance for recognition as Model and Master School or Model Library. The tests are designed to give points when a student makes 60 % or above, with maximum points being given for 100 % (Sandusky & Brem, 2002).

With the implementation of the Renaissance Learning Accelerated Reader program, extrinsic rewards caused controversy and competition. In their report to Renaissance Learning, Inc., Sadusky and Brem, (2002) surveyed teachers', students', and parents' perceptions of the program. Teachers expressed the most pessimistic view of the program. Over 70% believed that the use of rewards had a negative effect on reading motivation, and caused students to value rewards over reading. Students and parents, however, viewed the rewards positively. Even though parents and teachers were divided, parents did admit that there were some problems with extrinsic rewards because they created a level of pressure and competition. There were instances where students manipulated their book selection based on point value and ease of readability to increase their chances of making their goals. Furthermore, some teachers added to the problem by reading big point books aloud to their students so their classes had a better chance of meeting their goals. In addition, teachers were concerned that students would not read material that did not help them to move closer to their goals, as well as pressure from parents who pushed their kids because of the embarrassment for their child since members of the group share information about goals and book levels.

Even though controversy surrounds the extrinsic reward system, many studies linked use of the program with positive impact on student achievement. Some of the studies had

too many confusing variables, but recent studies suggested that a positive outcome can occur with quality implementation of the AR reader program (Labbo, 1999.) Sandard and Topping (1999) described characteristics of positive implementations which included time for students to read, guidance in book choice, monitoring students' progress, and checking that students have scored 85 percent or higher on tests. Teachers should study data from at-risk reports and when goals are not met, intervene. Challenge levels should be increased slowly and gradually while monitoring carefully to ensure that the challenges do not become so difficult that students are missing a large percentage of correct answers.

Other guideline to aid in implementation of the program included teacher training, voluntary participation, and having a large number of books available that are coded for readability. Students also need easy, frequent, immediate access to computers and feedback, with self-management encouraged. Students who have difficulty reading should be permitted to listen to the books by a reader or audio recording. Teachers need to communicate with parents through regular progress reports, and extrinsic rewards used only if necessary, effective, and culturally appropriate. Re-testing should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances, and the criteria for 'Model Classroom' should be met even if certification is not applied for (Sanders & Topping, 1999).

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to intervention is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions (Batsche et al.,2005). The provisions in the 2004 reauthorization of

the Individuals with Disabilities Act resulted in the implementation of RTI being used to guide decisions about school-based service delivery, and to evaluate the effectiveness of basic instruction in meeting all students' needs (Glover & DiPerna, 2007). Glover and DiPerna (2007) stated that the objective of RTI is the identification of at-risk students and those with specific disabilities, but the greatest benefit for an RTI framework is its use for determining responsiveness to instruction and guiding service delivery for students with unmet needs. RTI consists of structural components, which consist of implementation, resources, and organizational framework, and functional components which include the activities and roles of professionals within a system.

The components of service delivery include multi-tier service, student assessment and decision making, evidence-based intervention provision, maintenance of procedural integrity, and development and sustainability of systems-level capacity. RTI incorporates a multi-tier implementation which targets all students since at-risk students are identified through the classroom or school-wide instructional and behavioral supports (Glover & DiPerna, 2007). The three tiered model of school supports are divided into academic and behavioral systems. The academic model includes Tier 1, which is core instructional interventions including all students and is preventative and proactive in its approach. Tier I should use a program that is researched-based and provided for all students in combination with effective teaching practices. In Tier I, the school uses ongoing assessment to determine levels of proficiency, and the data is organized to analyze both group and individual performance on specific skills. Teachers meet in grade level teams to analyze data, set group goals, and plan for class instructional change based on the data.

Tier 1 provides evidence of the viability of the core curriculum and instruction process while identifying students who need further intervention (Batsche et al., 2005).

Tier 2 is targeted group interventions where supplemental instruction is provided to students who respond poorly to group instructional procedures used in Tier 1. Problem solving interventions, which are school-based support teams for teachers, use assessments identify specific reasons for the lack of student mastery and individualized interventions are developed to meet those deficiencies. Another part of Tier 2 is standard treatment protocol interventions which are evidence-based systematic practices provided for students who display difficulties at Tier 1. Interventions are usually implemented in small groups, and have a positive outcome of producing success for a large number of students. Students who improve at this stage are usually reintegrated into the traditional instructional program. If students are not successful at this stage, they should be referred for more intensive interventions and possible determination of eligibility for special education (Batsche et al., 2005).

Tier 3 is intensive instruction. This intervention includes district remediation programs or special education programs. The interventions at this stage include longer-term interventions, and this directly impacts ELL learners because this stage will determine if their performance problems are directly related to limited English proficiency (Batsche et al., 2005).

Fuchs and Fuchs (2006) developed a framework for building capacity for responsiveness to intervention. They suggested that schools are struggling to build RTI models, and therefore developed a model that addressed intervention efficacy, assessment integrity, and feasibility at each Tier. Each section asks questions that would help schools

to monitor their own RTI systems. Intervention efficacy addresses the expected effect size, number of students responding adequately, and how the reliability of implementation can be measured accurately. The assessment integrity part analyzes the responsiveness to the secondary intervention, and the feasibility asks about costs, staff, professional development, screening, monitoring, and technology in supporting decision making. Fuchs and Fuchs believed that this framework could be used by schools to help with implementation and delivery of the RTI model.

One of the latest Tier I approaches for ELL learners is K-PALS, or Peer Assisted Learning Strategies. K-PALS is a supplemental peer-tutoring program developed by researchers at Vanderbilt University. In this program, higher performing readers are paired with lower performing readers to practice skills identified by the National Reading Panel as critical for beginning reading. These include phonemic awareness, letter-sound recognition, decoding, and fluency. In a study conducted by McMasters, et.al, (2008), the program was found effective for ELL students who were at risk for reading failure. The strategies were found to be beneficial for ELL students as well as native speakers because the strategies include components recommended for ELL students such as high levels of student engagement, frequent opportunities for accurate responses, and peer-mediated learning (Gersten & Geva, 2003; Vaughn, S. Mathis, P., et al., 2006). Not only does the program address reading strategies, but also the social interaction and engagement in tasks that require ELLs to use language, and social interactions believed by second language theorists to be an important component for second language acquisition.

Accommodations

Teachers are expected to use interventions and accommodations in the classroom in order to meet all students' needs. Accommodations refer to a change in how information is presented, or an alteration in how a test is administered or test-taker is permitted to respond. Accommodations are made to take into account various learning and testing differences among students in order to provide equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge or understanding.

Many teachers substitute modifications for accommodations. They use the same instructional strategies for ELL students that they do for special education students. Accommodations are not the same as modifications. Modifications change the academic content of what the student is learning, while accommodations allow students alternative ways to demonstrate what they have learned, and change how the student accesses the information.

Changing How Information is Presented

Researchers and educators have strongly supported the integration of content and language objectives. Systematic language development has to take place in order for students to develop the academic literacy skills needed to perform grade level expectations, communicate with others, and pass mandated assessments (Hill & Flynn, 2006). Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989) give four reasons for combining language objectives and content objective. When combined, language forms and vocabulary will develop as students study areas of interest. If motivation is low, language acquisition is delayed because it blocks language stimulation from reaching the brain. By connecting language objectives and content objectives, teachers activate and build on

student's prior knowledge in the content area. The combination of learning language structure and form in authentic contexts will enhance language acquisition. Changing the way information is presented can include such accommodations as speaking slowly, visual aids, manipulatives, and avoiding idioms (Hill & Flynn, 2006).

Testing Accommodations

Many states include a variety of accommodations on the criterion-referenced and norm referenced exams. Some of these include small group testing, reading the questions when allowed, the use of a word to word dictionary, and individual testing. Under the NCLB (2001) Act, ELL learners must take the state math exam in their first year in the United States and the literacy exam after their second year. So even though accommodations are given, the exams themselves contradict the experts in second language acquisition who maintained that ELL students can take up to ten years to master academic language. (Haynes, 2008).

In the past, Arkansas had a portfolio system for testing ELL students. It contained grade level reading passages and open response questions over the content. The difference between the portfolio and the regular grade level assessment was that teachers could read the passage and use visuals, cues, graphic organizers, and various instructional strategies to accommodate the ELL students' needs. The portfolios also contained grade level problem solving in mathematics, and writing prompts which could be practiced and rewritten until the students understood the concepts. The portfolios were difficult work for the teachers and the students, but they were also a learning tool for the students as they mastered grade level skills through accommodations. The portfolios were

discontinued during the 2006-2007 school year, and now the students take the regular grade-level exam (Arkansas Department of Education 2003).

Differentiated Instruction

When teaching to a diverse group of students, a teacher must design and implement the curriculum for varied learning needs. According to Tomlinson and McTigue (2006) effective teachers attend to four elements in their classroom: whom they teach, where they teach, what they teach, and how they teach. If teachers do not combine the four elements, the quality of the students' learning is impaired. Tomlinson and McTigue articulated that combining differentiated instruction with the Understanding by Design curriculum model can have a beneficial effect for all students. The challenge for a classroom teacher is to align the curriculum, student instruction, and assessments so that all students know what is expected for them to learn, and at the same time be given the support to learn at their various abilities. In order to be successful, students must personalize the learning in ways that are meaningful to them.

Recommendations for differentiating learning from the book *Breaking Ranks in the Middle* (Tomlison and McTighe, 2006) included first identify learning objectives that demonstrate student achievement and create alternatives to tracking and ability grouping. Teacher teams and common planning time should be developed to connect the curriculum to real-life situations and integrate assessment into the curriculum. Service programs should be promoted and teachers should use a variety of strategies designed to accommodate the differentiated learning styles and abilities while engaging students. Teachers must be highly qualified with a high degree of academic knowledge. In order to

create vertical alignment, all levels of schools must communicate and work together (National Assoc. of Secondary School Principals, 2006).

The recommendations from *Breaking Ranks in the Middle* agreed with Tomlison and McTighe's (2006) ideas that a connection between curriculum and teaching strategies is beneficial. Tomlison and McTighe add that "serving up a curriculum" without regard to varied learning needs made teachers' jobs unsatisfactory. The authors suggested ten teaching patterns that benefit academic success for all learners. Get to know the learners because this helps express the belief that all students matter. It is important to incorporate small-group teaching routines because they help the teacher target instruction to specific students so students will gain confidence in their abilities. Teachers should create challenging lessons designed to foster critical thinking skills, independence, self-assessment, metacognition, and flexible pacing. Teachers must also offer activities that exemplify learning through expressing student's strengths, and informal assessments should be used to monitor student assessments. Using multiple ways to teach enables students with varying abilities to gain academic success. For example, a teacher could use non-linguistic images combined with words, modeling, using examples, stories, and other varied modes. Teaching reading strategies across the curriculum can help students read with greater purpose and understanding. Peer tutoring and opportunities to work alone can both aid students in improving learning. Rubrics and other forms of assessment demonstrate the quality of a student's work and are an alternative to the traditional pencil and paper tests, and providing classrooms that cultivate diversity provide a respect and safe place for students to express diverse views and multiple ways to solve problems.

Tomlinson (2008) acknowledged that differentiated instruction is a way of thinking about teaching and is not only for the development of content mastery but also student efficacy and learning. By differentiating instruction, teachers support students as they participate in the formation of their own identity as learners while helping students develop ownership in their own process of learning.

Brain-Based Learning

Brain-based learning consists of using approaches to teaching that rely on recent brain research to support and develop teaching strategies. Researchers theorize that the human brain is constantly searching for meaning and seeking patterns and connections. Authentic learning strategies increase the brain's ability to make connections and retain new information (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Devlopment, 2008). The way that material is taught reinforces brain-based learning, because the brain can make better connections. The material should be taught in a variety of ways such as manipulatives, active learning, field trips, guest speakers, and real-life projects that allow students to use various learning styles and multiple intelligences.

Dr. Levine (2007) maintained in his book *The Myth of Laziness* that many learning problems are diagnosed as laziness, when in reality students are sometimes unable to get their minds to work in the same way as other learners. As a developmental-behavior pediatrician specializing in learning differences, Levine studied the breakdowns within the developing brain, and articulated that children are often afflicted with learning difficulties because genetic neurodevelopmental dysfunctions which are either genetically caused or stem from environmental conditions. Levine referred to these dysfunctions as output failure, and described barriers that affect learning in his book. Some of these

barriers included motor function, memory, language, and organization. In Levine's book, he addressed the need to provide children with strategies to address their strengths and weakness while learning coping skills to overcome their obstacles. Sternberg (2006) asserted that by becoming aware of those strengths and incorporating them into instruction, educators can boost student achievement in diverse learners.

The core principles of brain-based learning are the understanding that the brain is a parallel processor and can perform several activities at once. Learning engages the whole physiology, and the search for meaning is inborn and comes through patterns which are affected by emotions. The brain processes wholes and parts simultaneously, learning involves both focus and peripheral perception and both the conscious and unconscious processes. In addition, people have two types of memory: spatial and rote (On Purpose Associates, 2001).

