High School English Teachers and ELLs in the Mainstream: Perceptions, Accommodations and Supports for their work in an Era of Standards-Based Reform

Emily Bucknor Lenssen

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Emily Bucknor Lenssen

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Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Sheila Valencia

Reading Committee:

Sheila Valencia

Eugene Edgar

Margaret Plecki

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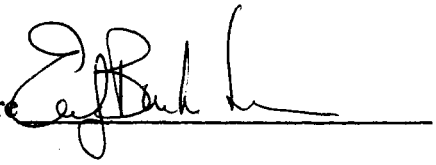
Signature 

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University of Washington

Abstract

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Emily Bucknor Lenssen

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
Professor Sheila Valencia
Curriculum and Instruction

This qualitative study examined the work of four language arts teachers in core curriculum classes in two high schools within in one district and how they served the English language learners assigned to their classrooms. The main focus of the study was to document the supports that existed and that the teachers accessed to assist them in addressing the specific needs of their ELL students. Four case studies of the teachers were created to determine their perceptions of their ELL students' needs and document the accommodations that they made to address those needs. Using interviews, observations, and document reviews, the researcher also examined the conditions and policies at the school, district and state level that both supported and constrained the teachers' work with their ELL students, especially considering the pressures associated with the standards-based reform that was being implemented at the time. Findings indicated that there were few supports in place for the teachers' work with their ELL students, that their work was complicated by both the number and diversity of student needs within their classroom, and that the specific needs of their ELL students remained largely unrecognized and undifferentiated from the needs of their mainstream peers.

The assignment of ELL students to mainstream teachers who lacked the experience or knowledge to recognize or address their needs was problematic without providing supports to develop those teachers' practice in that area. The standards-based reform, which included assessments, standards, and accountability measure that did not differentiate between mainstream students and ELLs and the resources and educational services necessary for each appeared to increase the challenges faced by these teachers and students. Findings include implications for both policy and future research in the area of secondary ELL education within the mainstream education system in the US.

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CHAPTER ONE
OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

The U.S. educational system is failing high school English Language Learners (ELLs) [1]--they are more likely to be placed in low level classes, drop out of school, and lag behind their peers on assessments both at state and national levels (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1990; Gandara et al, 2003; Lachat, 2004). The magnitude of this problem is staggering. In the last decade, America's ELL student population has grown 65% to over 5 million students in our K-12 system compared to only a 9% growth rate of the mainstream student population. In the past, this population was mainly concentrated in a few states—California, New York, Florida, Texas—however in the decade between the 1993-94 and 2003-04 school years, the growth rate of this population has reached over 200% in states where traditionally this population was quite small and "flying under the radar" when it came to concern within the education system. While the ELL population in the formerly highly impacted states continues to grow, the growth rate of the population in states like Arkansas, Iowa, Georgia, North Carolina, Kansas, and others is greater than 200%. An increasing number of states have K-12 populations made up of over 10% of students identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). It would seem to be in the nation's best interest as a society to successfully educate these members to be productive and contributing citizens.

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[1] It should be noted here that though the term LEP has long been used to label these students, this project instead uses the more recently accepted term, English Language Learner, or ELL (Rivera, 1994) which recognizes a change from a deficit-based label to a more positive focus on process and learning. However, there will be cases where LEP is still used in citations from other sources.

New federal mandates from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requiring increased testing of all students at grades three and above, and reporting requirements regarding subgroups like ELLs have brought even more attention to the significantly lower assessment scores of these students. Though researchers (Abedi & Lord, 2001;1997; August & Hakuta, 1997) agree that there are inherent problems in assessing these students in English, their second language, in the nature of testing accommodations, and in the accuracy of these assessments to gauge student achievement, it is clear that ELL students are performing below their non-ELL classmates.

What is happening to these students during their high school years? The perception among researchers, the media, and the public is that students with limited proficiency in English are spending their days with bilingual educators or English as a Second Language teachers who have been prepared to address their language and educational needs. However, the fact is that most students who are designated limited English proficient (LEP) or English language learners (ELLs) spend much of their day in classrooms with mainstream teachers who do not have the appropriate subject matter or pedagogical background. Ultimately, the system appears to be failing these students.

In addition to mainstream teachers' lack of preparation for meeting ELL needs, in the last decade there has been increased pressure on these teachers and on their ELL students due to education reforms based on standards and assessments. Although at the time of this study ELLs were exempt from testing associated with standards-based reforms for their first year of entry into the US education system, since the passage of NCLB in 2001 this exemption has been revoked. Though at the time of the study (1999-

2000) the NCLB act had not yet been legislated, state level reforms pushing higher standards and assessments had begun to be implemented creating accountability pressures for district, schools, and students. What began as the standards-based reform movement of the 1990's transformed into a federal call-to-arms that ramped up testing requirements, accountability measures, requirements for teacher qualifications, and curriculum changes in the form of the reauthorized ESEA, renamed the No Child Left Behind Act. Accountability pressures tentatively begun with standards-based reforms were heightened and standardized across the nation. Though NCLB was not in effect during this study, the legislation is still salient to that time period because many elements of the policies that were governing decision-making at district, school and classroom levels reflect the current federal policy. Consequently, though NCLB provisions will not be referred to specifically, the reforms of that time period were similar enough to remain significant to today's context---the main difference being less flexibility, local and state control and more accountability in the reform's current state.

Many of the state high school assessments associated with standards-based reform in the mid 1990s were considered high-stakes because they were slated to become a requirement for graduation. As a result, mainstream teachers who had ELLs in their classrooms were responsible for helping students meet the current standards and for preparing them to take high-stakes assessments. How does the system support these teachers as they endeavor to address the educational needs of the ELL students in their classrooms, especially in light of new, higher standards and these high-stakes assessments? Little research and attention in the public or policy arenas has been focused on this issue.

Research

The existing research sheds surprisingly little light on what is happening to the majority of high school ELLs in mainstream classes as teachers, schools, and districts cope with both the increasing demands of higher expectations and a growing ELL population[2]. The gaps in the literature fall into four main areas: (1) lack of attention to English language learners (ELLs) in high schools; (2) focus on exemplary programs and models rather than the real-world situation found in most schools; (3) focus on ESL or bilingual teachers with training in second language acquisition pedagogy rather than mainstream teachers who tend to teach ELLs; and (4) lack of attention to the influence of standards-based reform on the education of ELLs.

First, few studies have looked at English language learners at the secondary level. By far, the majority of research studies have focused on the education of ELLs in elementary schools. Though some educational issues are similar at the elementary and secondary level, additional pressures and needs arise in older students which create different educational challenges. Many of the findings at the elementary level cannot be generalized to the secondary level because of basic differences in the structure, staffing, and size of the schools and the specific needs of secondary ELLs. At the high school level, the greatest challenge for ELLs is seen as one of access to the core curriculum which determines if they will graduate, and the limited amount of time that they have to achieve English language skills that allow them this access. Access to content

[2] The national ELL population more than doubled from 1979-1988 (Chapa, 1990) and grew almost 8 percent from 1995-96 to 1996-97 (NCBE, 1998). Hakuta and Beatty (2000) report that between 1990 and 1997 the number of US residents not born in this country grew 30% (p.1).

knowledge for most ELLs comes through mainstream teachers and classes, especially at the secondary level where students see different teachers for individual subject areas.

Second, most existing research describes and compares exemplary or ideal programs (Lucas, 1994; Minnicucci & Olsen, 1992) rather than real world contexts. Studies of exemplars are useful in defining effective practice and elements that exist in successful models. However, the great majority of schools across the country cannot replicate the models and elements defined in these studies for a number of reasons. For example, bilingual programs where instruction occurs in the student's primary language require that students speak the same primary language. However, most schools with ELLs include at least three different languages, but may include as many as 30. Resources in the community and existing personnel usually are not able to support these bilingual models in more than one language. In addition, school districts are hard-pressed to find the funds to add additional classrooms and teachers with their already strapped budgets, especially considering accountability pressures impacting spending on improving student test scores and the economic climate limiting and cutting education budgets at federal, state, and local levels.

The great majority of high schools in the US utilize one program model to serve their ELL populations with small variations depending on the capacity of individual schools and teachers. This model may be termed *sheltered instruction* (Krashen, 1982; 1985; 1991), *English immersion* or *structured immersion* (Baker, 1998; Cazden, 1992). It may even be referred to as *inclusion* (Harper & Platt, 1998), a term borrowed from

special education.[3] The terms for this model may differ, but the rationale behind them is the same; the most straightforward way to learn English is to be in an environment where one is constantly exposed to English (McLaughlin, 1992). Implementation varies from school to school; however in general, ELLs are placed in classes (both English as a Second Language or ESL, and core curriculum) where instruction occurs in English. ESL classes focus on the acquisition of English, while the focus of instruction in mainstream classes is on core content. In mainstream classes, English language learning and the learning of content are expected to occur simultaneously. Cornell (1995) and others (Anstrom, 1998; CTC, 1993; Fleishman & Hopstock, 1993; Macias et al, 1997) suggest that a majority of English language learners spend *most* of their time in mainstream classrooms where the responsibility for their instruction lies with mainstream teachers. Sheltered instruction is meant to signal some kind of accommodation for ELL needs, often through the use of simplified instructional language, vocabulary, or work assignments. We have few studies of what accommodations teachers actually make for these students. However, data suggest that most mainstream teachers need additional support to deliver appropriate instruction for their ELL students (Constantino, 1994; Gandara, 1997; Lucas, 1994; Macias et al, 1997; National Research Council, 1997).

Third, few studies have looked at mainstream teachers with respect to the ELLs in their classrooms, the typical setting in which they are educated. These few studies (Constantino, 1994; Harklau, 1999) have focused on what mainstream teachers lack

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[3] California has also begun to use the term SDAIE or specially designed academic instruction in English (Gandara, 1997) to refer to sheltered immersion classes in content areas.

compared to teachers with ESL or bilingual education backgrounds. We have little information about the kinds of resources and supports that exist and that teachers perceive to exist, that help or hinder their efforts to address the needs of their ELLs. Preliminary findings from a new study conducted by researchers at the UW for the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession suggest that:

- Less than half of teachers (45%) have curriculum materials appropriate for ELL students' needs;
- Only a third of teachers surveyed had access to instructional assistants who speak students' native language;
- While more than 60% of teachers have one or more ELLs in their classrooms, few teachers had participated in professional development directed specifically at working with these students. Of those who had:
    - 36% had participated in professional development on instructional strategies for ELLs
    - 30% had participated in professional development on assessment strategies for ELLs
    - 15% had participated in professional development on working with newcomers to the U.S.
- In addition, high school teachers surveyed who had participated in professional development focused on instructional (36%)or assessment (45%) strategies for ELLs found them "not very useful"(Elfers, Knapp & Plecki, 2005).

Consequently, though few studies document this context, this very recent study sheds some light on teacher perceptions within the state of Washington (the study site) concerning supports provided for them and their relative helpfulness.

Finally, a fourth gap exists in the research area of standards-based reform and its impact on the education of ELLs. Efforts to improve the educational system for all students utilized curricular or content standards as the basis for reform both in the

1990's as standards-based reform and more recently as the NCLB Act. The research done on these reforms in mainstream high schools and classrooms rarely address the needs of English Language Learners (McKeon, 1994). Researchers have just begun to look at how standards-based reform affects diverse populations. At the time of the study (1999-2000), a majority of states were attempting to reform their educational systems through the implementation of standards, assessments, and accountability or some combination of these elements followed by the federal NCLB which took these standards-based reforms to another level. Much of the pressure and responsibility for this kind of reform falls upon teachers, and when teachers' classes are composed of 5% to 15% ELLs, the reform pressures are even greater.

The typical mainstream high school teacher may not have the pedagogical tools to address the needs of ELLs as they relate to those standards and assessments (NCES, 1998). The English language learner adds unique challenges to the already complex endeavor of teaching to higher standards. Without some efforts to develop the pedagogical knowledge base of mainstream teachers with respect to the academic and language needs of their ELL students and to support these teachers in their endeavors, reform based on higher standards and assessments is not particularly promising for this student population (August, 1994; Chamot, 1992; Mckeon, 1994). As Cardenas (1991) stated early in the standards movement, "New standards must be accompanied by new strategies so that the extensive number of students who have failed under the old standards can succeed (p.28)." As the recent Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession report (Elfers, 2005) suggests, teachers may or may not have supports such as professional development, adapted or primary language materials and curricula,

advice or cooperation from experts, and resources (i.e., time, funds, and instructional staff) to help them address the educational and language development needs of their ELL students.

Clearly, we have few studies of the nature of supports available to mainstream teachers, the real-world programs available to high school ELLs, and the effect of standards and assessment reform on ELLs. This study addresses this gap by focusing on two typical high schools within one district, and specifically on the perceptions and practices of mainstream teachers of ELLs. However, teachers do not practice in a vacuum. Consequently the study will also focus on the support systems for teachers that exist at individual, departmental, school, and district levels within the context of a state undergoing educational reform based on standards and assessments. I will compare the conditions in the two schools and examine how they influence classroom teachers' thinking and practice. In addition, I will examine the policy context at the state, district and school level that creates these conditions. Consequently, I hope to answer the following questions:

- What are the structural and demographic conditions at school, district, and program levels that support or hinder these teachers in their efforts to meet the needs of ELLs?
- What do mainstream high school teachers perceive as the needs of ELLs and the challenges of teaching them?
- How do high school English teachers accommodate ELLs in their classes and what is the effect of standards-based reform on their accommodations?

- What affect do policies, reforms, and decisions made at the state, school, district, and program levels have on mainstream teachers' abilities to address the needs of ELLs?

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

There are three main areas of literature that build the research base for this study. First, because ELL students and their teachers do not exist in isolation, it is necessary to examine the body of literature which concerns the contextual factors that influence, or potentially influence mainstream teachers and their students. The second body of literature describes and examines the characteristics, needs, and challenges of high school ELLs. At the root of an investigation of teachers and their needs is an examination of the needs of the students they serve. Finally, I review the literature that describes the challenges for mainstream teachers in providing effective instruction for ELLs.

Policy Environment, and the Implications for ELLs

Teachers are situated in complex environments in which policies may influence them directly or indirectly by shaping: the structure or organization of their time; their curricular decisions; the nature of their responsibilities; and opportunities for their growth. Knapp (1997) labels this contextual factor the "policy environment," defined as, "the system of overlapping and often conflicting formal and informal policy components" that exist at several levels-- state, district, school, and classroom. Currently, a dominant feature of this policy environment is educational reform based on standards (McLaughlin & Shepard, 1993; Sykes & Plastrik, 1993). Standards-based reform strategies are being used in almost every state in the country. (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1998). As such, the policy environments of nearly every classroom, school, and district are influenced in some way by these reform efforts. In particular, I review the literature concerning the implementation of standards-based

reform as it relates to student populations who fall outside the mainstream, in this case ELLs. The policy environment, made up of the formal and informal policies (sometimes construed as standard operating procedures) that influence decisions at state, district, school, and classroom levels, plays a part in shaping and understanding teachers' work. For this study, it is necessary to review the policy literature that has the greatest chance of being linked to the work of mainstream teachers of ELLs.

At the time of the study, the most salient policy influence at all levels of the educational system and in most states in the country was standards-based reform and the assessments attached to it. Standards-based reform is a concept that manifests in many different policies throughout the levels of the educational system. Like many reforms and policies, this particular reform was written for all students in the educational system, but without specific deliberation of the implications for the inclusion of ELLs. ELL students are included and addressed by the reform, but consideration of the challenges of including them tended to be worked out only after issues arise. The focus of the few studies that have been conducted around ELLs and standards-based reform is around how schools, districts, and teachers construct their practice to bring ELLs up to the mandated standards.

Many (McKeon, 1994; National Research Council, 1997) predict dire consequences for ethnic minorities and students with disabilities, as well as ELLs, in the form of increasing already significant achievement gaps between these groups and those of the mainstream population. Some question the use of the term "mainstream" which has been used to denote white, middle-upper class students in the educational system who in the past *were* the majority or mainstream. Increasingly, the majority or

mainstream population is beginning to resemble those who used to lie outside the mainstream. McKeon (1994) construes the problem as "meeting common standards, (when it) is uncommonly difficult."(p.?)