Dr. Levin (2007) identified neurodevelopmental constructs which profile an individual's strengths and weakness according to eight neurodevelopmental constructs which are 1) Attention-alertness, effort, focus; 2) Temporal Sequential Ordering-sequential perception, memory, and time management; 3) Spatial ordering-spatial awareness and perception, materials management; 4) Memory-short-term, long-term, memory access and consolidation; 5) Language-phonological processing, sentence comprehension, articulation, fluency semantic use, word retrieval, verbal elaboration; 6) Neuromotor functions-gross motor, fine motor, and graphomotor; 7) Social Cognition-communication, conversational technique, humor regulation, self-marketing, collaboration, conflict resolution, political acument; and 8) Higher-Order Cognition, which includes critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, reasoning, logical thinking,

and mental representation. Levin stated that schools spend too much time concentrating on students' weakness and instead should find the students' strengths while helping them develop ways to work on their weakness as cited in (Scherer, 2006).

Janet N. Zadina, PhD. (2007), a renowned speaker on brain-based learning, spoke about the use of brain research to enhance and energize language instruction. Zadina described key concepts and strategies involved with brain-based learning. She divulged that learning is the formation of connections in the brain. To make these connections it takes time, practice, emotional involvement, and other relevant skills in context. Also, students increase learning by making connection to their learning through logs, journals, reviewing, visualizing, mapping, and having waiting time before answering questions. Students should have an opportunity to learn in various ways such as talking, writing, drama, and music because the brain process information in multiple pathways. Experiential learning is beneficial because this creates networks through the brain. Moreover, it is important to know that memory is reassembled from many locations in the brain, so contextual learning is essential. Zadina wrote that incorporating all aspects of the learning cycle will enhance learning through concrete, abstract, and active learning. Action through discussion, reading, writing, doing, constructing, and teaching each other is advantageous, as well as engaging multiple intelligences through assignments and assessments. Another factor that teachers should consider is student differences in learning. Zadina suggested strengthening pathways by providing reading in areas of high interest, using larger font, and looking for assignments that access alternative pathways (Zadina, 2007).

Similarly, Tate (2003) identified twenty strategies that according to brain research and learning style theory, appear to correlate with the way the brain learns best. Tate's strategies incoorporate the neurological research with a practical application for educators. The strategies infuse Howard Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences with researched based strategies. Some examples of strategies are brainstorming graphic organizers, cooperative learning, etc. Each of these techniques use one of Garner's multiple intelligences which include spatial, musical, verbal-linguistic, kinesthegic, logical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. The strategies are incorporated through auditory, kinesthetic, visual, or tactile means. Tate's twenty strategies concur with the book *Classroom Management That Works* (Marzano, R.J., Pickering, D.J., & Polluck, J.E., 2007) which is regarded by educators as blueprint for successful approaches to student achievement.

Motivational Factors

Motivational factors should be considered when educating the ELL learner. Hussin, Maarof, and D'Cruz, (2001) found that teachers have to create a healthy balance between preparing students for standardized examinations and the ability to sustain life-long language skills. Additionally, they discovered that the drill-and practice approach does have advantages when preparing students for language exams, but does not help the students to master the language. Six activities that promote self-confidence, experiences of success, learning satisfaction, and a good relationship among learners and between teacher and students are 1) interrelated in-class and out-of-class language activities; 2) communicative and integrative activities; 3) a pleasant, safe, and non threatening environment; 3) enthusiastic environment; 4) group-based activities; 5) meaningful or

relevant activities; and 6) challenging lessons. (Hussin, Maarof, and D'Cruz, 2001).

Parental involvement has been identified by researchers as a contributor to a student's academic success (Hill & Flynn, 2006). Hill and Flynn stated that districts need to have a comprehensive plan for involving the school community, parents, and members of the community who share the same ethnic background and language. The Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) helped a small school district in Wyoming to develop such a plan. The plan included assessing parent and family needs, which included a questionnaire to gather basic demographic information and academic expectations of the parents for their children. McREL's plan included outreach to encourage the parents to actively participate in the decision making of their child's education. Some of the elements were teaching the parents their rights under NCLB, sharing the standards for language development, communication at parent-teacher conferences, and informing parents of the availability of ESL classes and other services in the community. Encouraging parent involvement was the last part of the plan. This was accomplished by training parents with the knowledge and skills they need to help their child with language acquisition (Hill & Flynn, 2006).

Instructional Settings

Commins (2008) stated that language-minority students are not really viewed for the linguistic and cultural richness they bring. Commins explained that educators see second language learners as problematic, deficient or broken, and they feel obligated to "fix" them. She described how successful districts are learning that expecting academic competence is the best practice for second language learners. To achieve this, districts must choose a standards-based approach and provide differentiation, and multiple avenue of teaching.

When a school chooses a program, it must consider the student make-up of the school, curriculum requirements, administrative support, and appropriate practices (DeCapua et al. 2007).

Bilingual Programs

Bilingual programs incorporate English and the English language learners' first language for instruction. This enables students to learn academic content in their first language while learning English. Two-way bilingual programs are an example of this. Minaya-Rowe (2008) described these programs as being long-term commitments, so the transient student will not be suited for these programs. In these programs, instruction is provided in one language and then the other. This can be done in alternate weeks or mornings and afternoons. The lessons are not repeated or translated in the other language, but concepts taught in one language are reinforced in the other through a spiraling curriculum where concepts and knowledge build on each other. Minaya-Rowe further stated that there have been preliminary findings indicating that students in a two-way bilingual program develop high-level proficiency in both languages and acquire grade-level achievement academically.

Transitional Bilingual Education Programs

In these programs, academic and literacy instruction are provided in the ELL's first language, but English instruction is also provided. The instruction in their first language usually takes place in kindergarten, and at the same time they are given some instruction in oral English development. English instruction begins in second grade, and students are transitioned to all-English instruction by the third grade. In some programs, they integrate

oral English with grade-level content earlier, and some schools have two to three year transitional programs for older students.

The advantage of this program is highly-trained certified bilingual teachers who promote home-language development. The disadvantage of this program would be if a district had ELL students who spoke many different languages (Minaya-Rowe, 2008).

Monolingual Programs

In a monolingual program, teachers instruct in English only. These include the sheltered English or content-based English as a second language program and ESL pullout/push in program, and the newcomer programs. Sheltered instruction is an integrated approach to developing English language proficiency, literacy skills, school behavior knowledge, and academic content knowledge by incorporating basic learning strategies (DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2007). In the sheltered programs, teachers present grade level content by making the material comprehensible to the learners. The sheltered instruction teacher incorporates pictures, visuals, and other learning strategies to allow students to learn grade-level content while also working on English proficiency. .

In the ESL pullout program, ELL learners are taken out of the regular classroom to receive instruction in English as a second language, and in the push-in program, the ESL teacher goes into the regular classroom to provide instruction. In the ESL programs, developing English grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills are the main objectives. According to Minaya-Rowe (2008), the problems with these programs are the learners' reduced access to the full curriculum that is being taught in their mainstream classrooms. However, Collier & Tomas (1995) disagreed and said that if the pull-out

programs focused on teaching English through academic content and developing higher-level thinking skills, the programs could be successful.

Newcomer Programs

Newcomer programs are developed for recent immigrants who have less time to meet expectations for English and academic development before high school graduation. (Minaya-Rowe, 2008). Common features of newcomer programs are English placement assessments, integration on content area instruction and language development, and orientation courses to familiarize students and their families to the U.S. school system and community. Experienced bilingual education, ESL, or ELL endorsed administrators as well as teachers are normally found in newcomer programs. Another feature is highly qualified bilingual paraprofessionals. Newcomer programs also include excellent communication with the family and classes for parents/caregivers (Gusman, 2008).

Summary

Field (2008) reported that ELL students are not only the fastest growing segment of the K-12 population, but they are also moving to areas that have never experienced such diversity. Field agreed with second language theorists that it takes an average of five to seven years for ELL students to acquire the academic English needed to attain academic achievement in school. Despite the many challenges districts have experienced, there is a movement across the nation for effective instruction, training, and assessment for ELL students.

The literature reviewed presented an informative examination of research concerning the education of ELL students. As districts are faced with choosing a program that fits the needs of their ELL population, they should carefully evaluate, communicate, and

implement the instructional setting that is right for their students. The following chapter provided the method used to study a rural district that has experienced the rapid growth of an ELL population. Chapter Four showed the results of a study which included surveys, interviews, historical data, and other types of information that reflected the district's movement toward academic achievement for ELL students.

CHAPTER THREE - METHOD

The literature review provided discourse on interventions, settings, motivational factors, and accommodations proven to aid in second language acquisition and student achievement for ELL students. Most educators are familiar with the recommendations of the language acquisition scholars, but there seems to be an inconsistency when the knowledge is transferred into practical use in the classroom.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how ELL students gain second language acquisition, and what accommodations and strategies used by teachers aid in student achievement. Through this study, perceptions and insights into the successful achievement of second language learners emerged which can be used by educators in the future as they plan and implement successful programs to aid second language learners struggling to achieve.

Research Questions

This study investigated how students who have achieved success with second language acquisition preferred to learn. The study sought to provide an insight to the feelings of the ELL student and how they perceived the instructional world around them. Furthermore, the study also focused on a rural school district's mission to identify and implement best practices in the classroom for all students. The study used the following questions as a guide.

1. Which accommodations are preferred among ELL students who have achieved successful language acquisition in relation to instructional strategies, settings, and language acquisition programs?

2. What accommodations are preferred among teachers of ELL students in the mainstream classroom?
3. What are the motivating factors that most impact ELL students to transition from language programs with accommodations into the mainstream classroom without accommodations?
4. What interventions used on Academic Improvement Plans were successful in transitioning the ELL student to proficiency on a criterion-referenced test?

Supportive philosophical perspectives involved both qualitative and descriptive research guided this study. Surveys of teachers, interviews of ELL students, and test score data were used to gather information that answered the research questions. While the surveys and interviews provided perceptions and attitudes, the test data was used to quantitatively analyze the effects of what was implemented in the classroom to improve student achievement. Historical background and archival data provided additional descriptive narration. Rubin and Rubin (1995) reflected on the differences a qualitative study can bring as a researcher strives to understand other people.

> Qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds. Through qualitative interviews you can understand experiences and reconstruct events in which you did not participate. (p. 1)

Using qualitative data allowed the researcher to gain an understanding into the feelings and thoughts of second language learners.

Methodology

Qualitative research included several types of collection procedures that emphasized data collection in the natural setting (Maxwell & Satake, 1997). According to Maxwell &

Satake, a qualitative study allows the investigator to document customs, social patterns, and interactions of a culture or group. Piaget used a naturalistic approach when studying language development, and his research was published in several scientific studies, thus confirming the methodology of this type of study. When qualitative research is used, categories of behavior are compared, contrasted, and sorted in search of enlightening patterns and relationships (Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991). Qualitative researchers use interviews, surveys, and observations to produce interpretations and meaning in order to make sense of phenomena. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) described the benefits of qualitative research:

> The openness of qualitative inquiry allows the researcher to approach the inherent complexity of social interaction and to do justice to that complexity, to respect it in its own right. Qualitative researchers avoid social phenomena and instead explore the range of behavior and expand their understanding of the resulting interactions. (p.7)

Fraenkel and Wallen (1996) described the general characteristics of qualitative research as being in a natural setting which allows researchers to discover how behavior is influenced by the setting. Through reporting of data, researchers use words to convey the understanding of phenomenon. Fraenkel and Wallen reported on the ability of qualitative researchers to discover the reason things occur, instead of just reporting statistical information. Qualitative researchers do not formulate a hypothesis beforehand, but instead construct a picture from the data collected, and the researchers are interested in the perceptions of the participants studied. In this study, survey responses and interviews provided the personal perceptions of the students and teachers.

Quantitative research, in contrast to qualitative, uses data analysis and statistical measures and methods to compare averages and variances between groups (Maxwell & Stake, 1997). The study used quantitative methods when comparing test data in the intervention portion of Chapter Four.

Research Setting and Participants

Participants for the study were chosen by purposive sampling which is a type of sampling where a small group of individuals are used to focus or represent the attitudes, interests, or attributes of a larger group (Maxwell & Stake, 1997). The sample involved ELL students, classroom and ESL teachers, and second language learners who were graduates from a rural school district. The district studied consisted of approximately 1850 students. The district has experienced a steady increase in enrollment especially in the ELL population which has increased from 180 to 334 in the past ten years. Students chosen for the studied exemplified the successful ELL learner. They were chosen because of their success through the ESL program. Graduates of the ESL program strengthened the study by including individuals from various age groups to observe commonalities. For the interview portion, the researcher accessed student data from the ESL department to develop a list of possible interview candidates. Consent letters to the parents provided permission for student participation in the study. Students over eighteen signed consent forms to participate in the interviews. (See Appendix A) To meet criteria, the second language learners had to have a home language other than English and must have achieved second language acquisition while attending the rural school district. Second language acquisition was measured by an English proficiency exam and other data such as a norm-referenced or criterion referenced exam, or successful progress at the

participant's current grade level. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms in place of students' names.

The survey was distributed in the mailboxes of all teachers from the district. This included teachers from the mainstream classroom which currently serves ELL students, and ESL instructors, who provide additional instruction in a pull-out program of instruction. The surveys remained anonymous, and participants returned them to boxes distributed in the teachers' workroom.

Research Procedures

Procedures involving participants included a student profile, survey, informal conversations, interviews, historical background data, and information obtained through school records such as test scores and demographics. Test score data was used to authenticate successful language acquisition. Participation in the student interviews was voluntary, and the researcher explained by letter to the participants that there would be no repercussions for choosing not to participate.

Through interviews, the researcher asked students and former students from the district questions about their educational experiences as a second language learner. The researcher recorded responses by the use of observational notes an audio recording. Student answers remained confidential, and the identity of the participant was known only by the researcher. Confidentiality was maintained by the use of a code for each participant. The recordings, notes, and responses will be kept on file in a locked location for three years. Other forms of information came from other school data such as grades, schedules, teacher or parent information, and test data. Permission for this data was granted by the district in the form of a consent letter. (See Appendix E) The survey for teachers used by the researcher incorporated open-ended questions followed by a list of classroom accommodations. (See

Appendix B) The open-ended questions allowed teachers to expand on their beliefs about best practices for teaching and accommodating ELL students. Surveys provided added information to enhance the case studies by presenting attitudes and beliefs concerning the education of ELL students. The researcher selected teachers because of their current role in the education of ELL students.

Data Collection Procedures and Instruments

The researcher collected information from interviews, surveys, demographic data, historical data, and test data for evaluation. Case studies have been proven to have a distinctive place in evaluation research (Yin, 2003). Yin described five applications for case studies. The most important is to explain the casual links in real-life situations that would connect program implementations with program effects. Case studies can be used to describe an intervention and the real-life setting in which is happened. In addition, case studies can illustrate topics in a descriptive mode. Moreover, researchers use case studies to explore situations in which the intervention has no clear, single set of outcomes, and last case studies can be a meta-evaluation, or a study of a study (Yin, 2003).

Through interviews, social changes and programs were explored, and the researcher was able to form explanations and theories grounded in the details, evidence, and examples of the interviews. Theories explained perceptions of the people involved in the situation of being an English language learner or ELL educator in the district studied.

Analytic Procedures

Historical data such as demographic and test score data was gathered and studied as archival records. Yin (2003) stressed the importance of using documents to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources because documents help verify the correct

spellings and titles, provide specific details, and a researcher can make inferences from the documents. For this study, the researcher used a historic survey, demographic information about ELL learners in the district, and formative, norm-referenced, and criterion referenced data. Other data such as report cards provided evidence of student success in a grade level subject.

Data from the interviews and surveys were analyzed as they were collected. The data was separated and organized into categories. As the data was organized, patterns emerged into separate data themes. This process was monitored by an educational advisor. The researcher analyzed data by following the theoretical propositions that led to the studies which in turn helped to organize the studies and define any alternative explanations that needed to be examined. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998,) qualitative studies can be used to gain in-depth understanding about information in which the variables can not be understood by using only statistical methods.

To measure the effect of interventions on student achievement who took a criterion referenced state exam, quantitative data was examined. Although the dependent variable (test scores) was measurable, the independent variable, which was the interventions, was based on inference of the researcher. Harris (1998) explained how researchers often study issues of cause and effect and draw inferences about what factors cause certain outcomes, and what variables influence other variables. Harris stated that it is not always possible to form a hypothesis because certain factors do not provide the appropriate data needed. Therefore, a correlation research study was conducted to look at the relationship between the two variables.

The quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS software using a correlation study which is a statistical study between two variables. In order to study this relationship, a bivariate distribution of the two scores was studied. The Pearson r, which is a measure of the degree of linear relationship between an interval or ratio level variable was used as a tool of measurement. The mean of the variables was graphed to compare the differences between the averages of a given class from one year to the next.

Summary

Including teachers, former Ell graduates, and current ELL students offered a study that included various beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. As the study emerged, thoughts from the very students that lived through the difficulties of being a student while learning a second language surfaced. Through these studies, relevant and effective strategies emerged that gave instructional leaders not only new insight on educational strategies, but also the unique opportunity to discover how second language learners feel about learning. The following chapter reported on the interviews, surveys, and test data collected, and Chapter Five discussed the results of the study and its implications for further study in the field of education.

CHAPTER FOUR - FINDINGS

Introduction

The preceding chapters provided an overview of the purpose of the study, literature pertaining to the study, and the methods for collecting data. This chapter examined the results of the study in four parts: a historical overview of the district studied; an analysis of the perceptions of accommodations both by students and teachers; case studies which included the interviews, quantitative test data, and archival data, and the effects of interventions on student achievement on a state benchmark exam.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to discover best practices and methods for districts to use to facilitate the successful mainstreaming of ELL students. The data was used to answer the following questions:

1. Which accommodations are preferred among ELL students who have achieved successful language acquisition in relation to instructional strategies, settings, and language acquisition programs?
2. Which accommodations are preferred among teachers of ELL students in the mainstream classroom?
3. What are the motivating factors that most impact ELL students to transition from language programs with accommodations into the mainstream classroom without accommodations?
4. What interventions used on Academic Improvement Plans were successful in transitioning the ELL student to proficiency on a criterion-referenced test?

Historical Background of District

The district and its community have experienced a huge growth in the last 20 years. This is partly because of the large number of poultry processing plants and farms in the area. With this growth, not only did the number of students grow but also the diversity. Table 1 represents the growth of students over the last ten years. During the last ten years, the student population increased by almost 300 students. As the number of students increased, the number of ELL students also grew. Only 180 Spanish speaking students attended the district in 1999, and this has increased to 334 in 2008. In addition to the Hispanic population, there have been other diverse cultures moving to the area. Table 1 illustrated the increase in the variety of languages now spoken at the district studied.

Table 1

Student Demographics for District Population

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total # Students	1592	1658	1649	1695	1691	1802	1809	1873	1825	1850
LEP Students	NA	168	193	219	166	193	175	243	232	270
English	1399	1504	1454	1471	1431	1483	1499	1528	1497	1503
Spanish	180	153	188	219	261	313	306	331	315	334
German	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Greek	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Gujarati	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Japanese	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Philipino	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	0
Portuguese	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vietnamese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2
Tagalog	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	5	5
Thai	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Ukranian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Urdu	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	3	2	2

Note. Information was retrieved by the school records administrator from the state data reporting website.

Historical Survey

Due to the growth of diversities in the district studied, Atchley and High (1996) surveyed staff in about feelings concerning new diversities and cultures moving into the area. The survey was taken for a Global Education Class at the University of Arkansas. The reason for the survey was the awareness by the researcher and her colleague that the small homogeneous community was divided in their opinions about the influx of new cultures. Most of the staff also lived in the same community as the school district. At the time, there was no ESL or language acquisition program in place. A few new programs such as after school tutoring by the Spanish teacher, the formation of a multicultural committee, and help from the migrant and Chapter 1 (Title) programs provided the only assistance for the new ELL population.

The survey provided insight to the problems which can arise if a school and community are not united in their belief that every child has the right to an education. When asked the question about their feelings of "outsiders" moving into the area, many responded positively, but others shared negative comments about the number of illegal aliens moving into the area. Other negative comments included the fact that non-English speakers should adapt to the American culture and learn English.

Many of the attitudes and problems in the school district itself arose from a lack of training and no formal language development program. Teachers lacked the expertise needed to teach ELL students, and the survey reflected that many of them felt helpless. The establishment of the ESL program helped to transform the education of ELL students. When the 2008-09 school year began, six full time ESL teachers, in addition to at least one Sheltered instructor for each content area in middle school and high school,

provided ELL instruction for the district. A full time ESL coordinator and a full time secretary who also translates for the district are employed as well. Many volunteers translate for parent-teacher conferences and special education conferences. Some of the translators are graduates from the district's ESL program. All handbooks, report cards, and newsletters are provided to parents in English and Spanish since those are the two largest populations of languages spoken.

The community and school district have progressed in their attitudes and beliefs. Many of the businesses realized the economic impact that growth brings, and hired bilingual translators, sales clerks, and workers. Numerous natives of the small town have joined together to welcome the many families that have moved to the area. Many of the districts' graduates have graduated from college and are employed as nurses, bankers, managers, and other jobs. The city has embraced the challenges of a changing culture, and worked together with the school district to create a community of learners.

The use of the historical survey provided information as proof of the progression of the district. The following current survey results reflected a much deeper understanding and concern for the growing ELL population and demonstrated growth since 1996.

Current Survey of Teachers in District

Participants from the survey consisted of teachers at a rural school district. The most experienced teachers returned the majority of the responses generated. The years of experience by teachers included 1) Nineteen teachers with more than eleven years; 2) Four with six to ten years; 3) Four with three to five years; and 4) Eight with zero to two years. In the survey, there was also a question about formal training participants had received in relation to working with ELL students. Table 2 illustrated

that most of the participants had received no formal training. Four of the teachers wrote that their special education training helped them with teaching ELL students. Six of the teachers received training at the English as a Second Language (ESL) Academy, which is an intense two-week summer course that includes second language acquisition, culture, law, and assessment. The ESL Academy was developed by the state to train ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers to be equipped for the challenges they might experience when educating second language learners.

Table 2

Survey Results: Participant Amount of ELL Training

Training	Number of Participants
No Training	17
Special Ed Training	4
Limited Training	3
ESL Academy	6
SIOP Training	1

The open-response questions generated by the survey required careful thought and in-depth answers. Through the surveys, several themes emerged. The themes gave insight to how teachers in the district perceived accommodations, and what strategies and accommodations they use in their classrooms.

Theme one: Professional development for staff.

The school district is required by the state of Arkansas to include two hours of ELL professional development per year which is usually given at the beginning of the school year by the ESL team. However, in the summer of 2008, several summer courses offered courses more designed for specific grade level needs. Many of the participants responded that they had learned more from classroom experience than from formal training. Participant one wrote that the training had been "fair", but he had also attended the ESL Academy. He added that the children themselves had been his best educators. Many of the more experienced teachers stated that they lacked formal training from their first college degree but later attended the ESL Academy. There was one response that said the participant had received more instruction on legal issues than instructional training.

Many districts such as the one studied are faced with the lack of professional development in ELL instruction. A 2003 study in North Carolina showed that only six percent of teachers had received eight hours of ELL professional development in the past three years even though forty-seven percent of them taught ELL students (Domenech, 2005). Howard (2007) agreed that many districts are not equipped to provide the training that teachers need. There are, however, many teachers in the district studied who have received SIOP (Sheltered Instruction) training or training at the ESL Academy. Even though the district is not providing the actual training, the district has committed to facilitate the training of its staff.

Theme two: Effective teaching strategies and accommodations.

The participants responded similarly about effective teaching strategies and accommodations. Even though most had not received formal training or much

professional development in the area of ELL training, their responses reflected best teaching practices reviewed in the literature review. Many of the participants stated that use of the accommodations and strategies listed are not only used for ELL learners but other learners as well.

Teachers used visuals and modeling more than any other teaching strategies. Twenty participants listed the use of visuals when asked about strategies or accommodations. Twenty-three included the use of modeling or "hands-on" involvement. Participant seventeen wrote that hands-on learning, modeling good reading and writing, use of a word wall, and visual aides are effective for the students in the participant's classroom.

Peer-tutoring was identified in eight responses. Participant twelve wrote that one effective strategy was pairing the ELL student with a bilingual student so the student can learn the content lesson in their own language as well as English. Six participants included collaboration or cooperative learning as a strategy. There was one participant, however, that emphasized the importance of the ELL student being active in his cooperative learning group and stated that sometimes the ELL student hid in the group and did not participate.

Other participants expressed the importance of establishing and teaching classroom routines as a child is learning the language. As the child is learning the social language of the new culture, these patterns of rules, procedures, and routines provide the new student with a sense of comfort because he or she knows what to expect. Participant one expressed that the teachers should give the students talk time and question time where they feel comfortable asking questions and answering them.

Many participants included comprehensive literacy strategies mentioned in the literature review. Some of these included picture and text rich environments, interactive lessons, low level-high interest books, guided practice, and discussing root words, prefixes, and suffixes. Participant nine added that showing commonalities between languages was effective. Vocabulary reinforcement and pre-loading vocabulary was mentioned by participant 21. Participant 23 considered re-reading and re-wording information and questions was helpful. This effective intervention was discussed in the literature review as being an intervention for fluency.

Participants identified the use of graphic organizers as an effective teaching strategy. Marzano (2001) included these as researched-based strategies found effective for all students. Participant 35 stated that information should be presented in smaller groups with multiple sensory inputs. The literature identified this as reaching multi-intelligence. The participant added that as often as possible, a teacher should use real items. For example, when learning about a plant, use a real plant. Participant 22 added that social-pragmatic approaches are most effective when teaching ELL learners, and if a connection can be made at a social-pragmatic level, overall communication interaction increased.

Several participants added the importance of classroom climate. Responses reflected the importance of respecting the student. Other ideas from the participants included the importance of learning about students' culture, and appreciating their culture because this helps to pave the way for students to feel comfortable and respected in their classrooms.

Theme three: Ineffective practices.

When asked what they considered to be ineffective strategies and practices, teachers identified lectures and auditory learning as the least effective practice. However, one

participant stated that if a teacher had to lecture, he or she should break the information into chunks. Simply reading the text without any pre-reading strategies or vocabulary development was thought to be ineffective. Participant 32 identified rote memorization, verbal presentation alone, and busy work as three practices that do not promote learning. Furthermore, participants listed speaking louder and expecting students to understand oral directions as ineffective.

One response to the question led participant eighteen to state that "dumbing" down the concepts was unproductive. This included practices like marking out multiple choice answers and modifying as if the student were in a resource classroom. This response reinforced what researchers said because some teachers confuse modifications and accommodations. Others participants added that teachers should not lower expectations because of the lack of English skills.

Theme four: Benefits and limitations of an ESL pull-out program

This question had the most information and provided an insight to how the participants feel about their school district's program. The benefits far outweighed the limitations in the eyes of the teachers. The attitude of the teachers reflected that they felt positively about the ESL program and its teachers.