National-Level Reform

First, it is necessary to briefly describe standards-based reform as a policy strategy to improve the educational system, and its implementation and influence on various levels of that system. Increasingly, states have initiated educational reform that includes a more systemic approach using several aligned policies (Smith & O'Day, 1990). These policies can focus on many areas, though current efforts are aimed at curriculum and assessment. Curriculum policies include those policies that intend to influence the general design of instruction with broad conceptions of the purposes, structure, and content. These include policies such as: instructional frameworks, standards, instructional materials, and, in some cases, the methods of instruction which may be built into a curriculum or framework or provide an orientation toward a particular pedagogy or philosophy. According to Hirsch (Hirsch et al., 1998), the recent use of frameworks, standards, and benchmarks has pervaded most state and national level efforts, thereby influencing the content of instruction (e.g., Goals 2000, Essential Academic Learning Requirements in Washington state). McLaughlin and Shepard (1993) and others (Sykes & Plastrik, 1993) label this type of reform "standards-based."

State-Level Reform

Many states have linked their versions of standards to assessments. Often these are tied to high stakes for students, teachers, and schools in the form of retention and promotion for students and monetary incentives and sanctions for teachers and schools.

Assessment policies provide a means of checking on the results of education and may act as visible targets for instruction (Cohen & Spillane, 1992). Assessment may serve a number of functions depending on the types of assessment utilized and the uses to which assessment scores are put. It may drive instruction and create a situation in which teachers "teach to the test" if accountability measures include sanctions and rewards (Cohen & Spillane, 1992; McLaughlin, 1991) or if assessments are used as a basis for "high stakes" decisions for student promotion, retention, and graduation. In the late 1980's, Popham (1987) touted assessment-driven instruction as "the most cost-effective way of improving the quality of public education" (p.679). More recently, his take has been more cautious and others warn that the content of traditional standardized measurement tools is not the goal of instruction, ultimately fragmenting and limiting curriculum content (Bracey, 1987; McLaughlin, 1991). McLaughlin (1991), Darling-Hammond and Falk (1997b), and others (Baker, 1992; Linn, 1994) have urged policymakers to consider alternative forms of assessment when using them to shape and measure instruction. Performance-based assessments in which students are asked to demonstrate their knowledge rather than just recall decontextualized facts and figures may guide instruction and work with curriculum frameworks to define the content, purpose, scope, and structure of instructional programs.

Recent reform efforts that utilize state curriculum frameworks, standards, and assessments are influencing instruction in a much more direct way than in the past (Darling-Hammond, 1997a; Hirsch et al.,1998). However, local autonomy is still a factor in the ways these policies are interpreted and implemented. State-level agencies do not have the manpower or resources to oversee or implement these policies, so they

delegate operations to the local level. The long-established trend of local control, in both schools and classrooms, and the contextual factors in each environment interact with policies to create curricular, instructional and assessment preparation that looks different from school to school and classroom to classroom. As Firestone (1989) notes, there is still a big distance between state or federal policymaking and practice. Many layers of decisions and interpretations lie between these levels and the classroom. Though federal and state roles have increased dramatically since this study was conducted and are felt more directly, there are still considerable differences to be found across states, districts, schools, and classrooms.

District

Districts tend to be cast in the role of policy implementor; however, Spillane (1992) argues that in interpreting and implementing state policy, districts are, in fact, making policy. Districts shape the opportunities that practitioners have to learn about instruction and state policy. They have much control over the kinds of influences that reach teachers through professional development opportunities and information flows from state and federal levels. Firestone (1989) places districts in a key role of governance in the US education system as the lever upon which difference is built into the system through their role as interpreters of local context and intersection of outside policies. Though stronger and perhaps clearer messages are being sent from state and federal agencies, local districts retain latitude in coping with these policies (Cohen & Spillane, 1992). Districts control many key policy strategies including professional development, curriculum guidelines, materials, recruitment and hiring of teachers, teacher evaluation and supervision, and many aspects of student assessment. They may

also make decisions about program design, structure and content for bilingual education, migrant education, and other educational programs.

School

School level policy may be determined by district policy; however, schools within a district may have very different work environments, and instruction may vary widely by school (and within schools) in a district. Contextual factors within a school ultimately affect whether policy shapes teachers' practice. The teacher has been termed the ultimate policymaker (McLaughlin, 1991). Individual contexts and capacities of teachers shape the ways in which they are influenced by directives from state, district, and school levels. Teachers receive advice about instruction on a continual basis, and from year to year they may receive contradictory messages both from their profession and from policy sources. Flexibility, commitment, motivation, experience, knowledge base, beliefs about teaching and learning, and instructional capacity are only some of the many factors that determine if a teacher is able or willing to incorporate the instructional guidance from other levels into practice.

Many of the new instructional policies depend upon a level of capacity that schools and teachers may not have, especially if one considers that mainstream teachers may lack the knowledge of instructional practice geared toward diverse learners. Some standards and alternative assessment systems require teachers to teach very differently than they have in the pasts, and require deeper levels of knowledge in content areas. Policies aimed at developing integrated content courses, collaborative teams of teachers, and team teaching require teachers to have developed shared norms for instruction. For example, the new state assessments in Washington require students to be able to

demonstrate their mathematical knowledge through written explanations rather than just computing or simply solving a problem. Math teachers, especially at the secondary level, have not typically been prepared to use writing within their math classrooms nor are English teachers prepared to help their students write in the realm of mathematics. If school or district policy does not translate this instructional need into professional development, then the capacity of teachers to implement the policy is limited.

Professional development is cited most often as the avenue of district or school support for teachers as they seek to address instructional challenges (August & Hakuta, 1998; Lucas, 1994; Minnicucci & Olsen, 1993; National Research Council, 1997). As such, the provision of professional development, the methods of implementation, funding, topics targeted, etc. can be conceived of as a significant tool of policy in a district or school. However, teacher development is not unidimensional; it can be approached in a variety of ways other than the traditional "one-shot" in-service workshop. In fact, most now agree that the in-service workshop is the least effective method of development. Corcoran (1995), Darling-Hammond (1992; 1995), Griffin (1994), McLaughlin and Oberman (1996), and others agree that effective professional development occurs over time with many opportunities afforded for practice and feedback. Collaboration and teacher networking is another method of teacher development that shows promise. Many agree (Constantino, 1994; Lockwood & Lucas, 1999; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990; Thomas & Collier, 1997) that with respect to ELLs in the classroom, the greatest knowledge a teacher can have beyond pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1989) is knowledge of language development.

Increasing Teacher Capacity

A few research projects have been conducted with the purpose of developing mainstream teacher capacity with respect to the needs of high school ELLs (Cameron, 1997; Jaramillo, 1998; Sakash & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995; and Uranga, 1995). Cameron (1997) documented the use of critical examination of classroom practice to foster teacher growth in a British secondary school. First, teachers' knowledge of second language development was enhanced through university-based seminars. Second, teacher practice was documented, analyzed and discussed by teachers and researchers who then developed new teaching strategies to support specific aspects of language learning.

Jaramillo (1998) documented one school's efforts to create immigrant-responsive schools through the sustained use of peer classroom observations and coaching. In this California high school, teachers initially looked to research and the models that other schools were using to serve immigrant students, creating a structural, curricular, and pedagogical model. Then, teacher practice was assessed through peer observations and the development of effective teaching strategies was addressed through peer coaching.

Sakash and Rodriguez-Brown (1995) documented a three-year project in Chicago that developed the capacity of mainstream teachers through greater collaboration and teamwork with bilingual/ESL teachers. Increased collaboration was achieved through weekly training sessions conducted by the researchers, and additional activities focused on staff needs identified by an initial needs-assessment conducted by the school staff.

Uranga (1995) documented a staff development model in a New York high school, that used methods similar to the Cameron and Jaramillo projects. Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond (1997) described promising school structures and practices for professional development of mainstream teachers and whole faculties such as the use of school-wide colloquia and seminars (for faculty), interdisciplinary team teaching, cognitive coaching, and small group collaborative work; however, as with much of the literature, the focus was mainly at the elementary level and the studies were mainly descriptive in nature and did not examine the effects on student learning.

Another project (CAL, 1999), focused on the secondary level and was meant to improve the integration of language and content instruction in science and mathematics through collaboration between ESL teachers, content-area teachers, and administrators, as well as extended learning opportunities through institutes, reflective journals, mentoring, and visits with other project schools. Again, the study was mainly descriptive and did not include an examination of the effects of the intervention on student learning.

In order to understand the opportunities and systems that support mainstream teachers in their instruction of mainstream students and ELLs, it is necessary to understand the policies at these various layers. The context of schools is complex; policies created far from the classroom do influence the resources, curriculum, preparation of the teacher, student requirements, and a host of other elements that make up a school. These policies are mediated at the district level, at the school level, and through individual teachers. The most salient feature of many states' policy environments at the moment is standards-based reform. The intention of this reform

strategy, as previously discussed, is to shape curriculum and teacher practice. This is particularly challenging for teachers with diverse learners in their classrooms. The next section concerns literature focused on standards-based reform and its implications for ELLs.

Standards-based Education Reform and ELL.

As much as policy implementation is not a simple, direct process, the policies written for general education reform do not affect populations being served by special programs in simple or direct ways. Several studies have explored the effects of reform on ELL programs and students (Anstrom, 1996; McLeod, 1996; Nelson, 1996; Olsen, 1995), though most of these have focused on district and school level reform and restructuring and most have been conducted by ELL experts rather than policy researchers.

The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education published and sponsored Anstrom's (1996) exploration of the implications of federal and state efforts at reform for ELLs. She emphasized that policymakers and practitioners must incorporate consideration of the heterogenous nature of the American student body in the three major areas of education: curriculum, teacher knowledge, and assessment. As August, et al. (1994) noted:

> Systemic reform holds promise for improving instruction and learning for all students, including LEP students. But such an outcome is not a foregone conclusion. Thus far the reform movement has generally sidestepped the particular conditions, needs, and strengths of LEP children. Difficult issues remain to be addressed in many areas including, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and leadership.
> In a study of California high schools and their efforts in reform, Olsen (1995)

noted that ELL issues do not tend to be considered when mainstream reform and

research-related practice is being implemented. In some cases, when policies for mainstream reform were implemented, programs for ELLs were eroded or shut down. The use of content standards and curricular frameworks emphasizes the need for common goals at the school level. ELLs may have these same academic goals, but they also have a goal of English acquisition not shared by the mainstream population. Anstrom (1996) notes the need to incorporate what research and practice say about how ELLs learn and how content is most effectively taught into the content standards. At the least, supplemental standards in English as a second language should be included in state frameworks. If ELL goals are not considered and incorporated into mainstream goals, including these students in the reform effort is made difficult. Much of the research on effective ELL programs insists that comprehensive programs that are incorporated within the mainstream education structure ensure greater equity in educational opportunity (Berman et al., 1995; Chamot, 1994; Lucas, 1994; McLeod, 1996; Olsen, 1995). Inclusive goals are the first step toward creating inclusive programs.

As McLeod (1996) found in a study of exemplary schools serving ELLs, internal impetus in individual schools drove the creation of common goals that included the development of English proficiency. Schools driven by compliance and external factors do not tend to be inclusive or proactive in their development of a school vision or services for ELLs. Ima (1995) noticed a pattern of "backing into" a policy of submersion (a program model in which ELLs are placed in mainstream classes and must "sink or swim" without either instructional or language supports for becoming English proficient) in schools with very small populations of any one non-English

speaking language group. In contrast, exemplary schools served ELLs in ways "neither conceptually nor physically separate from the rest of the school"(McLeod, 1996, p.6) where supports were built into their placement to scaffold their instruction in both English and academic content.

While the first element of the standards-based reform strategy is content standards, the second element is assessment. It is important to note that there are two types of assessment that are addressed in the literature concerning ELLs: assessment of their educational achievement, and assessment of their language proficiency in English. This study and this review remain focused on achievement assessments rather than language proficiency measures. Proficiency measures are mainly used to determine eligibility and exit of ELLs for ESL or bilingual services. Achievement assessment of ELLs is problematic for several reasons. First, it is difficult to accurately assess an ELL student's knowledge of content when the assessment is conducted in English. While some might suggest simply translating assessments into a student's primary language, this is impractical for two reasons: the enormous cost of translating a multitude of tests into the multiple languages present in the K-12 system, and the existence of cultural bias or knowledge within test items that do not translate into other languages. An example provided by one of the study teachers of the latter was an essay question included in the statewide assessment that asked students to provide an argument either for or against the state policy regarding the hunting of whales by the Makah Indian tribe who had been given an exemption to the international ban on hunting whales. Within the state, this was a fairly well-known controversy, however her ELL students from Somalia and Eritrea had no knowledge of the issue and in fact had no prior knowledge

of the existence of whales. In many of the assessments included in this reform, there is the added problem of producing a response that requires a high degree of English literacy, consequently, though a student might have enough English proficiency to understand the test item, he may not have the degree of proficiency to respond successfully.

Much has been written suggesting more equitable assessment of ELLs (Abedi; 2002; French, 1992; Hernandez, 1994; LaCelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994; NCBE, 1997; Rivera et al, 1997; Tannenbaum, 1996); however less research has been done in this area beyond surveys of accommodations and modifications (Rivera et al., 1997) and postulations about the use of alternative assessments. Alternative assessments have been suggested by many (Abedi, 2002; LaCelle-Peterson, 1994; Rivera et al., 1997; Linn, 1994; Baker, 1992). However essay and extended response formats included in some tests demand a high level of language proficiency which may detrimentally affect ELL performance on content knowledge assessments (Linn & Baker, 1996). At the time of the study, of the states that had systemic reform assessments, only Texas has developed a native language version of their statewide assessment. Accommodations and modifications utilized in the rest of the states do little more than allow directions to be read to students in English (rather than have the student alone read them), or increase the time allowed for completing assessments.

While inclusion of ELLs in statewide assessments and curricular reform is problematic, so too is a policy of exemption which can further marginalize the population. A particular phenomenon occurs in many ELL programs and schools that now must include ELLs where there was an historical precedent of exemption. Many

state and school level policymakers and implementors do not know how to include ELLs so they delegate decisions to the local level, perpetuating inconsistency and variability in programs. Schools are left to figure out how to include or serve ELLs without clear direction from the state or federal level (Olsen, 1995; Sayers, 1996). This occurs across both the curricular and assessment aspects of systemic reform. This exemption phenomena is a complex issue when it comes to assessment. In the past, many schools exempted ELLs in an effort to minimize the potential emotional damage of being included in an assessment that demands a high level of English proficiency. However, by not including ELLs, states, districts, and schools had little data by which to measure progress or to develop appropriate future modifications. Historically, there has been a severe lack of data concerning ELLs and programs and the relative rate of academic progress and second language acquisition across program models (Gandara & Merino, 1993). Olsen (1995) and Rumbaut (1995) suggested including ELLs in assessments but tracking educational outcomes both by ethnicity and by language status. Traditionally, student performance may be disaggregated by ethnicity, but ELL scores are masked by being included in categories that also include native-born American students (e.g., East Asian includes Chinese immigrants and Americans of Chinese decent). Once these data have been gathered, appropriate measures toward the development of new modifications and native language assessments may begin. Though the implementation and consequences of the more recent No Child Left Behind Act have been problematic, the data being generated due to the disaggregation of results by ELL status as well as by ethnic groups is a step in the right direction.

Thus far, the literature has been more broadly focused on studies of education reform and its implications for ELLs, how standards and assessments may affect ELLs. The one study that actually documents the implementation of standards and implications for secondary ELLs (Clair et al., 1998) was designed to both document the implementation of standards and to assist schools and the district in designing professional development to enhance their ability to support standards-based instruction. Their initial findings are consistent with the literature previously discussed concerning the educational challenges of ELLs, the needs of teachers of ELLS, and the kinds of supports that provide for these needs including collaboration between bilingual/ESL and mainstream teachers and university/school partnerships.

Though the Clair et al. (1998) study is the only one to directly address the implications of standards-based reform for ELLs at the secondary level, this should not be taken as an indication of the small size of this problem. As stated earlier, the population of secondary ELLs is growing faster than the capacity of teachers in US schools to serve their needs. In addition, standards-based reform is the norm across the nation. The educational community is scrambling to address the needs of learners in all of its classrooms; there is concern over whether most mainstream students will be able to reach the standards and perform well on the assessments. However, researchers and educators must also pay attention to the growing number of diverse learners and their needs. The paucity of the research literature available is evident in this review. The National Research Council (1997) created a document that laid out an ambitious research agenda to address the gaps in knowledge concerning ELLs and their education. This study is one attempt to address some of those gaps.