Participant nine wrote,

> Benefits include the students' greater comfort level, which encourages risk taking, leading to greater confidence in all groups. This benefit includes identification with the ESL faculty, who provide counseling and services to the children's families to further nurture learning. ESL classes offer opportunity to reflect on

> learning from the regular classroom and help establish connections between disciplines and cultures.

This statement was reflected in several other surveys which included phrases such as "secure environment to take risks," "ESL team support at our school," and "able to work with peers in the same situation with common experiences and culture. One of the most repeated responses was the benefits of small group instruction and how this enabled ESL teachers to address specific needs as well as helping students to build confidence and transition into mainstream classes.

There was, however, a response that provided insight into the frustrations classroom teachers encounter because of the differentiating abilities of the students. Participant 16 stated,

> The benefits are the smaller class size and a chance for them to associate with other ELL learners. The teacher can also move at a slower pace and prepare lessons catered to that group. The regular education teacher has a harder time with catering to them because they have many groups.

Even though this statement was answered under the benefits of and ESL program, clearly, the teacher does not understand differentiated instruction. The negative connotation of "catering" implied that ESL teachers do not follow the student learning expectations of the regular classroom. The statement does reflect the frustration of some classroom teachers. Many participants expressed the belief that the ESL program provided more opportunity for student success. They affirmed that the program helped to facilitate language acquisition and prepare ELL students for the regular classroom.

Time and scheduling had the greatest number of responses under the limitations of the ESL program, since the students are pulled from their regular classroom and sometimes lose instructional time. Participant seven said the ESL students also need help with math and science as well as vocabulary, reading, and language. Some teachers felt they really did not know how to separate the different ability levels of the students themselves and felt frustrated because they do not have opportunity to spend small group time with the students.

Another limitation of the program listed was the lack of communication with English speaking peers. Several participants reflected their concern that sometimes ELL children only mix in their own homogeneous group and, therefore, miss the interaction with other groups. Also, one response said classroom teachers sometimes rely too much on the ESL teacher and hold the ESL teacher responsible for the child's education.

Participant 32's thoughts were summarized in a way that reflected many of the other surveys.

> I think an ESL program would be limited in its ability to help its students if it were 100% self-contained, disallowing ELLs from the opportunity to learn from fellow English speakers. It would also be limited if it were 100% inclusion. I think a program that comprises both regular classroom time and ELL pull out time is the most authentically beneficial.

Other Challenges

Additional information provided insight into the feelings of the participants. One was the feeling of frustration over being unfamiliar with the student's culture and ability. Many expressed the unfairness teachers felt because the ELL student is required to take

the state benchmark exam before they learn the language. Some teachers also added responses about the wish to be able to communicate more effectively with the students' parents.

The opinions and responses of the surveys reflected the feelings of the participants. Even though many of the teachers are frustrated because of the challenges of teaching ELL students, clearly, they are adopting best practices for the classroom. In fact, most of the teachers are implementing effective strategies mentioned in the literature review. The new survey demonstrated a huge change in attitude from the 1996 one and reflected the districts commitment to education for all students.

Results-Case Studies/Interviews

The researcher and her ESL supervisor selected students included in this study for several reasons. Each participant was born as a second language learner which means born in another country, or raised in a home where English was not the spoken language. Moreover, participants had either successfully mainstreamed from the ESL program into the regular classroom, or were close to exiting the ESL program. In order to exit the ESL program, a student must have teacher recommendations, a 40% or above on a norm-referenced exam, and score FEP, or fluent English proficiency, on the yearly state required English language assessment.

The participants for this study included two elementary students, five middle school students, two high school students, and three adults. Of the twelve participants, seven had completely exited the ESL, and the researcher chose the other five because of their academic proficiency in English on a norm-referenced or criterion-referenced assessment and/or their academic achievement in the classroom. To protect the identity of the

participants and to record their contributions to the study, the researcher provided pseudonyms. Table 3 illustrated information regarding pseudonyms, demographics, and proficiency levels of the participants.

Table 3

Demographics of Case Study Participants

Students	Pseudonym	Age	Country of Origin	ESL Program	Proficiency Level
A	Mark	9	Guatemala	Yes	4
B	Mary	9	US/El Salvador	Yes	4
C	Vivian	12	El Salvador	Exited	FEP
D	Eddie	14	Mexico	Exited	FEP
E	Erica	12	Mexico	Exited	FEP
F	Rachel	14	El Salvador	Exited	4
G	Karen	11	Guatemala	Exited	FEP
H	Annie	18	Nicaragua	Yes	FEP
I	Alex	16	Ukraine	Yes	FEP
J	Martha	22	Mexico	Yes	FEP
K	Joe	19	Mexico	Exited	FEP
L	Larry	21	Mexico	Exited	FEP

The researcher interviewed each participant privately in a closed setting. The interview was a focused interview which Yin (2003) stated would provide answers to questions developed from the case study protocol while still maintaining an open-ended and conversational type interview. The researcher asked for responses related to the research questions. Participants' generated responses to create categories which the researcher analyzed and organized to develop themes. (See Appendix C)

Background information was included about each participant for several reasons. The background information explained that an ELL program itself, even in a rural school, consisted of students from different countries and background. As a result, bilingual programs are sometimes difficult to implement. According to the EPE Research Center (2009,) ELL learners in the United States come from more than 200 countries. In the district studied, there are approximately ten home languages represented. The background information included biographical data about the participant which created a connection between the reader and the participants being interviewed. Moreover, documentation of test data was included in some cases as a source of evidence of academic achievement to strengthen the study.

Background Information on Participants of Case Studies

Student A: Mark.

Mark is an eight year old male from Guatemala who moved to the United States in 2005. Mark has been in the district for three years and is currently in the third grade. Mark is from a family of six that includes a brother, nineteen, a sister, eighteen, and a younger sister, four. Mark attended kindergarten in Guatemala before moving the United States. He speaks Spanish and English fluently, but he reads in English only. Mark's hobbies include helping his dad with work, playing with his dogs, and watching wrestling on television. Mark is very close with his family and helps them by caring for his younger sister. His father is a roofer, and Mark enjoys going to work with him sometimes on the weekend.

Mark has not exited from the ESL program, but he is very close to testing FEP on the state language proficiency exam. His SAT 10 test scores reveal that he is successfully

learning English. For instance, Mark's reading comprehension score from second grade, his second year in the United States, was 55.5% on the National PR-S score, and his mathematics problem solving score was 66.6%. All clusters on the norm-referenced SAT 10 were either average, high average, or above average. Mark's regular classroom grades exhibit his ability to maintain a B average with minimal classroom accommodations. Mark is currently being served 60 minutes per day in the ESL pull-out program.

Student B: Mary.

Mary, a nine year old fourth grader, is an example of a second language learner who was born in the United States. According to Flannery (2009,) more than 75 percent of elementary ELLs are born to immigrant parents. Mary was born in New Jersey, but Mary's home of origin is El Salvador, with Spanish as her home language. There are five people in Mary's family, and she is the youngest. Mary has attended schools in the United States for approximately four years, and has studied in the district for three. Mary speaks and reads English and Spanish fluently but only writes in English. She stated that she had also learned Chinese at her previous school, but the researcher did not have any data to support this.

Mary has not exited the ESL program, but data indicated that she will probably exit in the near future. On the SAT 10 assessment, Mary scored 56% in reading comprehension, 96% in mathematics, and 46% in language. Her scores on the state's criterion referenced benchmark exam were indicative of her English proficiency Mary scored advanced in mathematics and literacy, which is the highest level. She maintains a B average in the

regular classroom and is currently being served 60 minutes per day in the ESL pull-out program.

Student C: Vivian.

Vivian is a twelve year old female from El Salvador who is currently in the 7th grade. She moved to the United States when she was two years of age. Vivian is from a family of six and has three older brothers. Vivian speaks, reads, and writes English and Spanish, and is actively involved in school activities, including athletics and National Junior Honor Society. Her favorite subject is science because she enjoys learning about animals and the environment. She loves to read and talk to her friends.

Vivian exited the ESL program in the second grade. Since then, she has successfully transitioned to the mainstream classroom. Vivian's assessment scores from sixth grade show that she has attained English proficiency. On the state criterion-referenced test she scored advanced in mathematics and proficient in literacy. Her SAT 10 norm-referenced assessment reflected scores of 62.3% in mathematics problem solving, 47.4% in reading comprehension, and 82.7% in comprehensive language. In fact, Vivian's reading comprehension and comprehensive language scores were above the national percentile ranking. Vivian is an honor roll student and receives no ESL pull-out instruction or accommodations.

Student D: Eddie.

Eddie is a fourteen year old male from Mexico who is currently in the 8th grade. He moved to the United States at the end of second grade and attended kindergarten through second grade in Mexico. Eddie's family includes one older brother, an older sister, and a younger brother. Eddie speaks, reads, and writes in English and Spanish. Eddie is active

in football, National Junior Honor Society, and the gifted and talented program. His favorite subject is math because he thinks it is easy. His favorite activities include doing math, practicing football, and social studies.

Eddie was exited from the ESL program after two years. He was nominated for the gifted and talented program in the third grade and qualified. Test data from Eddie's seventh grade year found that Eddie had scored advanced in mathematics and proficient in literacy on the state criterion-referenced exam. On the SAT 10 norm-referenced test, he scored 99% in mathematics, 56.4% in reading comprehension, and 65.6% in comprehensive language. Eddie is an honor roll student and successfully participates in the advanced level curriculum of the gifted and talented program. Eddie receives no accommodations, and no instruction through the ESL program.

Student E: Erica.

Erica is a twelve year old female student from Mexico. She is in the eighth grade and was four when she moved to the United States. Erica is the youngest of five children. Even though Erica came to the district in kindergarten, she attended a few weeks of kindergarten in Mexico. Erica speaks, reads, and writes English and Spanish. She participates in volleyball, track, and National Junior Honor Society. Erica's favorite subject is pre-algebra. She expressed that she loves school, especially the social parts like seeing her friends.

Erica was exited from ESL in the third grade. Erica has successfully mainstreamed into the regular classroom. Her scores on the state criterion-referenced assessment were advanced in both math and literacy. On the SAT 10, she scored 86.9% in mathematics problem solving, 61% in reading comprehension section, and 99% in comprehensive

language. She is in the gifted and talented program and on the school's honor roll. Erica receives no instruction or accommodations from the ESL program.

Student F: Rachel.

Rachel is a thirteen year old female from El Salvador. She is currently in the seventh grade. Rachel attended preschool, first grade, and one half of second grade in El Salvador before she moved to the United States. She has an older brother, and her mom is expecting a baby. Rachel reads, writes, and speaks both English and Spanish. Rachel expressed that she loves to learn, especially reading and mathematics.

Rachel has not been exited from the ESL program. She was chosen for the study because it is believed by the researcher that her mandated state benchmark test scores do not reflect her capabilities, and she is quickly moving toward English proficiency. Rachel is an example of how difficult it is for second language learners to achieve English language proficiency. On the criterion-referenced benchmark exam, Rachel scored proficient in math, and basic in literacy. On the SAT 10 norm-referenced exam she scored 59.3% in math, 33% in reading comprehension, and 44.1% in comprehensive language. Rachel maintains an A to B grade point average which is probably due to being a hard worker and her love of school. Rachel is served one period a day through the ESL program and receives both classroom and testing accommodations.

Student G: Karen.

Karen is an eleven year old female from Guatemala, and she is currently in sixth grade. Her family immigrated to the United States when she was four. Karen speaks Spanish and English fluently but has minimal skills at reading and writing Spanish. She

enjoys all of her classes, but especially math, science, and physical education. After school, she takes dance classes at the local dance studio.

Karen was exited from the ESL program in third grade. She has successfully mainstreamed into the regular classroom. Karen's test scores on the state criterion-referenced exam were advanced in mathematics and advanced in literacy. Her SAT 10 scores reflected a 69.3% in mathematics problem solving, 69.3% in reading comprehension, and 55.9% in comprehensive language. Karen is on the honor roll and maintains a high grade point average in the regular classroom. She receives no accommodations or instructional time from the ESL program.

Student H: Annie.

Annie is an eighteen year old female student from Nicaragua who was born in Canada. She is married and has a baby that is ten months old. She and her family immigrated to the United States because of civil war. Annie attended kindergarten through eleventh grade in Nicaragua, and is currently a senior in the district. She attends high school for one half day, and then commutes to junior college where she is taking classes to become a certified nurse's assistant and eventually a nurse. Due to her education in Nicaragua, she reads and writes fluently in Spanish.

Annie has not exited the ESL program, but she is currently being served indirectly which means that she does not attend ESL classes but has not tested proficient in English. Her current classes include pre-calculus, English IV, chemistry, and American History. Annie is driven to learn English, and plans to attend college after high school. Even though Annie is not being directly served in an ESL classroom, she still asks for assistance at times from the ESL teachers and staff.

Student I: Alex.

Alex is a sixteen year old male from the Ukraine who is in the tenth grade. Alex immigrated to the United States two years ago. Alex's parents immigrated to the United States when he was a small child, and he grew up with his Russian grandfather. He was educated in the Ukraine from the age of seven until he immigrated to the United States at the age of fourteen. He reads, writes, and speaks English, Russian, Ukrainian, and a little Polish. Alex's activities include athletics, and his favorite subjects are world history, biology, and geometry.

Alex remains in the ESL program for English classes only. He is very close to attaining English proficiency. His end-of-course algebra assessment in the ninth grade showed him to be at the advanced level. Alex scored average or above average in all clusters of the SAT 10 in the spring of 2008. His scores were: 87.8% in reading comprehension, 87.7% in mathematics, and 50.6% in language. Alex maintained a B average in his classes in the ninth grade.

Student J: Martha.

Martha is a 22 year old female from Mexico who immigrated to the United States when she was twelve. Martha has a very large family with eight siblings. In Mexico, Martha attended kindergarten through fifth grade. When she was in high school, she was active in soccer and her favorite subject was math.

Martha is a graduate of the district. She was in the ESL program from sixth grade through eleventh grade and then exited. After high school, Martha graduated from a two-year business school where she majored in business administration. She is now employed by the district as a part-time secretary and translator.

Student K: Joe.

Joe is a 19 year old male from Mexico who immigrated to the United States approximately seven years ago. Joe attended kindergarten through the fifth grade in Mexico. Joe speaks, reads, and writes both English and Spanish. He has two brothers and three sisters. His favorite subject is English because he loves to read and write essays. When he was in high school, he helped lead the soccer team to the state finals.

Joe was exited from the ESL program in the ninth grade. He graduated from the district in 2008 and attends a trade school. He is majoring in auto technology and his dream is to work for a major automobile company in a big city.

Student L: Larry.

Larry is a 21 year old male from Mexico. He immigrated to the United States with his six siblings when he was in the third grade. Larry attended kindergarten through second grade in Mexico, and he writes, reads, and speaks both English and Spanish. His favorite subject is history because he enjoys talking with his Father about the world. Larry's favorite activities include talking to girls, meeting new people, being with friends, and playing soccer.

Larry exited the ESL program in the tenth grade. He is currently a sophomore at a small college where he attends on a soccer scholarship. When he turned eighteen, he followed in his older brother's footsteps and became a U.S. citizen. His plans are to transfer to a state university in the fall of 2009. Larry wants to pursue a career in physical or speech therapy. He expressed a strong desire to finish his education and make a good living to support his mother and father.

Themes from Interviews

Villegas and Lucas (2009) suggested that in order for ELL students to experience success, a district needed to have a shared vision of how to respond culturally and linguistically to the needs of their diverse learners. This included teaching practices, being conscious of students' backgrounds and cultures, having high expectations, and advocating for these students. Villegas and Lucas wrote

> Successfully teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds especially students from historically marginalized groups involves more than just applying specialized teaching techniques. It demands a new way of looking at teaching that is grounded in an understanding of the role of culture and language in learning. (p.29)

Participants in the interview process provided insight into which accommodations they preferred and the motivating factors that helped them to acquire second language acquisition. Through triangulating data in a qualitative process from interviews, surveys, and written documents, themes emerged which demonstrated how and why these students learn. Themes and categories supporting each theme are reflected in Table 4.

Table 4

Themes from Student Interviews

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4
School Climate	Connections	Learning Preferences	Motivating Factors Factors
Categories	*Categories*	*Categories*	*Categories*
Physical Emotional Classroom	Teachers Staff Peers	Learning Styles Accommodations	Home Internal

Theme 1: School Climate

Perkins-Gough (2008) expressed the importance of an environment of safety, trust, fairness, respect and high expectations which provide a positive school climate for students. Included in this environment are physical, emotional, and classroom concerns for learners. When asked about earliest memories in school, participants discussed their feelings of arriving in a school where they did not understand the language, culture, procedures, or routines.

Mark, the third grader, recalled being excited to be in the United States. His biggest hope was to make new friends and good grades at his new school. Mark was not scared, which was a huge difference from the way the other participants felt. Many of them expressed fear, loneliness, and even some of the boys cried the first day. The main fear that most voiced stemmed from not knowing where to go or what to do. All twelve of the participants, however, agreed that the employees helped them to feel safe when they first

arrived. Annie, the senior in high school, told about the ESL teachers helping her to feel more comfortable by introducing her to teachers, helping her to find her classes, and providing student translators for her.

Two of the participants remembered how grateful they had been for receiving free breakfast and lunch. Both added that in their old schools, they usually had to buy lunch or bring it from home, and it was not very much food. The two expressed how much they loved the meals in the cafeteria and felt better knowing that they would not be hungry at school. The two participants said that the cafeteria workers were nice to them when they first came to the school.

Most of the participants expressed the frustrations experienced from not knowing how to communicate with others. Eddie, who arrived at the end of second grade, wanted to be able to do his work, but he could not read or ask questions. This is why he preferred math. He said, "You don't need English to do math." Karen remembered crying and becoming very angry when she could not finish a test. She realized that everyone else was finished but her. She wanted to be like everyone else. Joe felt lonely because he did not have any friends in his class.

Classroom and playground discipline became an issue for Mary and Mark. Both got in trouble when they first attended school. Mark said he jumped off of the slide on the playground and the teacher was mad at him. Mark was embarrassed because he did not know the rules at first, but he added that he knows them now. Mark mentioned how his first and third grade teachers gave warnings so he would not get in trouble. Both teachers had established a "card-flipping" set of procedures in their classrooms which allowed students a chance to change their behavior before they got in trouble. Mark seemed to be

very impressed by this system, and described both of these teachers as nice. Mary had also been in trouble for yelling out that she needed to go to the bathroom. Both of these students expressed that they did not want to get into trouble at school, so they had learned to watch other children and adapt to the culture. Mark and Mary talked about how knowing the procedures made them feel more comfortable on the playground and in the classroom.

When asked about school employees, classes, and the school system in general, all participants expressed positive comments. Most described the teachers as helpful and nice. Rachel commented,"The teachers want me to learn, write, and speak."Larry, who is currently in college, responded,"The teachers are great. I have never been disappointed by the staff or principals, and it is the same with college."

Participants related their feelings of earliest memories when they began school as an English language learner. Some experienced frustration, sadness, and loneliness. Despite these feelings, participants communicated their belief that the district had helped them feel safe, secure, and comfortable. Haynes (2009) described the stages ELL learners experience when they enter a new environment as culture shock. There is the euphoric or honeymoon stage which is what Mark experienced as he thought about making new friends and good grades, followed by the rejection state when the difference between the new culture and old one becomes visible to the newcomers. At this stage, students can seem sleepy, irritable, uninterested, or depressed, and this is where a teacher can ensure that students feel comfortable by establishing routines and procedures and making sure the ELL student understands them. By establishing and communicating routines and procedures, teachers can ensure students do not get in unnecessary trouble and become

withdrawn. In the regression stage, the newcomer starts to feel homesick and frustrated because they can not communicate with others, which Karen felt when she could not finish the test. Time and patience from staff members will enable students to progress towards the next stage which is the integration stage. During this stage, students begin to assimilate the old and new cultures. Finally, students enter the acceptance stage where they learn to accept that both cultures are important and at the same time learn to integrate in the mainstream culture. Districts can increase the effectiveness of school climate when they realize the changes newcomers go through, and provide resources to transition students through these changes.

Theme 2: Connections

Rooney (2008) wrote that school staff members need to focus developing personal relationships with students. Teachers, principals, and other staff can do this through communicating and sending the message that all students are valued, as well as implementing instructionally driven programs that provide for cultural differences. Education Development, Inc. (2003) outlined steps that help students feel more connected which included making sure each student has at least one adult that supports them, maintaining high expectations for all, and fair and consistent discipline policies. In addition, creating trust among all students, staff, and parents while employing high quality teachers helped students to make connections and attain achievement.

Participants expressed connections with teachers, staff, and peers which enabled them to achieve successful transitioning. Participants regarded teachers as leaders in the classroom. All of the participants held their teachers in high regard. When asked about specific teachers who had helped them, students remembered teachers by name and grade

level. They related stories about how teachers had helped them through the rough transition of being a second language learner.

Vivian learned the most from her migrant and ESL teachers. Vivian explained that her ESL teacher had a nice personality. She also remembered her ESL teacher having a party at her house when she was in the third grade. All of the ESL students and their families were invited to attend the ESL teacher's house. Vivian spoke of how the teachers taught reading, explained concepts, and helped her pronounce her English words. Rachel, who is still in the ESL program, also remembered going to the ESL teacher's house for a party. She explained that the ESL teachers made her feel comfortable because of their patience. Several of the participants mentioned the ESL coordinator and her secretary. Martha talked about how she felt comfortable approaching the coordinator and secretary, asking questions about what she was learning, and stated that they were "always there" for her whenever she needed them. Larry agreed with Martha and related how the ESL coordinator and her secretary helped him get into college. The researcher observed the close bond of Larry and the ESL office staff when he came by to visit during his Christmas break. During that visit, the director sent Larry to talk with the school's speech therapist since he had expressed an interest in a speech therapy degree. Even now, after graduation, Larry feels a strong bond with staff in the district.

Participants included the connection with classroom teachers as well. Larry recalled the connection with his third grade teacher when he first moved to the district. Larry stated that he was scared and cried, but the teacher helped him feel comfortable and safe. She helped him learn his alphabet and was very patient with him. When he was in junior high, Larry developed a strong bond with the cross-country coach. This helped him

become more a part of the schools' activities and helped him make friends. Participants mentioned teachers from all grade levels, including middle and high school. Additionally, several male participants conveyed the importance of male teachers, such as the elementary art teacher, coaches, and the high school science teacher. Furthermore, participants mentioned custodians from the elementary school as being friendly and helpful. Students felt that the staff, principals, and teachers wanted to see them succeed in school. In addition, many participants felt a strong connection with their peers. Mark described the happiness he felt when his friend Rolando helped him with his work. Several of the participants remembered both English and Spanish students who helped them adapt to the new way of life. In general, the participants' responses indicated the district's responsiveness and connectedness with ELL students.

Theme 3: Learning Preferences

Learning Styles.

Silver, Strong, and Perini (2002) described how students are born with eight intelligences which are interrelated, and explained how teachers use the knowledge of these intelligences to target the styles of students. The intelligences (Gardner, included verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. Learning styles reflected the unique personalities of the participants.

During the interview, the researcher observed Mark. As he answered questions, Mark sat with his feet curled underneath him. He moved his head around and almost seemed unfocused. But when asked a question, he immediately knew the answer. When interviewed, Mark reflected that the teacher was very important to him. That is why he

listens so intently. He expects the teacher to explain and make it easier for him. Other participants' answers agreed with Mark. The participants pointed out listening as the most used style in learning. Listening is a verbal-linguistic intelligence, and every participant at some point in their interview reflected their need to listen, speak, write, or read. Several participants remembered learning the abc's, pronouncing words, and learning to read in their ESL classes.

Even though listening was important to Eddie, he has a very quiet personality. The researcher taught Eddie when she was a third grade classroom teacher and then again when she moved to ESL as fourth grade ESL teacher. Eddie does ask questions but only to seek information he can not obtain by himself. Eddie prefers listening, reading, and reflecting. This is an intrapersonal intelligence, and Eddie sets goals, reflects on his learning, and exhibits tremendous self-discipline. Eddie's self-discipline has enabled him to succeed in the gifted and talented program. Moreover, Eddie exhibits logical-mathematical intelligence which is reflected in his test scores on both the criterion and norm-referenced exams. Alex reflected a very similar learning style to Eddie's. He preferred to read and listen to the teacher. Alex communicated that he learned English through learning the rules of grammar. Similarly, Rachel preferred listening to the teacher and reading, which are reflective of an intrapersonal learning style.

Conversely, Karen, Joe, Larry, Marco, and Martha exhibited intrapersonal as well as verbal-linguistic learning styles. These five participants preferred to learn by working with others, talking, reading both orally and silently, and writing. Larry expressed that he learned much more when he could discuss new concepts with his friends. Several

participants added that even though they enjoy learning with others, they do not want to be distracted by the other students.

Even though participants exhibited various learning styles, a common theme emerged which was the importance of the teacher. The participants expressed a deep respect for teachers, and none of them said anything negative about teachers. In one case, the researcher observed the depth of respect by Alex, the participant from Ukraine. Alex told of his disappointment of missing soccer try-outs. The researcher asked Alex why he had missed, and he responded that he had been ill. The researcher said, "Why don't you explain to the coach that you were sick?" Alex responded that it would not be fair to the others or the teacher if he tried out for the team late. The participant was not mad at the coach, but instead wanted to try out for the team next year. This is reflective of the respect that the participants give their teachers.

Accommodations.

Accommodations enable the ELL student to effectively participate in the mainstream classroom by making the academic content interesting, accessible, and challenging. Successful classrooms incorporate conceptual frameworks for new knowledge, learning strategies, content reading, opportunities for independent reading, and build on prior knowledge to help students move beyond the text (Crandall, et al., 2002). Interviews conducted by the researcher included questions about which accommodations participants preferred in order to gain an understanding of how ELL students perceive accommodations (see Table 5).

Table 5

Accommodation Preferred by Participants

ACCOMMODATIONS	*YES*	*NO*
Repeat/Explain	12	
Peer tutoring	11	
Visuals	10	1
Cooperative Learning	6	3
Draw	5	
Bilingual/Dictionary	5	
Gestures	5	
Speak Slowly	5	
Model	4	
Kinesthetic	4	
Make Connections	4	
Graphic Organizers	3	2
Music	3	2
Manipulatives	3	1
Homework	3	
Feedback	3	
Key Vocabulary	3	5
Chunks	2	
Games	2	
Feedback	1	
Oral/Written	1	

The most preferred accommodation by participants was repeating and explaining instructions. As stated in the learning styles category, participants interviewed placed a great deal of importance on listening. The answers generated by the accommodations questions concurred with the findings, and reinforced the importance of effective classroom instruction. In the same way, several students emphasized the importance of teachers using gestures and speaking slowly. One participant explained that teachers sometimes read or speak too quickly, and that is why she feels comfortable in the ESL program. Providing feedback and homework to students was important to several participants who stated they like to have immediate feedback. Karen thought feedback was important because it helps her improve by showing her what she did wrong.