In the next section of the literature review, I move closer to the classroom. First, I review research related to the characteristics and needs of secondary ELLs. This points to what mainstream teachers need to consider in their work with ELL students. Then, I review the literature concerning the challenges and effective instructional strategies of mainstream teachers as they address the needs of their ELL students.

Characteristics and Needs of High School English Language Learners

Much of the research, practice, and policy related to immigrant and ELL student education has been directed at the elementary level. The assumption is that immigrant children arrive when they are young. As Garcia noted (1992), "the lower the grade level of a group of students, the more concern teachers and administrators express about being fair and unbiased." This does not bode well for the older student. According to the Census Bureau (1994), half of the foreign-born children in the United States are between the ages of 14 and 18. Additionally, they admit that this is probably an undercounted number because many immigrants are not included due to a lack of a permanent address, illegal status, etc. Though the Bilingual Education Act was passed in 1968, the US Department of Education found it necessary to define the characteristics of secondary language minority and limited English proficient youth in a report written in 1993 (Special Issues Analysis Center, 1993). The report was a first step in identifying the population and their needs. The following section will describe characteristics of high school ELLs that create specific needs and challenges for secondary schools and teachers.

Characteristics

The education of older ELL students is complicated by a number of factors beyond the obvious language challenges. These can be divided into three broad categories: (1) diversity, (2) time, and (3) economics. These factors are not clearly delineated; each is compounded and complicated by the other. For example, the economic factor, usually characterized by family poverty and the need for high school ELLs to work, also adds to time pressures on students whose time for learning (e.g., homework, studying) is decreased. However, to clearly present the nature of these students' needs, I will discuss each one separately.

Diversity

Diversity may provide the greatest challenge to classroom teachers, as well as to every level of the educational system. ELL students are not a homogenous group. They are extremely diverse in terms of their needs, experiences, and abilities. A few factors predominate: education level, literacy level, primary language, and age. Rumbaut (1994) argues that immigrants entering the United States today include the most educated groups and the least educated groups, the groups with the lowest poverty rates and the groups with the highest poverty rates. Some may come from countries with comparable school systems and have content knowledge at grade level, thus they primarily need to develop English proficiency. On the other hand, others may have come from rural areas in Asia, Africa, or Central America and have had little or no formal schooling. They may be virtually illiterate and unfamiliar with the social and cultural norms of schooling. Haverson and Haynes (1982) identify four categories of

native language proficiency and literacy that are generally used to characterize students; the fifth category has been added more recently by others:

> *Nonliterate*: Learners who do not have literacy skills in their native language but who speak a language for which there is a written form.
> *Preliterate*: Learners who come from sociocultural groups without traditionally written languages.
> *Semiliterate*: Learners who have 3 to 4 years of formal schooling but have minimal literacy skills in a language. They have initial knowledge of a writing system including the names of the letters and can recognize some common (written) words.
> *Literate in a non-Roman alphabet or other writing system*: Learners who are literate in their native language but have to learn a new writing system (p.3).
> *Literate in a Roman alphabet*: Learners who are literate in their native language but have to learn English (Simich-Dudgeon, 1989, p.4).

Creating an academic program that provides instruction and curriculum for emergent literacy at the one end and high school level academics at the other, within the same high school building, is extremely challenging.

Immigrants come from a wide variety of countries with very diverse languages and cultural norms; for example, the top ten countries of origin according to the Census Bureau (1994) were Mexico, China, Vietnam, Italy, the Philippines, Korea, El Salvador, India, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica. Regional variations across the United States contribute to complicated demographic differences in providing services. In Washington state, for example, the six primary language groups served in its transitional bilingual program at the time of the study (OSPI, 1997) were Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Cambodian, Korean, and Ukrainian, but up to 100 other languages were represented in its programs. California has seen a large shift in its migrant population, from one dominated by Spanish speaking immigrants to concentrations of immigrants from Asian countries. When students within one program

or school speak a wide variety of languages, finding materials and personnel (e.g. interpreters, bilingual teachers) is challenging (and expensive). The diversity of academic and linguistic backgrounds and corresponding needs makes the development and implementation of programs very difficult. Demographic shifts create a dynamic environment that cannot be served by static programs.

Students entering secondary schools may also vary widely in age; due to inconsistencies in documentation across countries and the sometimes immediate flight from a country, students may enroll in high schools as young as 11 or 12 and as old as 25 dcpcnding on thcir appcarancc. Disparitics in agc and cultural cxpcctations rcsult in a large diversity of maturation levels and behaviors in classrooms.

Finally, another element of diversity that affects ELLs and provides indirect challenges to the educational system is the diverse sociocultural experiences of students. Some have had little exposure to a literate society; most have come from primarily homogenous societies very different from the heterogeneous populations of schools and communities in America. Olsen (1995), Valdez (1998), and others have written about the clash of cultures that can occur both within the ELL population and between the mainstream school culture and ELL students' cultures. In addition to experiencing culture shock, some students come to the United States seeking refuge or asylum from war, political oppression, and other traumatic experiences with associated emotional, physical, and social service needs

Time

Time could be categorized as a factor that puts pressure on the system and students, rather than being a factor in itself. However, there are several ways in which

time, or rather a lack of it, becomes a problem for English language learners. This can be broken down into two compounding issues: the amount of time it takes to learn English at the level of proficiency necessary for academic success, and the limited amount of time that ELLs who enter the educational system as high school students have to learn. As Collier (1992) and others (Cummins & McNeely, 1987) agree, even for the most advantaged student, it typically takes four to twelve years of second language development to reach deep academic proficiency in English. At the high school level, the language demands in both oral communication, termed by researchers as basic interpersonal communication skills, or BICS, and in cognitive-academic language proficiency, or CALP (Collier, 1992; Krashen & Biber, 1988), are much more intensive than at the elementary level[4]. However, the secondary student must reach this proficiency within a short time frame. As Collier (1992) found, the academic and cognitive demands on curriculum increase rapidly with each succeeding year. High school teachers depend on a level of prior knowledge developed in preceding grade levels upon which to build new content knowledge and skills. Immigrants entering high

[4] Cummins (1984) and others (Edelsky, 1981; Edelsky et al., 1983; Faltis, 1994) have pointed to some problems with the original conception of BICS and CALP developed around 1980. The CALP construct was first defined as "those aspects of language proficiency which are closely related to the development of literacy skills in L1 (the student's first or primary language) and L2 (in this context, English),"(Cummins, 1980, p.177) and "knowing how to process decontextualized language" (Cummins, 1979, p.242). At that time Cummins (1979) definition of CALP was operationalized as the ability to perform well on standardized reading and other language-based achievement tests prompting critics to characterize CALP as a fancy term for "out of context, irrelevant instructional nonsense" (Edelsky, 1983, p.9) or SIN (skill in instructional nonsense) (Edelsky, 1991). The original construct was also problematic because BICS, being distinct from CALP, was seen as unrelated to language and literacy development. These constructs, however, continue to be used by educators and researchers to distinguish the two categories of language.

school without this knowledge must quickly build this knowledge base *and* the English skills to translate. Students need to fulfill graduation requirements within a short time frame, fill academic gaps, and learn English. In addition, some of these students need to learn basic literacy skills. Secada (1991) and Thomas (1992) argue that no matter how rapidly these students with limited prior education progress, the target toward which they are aiming is always moving. Their English-speaking peers are also moving ahead in subject matter knowledge and skills, increasing the distance between them. This makes inclusion of ELLs in core curriculum classes more difficult.

Time in school for some ELL students is also limited by the transient nature of some immigrant families. The low status jobs available to recently arrived immigrants with little education or English proficiency may require many moves with corresponding school absences. The limited amount of time for high school ELLs is compounded by the need for increased instructional time. This challenge has been a focus of much of the research in second language acquisition (Collier, 1992; Cummins, 1992; Krashen & Biber, 1988; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990; Thomas, 1992). Most students need five to seven or more years of instruction in a second language to reach even a moderate level of success in an academic curriculum taught in a second language (Chamot, 1994; Collier, 1992; Cummins, 1984, 1992). Instructional time, and the restructuring and reallocation of it in traditional programs and schedules is a major factor in the success of ELLs and an element of effective and exemplary programs and practices (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990).

Though the amount of time that ELLs are in the US is not a factor under the control of educators or policymakers, the likelihood of high school graduation and

success is increased greatly by the number of years an immigrant has been in the United States, even at the highly capable or gifted level of ability (Duran & Weffer, 1992). In a study of highly capable immigrant students, Duran and Weffer (1992) found that the years of residence in the United States strongly affected levels of reading, math, science, and social studies achievement.

Economics

Compounding the problem of time is economics. Economics, like time, may also put pressure on the system rather than acting as a factor in itself. Economic pressures on immigrant families and their high school students decrease the amount of time that high school ELLs can spend developing academic knowledge, skills and language proficiency. Most immigrant families move to the United States for economic reasons, wanting to better their quality of life. High school age ELLs may have to work to support themselves (many are separated from their families or live with extended family), to contribute to their families, or to send money to family members in the home country (Dentler & Hafner, 1997; Minicucci & Olsen, 1993; Rong & Pressle, 1998). Some may not have jobs but must take responsibility for younger siblings while parents work several jobs. This takes time away from homework and may contribute to school absences. In rural, agrarian areas, students may work seasonal jobs and incur absences of several weeks at a time. Depending on school attendance policies, this may result in a loss of credit, severely hampering the possibility of completing required course work for graduation in the time allotted. If one considers the pressures and challenges outside and inside of school, it is no surprise that many drop out of school or never enroll (NCES, 1996). Rong and Pressle (1998) list the drop-out rate as 26% for foreign-born

students at age 18, and at about 18% for students at age 17. The calculation of this rate is complicated, however, by the number of students who never enroll and by the students who leave high school for other or unknown reasons. For example, in the state of Washington (OSPI, 1997), 1,043 students served by transitional bilingual programs [out of approximately 56,000 K-12 ELLs (NCBE, 1998)] are listed as drop-outs, but 5,910 left for unknown reasons and are not part of the drop-out category. For this reason, it is speculated that this drop-out figure is underestimated. Many more may never "drop-in" (Vernez & Abrahamse, 1996).

Thus far, this section has described the characteristics of the high school ELL population. The following section is concerned with the needs of ELLs based on these characteristics, especially those needs that are served by the educational system.

Educational Needs

The characteristics of high school ELLs are diverse and consequently lead to a wide range of needs. As Chamot (1994) argues, while these needs are not limited to academics, the role of academic success in determining options and future careers is significant; consequently, these are the prioritized needs. Consequently, the educational needs of high school ELLs can be divided into three categories,: (1) English language development, (2) subject matter knowledge and skills, and (3) learning strategies.

English language development

The primary need for ELLs is obviously English language development, if only for survival in this country. However, as posited by Vygotsky (1962), language development is also important because of the critical role of language in learning and thinking. It is crucial to both social interaction and intellectual growth. Younger

English language learners and native English speakers gradually build their academic language skills used for learning in school. They have developed an array of academic language skills and functions, including reading both narrative and expository text, writing in different content areas, and using language to inform, explain, analyze, classify, and evaluate what is being studied in school. Secondary teachers expect that most of their students will be able to use language functionally for learning in different subject areas (Chamot, 1994). Many ELLs who enter school at the secondary level have only begun to acquire the first levels of social communication in English and may not have developed academic language, concepts, or literacy skills in their native language.

Subject matter knowledge and skills

Another major need for secondary ELLs is subject matter knowledge and skills (Gandara, 1997). The diverse array of prior academic knowledge that ELLs possess and the resulting gaps in this knowledge require high schools to build both grade level content knowledge and skills and the prior knowledge that is the basis for that new knowledge. ELLs who have good educational backgrounds typically do well in subjects such as math and science which share curricular features across international lines (Chamot, 1994). However, the linguistic demands of subjects such as social studies and literature make these subjects particularly difficult. Prior knowledge of the American culture also plays a part in the structure of curriculum and learning in these content areas. For example, high school teachers build instruction and utilize materials based upon prior cultural knowledge obtained implicitly through living in the culture and explicitly in the educational system (Olsen, 1996).

Learning strategies

Finally, ELLs need to develop effective learning strategies for both content and language (Chamot, 1994; Lucas, 1994; Minicucci & Olsen, 1992). Depending on their academic backgrounds, students may not have had any experience with the process of learning in schools, or they may have experienced very different instructional techniques (often focusing on rote memorization and recitation). Of course, many native English-speaking students also lack these skills, but the sheer magnitude of content and language knowledge and skills that must be acquired by ELLs requires maximum efficacy. The standards-based reform movement with its focus on higher order thinking skills and performance assessments (e.g., performance-based assessment, portfolios), increases the demands on both expressive and receptive language.

This is obviously a partial list of needs. ELLs may have many socio-emotional needs due to the traumas of war, family separation, torture, and a host of other experiences, in addition to the typical social service and emotional needs of adolescents. They may have legal worries due to their status as citizens. They may be afraid to remain in one place for long periods of time or to offer information that may alert the authorities as to their status. The rights of illegal aliens are few; anecdotal evidence of students being detained by Immigration officers while on school field trips increases student stress over the possibility of displacement and arrest.

In sum, high school ELLs are a diverse group with a variety of needs, the foremost of which are to learn English and have access to the core curriculum so they may successfully complete their education. All of this must be accomplished in a very short time, which may be complicated with legal and economic pressures, a lack of

basic academic and literacy skills, and the process of acculturation. As a result, teachers face a tremendously challenging task of providing appropriate instruction.

Challenges and instructional strategies of mainstream teachers of ELLs

The next logical step after identifying the characteristics and educational needs of English language learners is to identify the challenges faced by their mainstream teachers. What classroom strategies, pedagogical skills, and knowledge do they require to successfully address the needs of English language learners? What does the literature say about the preparation and ongoing development of these mainstream teachers? What kind of supports do they need? What conditions exist? Because this study focuses on teachers who are already in the field, rather than pre-service teachers or new teachers, this section includes a review of literature concerning the challenges of practicing mainstream teachers of English language learners at the secondary level.

Challenges

English immersion is most often chosen as the method for instruction of ELLs for practical reasons—the resources required for native language instruction can be beyond many district budgets and capacity. Some also point to the advantage of immersion because of the greater opportunities for interaction in English afforded to ELLs in mainstream classrooms (Baker, 1998). The argument for immersion is based on theories and studies that seem to be sound, namely that complex learning develops from social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978) and that interaction with a high level of English gives language learners increased opportunities to create language output (Swain, 1985). It allows ELLs to practice components of the language, increasing the likelihood of automaticity (McLaughlin, 1987); to negotiate meaning (Pica, 1994); and to acquire

the conventions of English and practice academic communicative skills (Hall, 1993). Green and Harker (1982) argue that students learn the social and communicative skills they need to gain access to academic content as they learn that content. However, it should be noted that though there are some advantages to educating ELLs in immersion classrooms, most in the field agree that in the best of circumstances, ELL students develop their English language and content knowledge best with instruction in their primary language. The reality of most districts, where students come from multiple language backgrounds and bilingual teachers are few and far between, is that English immersion is the most often used method of educating ELL students.

Few studies (Green; 1992; Harklau, 1994; Schinke-Llano, 1983) have focused on ELLs in mainstream classrooms at the secondary level; however, those few studies have identified several areas of concern regarding the English language learner. These concerns are echoed by researchers who have been focused on ELLs in ESL programs (Lucas, 1990; 1993) and newcomer magnet programs (Olsen, 1996; 1992) but also have been observed in ELL students within mainstream classes.

The reality of mainstream high school classroom interactions has not been found to foster the high level of English acquisition promised by English immersion proponents who claim that being immersed in an English only classroom will force ELL students to speak and understand English. Green (1992), Schinke-Llano (1983), and Olsen (1996; 1992) claim that ELLs interact significantly less than their English Proficient classmates. These studies found teachers used fewer questions with ELLs and talked to them more about classroom management than content. Teachers in these

studies (Green, 1992; Schinke-Llano, 1983; and Verplaetse, 1998) tended to use more directives, less open-ended questions, and fewer higher level questions with their ELLs. Verplaetse (1998) conducted a discourse analysis of three secondary content teachers and their classroom interactions with English Proficient (EP) and LEP students. The teachers were chosen because of their highly interactive teaching styles and their sensitivity to the needs of LEP students. Verplaetse found that these teachers unwittingly limited ELLs' opportunities to interact verbally in the classroom. For example, she found that mainstream teachers tended to underestimate the language competency of students, did not leave enough wait time between questions (allowing them to construct an answer) (Cazden, 1988), and wanted to protect ELLs from embarrassment (which was postulated as giving an incorrect response and being corrected in front of their peers). In the latter case, this led teachers to finish sentences for ELLs and to hold off on higher level or harder questions. Hatch (1992) refers to this phenomena as a "benevolent conspiracy" which reduces ELL opportunities to interact in mainstream classes. Constantino (1994), in her study comparing mainstream teachers and ESL teachers, agreed with Verplaetse (1998) and documented this lack of knowledge of language acquisition and the consequences that it can have in a mainstream classroom with ELLs.