Participants identified peer tutoring as the second most preferred accommodation. Several participants explained peer tutoring allowed them to gain understanding of concepts when they first started to school. The peers also helped them find classes, learn the rules, and most importantly, facilitated communicate as they assimilated into a second language. Similarly, participants chose cooperative learning, even though three of the participants disagreed. Of the three participants, two indicated to the researcher that they did not like groups because they ended up doing the work, and the other participant said she talked too much in groups and did not get her work finished.

Most of the participants communicated feelings about visual accommodations. Visuals mentioned included flashcards, pictures, and games. Several students discussed how the ELMO, an overhead projector, made learning easier for them. Karen declared that if she were teaching another student, she would make vocabulary cards with pictures that had the Spanish and English words. In addition, several students discussed the use of graphic

organizers for writing. A few participants related to the researcher their preference for making lists when writing an essay.

The students who know how to read and write in their native languages preferred bilingual dictionaries and books. Unfortunately, many of the students interviewed moved to the United States before they learned how to read and write their native language, so a bilingual dictionary in the classroom or on testing is not a useful accommodation.

The elementary and middle school participants talked about the use of drama, music, and movement as an accommodation. Karen related an elementary teacher's use of music to teach the parts of speech and multiplication facts. Karen still remembered the songs from three years earlier. Similarly, students believed that drawing helped in their understanding of the concepts. Movement was considered to be important by a few students. Mark recalled learning his alphabet from his ESL teacher who taught the concepts by "making letters with his body."

Participants mentioned modeling, real-world connections, and experiments as well. One participant expressed that she never understood science until her fifth grade teacher did experiments with her. Now she enjoys and understands science. A few participants felt comfortable when teachers modeled how to do the lesson and then let them follow. Modeling is mentioned in the literature review as being an effective teaching strategy.

On the whole, all of the students preferred some type of accommodation, especially when they first started learning English. In fact, when asked how they would help a non-English speaking friend learn English, participants responded with comments such as "show them pictures," "make vocabulary cards," "bilingual worksheets," and "teach them games."

Theme 4: Motivating Factors

Family.

Establishing a strong relationship with families is identified by Gray and Fleischman (2005) as a vital component of serving the needs of English language learners. Gray and Fleischman wrote that lack of parental involvement is sometimes viewed as a lack of parental interest, but the cause is often families having no means of communicating with the school. Sobel and Kugler (2007) agreed and stressed the importance or parent support and information as well as realizing cultural differences.

One motivating factor for academic achievement shared by participants was the importance of family. All twelve participants related the importance of education by their family. Many of the participants had older siblings who helped them study and finish homework as they learned English. Some participants are now helping younger siblings as they learn English. Most participants said their parents encouraged them by checking their grades and making sure they did their homework. Karen, as well as several other participants, explained how their fathers would help them with math. Three of the participants currently have parents who are attending ESL night classes to learn English, and they help their parents as well.

When asked if his parents were supportive, Joe responded, "Always. They want success for me." Most of the participants agreed with Joe. Their parents want them to succeed, get a better job, and do well in school. Larry stated, "Mom and Dad work hard, and some day I hope to give back. They want me to make something out of myself." Both of Annie's parents are going to classes to learn English. Annie declared that her mom and dad are proud of her and support her decision to become a nurse.

The researcher found a common theme in all twelve participants; family. They help each other, rely on each other, and the students even translate for their parents at the doctor's office and other places when needed. Therefore, the district must cultivate the relationship between the school and family.

Internal motivators.

Participants interviewed demonstrated another common trait: internal motivation. Each participant expressed their desire to learn and achieve academic success and communicated their belief in the importance of learning. Teachers can aid in this achievement, but ultimately it is the student who learns. When Larry was asked how he would help a non-English speaking student learn he replied,"Well, first I would tell them the importance of learning English so they could be motivated to learn."Furthermore, he went on to say that many Hispanic students could learn English if they wanted to. Larry believed that first non-speakers must understand why they need to learn English.

Sagor (2003) related that motivated students have internalized the desire to learn and this produces high self-esteem. Moreover, they must feel comfort and acceptance. The district can aid in student achievement by providing a safe, nurturing environment with high expectations for all students.

Results-Interventions

Demographics of District

Demographic data for the district is represented in Table 6. This data was released to the parents in the 2007 School Performance Report (Arkansas Department of Education, Division of Academic Accountability, 2007). The data showed that the district has seen a steady increase in enrollment. From 2004 to 2006 the enrollment increased by sixty-six students. The average daily attendance was 95% in the 2005-2006 school year, and 94.4% in the 2006-2007 school year. There are no teachers that are not highly qualified in the district. Even though the average teacher salary and the expenditure per student is lower than the state average, the mills (state funding formula) voted by the community is higher than the state average. The number of students receiving free and reduced meals also increased from 2004 to 2007. As a result of increased enrollment, there have been new challenges such as an increase in the ELL, highly mobile, and free and reduced populations, which are usually identified as at-risk students.

Since the implementation of the state benchmark exam, the district studied has been striving to ensure that every student is given every opportunity to attain grade-level achievement. The district has increased the number of teachers to reduce class sizes, hired curriculum specialists to analyze data and design staff development, hired a math and literacy coach for the elementary schools to aid classroom teachers in the implementation of Everyday Math and the Comprehensive Literacy Model, and aligned the Consolidated School Improvement Plan into to best fit the goals to benefit all children. The curriculum has been aligned both vertically and horizontally, and all teachers have worked together to implement sound teaching practices.

Table 6

Demographic Data for District Studied

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
ENROLLMENT	1801	1804	1867
MILLS VOTED	35.5	31.55	38.05
AVERAGE TEACHER SALARY	38,978	42,746	42,123
% FREE AND REDUCED MEALS	50.4	50.6	52.3

Interventions

Analysis of test data.

Tables 7, 8, and 9 showed the student achievement indicators for third, fourth, and fifth grades in the 2005-2006 school year as compared to the 2006-2007 school year, when they were in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. These numbers included all students who were not proficient on the state benchmark exam during the 2005-2006 school year. An Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) was developed for each of the students, and the plan included interventions such as explicit instruction, after school tutoring, accelerated reader, fluency development, and formative testing. Parents were included in the planning of the AIPs for students. The plans were monitored by classroom teachers throughout the year and adjusted when necessary. The tables indicated a gain in achievement after interventions. Even though all students did not test proficient the following year, there was a movement toward proficiency.

Table 7

Student Achievement Indicators for Third Grade 2006-2007

	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
3rd Grade Literacy-2006	7%	27%	37%	28%
	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
4th Grade Literacy-2007	6%	28%	42%	24%

Table 8

Student Achievement Indicators for Fourth Grade 2006-2007

	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
4th Grade Literacy-2006	5%	25%	45%	23%
	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
5th Grade Literacy-2007	4%	23%	51%	22%

Table 9

Student Achievement Indicators for Fifth Grade 2006-2007

	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
5th Grade Literacy-2006	3%	21%	55%	22%
	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
6th Grade Literacy-2007	4%	29%	42%	27%

In order to obtain a more detailed report of the effects of interventions on student achievement, a Pearson r one-tailed correlation between the test scores of the two years for each group was performed. The third grade ELL students, showed an increase in the mean scores as shown in Table 10. Although the mean of the group improved, this was not deemed to be statistically significant at the one-tailed level which is shown in Figure 1. This could be due to the small sample size. According to Cohen and Thompson (1992;1989) it is acceptable to mention the findings, but further research should be performed with a more significant group in order to achieve a better result. The second third grade group with No ELL students also increased the mean of their test scores as shown in Table 11 and Figure 2. The findings with this group were statistically significant at the ($p<0.01$) level on a one-tailed test with a positive correlation ($r = .675$). When the two third grade groups were combined, however, they showed an increase in mean scores as shown in Table 12 and Figure 3. There was a positive correlation ($r = .660$) level of significance at the 0.01 level on the one-tailed Pearson r.

In the fourth ELL group, there was a gain in mean test scores, as well as a significant correlation which is shown on Table 13 and Figure 4. A Pearson r one-tailed correlation at the 0.01 level was (r = .859), which is a high significance. The fourth grade No ELL group showed a positive correlation of (r = .392) which was a low significance at the 0.05 level of the Pearson r, and as shown on Table 14, and the group increased their mean score (see Figure 4). This was considerably lower than the ELL group. When the groups were combined, and the test scores were correlated, they showed an improvement in the mean of the scores but there was an insignificant relationship at (r .447), using the Pearson r at the 0.01 level which is shown on Table 15 and Figure 5.

In the fifth grade ELL group, there was a positive correlation of significance at the 0.01 level of (r = .859) on a one-tailed Pearson r (see Table 16). The mean scores of the ELL group also increased as shown on Figure 6. The No ELL group did not show a significant correlation on the Pearson r, but did increase their mean scores (See Table 17 and Figure 7). When the two groups were combined, there was a significant correlation at (r =.447), and they did increase the mean of their test scores, as observed on Table 18 and Figure 8.

Table 10

Third Grade ELL Students 2006-2007

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
LITERACY 2006	427.88	60.636	8
LITERACY 2007	554.25	128.756	8

		LITERACY 2006	LITERACY 2007
LITERACY 2006	Pearson Correlation	1	.435
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.141
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	25736.875	23753.250
	Covariance	3676.696	3393.321
	N	8	8
LITERACY 2007	Pearson Correlation	.435	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.141	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	23753.250	116047.500
	Covariance	3393.321	16578.214
	N	8	8

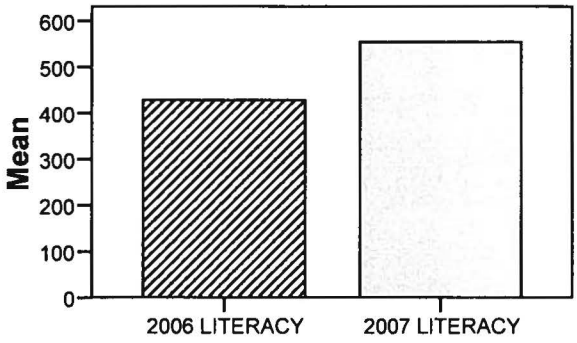

Figure 1. Mean of Third Grade ELL Students' Test Scores from 2006-2007.

Table 11

Third Grade No ELL Students 2006-2007

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
2006 LITERACY	341.33	99.639	18
2007 LITERACY	445.44	140.775	18

		2006 LITERACY	2007 LITERACY
2006 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	1	.675(**)
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.001
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	168776.000	160911.333
	Covariance	9928.000	9465.373
	N	18	18
2007 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	.675(**)	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.001	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	160911.333	336900.444
	Covariance	9465.373	19817.673
	N	18	18

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tail)

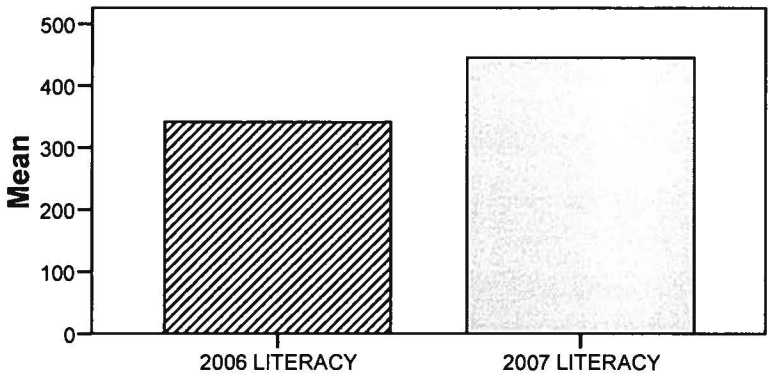

Figure 2. Mean of Third Grade No ELL Students' Test Scores from 2006-2007.

Table 12

Third Grade All Students 2006-2007

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
2006 LITERACY	367.96	97.158	26
2007 LITERACY	468.77	135.465	26

		2006 LITERACY	2007 LITERACY
2006 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	1	.660(**)
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	235992.962	217005.769
	Covariance	9439.718	8680.231
	N	26	26
2007 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	.660(**)	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	217005.769	458770.615
	Covariance	8680.231	18350.825
	N	26	26

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

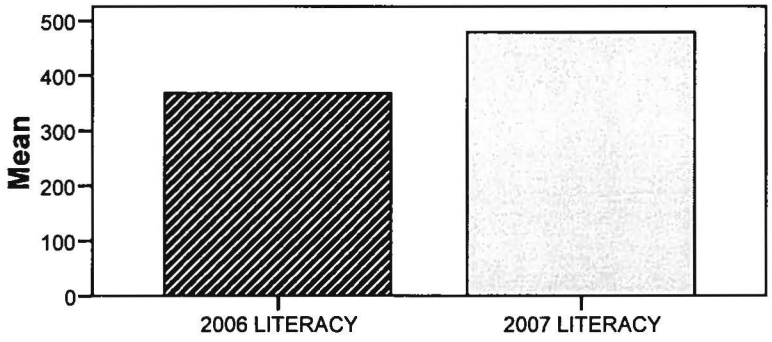

Figure 3. Mean of All Students' Test Scores from 2006-2007.