Harklau (1999) examined both mainstream and ESL classrooms in American high schools in light of the research examining the nature of participation structures and classroom activities in typical mainstream classes. She and others (Applebee, 1981; Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; Sirotnik, 1983; Sizer, 1984) concluded that there is an "abundance" of teacher talk in high school classrooms. Much of the discussion

observed by Harklau (1999) did not allow for the high level of student interaction needed for successful structured English immersion. She noted that discussion tended to be equal parts lecture and initiation-reply-evaluation or IRE (Mehan, 1979). Harklau did contend that there was a high level of language input from the teacher which served as authentic communication (Krashen, 1981), however she determined (through queries of students) that much of it was incomprehensible to ELLs because it was aimed at the English-speaking students in the class. Some teachers' talk also included puns or asides that made comprehension even more difficult for ELLs.

Harklau cited other research that pointed to the first-language socialization patterns of ELLs that may render teacher-directed participation structures relatively ineffective as a means of engaging students in learning (Heath, 1986; Trueba, Guthrie, & Au, 1981; Wong Fillmore, 1985). In one study, Park (1999) demonstrated this mismatch in socialization through an examination of learning preferences of students from five countries (Armenia, Laos, Vietnam, Korea, and Mexico). She found that not only did the learning preferences of the students not match the teaching style used in the classroom, but student preferences differed by cultural background.

Harklau (1999) and others (Anstrom, 1998; Cameron, 1998; Verplaetse, 1998) also noted that opportunities for ELL "output" (Swain, 1985) are limited by a number of factors in the mainstream classroom. Output is defined as the language that students produce, a chance for negotiating meaning and practicing. The size of the mainstream class hampers opportunities (Knott, 1987) giving learners only a 1 in 25 or 30 chance of being designated by the teacher to respond. ESL classrooms, on the other hand, tend to be limited to approximately 15 students. Harklau (1999) also noted the lower level of

response expected by teachers, since they tended to ask questions with word or phrase level responses rather than questions that required authentic negotiation of meaning.

Another aspect of mainstream classes that provides limited opportunities for ELL learning is the heavy reliance on written language (Adamson, 1993; Cumins & Swain, 1986; Saville-Troike, 1984). Virtually every activity in high school classrooms involves literacy. This can be an advantage for ELLs, in that print is reviewable at their own pace and proficiency level. Print can also be a rich source of academic vocabulary. However, the types of literacy events and authenticity of interactions with print vary considerably with the content area. Constantino (1994) and Harklau (1999) found that a large part of instruction that was missing for ELLs in mainstream classes was explicit instruction on linguistic form. Mainstream classes seldom provided appropriate occasions for feedback on pronunciation or grammar in spoken interaction. Feedback on written language (as well as explicit instruction) was also erratic. Some mainstream teachers focused on correcting grammatical errors while others focused on content. Grammar instruction was mainly intended to formalize and label intuitions that English proficient students were already expected to possess. Grammatical rules and principles did not tend to be provided, though they are relied upon by ELLs in lieu of those intuitions. This reliance on written language also creates extreme problems for ELLs who lack basic skills in reading and writing.

Cameron (1998) also identified the challenges and ways that mainstream teachers are not meeting ELL language and academic needs in her report of a study done in a British secondary school. The school was involved in a partnership with a university-based School of Education to address this concern. The researcher

conducted interviews and classroom observations to determine several "sites of action" for teacher development. She identified the following: ELLs were not provided with or convinced of a clear purpose for listening; teacher talk did not always make it clear when instructions were coming or help learners distinguish instruction from other input; instructions were sometimes entirely verbal; learners developed coping strategies which involved paying attention only in certain circumstances. For example, instructions that were imbedded in ongoing talk made it difficult for an ELL student to determine important talk from peripheral, and when pupils expressed confusion, the teacher repeated instructions or broke them down into more helpful stages. This latter scenario resulted in selective attention; in which students stopped listening because they knew that later they could ask for clarification.

Anstrom (1999; 1998a; 1998b) provided a good synthesis of the literature on the challenges faced by secondary mainstream teachers in language arts, social studies, and science. She identified several of these challenges, including adapting mainstream lessons and materials; assessing and grading ELLs; distinguishing between language difficulties and learning problems; incorporating ESL methods in the mainstream classroom; making academic English more comprehensible; managing multi-language and level classrooms and interactions between ELLs and their English-speaking peers. Harper and Platt (1998) boiled down concerns for mainstream teachers and their instruction of ELLs to three important areas: comprehensible instruction, opportunities for participation and interaction, and appropriate curriculum.

The studies completed thus far have done much to identify the challenges of mainstream teachers of ELLs at the secondary level. These identified needs will prove

particularly useful in developing the instruments for this study. The purpose of this study, however, is to go beyond a description of these needs to a description of the efforts of teachers and schools to address these challenges. In order to identify these efforts, it seems necessary to review the literature concerning effective instructional strategies for ELLs, especially by teachers in the mainstream classroom.

Many of the descriptive studies of exemplary programs have noted the use of instructional strategies that may already be used in mainstream classrooms: cooperative learning (Crandall, 1992; Lucas, 1994), task-based or experiential learning (Rosebery, Warren & Conant, 1992), and holistic language arts strategies (i.e., dialogue journals, reading response journals, process-based writing, and language experience stories) (Blanton, 1992; Crandall, 1992). Though the use of these strategies is much more widespread in elementary mainstream classrooms, some secondary teachers have begun to incorporate these methods into their classes rather than rely on traditional lecture and IRE (Inquiry-Response-Evaluate) formats.

Instructional strategies

Instructional strategies that have been identified for mainstream teachers of ELLs appear to differ in some ways based on content area (Anstrom, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c; Garcia, 1992; Lucas, 1994). It appears to be important to examine the strategies used by mainstream teachers of ELLs across and between subject areas. Some studies have begun to focus on teachers in specific content areas as they work with ELLs. Fradd and Lee (1999) for example, examined teachers' roles in promoting scientific inquiry with ELLs. The researchers found that scientific inquiry in classrooms containing ELLs is much more challenging, due to the limited capacity of students to

engage in discussions with their peers and teacher, and the lack of depth of subject matter knowledge of the teachers assigned to ELLs. They found two competing models of instructional interaction, teacher-as-facilitator, and teacher-as-knowledge-transmitter. Finally, Fradd and Lee (1999) stated that much of the literature in science education indicates alternative and sometimes opposing instructional approaches, thus more inquiry is needed to determine the effectiveness of these approaches.

Sanders and Goldenberg (1999) investigated the effects of instructional conversations and literature logs on story comprehension and thematic understanding, where the teacher helps students study literature in relationship to their own experiences and a central theme, through ongoing discussion (instructional conversation), writing activities, and reading. The researchers found that these methods resulted in significantly higher levels of both interpretive and factual story comprehension for students of all language levels, but especially for students with more limited proficiency in English.

Corasaniti, Dale, and Cuevas (1992) studied ELLs and their difficulties with mathematics instruction in the US, suggesting explicit instruction in the translation of mathematical syntax to linguistic statements, among other things. It should be noted that much of the remaining literature concerning instructional strategies is not based on research per se. Many of the references to particular strategies are based on anecdotal data, instructional guides, and classroom experiences (Chamot, 1998; Echevarria, 1998; Fathman et al, 1992).

Harklau (1999) lists some additional classroom strategies that mainstream teachers can use to adjust their speech to make it more comprehensible to their ELLs

based on her study of mainstream high school and ESL classes. Reducing the speed or complexity of teacher talk may help. Harklau also cited other researchers in the field (Chaudron, 1988, Hatch, 1983, Wong Fillmore, 1985) who suggested increasing repetition and pausing or contextualizing abstract concepts through the use of nonverbal cues such as pictures, demonstrations, or gestures to increase ELL comprehension. Finally, Harklau (1999) emphasized the need for flexibility in course curriculum and instruction on the part of the teacher. The ESL teachers she studied responded to this need for flexibility by developing a spiral syllabus and unit-based approach to curriculum that could be adjusted up or down or supplemented, depending on the needs of the class. The challenge of planning a flexible curriculum to meet contextual needs is certainly significant. However, a number of teacher development programs and projects addressing these concerns have been documented. Some involve collaboration with the resources and expertise that exist within schools, while others draw upon outside sources for teacher development.

Summary

To summarize, this review of the literature reveals gaps in the research that lead to the major reasons for pursuing this study. First, the majority of research concerning ELLs and their education has been conducted at the elementary level. Though there have been a few studies in high schools, they have only begun to describe the educational practices of mainstream teachers teaching ELLs in their classrooms and have tended to look mainly at professional learning opportunities as a support for their teaching. Second, the majority of studies that have been done have focused on exemplary programs and models (e.g., bilingual programs and two-way immersion

programs[5]), used in isolated cases and regional pockets of the US. The majority of studies done thus far do not speak to the typical situation in US schools which include a diverse population of English language learners and a varying capacity of schools to meet their needs. Most studies have occurred in states with high concentrations of ELLs (CA, TX, and FL) from one language group (Spanish). There are growing numbers of ELLs in states that have not typically housed these students and their families. Third, of the research focusing on teachers, few studies have examined mainstream teachers and ELLs; the majority have observed ESL and bilingual education teachers who have the pedagogical background and training to address ELL educational and language acquisition needs. The studies of exemplary programs do not describe the typical educational situation for the high school English language learner, nor do they describe the typical situation for the majority of teachers of ELLs. According to a descriptive study done in 1993 (Fleischman & Hopstock), 66 percent of teachers serving ELLs were mainstream teachers, and 18 percent were mainstream classroom teachers serving these students primarily in the mainstream without ESL or primary language support. Many researchers in the field (Faltis & Arias, 1993; NCBE, 1993; National Research Council, 1997) have called attention to the need for further study of both secondary ELL programs, and mainstream teachers of ELLs. Finally, few studies have documented the impacts of standards-based reform on the education of ELLs.

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[5] Two way or dual immersion refers to programs that are considered "additive" in nature. They include both ELLs and students from the mainstream culture. Instruction occurs in two languages, providing the opportunity for mainstream students to become proficient in a second language, and ELLs to maintain proficiency in their primary language and gain proficiency in English as well.

This study focuses on the typical: the typical state, pursuing typical education reform based on standards and assessments that promise high-stakes accountability and made up of a fairly typical percentage of ELLs, with a fairly large population of ELLs located typically in both rural and urban pockets; the typical urban district facing a crumbling infrastructure, a decreasing tax base coupled with the challenges of increasing diversity in its student population: the typical large, comprehensive high school with its diverse mix of student needs; and the typical high school teacher with a preparation in subject matter but not pedagogically prepared for the specialized learning needs of ELLs. Keeping this in mind, the questions that I will address are:

- What are the structural and demographic conditions at school, district, and program levels that support or hinder these teachers in their efforts to meet the needs of ELLs?
- What do mainstream high school language arts teachers see as the needs of ELLs, and the challenges of meeting those needs?
- How do high school teachers of the core curriculum accommodate English language learners in their classes and what is the effect of standards-based reform on their accommodations?
- What affect do policies, reforms, and decisions made at the state, school, district, and program levels have on mainstream teachers' abilities to address the needs of ELLs?

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Selection of Sample--State and District

There are four areas which were considered in the choice of the sample state, district and schools: the existence of state-level educational reform policy(s), student demographics, size, and to a lesser extent, education expenditures. Though the findings of this study were not meant to be generalized to any population, this was also not meant to be a study of an extraordinary educational setting.

First, the state in which the sample district, schools, and teachers were located was one dominated by standards-based reform characterized by associated statewide, performance-based assessments and accountability measures. At the time of the study these measures were still to be named, however since that time, sanctions for not meeting school improvement goals in the form of higher test scores have been put in place. The kind of educational reform underway at that time was similar to reforms in the majority of the states in the US.

Second, geographically and demographically, the state's educational system served students in rural, suburban and urban areas with higher concentrations of ELLs in both urban and rural pockets. During the time of the study, the majority of the state's students were served in one region of the state which included two large urban areas connected by suburban communities and the district chosen for this study. Though the percentage of minority students and ELLs statewide was below the national average, the percentage in this region was much closer to the national average as demonstrated by the sample district data in Table 1. School level data are also included in Table 1 to

illustrate that the levels of poverty (as measured by % of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch), minority students, and ELLs were within the range of national averages.

Third, the size of both the district and schools was fairly typical. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (*Education Statistics Quarterly*, Fall 1999) at the time of the study, 18.6% of all the students in the US educational system were served in districts of a similar size (10,000 to 24,999 students). The size of the two high schools chosen for the study also fell within the range of the average high school in the US.

Finally, there is the matter of expenditures. Table 1 illustrates the typical level of expenditure per student in the state, which although below the national average, was exactly the national median at the time of the study, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (*Education Statistics Quarterly*, Fall 1999). It is important to note here, that though the expenditure data reported by the state was close to national norms, the district reported (*1998-99 Year in Review*, 1999) expenditures of only $4,058 per student.

Table 1 *Comparison of Sample Schools, Sample District and National Averages in 1999-00*

Descriptor	**School 1**	**School 2**	**Sample District**	**Sample State**	**National Average**
% Minority	35%	45%	37.9%	23.2%	36.7%
% ESL	7%	12%	10%	7%	8%
% Free/Reduced lunch	20%	40%	39%	31%	29.6%*
# of students	1,452	1,143	18,403	974,504	N/A
Expenditure/student	N/A	N/A	$5,753	$5,734	$5,923

*Average was computed w/o data from 9 states who did not report, including WA.[6]

Study Sample

Four high school teachers from language arts departments in two high schools within one middle-sized urban district were chosen as case study teachers in this qualitative study. The four teachers, two from each language arts department at each school, were selected from faculty who taught at least one class containing a minimum of five English Language Learners. Language Arts was chosen as a subject area because of its priority status in the state systemic reform. By sampling two teachers within a subject area in one school, the potential effects of culture and influence of the high school department were able to be studied as a possible condition that supported teachers in meeting instructional challenges.

The teacher sample was chosen, in part, based on principal and counselor recommendations. Interestingly, the original criteria for teacher selection included a requirement that the teachers be neither novices in their first two years of teaching nor veterans within two years of retirement to limit the compounding effects of experience and or motivation. The reasoning behind this being that novices would be struggling to develop their practice and veterans close to retirement might be "coasting" or less likely to be searching out new ways to improve or have their teaching supported. However, upon examining assignment schedules and recommendations from administrators and

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[6] The data in columns 1,2,3 and 4 are from "1998-1999 Enrollment reports," by Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1999.
The data in column 5 are from "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey ," by U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), 1997-98.
The ELL data in column 5 are from "Summary Report of the Survey of the States' Limited English Proficient Students and Available Educational Programs and Services, 1996-97," by R.F. Macias, et al., 1998, Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

staff, it became apparent that *only* veterans close to retirement and novices with less than two years of experience were assigned ELL students in their language arts classes. This was not a study of exemplary practice or exemplary teachers, though exemplary practice could have been documented or observed. This was also not a study of failing teachers, consequently, peer and administrator nomination and researcher observation were used in choosing the case study sample. Though the teachers selected did not match the original criterion, they did appear to be similar to other teachers assigned to teach ELLs in mainstream classes according to surveys of teachers done both nationally and in the state studied (CSTP, 2005; US Department of Education Survey of the States, 2005).

At that time, the district chosen for the study was encountering many of the challenges being faced by urban education systems. The student population was increasing (going from a low of 15,606 in 1985 to the 1999 average enrollment of 18,403) and becoming much more diverse, creating instructional challenges in the classroom. According to district sources at the time of the study, 37.9% of the students were classified as minority, an average of 39 % students received free and reduced-price lunch, and schools had between 6% and 80% ELLs representing up to 44 different languages. At the same time, the facilities and infrastructure of the district and community were aging, leading to greater maintenance costs. The tax-base was decreasing and the district's attempts to pass a bond measure to construct or improve facilities had failed consistently for several years. Some of the district's general education fund had to be allocated to maintaining crumbling facilities rather than to

curricular or instructional costs. In this district context, school and district administrators were forced to make difficult decisions about the allocation of resources without the relative luxury of having enough resources to go around. The decisions they made at district and school levels built the context in which teachers had to find organizational supports (e.g., professional development programs, instructional assistants or paraprofessionals, materials, translation assistance) that helped them meet ELL needs. On the other hand, the financial situation in this district, much like other urban districts, was apt to create a context where funding or providing these organizational supports was a challenge.

Data Collection

Three methods of data collection were used: semi-structured interviews, observations, and document reviews. The bulk of data was collected through interviews and observations, however document reviews performed the important function of triangulation, providing evidence that supported those perceptions recorded in interviews and observations.

The first method of data collection, semi-structured interviews, was conducted using protocols created for specific participant roles (school counselor, case study teacher, principal, district ESL coordinator, building ESL teacher, state ESL/bilingual education administrator) (see Appendix A). Protocols were pilot-tested with other teachers and administrators who were not a part of the sample but part of a larger study conducted by the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy located at the University of Washington. Interviews were conducted with state, district and school administrators

to determine the policies and contexts that directly or indirectly influenced mainstream teachers, and to define the policy environment that existed at these levels, especially with regard to standards-based reform. Interviews were also conducted at the school level with several staff members including: (a) school counselors to collect data on assignment practices for students and for teachers; (b) principals and departmental chairs; and (c) ESL teachers and department chairs to determine school level instructional supports for case study teachers. Initially, case study teachers were interviewed to determine teacher preparation and experience, instructional methodologies, and perceptions of teaching challenges and student educational needs. When logistically possible, brief pre-observation interviews were conducted with each teacher before each of the three observations to document lesson goals and objectives, instructional methods to be used, and curricular content. Post-observation interviews were also conducted when possible to further understand teacher rationale for content, pedagogy, and classroom organization decisions (see Appendix B for protocols). Finally, exit interviews were conducted to document teacher perceptions of policies, pressures, and ELL student issues. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The second method for collecting data was through observations. Classroom instruction was observed and documented through field notes and structured by guide-sheets created with the relevant literature in mind (see Appendix C). I observed each teacher at least three times over the course of the second semester of the 1999-2000 school year. Focused observations were conducted in only one class out of each teacher's course load, however other classes were also briefly observed to document

whether the teachers' behaviors were specific to a particular class or consistent with their practice in other classes. The class contained at least five ELL students, however due to student attendance issues some observed classes contained as few as two. The first focused observations occurred within a month of the start of the semester, while the second and third observations occurred on sequential days to document lesson-follow up. Additional observations of professional development classes, staff meetings, faculty study groups, and other school and district events were conducted to document the nature of these events and their relation to the case study teachers' ability to address instructional needs of ELLs. Field notes were taken in all observations. Notes from observations were referenced during post-observation interviews. Field memos were written to summarize each observation and to aid in identifying emerging themes. A constant comparative method of analysis was used to allow the researcher to prompt further investigation of emerging themes in further observations and interviews.

Finally, document reviews were conducted of relevant documents at state, district, school and classroom levels (see document list in Appendix D). When applicable, these documents were used to triangulate data collected through interviews and observations. In addition, classroom documents were used to prompt discussion in post-observation interviews and to help determine when and how the case study teachers differentiated assignments, grading, or instruction for ELL students compared to their mainstream classmates. Document reviews also included budget and fiscal data linked to the conditions and allocation of resources for mainstream teachers of ELLs.

Analysis

All interviews were transcribed and coded for themes and issues connected to the foci of the study. Field notes of observations, events, and interviews and memos were also coded. A coding structure or schema was created based on the conceptual framework of the study, the literature reviewed, and from themes that emerged from interviews and memos. The initial coding scheme was based on the conceptual framework of the study which focused on the myriad of policies within the broader environment at state, district and national levels based on the work of the larger study underway in the same district and schools at the time through the Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (Knapp et al, 1998). The initial round of coding was an attempt to identify as many of the variables as possible that were creating the policy environment and structural and programmatic conditions that were most likely to influence the practice of the case study teachers within their classrooms with ELL students. Codes from the conceptual framework and from the relevant literature were based on policies at the state, district, school, and department levels that theoretically could be linked to pressures, constraints or supports for teachers' practice. An illustration of the conceptual framework is included in Appendix E. The codes generated from this framework were used in initial analyses of the interview and observation data. The initial coding scheme is listed in Table 2. The codes were organized by the level of focus.

Table 2 *Initial Coding Scheme from Conceptual Framework*

Focus	Code Description	Code
Teacher	Teacher Preparation: education, experience, certification, endorsements	TP
	Professional Learning Opportunities (individual)	PD-I
	Collaboration with other teachers	CT-I
	State Reform: WASL, EALRs, accountability	SR-I
	Students: demographics, # of ELLs, skill levels	SS-I
	Instruction or curriculum (teacher decisions)	IC-I
School	Assignment of teachers, students, classrooms	A
	Programs serving ELLs (includes ESL consultation for teachers)	PELL-S
	School improvement initiatives	SI
	Professional Learning Opportunities (school-led or initiatcd)	PD-S
	Instruction or curriculum (school-based)	IC-S
	State Reform: WASL, EALRs, accountability, school improvement plans-school level interpretations	SR-S
	Collaboration with other teachers (release time, department, common planning)	CT-S
	Nature of students, faculty, facilities school-wide	SS-S
	Instruction or curriculum (school decisions)	IC-S
District	Programs for ELLs: eligibility, funding for, personnel	PELL-D
	Professional Learning Opportunities (district-led)	PD-D
	District improvement initiatives	DI
	State Reform: WASL, EALRs, accountability	SR-D
	Instruction or curriculum (textbook adoptions, curricular alignment)	IC-D

All transcripts, memos, and observation notes were entered into both a large hard-copy notebook and computer files in Microsoft Word. Interviews with case study

teachers were compiled into single documents with interviews listed sequentially and numbered continuously. Consequently, citations and quotations from teachers cite the teacher's pseudonym and a page number. Coding using the initial codes listed in Table 2 occurred in both the hard-copy notebook and using text and string searches in Word. These deductive codes served as a first round of analysis. Analytic files were created for each code category. A second round of explanatory coding (Miles and Huberman, p1994) occurred using themes that emerged both from the process of coding and from field memos (Glaser, 1978) which served as a means of finding patterns across the codes, teachers, and schools. These codes in some cases expanded the initial coding categories and in other cases resulted in further dividing the category. The coded data files were then examined to determine if there were themes that ran across categories or if there were other patterns in the data that emerged. Analytic files were created for each code and divided by teacher cases and schools. The conceptual framework and research questions were then used to guide the organization of the data for writing case studies.

Case studies were created for each teacher to then allow a cross case analysis to determine if variation existed between and within schools, departments, and individuals. Data collected through interviews, field notes, observations, and documents at state, district, school, and classroom levels was used to write case environment pieces that described the policies, interpretations at those levels, practices, and resources that created or allowed the conditions for support of the teachers. Text and string searches of the Word files were conducted once themes were identified to find particularly

illustrative quotations across the case study teachers, building administrators, ESL teachers in the buildings, and district personnel. Text searches within the analytic files also provided a tool for analyzing this large quantity of qualitative data for themes across and between the various levels of the educational system, providing a feasible and effective way to link policy interpretations and implications from the level at which they originate to the level of implementation.

Questions and Data Sources

- What are the structural and demographic conditions at school, district and program levels that support these teachers?

Conditions of Support	Data Source
Expertise, Advice, Professional Development	**Interviews**- case study teachers, ESL teacher, district staff **Document review**- professional development, assignment, salary schedule documentation for steps, master schedule **Observation**- department meetings, classroom, collaboration, teaming, in-service meetings
Materials (ESL, primary language)	**Interviews**- case study teachers, ESL teacher, district staff **Document review**- classroom materials, ESL materials, district materials, lesson plans **Observation**- classroom
Personnel (instructional assistants, interpreters)	**Interviews**- case study teachers, ESL teacher, district staff, principal **Document review**- assignment (district and school), grants and evaluations, master schedule **Observation**- classroom, tutoring sessions, preparation periods
Other resources (time, community, volunteers, work environment, administrative support)	**Interviews**- case study teachers, other building teachers, administrative staff, district staff, community members/volunteers, parents **Document review**- parent/community communications, budget, discretionary budget, master schedule, assignments

	Observation- school, staff meetings, classroom, faculty study groups

- What do mainstream high school teachers see as the needs of ELLs and what are the challenges of teaching them?

Teacher Perceptions	Data Source
Instructional Needs and Teaching Challenges of ELLs	**Interviews**- case study teachers **Document review**- lesson plans, student assignments, curriculum materials **Observations**- classroom instruction, lesson planning

- How do mainstream high school language arts teachers accommodate English language learners in their classes and what is the effect of standards-based reform on their accommodations?

Accommodations for ELLs	Data Source
Address English Language Acquisition?	**Interviews**- case study teachers **Document review**- curriculum, student assignments, lesson plans **Observations**- classroom instruction
Address Skills Acquisition?	**Interviews**- case study teachers **Document review**- student assessments, curriculum, lesson plans, student assignments **Observations**- classroom instruction
Address Content Knowledge Acquisition?	**Interviews**- case study teachers **Document review**- curriculum, state and district curriculum standards, student assignments, lesson plans, assessments **Observations**- classroom instruction

Broader Instructional Framework (assessment, instructional methods, etc.)	**Interviews**- case study teachers **Document review**- assignments, lesson plans, assessments, curriculum **Observations**- classroom instruction

- What effect do policies, reforms, and decisions made at the state, school, district, and program levels have on mainstream teachers' abilities to address the needs of ELLs?

Influences from Reform Policies	Data Sources
State Level Policies	**Interviews**- state superintendent's office (bilingual/migrant program administrator) **Document review**- legislation, licensure and certification requirements, written policies, budget and expenditure reports, program and professional development evaluations and reports, curriculum and assessment standards
District Level Policies	**Interviews**- district bilingual/ESL staff, curriculum coordinators (Language Arts & Science), budget/fiscal officer **Document review**- curriculum standards, budget and expenditure reports, professional development plan and budget, program evaluation and interim reports (grants, reform-related, ESL)
School Level Policies	**Interviews**- principal, department heads, case study teachers, ESL teacher **Document review**- assignment policy, curriculum frameworks and adoptions, master schedule for teachers and students, professional development allocation plan, budget & allocation, school improvement plan, state and district student assessment reports

CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS: STATE AND DISTRICT

What does one have to understand at the state and district level in order to understand the broader context in which these schools and teachers operated? More specifically, what were the conditions at district and program levels that supported or hindered mainstream teachers in their efforts to meet the needs of ELLs? What affect did policies, reforms, and decisions made at the state, district and program levels have on mainstream teachers' abilities to address the needs of ELLs? The most salient decisions or policies that influenced these teachers can be divided into four categories at both the district and state level.

The first category includes the kinds of services provided for ELLs and how they were delivered; the criterion that established which students received services and the duration of those services; and based on these criterion, the demographics of the population served in the state of Washington and the district (Typfield, a pseudonym). The second category includes those policies that determined the source, amount, and types of resources that were allocated to both programs that specifically served ELLs and programs that may have provided support to ELLs and their teachers in the mainstream, outside of the state's (and district's) ELL services. The third category includes the policies of the education reform underway at that time and those elements that placed pressures on ELLs, their teachers, districts and schools. In keeping with the literature that insists that even though up to 66% of ELLs are served in mainstream classes by teachers who are not prepared to serve their needs (Fleischman and Hopstock, 1993), the last category contains those policies that determined how mainstream teachers were prepared and certified to serve ELLs, both initially and

throughout their careers. This includes both teacher education requirements for institutions and individual teachers, and ongoing professional development required and/or provided by the state or district. Both Washington state and the Typfield school district will be discussed in terms of these four categories.

Washington's Services for ELL Education

The first category, services provided through the state's Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program[7], at first appeared to have an indirect influence on mainstream teachers, since the students who were mainstreamed had at least begun to be transitioned from this program and the services it provided. However, the services provided by the Transitional Bilingual Program begin to describe the educational experiences of ELLs. In addition, those ESL personnel at the school, district, and state level did serve as a resource for mainstream teachers. At the school level for example, though students may have officially exited ESL classrooms, they still might have been assigned to classes with an interpreter or been provided with modified materials technically provided by a school's ESL program. The state of Washington was similar to many states in terms of the way in which it served its ELL population. At the time of the study, the majority of services provided through funding from the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program were termed "bilingual no primary" and "bilingual limited" by the state's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Instruction was described as follows:

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[7] Though the state terms its program as "transitional bilingual instruction", it should be noted that according to annual reports from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), only 21% of programs are described as being "bilingual" where the language of instruction matches that of the ELL students.

> Bilingual No Primary: in which students are provided with intensive ESL instruction and may receive other special instructional services which enable the student to participate in the regular all-English classroom; and
> Bilingual Limited: provides intensive ESL instruction with additional basic skills and literacy offered in English, with limited assistance in the primary language. This may include academic tutoring provided by non-certificated staff, translators, interpreters, etc. (OSPI, 2000)

The description of instructional services matched the model used in most other state educational systems, though the terms may have differed. The term "bilingual" may be misleading, since the instruction was not provided in the ELL's primary language, the most commonly understood definition of bilingual education. Other systems called the type of instruction *English Immersion, inclusion, English as a second language or ESL instruction,* or *sheltered instruction* (Baker, 1998; Cazden, 1992; Harper and Platt, 1998; Krashen, 1991). The Office of the Superintendent of Instruction (OSPI), the state department of education in Washington, did not require districts to provide services using any particular model of instruction. Rather, OSPI dictated the criterion for eligibility and the assessments to be used for student eligibility; allocated funding to districts; and tracked how that funding was used, the number and background of students served, and how they were served, all based on district annual reports.

Students became eligible for state transitional bilingual funds for services when it was determined that they spoke a language other than English in the home, and they scored at or below a specified level on a test of oral English. There were three language assessments deemed acceptable by the state of Washington at that time, however, the majority of districts used the Language Assessment Scale-Oral (LAS-O), which was relatively short and easy to administer. The state guidelines stipulated only that the student must be assessed on a test of *oral* English, however federal regulations

required districts to assess student proficiency in reading and writing. Most districts assessed students using the versions of the LAS for reading (LAS-R) and writing (LAS-W) to determine student eligibility. The state left it up to individual districts to specify the level at which students would become eligible for services.

Exit criterion, however, were defined quite clearly. Students were to be exited when they reached the 35th percentile on the Total Reading and Total Language Arts sections of a standardized assessment, though which instrument was not specified. Since Washington administered the Iowa Test of Basic Skills at the 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade and the Iowa Test of Educational Development at the 9th grade, most districts used this assessment as the measure of student proficiency for program exit. Here it should be noted that this level of proficiency is quite low. At the time, educators argued that students who scored at this level were not prepared to perform successfully in mainstream classes. As a further complication for ELLS at the high school level, there was an added time pressure to exit the ESL program. Content area requirements for graduation were not offered (except in rare instances) in ESL or sheltered English formats. Consequently, high school ELLs were under pressure to exit ESL classes and begin taking mainstream courses in order to graduate in the allotted time, usually three or four years. This will be discussed further in following chapters, as details are dependent upon school level contextual factors.

Under these eligibility and exit guidelines, OSPI reported that the number of students being served by transitional bilingual programs in the state rose from 13,939 in 1985 to 56,939 in 1998 (OSPI, 2000). In the last two decades, many districts have had to develop new educational programs to serve ELLs. In 1985, only 106 districts in

Washington provided services to ELL students. In 1998, there were 178 (there are 296 districts in the state). In addition to a growing ELL population, diversity within this ELL population has also increased. In the past, most ELLs came from one or two language groups whereas in 1998, there was a total of 175 primary languages represented among ELLs in Washington. Eighty-two percent of the students were from six primary language groups (Korean, Ukrainian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Russian, and Spanish), though the number of students speaking other languages was significant at 10,000. However, these numbers only reflect the students who *were* served by the transitional bilingual program, not the students who exited or had been placed in the mainstream. Tracking of these mainstream ELL students tended to be less precise. However, OSPI reported that between 1994 and 1998, almost 17,000 students were officially transitioned out of the Transitional Bilingual Program. In addition, over 1000 students dropped out of the program each year in that period (for a total of 5,382 drop outs). An additional 24,683 left the program for "unknown or other reasons"(OSPI, 2000 p.10). One could argue that these numbers begin to define the size of the population that ended up in mainstream classes, where mainstream teachers provided for their educational needs.