Table 13

Fourth Grade ELL Students 2006-2007

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
2006 LITERACY	447.80	67.869	10
2007 LITERACY	552.00	86.017	10

		2006 LITERACY	2007 LITERACY
2006 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	1	.859(**)
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.001
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	41455.600	45147.000
	Covariance	4606.178	5016.333
	N	10	10
2007 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	.859(**)	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.001	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	45147.000	66590.000
	Covariance	5016.333	7398.889
	N	10	10

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

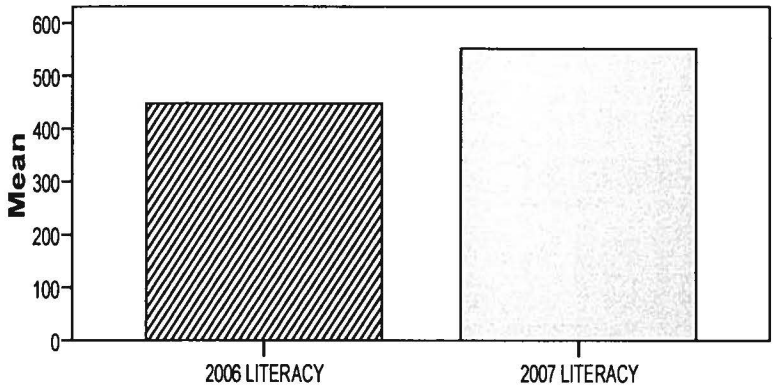

Figure 4. Mean of Fourth Grade ELL Students' Test Scores from 2006-2007.

Table 14

Fourth Grade No ELL Students 2006-2007

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
2006 LITERACY	427.96	94.789	26
2007 LITERACY	564.81	143.061	26

		2006 LITERACY	2007 LITERACY
2006 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	1	.392(*)
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.024
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	224624.962	132994.808
	Covariance	8984.998	5319.792
	N	26	26
2007 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	.392(*)	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.024	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	132994.808	511660.038
	Covariance	5319.792	20466.402
	N	26	26

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

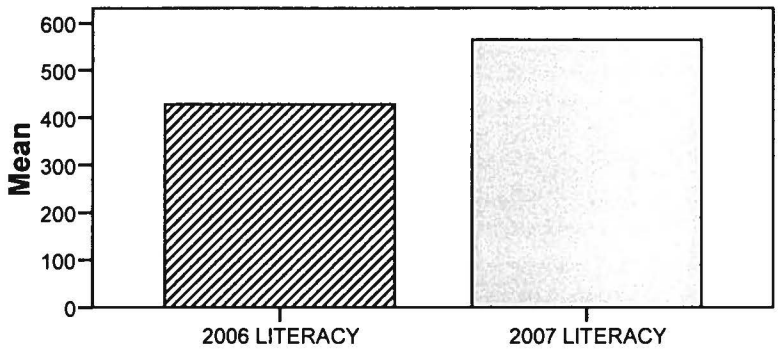

Figure 5. Mean of Fourth Grade No ELL Students' Test Scores from 2006-2007.

Table 15

Fourth Grade All Students 2006-2007

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
2006 LITERACY	433.47	87.656	36
2007 LITERACY	561.25	128.667	36

		2006 LITERACY	2007 LITERACY
2006 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	1	.447(**)
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.003
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	268922.972	176306.750
	Covariance	7683.513	5037.336
	N	36	36
2007 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	.447(**)	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.003	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	176306.750	579434.750
	Covariance	5037.336	16555.279
	N	36	36

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

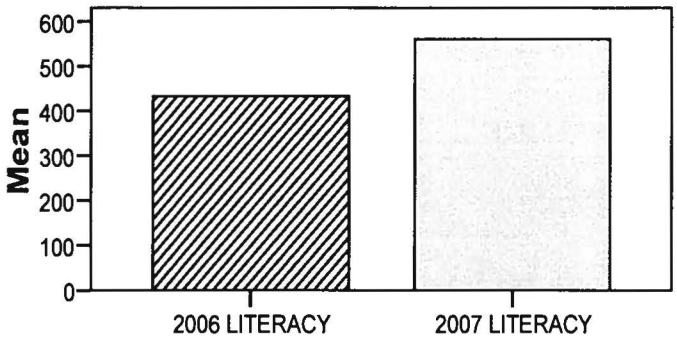

Figure 6. Mean of Fourth Grade All Students' Test Scores from 2006-2007.

Table 16

Fifth Grade ELL Students 2006-2007

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
2006 LITERACY	475.7500	86.46531	4
2007 LITERACY	540.7500	107.01830	4

		2006 LITERACY	2007 LITERACY
2006 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	1	.953(*)
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.024
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	22428.750	26448.750
	Covariance	7476.250	8816.250
	N	4	4
2007 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	.953(*)	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.024	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	26448.750	34358.750
	Covariance	8816.250	11452.917
	N	4	4

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

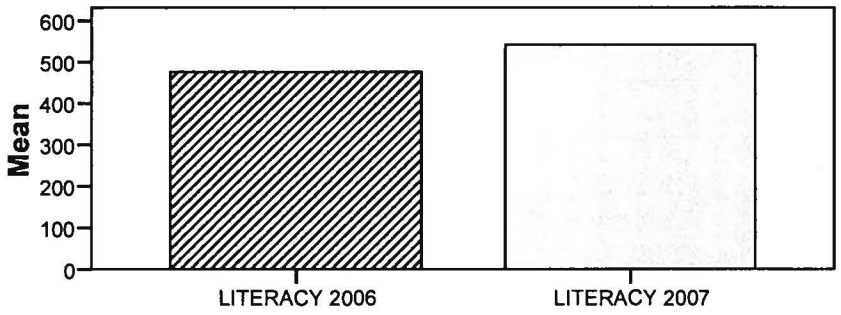

Figure 7. Mean of Fifth Grade ELL Students' Test Scores from 2006-2007

Table 17

Fifth Grade No ELL Students 2006-2007

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
2006 LITERACY	463.8095	106.22882	21
2007 LITERACY	578.5714	136.18024	21

		2006 LITERACY	2007 LITERACY
2006 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	1	.069
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.383
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	225691.238	19935.286
	Covariance	11284.562	996.764
	N	21	21
2007 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	.069	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.383	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	19935.286	370901.143
	Covariance	996.764	18545.057
	N	21	21

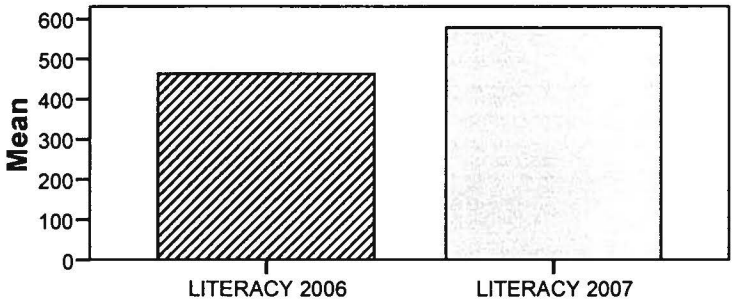

Figure 8. Mean of Fifth Grade Students' Test Scores from 2006-2007.

Table 18

Fifth Grade All Students 2006-2007

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
2006 LITERACY	465.7200	101.77570	25
2007 LITERACY	572.5200	130.71378	25

		2006 LITERACY	2007 LITERACY
2006 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	1	.141
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.251
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	248599.040	44866.640
	Covariance	10358.293	1869.443
	N	25	25
2007 LITERACY	Pearson Correlation	.141	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.251	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	44866.640	410066.240
	Covariance	1869.443	17086.093
	N	25	25

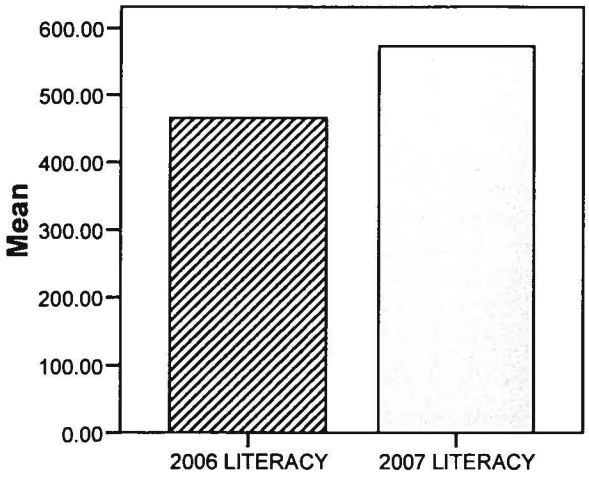

Figure 9. Mean of Fifth Grade All Students' Test Scores from 2006-2007

When studying the individual cases of proficiency, the researcher found an increase in overall proficiency of the students studied. In the third grade group, there were 26 cases of non-proficient students studied. Of that twenty-six, five were proficient the next year, and one was advanced. The fourth grade group showed the most significant increase. There were 36 cases studied. Of the 36, seventeen were proficient the next year, and one was advanced. The fifth grade group exhibited an increase as well. Of the 25 cases studied, six were proficient the next year, and one was advanced (See table 19).

Table 19

Student Improvement in Proficiency at Next Grade Level

	3rd to 4th Grade	4th to 5th Grade	5th to 6th Grade
Total no. of students taking the benchmark exam 2006	122	132	116
Total no. of all non-proficient students in 2006	26	36	25
Total no. of students non-proficient at next grade level	20	18	18
Total no. of students proficient at next grade level	5	17	6
Total no. of students advanced at next grade level	1	1	1

The results of the interventions reflected an effort on the part of the district to move all students to proficiency. The correlation between interventions and improvement in test scores is inconclusive because of the variables in the interventions, however, the gains reflected the effort of the teachers, students, and parents to design and implement an improve plan for those students who have not achieved academic proficiency.

Summary

Participants in this study included teachers and staff from a rural school district, students, and former students. Through the use of surveys, interviews, and test data the researcher developed themes which provided insight into beliefs about teaching, learning, and best practices for ELL students. In addition, the study of interventions and their effect on non-proficient students proved that the district is effectively working to improve student achievement.

Four research questions guided this study. The first two questions concerned teachers' and students' preferred accommodations. Surveys answered by teachers reflected beliefs about teaching strategies, accommodations, and programs related to the ELL student. Themes emerged which reflected these beliefs. The third research question dealt with motivating factors that facilitate second language acquisition. Interviews used to answer the third research questions illuminated the thoughts of ELL students themselves and how they perceived their own learning. From the interviews, four themes emerged: 1) School Climate; 2) Connectedness; 3) Learning Preferences; and 4) Motivating Factors.

The last question dealt with the impact of interventions on student achievement. By comparing assessment scores from one year to the next, the researcher communicated that interventions can aid in improving test scores for both the ELL students and the regular mainstreamed students. The following chapter provides a discussion of the findings as well as recommendations for further studies and research.

CHAPTER FIVE–DISCUSSION

Overview of the Study

This study investigated relationships between interventions, perceptions of accommodations, motivating factors, and student achievement among ELL students. In order to examine these relationships the following questions guided the study:

1. Which accommodations are preferred among ELL students who have achieved successful language acquisition in relation to instructional strategies, settings, and language acquisition programs?
2. What accommodations and teaching strategies are preferred among teachers of ELL students in the mainstream classroom?
3. What are the motivating factors that most impact ELL students who transition from language programs with accommodations into the mainstream classroom without accommodations?
4. What interventions used on Academic Improvement Plans were successful in transitioning the ELL student to proficiency on a criterion-referenced test?

Discussion of Findings

Triangulation of data from test scores, interviews, and surveys revealed that districts can facilitate the successful mainstreaming of second language learners. The researcher determined several reasons that the district studied has been successful. One reason is a commitment by the district to the idea of providing a successful education for all students, regardless of race, ability, or socio-economic class. The commitment is reflected in the hiring of highly qualified teachers, the continued improvement of the ESL program, and the district's use of funds for programs. Furthermore, the district displays a

commitment to communication with the parents which is shown by translating newsletters, handbooks, and important information. Translators are employed through the ESL department for enrolling students, special education conferences, and parent-teacher conferences.

The first research question dealt with the preference of accommodations by ELL students who have achieved successful language acquisition in relation to instructional strategies, settings, and language acquisition programs. Through the study, the researcher discovered that the role of the teacher promoted student success. The relationships between the twelve interview participants and their teachers provided opportunities for the ELL students to feel safe and valued. Furthermore, the teachers held high expectations for these students thus enabling them to develop intrinsic motivators which promoted self-esteem and a love of learning. Students communicated the importance of teachers repeating directions and instructions as well as explaining concepts in detail. In addition, students identified peer tutoring as a beneficial accommodation. Many of the students expressed the importance of having a peer that shared the same culture and first language. Moreover, the use of visuals in a classroom enhanced student learning. The use of pictures to connect new vocabulary helped to activate prior knowledge of concepts.