Washington's Funding for ELL Education

The second category of salient policies can be broadly defined as resources, or more specifically as funding. There were two main sources of funding for educational services for ELLs in the state of Washington: Transitional Bilingual Education funds and Emergency Immigrant Education funds. Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) funds were allocated on a per student basis and tended to be used in a variety of ways

depending on the provision and structure of services at each district. At the time of the study, the state allocation per eligible ELL student was $558 totaling an approximate expenditure statewide of $31,753,000 (OSPI, 2000). Eligibility was determined using the criterion discussed previously. Additional federal monies were also allocated through the Emergency Immigrant Education program at the state level. These were meant to provide funds for districts that had seen a rapid influx of immigrant students and needed to quickly allocate new or increased special services. Individual districts could also apply for federal Title VII grant monies aimed at creating or developing new programs for ELLs. However these funds were usually limited to a three year period and were meant to cover start-up costs for new programs. By and large, it appeared that districts in Washington were unable to fully fund their programs using only the state Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) funds. Districts in the state found it necessary combine TBE funds with Basic Education dollars in order to provide educational services for their ELL students required by the state's Transitional Bilingual Program, with the occasional federal supplements in emergency situations. Consequently, districts with large ELL populations necessitating the provision of specialized ESL services tended to be heavily impacted in terms of the resources required to serve these students, especially considering the limited funding available from state and federal coffers.

Washington's Education Reform

The third category, education reform, seemed to be placing direct pressures on mainstream teachers, thus it could be seen as a salient influence. In addition, the high-

stakes nature of the reform affected ELLs as well as mainstream students. It is important to understand the role that this reform played in shaping teacher practice, especially the reform's inclusion efforts toward ELLs. This third category extends the discussion of resources begun in the second category, since funding for ELLs might have been a story of what services and which students didn't get funded rather than a description of what and who did (considering the relatively short time that ELLs were served under those exit criteria).

One of the most salient policy actions that was underway in Washington at the time of the study was a standards-based reform package. This package included standards (entitled Essential Academic Learning Requirements--EALRs), performance-based assessments based on the standards (Washington Assessment of Student Learning--WASL), and accountability measures tied to WASL performance and improvements in that performance over time. This package was similar to reforms underway in the majority of states in the country. However, Washington's reform was different in several important ways. First, it was developed and implemented over a longer period of time. Schools and districts had several years of voluntary participation for assessment administration as a transition, and other subjects continued to be added and developed in increments. Second, the assessments were performance-based and developed directly from the EALRs. Many states chose to adopt standardized tests already developed by testing companies, a considerably easier and less expensive way to implement assessments. Customized, performance-based assessments involved greater costs and challenges both in development, administration, and scoring stages.

Finally, accountability measures had yet to be decided upon even after several iterations by different committees in the past three years. Washington appeared to be moving more slowly in determining both the criterion for accountability, and the consequences. Other states had implemented assessments and accountability at a much faster rate.

One aspect of Washington's reform remained consistent with the standards-based reform movements of other states---the high-stakes nature of the assessment for high school students wishing to graduate. House Bill 1209, the original legislation for the reform, maintained that by 2008, in order to graduate from high school, students would reach proficiency on the WASL administered in the 10th grade (upon which they would receive a "Certificate of Academic Mastery"). This last element of the reform placed pressures on both high school students and all of the elements of the educational system--- teachers, schools and districts. Considering the levels of performance on the 10th grade WASL at that time, high school seniors might be retained in record numbers. In the Spring of 2000, only 35% of 10th graders reached proficiency on the Math WASL, 59.8% of 10th graders demonstrated proficiency on the Reading WASL, and a mere 31.7% on the Writing WASL. If student performance on the WASL did not improve drastically, the state of Washington may have faced an overwhelming task of retaining and remediating as many as 60% of seniors. This pressure to improve student performance fell both on students and their teachers, and as the following paragraphs describe, ELLs were not exempt from this pressure.

In general, education reform placed pressure on high school teachers and students, however the reform also increased the pressure placed on ELLs. Among researchers and educators in the area of ELL education, there continues to be some

controversy over whether to include or exempt this population from mainstream requirements. Some argue that by exempting ELLs, one creates a separate education system with all of the implications of that decision (Gandara, 1994). If ELLs are never considered a part of the system, it is argued, they will not gain equal access to society. Others (Faltis and Wolfe, 1999) argue that requiring all students including ELLs to reach the same academic standards in the same amount of time, though they may have entered the system years behind academically and speaking another language, is unfair and places undue stress on both the system and the students. In addition, if ELLs are not included then their performance is not included in further test development (e.g. norms, relative performance measures). However, including them, even after their first year in the US or school system (with limited English language abilities) has possible damaging psychological effects, especially considering the length of the WASL which took several days to administer. Though there was some deliberation over this point, Washington required its ELL students to take the WASL after one year of exemption. The exact wording of the exemption clause allows students to avoid taking the WASL if:

> The student has spent one school year or less in a school where English is the language of instruction. AND
> The student is not proficient in English and scores at the lowest level on a state-approved language proficiency test administered within the current school year (CSL, 1999,p.7).
> Once the student must take the test, Washington included accommodations for

ELLs if they had not reached English proficiency (as measured by oral language proficiency assessments and standardized tests---the same ones that determine program eligibility). The accommodations included:

> Providing English or native language dictionaries—except on the reading test.
> AND
> Using a reader to read math assessment items verbatim in English (CSL, 1999,p.17).

An additional challenge became evident when one examined the nature of the WASL. As a performance-based test, the WASL included language intensive tasks that required students to demonstrate problem solving in written form in all subject areas. Some argued that if measurement was to drive instruction, then the forms of measurement should better approximate real life tasks rather than tasks like choosing from multiple responses or recalling isolated facts. However, this same language intensive format, which some argued was the strength of Washington's reform, also increased the difficulty of the assessment for ELLs who may have understood the concepts and be able to perform the tasks, but be unable to demonstrate that they had done so in proficient written English. Add to this the high-stakes accountability for high school students who would not graduate unless they "passed" the WASL and one begins to understand the most visible challenges for mainstream high school teachers both in general, and specifically for the ELLs that they served in their classrooms.

Washington and Professional Education

Finally, we come to the fourth category--Washington's policies surrounding the preparation of teachers for meeting ELL educational needs. There are several areas in which the state can shape this preparation: pre-service teacher education as realized in accreditation standards for teacher education institutions, initial teacher certification requirements, and continuing teacher certification standards. At the time of the study, Washington appeared to be reluctant to centralize specific requirements for its 22 teacher education programs, instead relying on more general goals and requirements for

program certification and accreditation. Consequently, some individual programs required pre-service teachers to take a course in meeting ELL student needs (or other special populations, e.g. special education students), but there were no statewide requirements. Thus, many beginning teachers were not prepared to meet the needs of ELL students through their pre-service teacher education.

Another way the state may require teachers to have some training or education in serving ELLs is through certification standards both for initial and continuing certification. Washington was in the process of changing its certification requirements for both initial and continuing certification. At the time of this study, the system for continuing certification relied upon the accumulation of clock-hours of professional development for which there was no direction or focus. Teachers could choose from a variety of providers and subjects and were not required to submit a rationale for their professional development activities or match those activities with their own needs as a professional. This last area--professional development is one of the most often used methods of supporting teachers and their needs in the classroom. Much of this type of support existed at district rather than state levels in Washington.

In summary, the salient issues for ELLs and their mainstream teachers at the state level included: educational services for high school ELLs limited by few resources, early exit criteria, and time constraints that left ELLs less-than-prepared for mainstream academic work; an educational reform that included ELLs in the high-stakes assessment at an early stage; impending accountability measures for students who did not perform proficiently on those assessments; and graduation requirements that left little time for the development of language proficiency in English and rapidly

pushed ELLs into the mainstream. Add to this, the mainstream teacher who was ill-prepared and not required to specifically seek professional development to be better able to meet ELL needs and one begins to understand the nature of the challenge that existed for both teachers and students in mainstream high school classes. These state level policies landed squarely in the lap of districts who took the funding, the reform requirements, the assessments, and the teachers prepared and certified by the state, and attempted to provide a viable educational system under which teachers and schools could provide quality learning opportunities that in turn allowed students to be successful.

Typfield and ELL Education

Typfield, the district in which the case study teachers and schools were located faced many of the same challenges as other urban districts around the US. Its population was growing more diverse (in both mainstream and ELL populations); funding both improvement efforts and maintaining the current system was taxing both community and district resources; and standards-based reform and accountability were adding further pressure to a district already struggling with student achievement. Typfield's size and demographic make-up was similar to many urban school districts across the country today. The district enrolled approximately 19,000 students, 54.6% White, 11.3% Black, 11.6% Hispanic, 3% Native American or Alaskan Native, and 19.7% Asian or Pacific Islander. The district averaged 41% free and reduced-price lunch, however there was great variability across schools, from 3% to 90% (OSPI, 2000). At the time of the study, Typfield's ESL program served over 1,200 students-- a number that has continued to rise to more than 1,700 students in 2005. Typfield faced

many of the educational and fiscal challenges of urban districts. The tax base in the district had been decreasing, while the educational needs of its students had been increasing.

During the time of the study, transitional bilingual instruction services in Typfield were provided using an ESL education model with some primary language support provided by interpreters and instructional aides as well as several bilingual teachers. The district defined its instructional model as one that was "not a bilingual program" but one where the "majority of the instruction is in English with limited first-language instruction or support for newcomer students." (Typfield School District, 1999, p.7) Upon first arriving in the district, students were assessed for both academic and English language abilities and placed in schools and the ESL program accordingly. Newcomers, those just arriving from other countries with little English, were to be placed in self-contained ESL classes, while ELLs with greater English proficiency were placed in mainstream classes with pull-out ESL instruction or in-class interpreters (generally classified staff). Not all schools had ESL programs. The district designated many, but not all schools as ESL magnet schools. A few schools also operated bilingual education programs when possible[8]. According to the ESL coordinator, the district chose to structure their services for ELLs in this way to maximize the use of personnel with ESL endorsements and interpreters and to provide the best services with the limited funds they received from the state.

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[8] In order to provide a bilingual classroom, a number of factors must be present: 1) ELL students must have the same primary language, 2) there must be a large enough number of them to form a class, 3) a bilingual teacher fluent in the students' primary language must be available, and 4) materials must exist in that primary language.

At the secondary level, the district concentrated their ELL students and ESL staff in three of the four high schools. Students took ESL courses in reading, language arts and composition as well as a very limited number of content area classes taught through ESL or sheltered English instruction (modifying and simplifying the instructional English spoken) by ESL staff at the high school level. ELLs took their content area classes and graduation requirements through the regular education program, though ESL classes count toward graduation as Language Arts credits. Typfield appeared to be structuring its services in a typical manner to districts across the US. However, there were some elements of ESL services in Typfield that were not so typical and that had direct implications for exiting or transitioning ELLs.

From an ESL program perspective, the most salient policies affecting ELLs in the mainstream were the policies that determined whether they were eligible for services and how long those services were to be provided. Just prior to the beginning of the study, district administrators had spent a considerable amount of time negotiating with both the state department of education and the Office of Civil Rights around these policies. In Typfield, there were two policies in this area that differed from districts in the rest of the state. The first involved a policy action initiated by the Office of Civil Rights in collaboration with the ESL coordinator which was focused on the state/federal conflict in eligibility requirements. State guidelines indicated that ELLs were eligible if they demonstrated a lack of proficiency in *oral* language, while federal guidelines listed *oral* language AND *reading* and *writing*. Hence, students who qualified for services under the federal guidelines, may not have qualified under state guidelines. Experts in the field of bilingual education (Krashen, 1991; Cummings, 1991) point to the ability of

ELLs to develop conversational language proficiency at a much faster rate than academic language proficiency, the first being measured by the oral language assessment, the latter being measured by the reading and writing tests. Typfield, through negotiations with Office of Civil Rights implemented federal guidelines, qualifying more students and continuing to serve more students, though neither federal nor state funding was attached to these students. Consequently, Typfield allocated additional funds from its basic education budget to provide the additional ESL services. This also meant that ELLs could be supported by ESL staff for a longer period of time.

The second policy action involving the number and extent of services offered by the ESL program was initiated by the ESL coordinator and negotiated with the state office for transitional bilingual instruction. The agreement created new, more subjective exit criterion that included: ESL and mainstream teacher input, portfolios of student work, other district assessments (i.e. Six Trait Writing Assessment, the Typfield Reading Assessment based on the WASL reading assessment), and additional standardized assessments (i.e. Iowa Tests of Educational Development subtests in Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies; Reading and Writing sections of the WASL). Through this policy, ELLs could continue to receive ESL services after they reached the 35th percentile on standardized tests. ESL teachers reviewed the progress of ESL students at the end of each year to determine if these criteria had been met. Students who met district criteria were placed on "trial exit" and were monitored during their first year of exit by means of a mainstream teacher feedback form. District plans were to continue the monitoring process through the second year of trial exit and to monitor progress at least twice during the year; the district maintained that this was

based on federal requirements (as understood through discussions with OCR). The expectation, according to the district ESL office, was that as the state's standards-based assessments became more established, the transitional bilingual program would follow other programs (i.e. Title 1) in using standards-based measures as criteria for program exit---content standard assessments, WASL, and report cards related to content standards.

Through these two policy actions, using federal rather than state exit criterion, and the establishment of a trial exit period, the Typfield district extended services for ELLs as a whole. However, several previously mentioned factors at the secondary level conflicted with this extension of services--graduation requirements, time constraints on graduation, and accountability pressures. These pressures on high school ELLs tended to push them into mainstream classes before they had developed the English language skills and/or academic skills necessary for them to succeed, even though the services were available for a longer period in their academic careers'.

With these district policies (i.e. extended ESL services, assignment of ELLs to schools with concentrated services, and more inclusive eligibility and exit criterion), the nature of the student population in Typfield should be defined. Demographically, Typfield's transitional bilingual program included both diverse and numerous language groups. Though it was not the largest program in the state (it was 10th during this period), Typfield served over 1,700 students and employed 44 certificated teachers as well as 26 para-educators. Its population was very diverse in several aspects. According to OSPI's evaluation report (OSPI, 2000), Typfield served students from 49 different language groups in 1999. By far, the most students spoke Spanish (41%),

however there were significant numbers of Vietnamese (244 students), Somali (126 students), Punjabi (100 students), Cambodian (90 students), Ukrainian, Bosnian, Hmong, Samoan, Russian, Kurdish, Amharic, and Tagalog speakers (as well as Arabic, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Korean, Persian and Pilipino). Other languages were represented by only a few students which created additional challenges in providing educational services both in staffing, interpreting, and finding materials in those primary languages.

Typfield had seen some changes in its ELL population over the years. During the study, the population of ELLs represented a shift in demographics over the previous five years. Before that time, the program mainly served Spanish, Vietnamese, and Cambodian speakers. According to OSPI's reports, the district had only served about 1200 students speaking 39 different languages in the 1997-98 school year. Compared to the report released in 2000, there were an additional 10 languages being spoken and 500 more students in their ESL program.

Another change that occurred was the dispersion of ESL students and families throughout the district, which created additional challenges in transporting and serving these students. Previously, immigrant families tended to live in specific neighborhoods or municipalities (the district included eight municipalities at that time). The district also reported that there had been an increasing number of students who arrived with little or no previous educational experience. It is interesting to note that though Typfield was facing challenges due to its increasing diversity, and was struggling with a crumbling infrastructure that was draining its decreasing and already overwhelmed tax

base, it was recognized as having exemplary programs for ELLs according to sources at the state department of education and in other districts.

Typfield's Funding of ELL Services

Funding of the ESL program and services provided for ELLs at the school level came from several sources. The ESL coordinator in Typfield was also the administrator for the Migrant, Title 1, and Indian education programs in the district, which allowed some schools to collaborate among services and combine resources within those programs, especially since many students qualified for one or more of those programs. For example, many ELLs were also eligible for Title 1 services due to their low socioeconomic status. This practice was one found in many districts around the state. One budget policy not found in most districts was Typfield's policy of funding ESL teacher salaries through state Basic Education monies, rather than state transitional bilingual instruction funds. These funds then became discretionary monies for other program expenses (i.e. para-educators, materials, professional development).

Another district resource that could be a source of support for mainstream teachers and their ELLs was the allocation of para-educators. The ESL coordinator was responsible for the assignment of para-educators throughout the district, many of whom assumed itinerant positions due to the need for specific language support at particular schools throughout the day. At the time of the study, the district employed 26 bilingual tutors. By far, the greatest number of tutors spoke Spanish (over half), however there were tutors who spoke Vietnamese, Russian, Ukrainian, Tagalog, Amharic, Arabic, Korean, Cambodian, and German. Most of the para-educators were well educated; most had bachelor's degrees and some had masters in various subjects. Though the

allocation of para-educators occured at the district level, schools and teachers (both mainstream and ESL) could use those classified staff in a multitude of ways. Their roles will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

Typfield and Education Reform

This third category begins to describe much of the activity in the Typfield district both at the district and school level. Administrators in Typfield had taken the state's education reform very seriously and based many decisions, such as professional development for teachers and adopting whole-school reform packages, on their goal of improving student performance on the WASL. Decisions concerned with professional development will be discussed in the following section.

There were three additional areas of activity at the Typfield district level that could be attributed to Washington's education reform. The first area was curriculum standards and resulting changes in the content and sequence of curricula. The second area was assessment and the prominence of testing in Typfield. The third area was remediation and the district's attempts to improve student achievement through the implementation of packaged programs in reading and writing. A description of these three areas of activity gives a telling look at the policy environment that was most salient to teachers and schools in Typfield.

The curriculum standards created at the state level (the EALRs) were like many standards set at that level across the US. The EALRs were meant to be guidelines for the more specific content standards created at local levels. Typfield, like most districts in Washington, formed committees of teachers and administrators around subject areas.

These committees used the EALRs as benchmarks and created standards that were more accessible and offered more specific guidelines for teachers. These content standards were then published and distributed to teachers throughout the district. The absence of ESL EALRs at the state level added to the challenge of designating or coordinating an ESL curriculum in Typfield. The ESL coordinator and teachers, like other providers of educational services for students outside the mainstream (i.e. special education), modified the Typfield content standards developed for reading, writing, and communication to set guidelines for ESL classes. Though these activities around the content standards and curricula seemed significant for district administrators, the activities focused on the statewide assessment, the WASL, took on added importance due to its links to accountability. The prominence of the WASL as an important factor in decision-making in curricular issues brings us to one of the most salient areas of activity in Typfield, assessment.

Describing assessment in Typfield does much to build the context within which district and school decision-making was done. Typfield had taken the state's promise of accountability very seriously. Student performance on the WASL at all levels of the educational system, but namely the 4th, 7th and 10th grades was of great concern. The weak performance of high school students on the 10th grade WASL was particularly challenging with only 44.1% proficient in reading, 29.5% proficient in math, and 25% proficient in writing (OSPI, 2000). Considering the looming Certificate of Academic Mastery, the district had much to be concerned about---a conservative estimate which considered only proficiency in reading slated 56% of district seniors for retention.

Typfield responded in several ways. One way they responded was by adding more assessment of students. First, the district developed two of its own assessments based on the Reading WASL and the Math WASL to measure student progress toward achieving proficiency on the WASL. They named these assessments the Typfield Reading Assessment of Proficiency (TRAP), and the Typfield Math Assessment of Proficiency (TMAP). During the study, these tests were administered at the elementary level five times in the course of the year. At that point in time, Typfield had plans to create and administer a TRAP for the secondary level within the next two years. Elementary teachers administered and scored the TRAP and TMAP and then submitted those scores to the district office where they were analyzed.

Second, Typfield had chosen to administer the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) in almost every grade level (excluding the WASL administration grades at the 1st and 4th levels) rather than at just the 3rd, 5th, and 9th grades required by the state. Third, Typfield had teachers administer a district-wide writing prompt to students in the 4th, 7th and 10th grades which was then scored by two teachers using the Six Trait Writing Rubric. This rubric served as the basis for the scoring process of the writing portion of the WASL and had become the rubric of choice in the district particularly for language arts teachers. The increased frequency and number of assessments administered seemed increase the pressures on students, teachers, and schools. Much of this assessment data had driven decisions to adopt remedial programs in areas where student performance on assessments was below standard.

Remediation, the third area, had for the most part been based on the low levels of proficiency on the WASL of the student population and the promised accountability of the education reform. The district adopted several programs in reading and writing intended to increase student proficiency in those areas. One of the programs already mentioned was Six Trait Writing. Another program was Accelerated Reader which is tied to the STAR computerized reading assessment and utilizes level reading books. This program is one element of a larger program called Reading Renaissance. Several teachers in the district had been sent to multi-day seminars focused on Reading Renaissance and Accelerated Reader. Although Accelerated Reader and the STAR assessment were meant to be implemented district-wide, the decision to integrate Accelerated Reader into the language arts curriculum tended to be made at the school and teacher level. Thus, a description of the implementation and school level decisions about the level of integration will be included in the following chapters concerning the school and teacher levels. In addition, the district supported extended day, Saturday, and summer school programs with Accelerated Reader as the curriculum---however the decision to take on the responsibility and implementation of those programs was made at the school level and will thus be discussed in the school findings chapters.

Typfield and Professional Education

While professional education policies at the state level were focused in the areas of certification and requirements for teacher preparation programs, at the district level this had more to do with professional development. This fourth category can be divided into three areas: professional learning opportunities provided for ESL teachers (or

organized by ESL teachers district-wide); general opportunities for mainstream teachers; and those focused on issues around the state's educational reform. The first has an indirect influence on mainstream teachers, since the opportunities were provided to ESL teachers. However, ESL teachers could serve as one of the most immediate sources of support and knowledge for mainstream teachers. The second area includes professional learning opportunities for teachers concerning content, pedagogy, serving special student needs (i.e. At Risk, ELLs, special education students), etc. The third area could be subsumed within the second, however because of the nature of the reform much of the professional development being offered at the time of the study, both through state and district offices, was either about the content of the reform, or in reaction to the reform (i.e. improving test scores). Consequently, this third area appears to warrant a separate discussion.

Traditionally-configured professional development provided by the ESL department at the district office was for the training of para-professionals rather than for ESL teachers or mainstream teachers. According to the ESL coordinator, the focus of the training tended to be toward giving the paraprofessionals a background in the educational system, giving them CPR and First Aid training, and sometimes providing training in specific instructional programs or curricula that had been adopted district-wide, though most of these curriculum or program specific professional development trainings were offered at the individual schools. This professional development tended to occur on the district early dismissal days (termed TUC or Time Use Committee days for the committee that evaluated their effectiveness) because para-educators were "on

the clock" during that time. However, the coordinator contended that it was becoming more difficult to find the funding and time to train para- educators and that the training that was provided was "inadequate" (District administrator interview, p.3). In addition to the training on TUC days, the coordinator reported that there were district-wide para-educator meetings twice a year and the ESL department published a newsletter to maintain awareness for other generic kinds of training (i.e. AIDs training, hazardous waste, rules and regulations, etc.) that they provided centrally. Consequently, the training provided had little relation to serving ELLs in the classroom, or in classroom instruction.

Professional development aimed at certified staff had changed over the years due to the loss of Student Learning Improvement Grant (SLIG) money (state funds earmarked for teachers' professional learning opportunities). In the past, the coordinator released all of the ESL teachers four times a year for an entire day to meet and discuss instructional and programmatic issues. The high school and middle school ESL teachers met twice a year together and then twice a year separately (by levels). Topics included ESL program improvement plans and goal setting, or incorporating ESL student needs into the new district report cards, or what kinds of materials were needed to supplement the new curriculum adoptions. However, with the loss of funding that provided substitutes and time for these meetings, the coordinator could only meet with department heads at the secondary level once a month. She continued to communicate with teachers over email on a regular basis and spent time in classrooms and school buildings. But with the loss of funding, the coordinator reported that there was only enough money to meet with the entire group of ESL teachers for four hours

once a year. According to ESL teachers interviewed in several district schools, the coordinator and the ESL district department stood as an excellent resource for ESL teachers. As one ESL department chair noted:

> One of the main things that works well is the support, the direction of leadership we get from the Program Coordinator. I was telling one of the other people the other day in our department, she's head and shoulders technically and interpersonally above all the rest. I can talk with her at a professional technical level that we both understand where the other is going and she is ahead of me in some stuff, so I can go to her. I can say, where is the research in this and what do we need to talk about this and she is there because she reads in it. She also works real well with the principals, some of the ones who are a little rambunctious or feisty to deal with (p.12).

However, the great majority of this support was focused on ESL teachers and para-professionals rather than mainstream teachers. This support certainly was needed, took priority, and was a full-time job in itself, however, this left mainstream teachers who served ELLs out of the loop.

Typfield faced several challenges in providing professional development opportunities for their faculty. Costs for professional development were twofold. First, the district paid funds to the provider; this cost was relatively small. Second the district had to pay for substitutes for all of the teachers attending the workshop or class; this cost could be quite large. In addition, substitute shortages made offering this kind of district-wide professional development almost impossible. In response to fiscal and personnel challenges, Typfield initiated what it called TUC days. Up to two days a month schools either dismissed students early or began the school day late, during which time teachers were free to attend district-sponsored professional learning activities (or school-driven activities discussed in the following chapters) without having to pay for or find numerous substitute teachers. The focus of these activities was

decided at the district level for the majority of schools in the district. Schools had the option of pursuing their own foci if they offered the district a reason for doing so or tied the learning activity to their school improvement goals. District topics range from addressing the needs of students living in poverty to classroom management, however by far the greatest focus in the two years prior to the study had been on educational reform issues---especially assessment. A partial list of district professional development offerings included:

- Teaching Reading Across the Curriculum,
- Intergenerational Poverty,
- Six Trait Writing,
- Classroom Management,
- Prioritizing WASL formats in Classroom Assessments,
- Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum,
- Teaching Mathematics Across the Curriculum, and
- Using WASL Assessment Formats for Classroom Assessments.

On the other hand, though the district had been clever in finding a way to offer professional learning opportunities at a reduced cost, these opportunities did not address the needs of the teachers in this study or their ELL students. The heavy emphasis on WASL activities and improving student performance on the WASL did not include ways to address ELL student issues on those assessments. Consequently, though this was one way the district was attempting to better prepare teachers to address the state reform, it was not one that helped teachers in terms of their ELL students.

To summarize then, Typfield faced the challenge of educating high school ELLs through an extended ESL program, however graduation requirements and the state's

promise of high-stakes accountability pressured students to move to mainstream classes as soon as possible conflicting with this offer of extension of services. The district did little to offer support specifically to mainstream teachers who served these ELLs. It provided professional learning opportunities on a range of subjects, but opted to prioritize a focus on raising WASL scores and did little to tie those opportunities together or to improvement plans of either the district or individual schools. The ESL program and coordinator had a large enough task serving the students and supporting the teachers within the ESL program without expanding their scope to support those ELLs and teachers outside the program (much less taxing their limited resources). Consequently, mainstream teachers who served ELLs were not specifically supported in this role by the district in either its ESL program, through funding or resource allocation, or in its professional development offerings.

Getting a picture of the state and district and their policy actions and supports for individual schools and teachers was a difficult task. Much of the district support provided was dependent on active leadership at individual schools, the climate of schools and departments, and the array of resources available at the school level from the knowledge base of experienced teachers to the existence of a magnet program. Consequently, it is necessary to move to the next level where we can begin to understand the context of these two high schools, the Language Arts departments, and the four teachers within them.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS: TWO ENGLISH TEACHERS WITHIN STONYBROOK HIGH SCHOOL

The policy environment and decisions made at district and state levels discussed in the previous chapter played a role in creating the educational context of the individual schools. The school environment, however, served as the most immediate sphere of influence on teachers' practice and thus on their ELL students, bringing together the consequences of decisions and interpretations of policies made at both local and state levels. Thus, the two case study teachers provided a snapshot of the school environment and the policies enacted there and at the district and state levels and what the combination and interaction of those meant for teachers.

Through each of these case studies, I examine issues that inform all four of my research questions. I begin this chapter by addressing the first question: What are the structural, physical, and demographic conditions at the school and program level that support or hinder these teachers in their efforts to meet the needs of ELLs? A description of the physical environment of Stonybrook, the structural and programmatic conditions, and the demographics of the school population provide a context within which the two case study teachers' work was located and constructed. Next, in order to address the question focused on the perceptions of mainstream teachers regarding their ELL students' needs and the challenges of teaching them, I provide a description of the two teachers: Heidi, a novice teacher in her second year, and Martha, a thirty-plus year veteran approaching retirement. Following this introduction to the teachers and examination of their perceptions, I address the question: How do high school English teachers accommodate ELLs in their classes and what is the effect of standards-based

reform on their accommodations? This section of the chapter focuses on an examination of their practice through analyses of classroom observations. Finally, I conclude with the fourth research question and an examination of the ways in which policies, reforms and decisions made at various levels in the educational system appeared to affect these teachers' abilities to address the needs of their ELL students.

Stonybrook High School: Students and Physical Space

A description of the demographic and physical context of Stonybrook provides important background to help understand what occurred in both teachers' classrooms as well as the types of policies and choices that administrators at the school and district made concerning the targeting of resources, programs, and services.

At the time of the study, Stonybrook High School enrolled just over 1200 students served by 60-65 certified teachers. Table 1 includes a break-down of both the ethnic make-up of the student population and the percentages of students receiving special education and English as a Second Language services.

Table 3 *Demographics of Student Population: Stonybrook High School*

Ethnicity	% of Students	Ethnicity	% of Students
White	55.1	Asian/Pacific Islander	21.1
Black	11.9	Native American	3.3
Hispanic	8.6	Special Education	13*
ESL	12*		

* Approximations--School level data unavailable at that time.

The population at Stonybrook also included a large proportion of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch (over 40% qualified), an indication that this population (and their families) were facing economic as well as educational challenges. At the time of the study, only 37 % of Stonybrook 10th graders had met standard on the

Reading WASL, approximately 18 % had met the math standard and 32 % had met standard on the Writing portion. Stonybrook's students performed below the district's averages in all three areas of the WASL. Additionally, at over 13%--a significant number of students qualified for special education services, and the percentage of students eligible for ESL services was one of the highest in the district at the secondary level (over 12%).

Facility

Like many buildings in the Typfield district Stonybrook's facility was a maintenance challenge. Structures meant to last twenty-five years during an enrollment boom were still in use at their maximum capacity thirty years after their construction. To compound matters, Typfield was at a point in its history where fiscal crisis was an ongoing reality and maintenance of facilities was more a matter of patching holes and dealing with the most immediate, critical needs rather than true repair. Broken windows received plywood patches rather than glass replacements, a leaky roof received another patch of tar that would only last until the next big rain. According to the principal, resources earmarked for instruction, curriculum materials, and to pay for staff were continuously being redirected toward maintenance and repair costs. Since the cafeteria was too small to feed all 1,200 students at once, two lunch periods had been instituted dividing the campus, both students and staff. Haphazard numbering of classrooms and offices contributed to confusion of students and visitors, especially new immigrant ELLs and transfer students (and researchers). For the past ten years, the district had been attempting to pass a construction levy for new facilities to replace this and those of other schools. This promise of new buildings appeared to keep

both district and school administrators from making more long term-oriented repairs on existing facilities.

The condition of the facility affected the way in which the 65 or so teachers worked in several ways. First, the facility was built to house a much smaller number of students, consequently, small rooms meant to keep class sizes to an intimate level were now overcrowded. The classrooms observed housed as many as 37 students in rooms built for 20 to 25. Accommodating individual student needs in overcrowded classrooms proved to be a challenge, where small disruptions were exaggerated and even finding enough seats was problematic. In addition, due to a lack of classrooms, three teachers were forced to 'travel' from one open classroom to the next throughout the day. This created logistical challenges for these teachers—preparing the room for a lesson, transporting materials, finding time to meet with students before or after class, etc. that seemed to affect their ability to address both ELL and mainstream student needs.

Second, the physical layout of the buildings spread teachers, classrooms and students over a great area separated by parking lots, administrative offices, and spaces filled with dirt (or mud). The lack of sufficient classroom space had even resulted in classes being taught in the adjacent middle school. Ten teachers' rooms, including one case study teacher were located in buildings on the middle school campus. This created safety and discipline issues for the administration due to the physical latitude given to students. The lack of physical proximity also limited the opportunities for teachers to collaborate or consult with one another around student or curricular issues.