The second research question which guided the study provided insight into the preference of accommodations and teaching strategies among teachers of ELL students. Through surveying district teachers, themes emerged which gave the researcher a perspective into the feelings and beliefs of these teachers. Lack of professional development in the area of second language acquisition was a concern for survey participants. Since many of the participants had not received formal training for teaching

ELL students, the teachers had learned from classroom experienced. In spite of the lack of formal training, the responses generated reflected that teachers in the district were using effective teaching strategies such as visuals, modeling, and peer tutoring. These correlated with the preferences of the ELL students interviewed. Furthermore, even though there was one negative response about "catering" to the ELL students' needs, most teachers responded favorably to maintaining high expectations and cultural diversity in the classroom. In general, the researcher found that the teachers responded favorably to the ESL pull-out program and its teachers. However, teachers also felt that time and scheduling of these students was restricting because students lost instructional time in the regular classroom. Even though some teachers felt that they lacked the experience of teaching cultural diversities, the surveys reflected tremendous effort, caring attitudes, and high expectation towards ELL learners.

Motivating factors that impacted ELL students who have achieved second language acquisitions were studied by interviewing twelve current and former students of the district. The researcher discovered four themes which explained the motivational factors of these twelve students. The first identified theme was school climate which included physical, emotional, and classroom elements. The researcher determined that before the ELL student can learn, they must first feel safe and valued. Through the interviews, participants reflected that they preferred procedures and consistency. Some participants remembered classroom procedures which allowed them to learn teacher expectations for the classroom. In addition, connections among peers, staff, and teachers emerged as a motivating factor. Participants recounted these connections as integral parts of their

successful transition into a second language. Every student mentioned an ESL teacher or classroom teacher as being important.

Learning styles developed as the third theme. During the interviews, the learning styles of participants reflected the way they preferred to learn. Participants were asked about their preferred styles, and their responses generated a view of the differences in the way they learned. Once again, the importance of the teacher emerged as a key factor no matter the learning style of the participant.

The role of the family was a central motivating factor. Each participant discussed the respect and closeness they maintained with their family unit. In spite of most of the parents speaking another language, the parents still checked homework, attended conferences, and maintained communication about their children. Some of the parents were in the process of taking ESL night classes to learn English as well. It was also expected that siblings would help each other out as they learned English.

The final research question investigated the actual implementation of interventions on student achievement. The researcher studied not only ELL students, but regular classroom students as well in order to discover if there were differences in the two populations. By correlating scores before and after interventions, the researcher discovered that there was a movement toward proficiency in all groups.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study was the inclusion of only one district. Since the district was rural, the results of the study might be generalized to a small ELL population. Further study of larger districts could help to strengthen the findings of the study. Another limitation wa s the ability of the students interviewed. Since only two have been

identified as gifted and talented students, it is believed that the other ten have average intelligence. However, the other ten students may have never been tested for gifted and talented. That information was not available to the researcher. The last limitation was concerning the interventions. Since not all teachers implement the interventions in the same method, it is not known whether the interventions resulted in the improvement in proficiency.

Educational Implications

With the ever expanding growth of diverse populations, there are many challenges to be faced. In order to meet the complex needs of ELL students, districts should provide more adequate professional development in the areas of culture, language acquisition, assessment, and linguistics for ELL students. Another major challenge is high stakes testing. Research shows that it can take up to ten years for second language learners to succeed in learning academic language. High stakes testing puts pressure on students to learn before they are developmentally ready. Administrators in districts around the country must be patient with these students. Although the district studied exhibits high test scores for ELL learners, this is not the norm. The district studied has made a commitment to fund programs needed to aid in student achievement for these diverse learners. Districts who are struggling might need to observe what successful districts are doing in order to implement successful programs.

Educators also need to realize the importance they play in the lives of students. This study illuminated the importance of the teachers. The role of the teacher should portray acceptance for these diverse learners, high expectations, and knowledge of the implementation of effective strategies.

Furthermore, schools should embrace the family. Since the family plays such an integral role in the achievement of the ELL student, every effort should be made by the district to encourage communication and collaboration. Even though some parents do not speak English, they still want the best education possible for their child.

Further Research

Further research should include a motivational scale for ELL learners. This could help strengthen the identification of motivational factors used by ELL learners who have achieved academic success. Other research should include parental interviews which could identify the methods and strategies used by the parents of successful second language learners who play an integral role in their child's education. Finally, a scale created for the ESL teachers should be developed in order to identify traits shared by the teachers of students who are academically successful in second language acquisition

Summary

This study found that ELL students who had achieved academic success owed this achievement to several factors. The study presented information from students, teachers, and former students of the district through interviews, school data, and surveys. The investigation provided insight into the perceptions and factors leading to the successful mainstreaming of ELL students. Shared qualities among participants studied included effective school climate, the support of teachers and staff, an enriched learning environment, and support from family. The qualities identified proved that a committed district can aid second language acquisition for the ELL student.

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APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: Inverventions, Perceptions of Accommodations, and Motivating Factors Impacting the Achievement and Successful Mainstreaming of ELL Students

Principal Investigator (PI):
Desiree J. Atchley, Ed.S

Contact Information:
XXXXXXX

Explanation and Purpose of the Research

As part of Mrs. Atchley's dissertation requirements at Lindenwood University, she is requesting volunteers to participate in her study. The purpose of the study is to discover how educators might best facilitate the acquisition of English for ELL students.

Research Procedures

As a participant observer/researcher, prodedures involving participants will include a student profile, a survey, informal conversations/interviews, informal conversations, and information obtained through school data. Participation is voluntary, and there will not be any repercussions for choosing not to participate. If you choose to voluntarily participate for this study, you will be asked to answer questions designed to discover relationships between language acquisition and motivating factors, interventions, and accommodations.

As an interview participant, you will be asked questions about your educational experiences as a second language learner. Your responses will be recorded through notes taken by the researcher and/or audio recording. These questions will remain confidential, and your identity will only be known by the researcher. Other forms of information will come from other school data such as grades, schedules, test data, and teacher/parent information.

Potential Risks

Possible risks of this study could include fatigue, or physical and/or emotional discomfort. To prevent any of these risks, the observer/investigator will conduct interviews in a comfortable environment, and beverages and food will be made available to you. At any time, you may request to discontinue the interview or take a break.

Another potential risk of this study is the release of confidential information. To protect against this risk, all students will be interviewed in a private conference room. The door will be closed during the interview, and a sign will

be posted to prevent interruptions. Students will be given a code name such as student A, B, C, or D. These codes will be used by the investigator to retrieve and analyze data.

The results of this study will be used in the investigator's dissertation; and could be used for publications. Any information used will not include any personal information about the participant, and all names will be kept confidential. All materials including USB drives, note, records, and audio recordings will be kept in a locked cabinet only accessible to the researcher. All materials generated from the study will be destroyed through shredding or incineration after five years.

Participation and Benefits

The amount of time for the interview will be approximately one hour. The Interviews will be during school hours for school-age participants, and interviews with adults will be arranged at their convenience.

You may obtain a copy of a summary of the results of the study by adding your address to the bottom of this consent form.

Questions

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Desiree Atchley at XXXXXXX

_____ _____

Signature of Parent or Participant or Participant Date

Please provide your mailing address if you would like a copy of the results of this study upon completion.

_____

APPENDIX B: SURVEY RECRUITMENT AND SURVEY

Teacher Survey

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

_____0-2 _____3-5 _____6-10 _____11+

2. How well did your educational training prepare you to teach ELL learners?

3. What teaching strategies do you feel are most effective when teaching ELL learners?

4. What teaching strategies do you feel are least effective when teaching ELL learners?

5. In your opinion, what are the benefits and limitations of an ESL program?

6. Please circle accommodations you have used to teach ELL learners?

Longer response time	Authentic Assessment	Information both oral/written
Gestures, facial expressions	Graphic Organizers	The incorporation of diverse cultures
Speaking slowly and clearly	Cooperative Learning	Students encouraged to talk
Teaching key vocabulary	Real world activities	Peer tutoring
Repeating instruction	Levelized readers	Drama or readers' theater
Modeling instruction	Developing critical thinking	
Visuals	Setting objectives	Physical movement
Hands-on manipulatives	Providing feedback	Adjustment for learning styles
Use of music/chanting	Acting out the concepts	Drawing the concepts

7. Which accommodations have you found to be the most beneficial in your classroom?

8. Which accommodations have you found to be the least beneficial in your classroom?

Please add any additional information you would like to provide.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

NAME OF STUDENT

SECTION 1 DEMOGRAPHICS AND BACKGROUND

1. Name

2. Date of Birth

3. How many people are in your family?

4. Where were you born?

5. Did you go to school in another country?

6. Name the languages that you speak fluently.

7. Name the languages that you read and write fluently.

8. What grade are you in? (If you are a current student)

9. In school, what extracurricular activities have you been involved with?

(currently or during attendance at the school attended)

10. If you work, what is your occupation?

SECTION 2 SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

Now I'm going to ask you about your experiences in school.

Prompt: What are your earliest memories of being in school in the United States.

Prompt: What kinds of classes do/did you take in school?

Prompt: What is your favorite subject? Why do you like that subject?

Prompt: Do you enjoy school? What are some of your favorite activities at school?

Prompt: Did you ever attend summer school or after school tutoring?

SECTION 3 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Prompt: How do you feel about your teachers and other staff in the school?

Prompt: Are there special staff members that you feel helped you when you were learning English? If so, tell me about them.

Prompt: Do your parents believe that education is important? Tell me how your family encouraged you as you were learning English.

Prompt: How did the ESL program at this school help you as you were learning English?

SECTION 4 SETTINGS

Prompt: Do you remember when you first exited from the ESL program? If so, how did you feel when you did not go to ESL?

Prompt: Did you want to be in the regular classroom, or did you want to remain in the ESL program?

Prompt: Were there times when you asked teachers in the ESL program for help even though you were not in the program any more?

SECTION 5 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Prompt: Do you prefer to read, listen, or work with others when you are learning new information?

Prompt: What teachers helped you the most when you were learning English?

Prompt: How did the teachers make the information meaningful to you when you were learning English?

Prompt: If you were teaching a non-English speaking friend, how would you try to help them?

Prompt: (for graduates only) What are your future plans? Did the XXXX school system help you to be able to get the job you wanted or encourage you to attend college?

APPENDIX D: HISTORICAL SURVEY

March 18, 1996

To All School Employees:

The following survey is designed to collect data for our Global Education class at the University of Arkansas. It concerns the growth in our area and school, and how you view the changes.

We would appreciate it if you would take a few moments to complete this survey and return it to one of our mailboxes by April 2. This survey is anonymous, and all information collected will be used only in our Global Education class. Thank you for your cooperation!

Desiree Atchley and Colleen High

(Mailbox locations: Desiree/Junior High Lounge; Colleen/Upper Elementary Office)

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1. Years you have lived in the Berryville area? 5 or less ___6-10___ over 10 years ___

2. Have you ever lived in a large city? Yes _____ No _____

3. Do you have the opportunity to come in contact with our students from other cultures? Frequently_____ Rarely_____ Not at all_____

4. How do you feel about different nationalities moving into our area? I am enjoying the diversity of new people _____ I am learning to accept this change_____ I would prefer they would not move into our area_____

5. Is it your opinion that "outsiders" are taking over the work force in our area?
Yes_____ No_____

6. How do you feel about the language barrier? Others should learn English _____. We should learn their language_____. All cultures should work together to facilitate communication_____.

7. How do you feel about the various cultures attending the school system? I think it is good for our students to learn about these cultures_____. I don't have an opinion_____. I would prefer we had no other cultures here _____.

8. How many opportunities have you had to communicate with other cultures in the past year, either here at school or in the community? Less than 5_____ 6-10 _____more than 10 _____

9. In a few words, how would you describe students from other cultures that you have come in contact with?

_____

_____

10. How do you feel about "outsiders" moving into our area?

_____

APPENDIX E: LETTER OF CONSENT TO ACCESS SCHOOL DATA

To whom it may concern:

The purpose of this letter is to grant Desiree Jeanette Atchley, a doctoral student at Lindenwood University permission to conduct research at the xxxxxxxx School District. The project, "Interventions, Perceptions of Accommodations, and Motivating Factors Impacting the Achievement and Successful Mainstreaming Transition of English Language Learners" entails normal classroom instructional practices utilized by Mrs. Atchley in her position as an ESL instructor with the district.

Research activities to be done at this site will involve routine data collection procedures such as observations, interviews, surveys, test data information, and other descriptive types of collection for inquiry including all ethical and feasible forms of data collection that contributes to understanding the phenomenon or individuals studied. Participant and parental consent will be obtained prior to this study, and all information collected will be kept confidential, and only released for the purposes of completing Mrs. Atchley's dissertation and related publications. No names will be used in this study, and all materials will be destroyed after three years.

As Superintendent overseeing all educational programs within the xxxxxxxxxx district, I do hereby grant permission for Desiree Jeanette Atchley to conduct her study, "Interventions, Perceptions of Accommodations, and Motivating Factors Impacting the Achievement and Successful Mainstreaming Transition of English Language Learners" at the xxxxxxxx School District.

Sincerely,

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

VITA

Mrs. Atchley is a life-long educator with over twenty years of experience. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in music education from East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma in 1986. In 1998, Mrs. Atchley graduated from the University of Arkansas with her M.Ed. She obtained her ESL endorsement from Arkansas Tech in Russellville, Arkansas in 2004, which was followed by an Ed.S. from Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri in 2008.

Mrs. Atchley has taught elementary, middle school, and high school music. Her experiences also include teaching in the third grade classroom and developing and implementing a middle school and high school language program for ELL learners. She has been involved with children's choirs, drama, book clubs, and other after school activities for children. Currently she is a third grade ESL instructor.