Third, by dividing the students and faculty in half for the two lunch periods, time for teachers to interact outside of class with colleagues and students was

minimized. Lunch-time meetings invariably excluded faculty members who were scheduled for the alternate lunch time. This pushed meeting times to before or after school or professional development days (district TUC days or Early Release days) impacting the amount of time available for professional learning. In addition, this limited the time and staff members with whom teachers could share expertise, materials, and knowledge. This also appeared to limit opportunities for ESL teachers and their mainstream colleagues to share knowledge concerning the special needs of ELLs.

Programs

The elements of the physical environment discussed above reflect the overall climate at Stonybrook. However, the scattered buildings, divided time, lack of repairs, and teacher isolation, also seemed to be characteristics of the social and academic environment of the high school. Though there were a multitude of well-intended programs in place, as one teacher put it, "where's the whole here?(Heidi, p.34)" Programs had been instituted over the years to address crises in a number of areas--low reading levels, a high incidence of drop-outs, large numbers of failures in mathematics, and a lack of connection to the community. At the time of the study, programs at the school included:

- An ATLAS whole-school reform effort,
- Travel and Tourism Academy,
- Technology Academy,
- Connections for At Risk Youth,
- 21st Century Schools Community Program,

- Accelerated Reader and STAR computer assessments,
- Reading Renaissance,
- A magnet ESL Program, and
- The Regional Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program.

New programs were layered on top of old programs, stretching scarce resources. Neither old nor new programs received the resources or support necessary to be fully implemented and/or successful. Professional collaborations or interactions were inconsistent and infrequent at Stonybrook, despite a host of programs and activities meant to foster these. Upon examining the individual programs and activities, it became clear that though some had promising elements that might support teachers' work with their diverse student population, the sheer array of activities without a guiding strategic plan to provide coherence, and the significant amount of resources required to fully implement each seemed to limit their chance of success. As one of the case study teachers noted:

> It seems to me that Atlas, like Reading Renaissance, is a program that needs 100% participation 100% of the time, there has to be a certain level of administrative, as well as non-administrative support....to my understanding one of the keys to the ATLAS program is that you don't take time out for your own personal time, that's supposed to be time (built into the schedule)...I've not seen that. They've tried to reimburse us. They've tried to make it so that we get paid for the extra time through...whatever extra money (the school) gets, but that requires, on our part, documenting all the time, submitting the paperwork. And so, the way that it's set up, it seems to be defeating....when they (the ATLAS people) talk about what it takes to make this, is not being done....it makes me question how much other aspects of it are getting supported...it's my understanding with ATLAS that you need to have one basic focus for the whole school. For instance, reading...which I would love. That would figure right into Reading Renaissance...what a beautiful thing. And instead we are, I think we're at 8 or 10 different focus groups...and I don't see how that fits....the

> bedrock things that are supposed to make the program successful are missing (p.85,86).

On the other hand, there were two programs at Stonybrook that appeared to support the teachers' work with their ELL students, even if they were not entirely aware of that support.

After-School Tutoring

Through a 21st Century Schools grant, Stonybrook had created a program to better connect the surrounding community, parents, and students to the school. The grant provided staff, a facility, and transportation to create a place for community members and students to gather off-school hours four days a week in a school building and in the adjacent park complete with basketball courts and a skateboard park. The YMCA, in partnership with the school, helped staff the program intended for all students at Stonybrook. In addition to providing supervision and a facility in which to gather, an after-school tutoring program was included. Though many non-ELL students took advantage of the program for the "hanging out" aspect, the tutoring services quickly became an extension of the ESL services provided during the school day. In fact, the tutoring took on the informal role of supporting ELLs with their work in mainstream classes after they officially exited the ESL program. The after-school program was staffed primarily by ESL staff (interpreters, instructional assistants and certified teachers) working for an hourly wage paid by the grant. Though I did not directly observe this program, ESL teachers who served as tutors estimated that on average 15 to 20 ELL students took advantage of the program on a given day. It seemed that ESL teachers saw the after school program as a time they were able to

support students once they had left the ESL classes. As one ESL teacher put it, "I just don't have the time to follow or check up on their progress after they leave my class (within the school day)...there's a whole new batch of students to worry about (J, p.45)." Both the continuous enrollment of new ELLs at Stonybrook and the limited time for working with students (52-minute class periods with loads of over 30 students in beginning ESL classes) constrained the ESL teachers in their ability to fully support students (their primary concern) and their colleagues in the mainstream.

A secondary consequence of this tutoring program came to light in examining the case study teachers' practice. It appeared that when ELLs utilized this tutoring, their difficulties with assignments were masked. When the case study teachers received completed assignments and few questions from their ELL students, it seemed to indicate that their classroom instruction was adequate to meet their needs. In reality, many of these needs and questions were arising and being met in these after-school sessions.

ESL

A description of the ESL program at Stonybrook illustrates two elements salient to this study: the characteristics of the ELL students who had been exited from the program and their preparation for mainstream classes, and the existence of an ESL staff with the knowledge necessary to support both ELL students and their mainstream teachers. Though the ELL students who were in the mainstream language arts classes with the case study teachers had been exited from the ESL program at Stonybrook or a prior school, a brief description of the nature of ELL students' needs and ability levels upon exiting the ESL program at Stonybrook is relevant.

The ESL program consisted of a set of classes taught by ESL-endorsed teachers focused on reading and writing in English, and a set of content classes seen as transitions to mainstream or core content including low level math classes and some sheltered social studies courses. Though the social studies credits counted toward graduation, the math classes did not. After the first year or so of high school, ELL students had taken most of the ESL and sheltered content courses, though they may still have lacked a proficient knowledge of academics or English necessary for participation and success in core curriculum classes. The three to five years allowed for high school graduation made time a precious commodity. State graduation requirements drove student schedules, especially for ELL students. While there was some room built into the schedule for course failure and electives, the pressure to accrue credits (specific course credits) for graduation grew as ESL students spent precious time in ESL courses for their first few semesters, collecting few graduation requirements. As the head of the ESL department stated, "(they) don't go into English until at least fourth or fifth grade level (in reading)." The gap between this reading level and the ninth or tenth grade reading level literature and texts used in the mainstream language arts classes of the case study teachers was considerable. In addition, a growing but still developing proficiency in academic English was naturally a challenge for ELLs to be able to participate fully in mainstream classes.

The second element that made the ESL program salient to this study was the ESL program staff who were a possible avenue of support for mainstream teacher practice through consultation and collaboration. ESL teachers stood at the nexus between the worlds of the core curriculum and the ESL program for both core

curriculum teachers and ELLs. Knowledge of instructional strategies, curricular materials, diagnostic assessments, and ways in which to modify mainstream materials to address ELL-specific needs existed within teachers in Stonybrook's ESL program. Knowledge of the students' primary language existed within ESL classified staff and interpreters. This knowledge and experiential base was a rich resource for mainstream teachers. However, in talking to ESL teachers at Stonybrook, it became clear that there were limitations on how much they were able support either teachers or exited ELL students.

At the time of the study, the three ESL teachers at Stonybrook "had their hands full (Martha, p.18)" in serving the 120 to 190 students eligible for ESL services within the program in addition to teaching mainstream courses in other departments leaving little time to consult with other teachers about ELL student needs. The physical space between their classrooms and the those of the case study teachers also seemed to limit opportunities for interaction or consultation. More importantly for this study, the case study teachers did not appear to perceive the ESL teachers as a resource for supporting their work, but only as a resource for directly working with ELL students. Rarely did either case study teacher seek out help or advice from ESL experts on the faculty. This mirrors reports from ESL teachers at Stonybrook who reported that few teachers ever consulted them about ELL student needs, instructional or curricular modifications, or for the use of materials for their ELL students.

Consequences of these Conditions: Case Study Teachers—Their Practice and their Perceptions

The best way to understand the real implications for teachers' practice is to examine specific teachers and their experiences, perspectives, and classroom practice. I

examined two teachers' practice and perceptions regarding the educational needs and challenges of their ELL students, as well as the perspectives of administrators and other teachers on the faculty at Stonybrook in as much as they helped illustrate and corroborate the contextual elements of those teachers' work environments. Each teacher offered a unique, though interestingly, mutually reinforcing look at teacher practice in language arts classes at Stonybrook High School: one through the lens of a novice and the other through the perspective of a 30 plus year veteran.

"You learn how to make shit up"—Heidi, a Novice Teacher at Stonybrook

The first thing one noticed upon meeting Heidi was her energy level---she almost never seemed to be at rest. This vivacious quality appeared to serve her well in her role as teacher in a variety of programs, subjects, and extracurricular activities at Stonybrook. Heidi's undergraduate degree was in drama. Immediately after finishing her degree, she enrolled at another Washington university for teacher education, and became certified to teach secondary level English.

She substitute taught for two years and reported that she, "loved it. I was teaching at one particular school three days out of five...and you get to know the kids and get a feel for it...I liked being on my toes like that (p.74)." However, she could not afford to live without benefits, so she left the profession for a year and worked as an office manager. Missing the intrinsic rewards of teaching, she returned to "subbing with the focus of getting a full-time certificated position (p.75)." She came to the Typfield district to fill a position in a special education kindergarten even though she wasn't certified in that area. Consequently, she went back to school to become certified in special education while she was teaching under an emergency waiver from the state.

The next year, she had a half time position at Stonybrook teaching English and taught the rest of the day in the kindergarten for the first semester. Finally, the administration found a way to offer her a full time position teaching drama and English at the high school.

The administration at Stonybrook had assigned Heidi to teach a variety of courses and levels of students. One low-level Language Arts class was part of a special program for students identified as being At risk of dropping out. In addition, she was assigned to teach classes in two different, though closely aligned departments--English and Drama. Her two Language Arts classes were made up of low to average 9th grade students. These classes included ELL students: one in particular included four ELLs (17% of the class) and was the focus for my observations. She was also assigned a Shakespeare course for honors and college bound students. Her assignment to this array of classes was problematic for several reasons. First, as a novice teacher, the literature suggests (Moore-Johnson, 2005; Sewell, 2002) that having multiple preparations added to the stress and workload of developing a teacher's instructional and class management practices. Heidi's variety of courses also added to her preparation workload, requiring her to prepare multiple lessons for differing student levels and content. Upon reflection she had this to say about her course assignments in the English department and on the lack of curricular guidance, especially as a novice teacher:

> ....on your mark, get set, go. Oh my God, it's the two years of subbing, I tell you. You know? You learn how to make shit up (p.93)... I've literally been on my own and wandering from classroom to classroom since day one, so I've had to make my own program, and do the best I can to make sure it matches state guidelines, but I don't know. Nobody's come to check and tell me whether it is (p.78).

Another consequence of having multiple preparations within a few departments (added to the increased workload of preparing for an array of classes and levels of students) was that Heidi did not have the kind of support that a department and its resulting network might offer a developing teacher. In theory, she could have found guidance and support from the English Department, the Drama Department, and the interdisciplinary team for the special at risk program. However, in reality, her time was divided among these groups and guidance was more sporadic than sustained. As she explained:

> This little cell is my English class, and what I do with and to these children is me and all me. And trying to establish just an English department is crazy...we've got people who teach one or two English classes and then they're social studies, or they're math, or they're another language...I mean...we don't just have English teachers. We've got somebody who teaches for the Academy and then they've got other classes, so trying to create a program is really difficult. There's one teacher who does the 10th (grade language arts)...I think there might be a third who just has one class...and just trying to get together and plan doesn't work because we have different planning periods, they don't give us the same planning period. I know that there are some departments who have the same planning period AND the same lunch (p.77).

Due to the number of students and teachers at Stonybrook and the overcrowded facility, Heidi was one of the teachers without a permanent room assignment. Instead, she traveled to other teachers' rooms during their preparation periods to conduct her classes. She talked about the consequences of traveling for her practice:

> It's misery because I don't have any of my materials in one place...my drama class is over in the band room, so it's not my room. Finding a place for my materials is crazy, and we're not allowed to touch the instruments, so I can't even move around the room the way I'd like to. The only luxury in my schedule is that I teach two language arts classes in the same classroom--it's somebody's science classroom[9]. My first period is in a classroom over in the (other)

[9] Heidi only had the room for two classes because the Science teacher gave her the room during her preparation period, she was originally due to travel for all five of her classes.

> building...so I never beat my kids to class, so I can never set up the classroom for them. Anything I put up is gone by the next day 'cause the other classroom needs to use it, unless I make special allowances to have it be left there (p.78).

From her comments, it seemed that there were two factors that made this aspect of traveling particularly problematic. The first was the direct influence that it had on her preparation time and her ability to have materials at hand for her lessons, ultimately making her question her effectiveness.

> I really struggle with how effective...how I could possibly be effective, because I feel like all I do is teach mini-lessons, because that's all I can do. All I can do is walk into a classroom and say, 'okay, this is what we're going to learn today' and the continuity is pathetic at best (p.78).

The second physical assignment issue appeared to speak directly to the main research question of this study—conditions that support or hinder teachers as they strive to meet the needs of their ELL students. This issue, being assigned to rooms far from teachers who teach either her same subjects or even the same students further limited her access to teachers who might have provided support, materials, expertise affecting her practice with all of her students, especially her ELL students. By keeping her traveling to remote classrooms across the campus, Heidi remained isolated from the teachers who might have assisted her with curriculum or management issues.

In answering the research question focused on the conditions of Heidi's work I have focused on the structure of the school, its programs, and her class assignment. While this describes the nature of her work, it does not illustrate the ways in which Heidi perceived her students, particularly her ELL students and their needs. In the next section, I discuss Heidi's perceptions based on an analysis of interviews with her and on discussions of her practice that followed classroom observations.

Heidi's Perceptions of ELL Student Needs: Heidi Talks about her ELL students

Heidi faced many challenges in her classes, from determining curriculum to dealing with student behaviors to working with students with a large range of abilities and needs. In dealing with the latter, she reported drawing upon her educational background in special education:

> My special education background has been a huge help to that...I feel fortunate in that I hadn't been teaching very long when I got into special ed...I don't think I've taught a class that didn't include, incorporate all kinds of special ed practices...there is nobody who's a teacher now who doesn't practice special ed techniques, the diversity of population here literally requires it (p.89).

Interestingly, her perception of the diverse needs of her students seemed to be limited to those students with disabilities. In multiple interviews and discussions, it became clear that Heidi's perception of the needs of her ELL students was limited and sometimes conflicting. In one respect, she seemed to recognize that her ELL students had different needs than her mainstream students. In a statement given in response to a question about what she did when assigned a class with ELLs she said, "I'm not...even been given any special tools for, 'Okay. Here's what we know will work with this kid. Use this on a regular basis (p.90)." This seemed to imply that Heidi realized that ELLs would require 'special tools,' or at least ones that were differentiated than those used for her other students. She referenced these 'special' tools again when she said:

> I just know that, okay, if this kid is doing this writing assignment, I'm going to check the grammar in a different way. The grammar standard is different. Period. But I've not been given any *special materials* or...(p.90)

This statement also repeats her expectation that she would be 'given' these tools. This particular notion of the receipt of help, information, or materials as a matter of course, and her recognition that this was not the norm at Stonybrook was evident in a statement from an interview later in the year where she said:

> I've had to identify the need and then identify a potential source and go to that source. So, if I work hard enough, I'm able to get some help, but nothing appears magically. (p.138)

However, in reality, Heidi did not appear to actually do this when developing her practice with her ELL students, as she did not access the 'source' in terms of what her ELL students might need. Heidi did find a 'source' to help her with curriculum and instruction within the Language Arts department for her English classes, however she did not appear to feel the same need (at least enough to identify or access a source) in terms of the instructional or curricular needs of her ELL students. Perhaps because she was facing an overwhelming number of challenges as a novice teacher assigned to multiple courses, a diverse array of students with varying needs, trying to develop her classroom management techniques, make curricular decisions, and manage to organize and transport her materials from room to room throughout the day, she did not appear to take her notion that her ELL students might need something 'special' and act upon it either by searching for the instructional knowledge from her ESL colleagues or trying to research and figure out how to differentiate instruction for her ELL students on her own.

Another indication that Heidi may have perceived that her ELL students had different instructional needs than she was prepared to provide might have been an inclination on her part to seek opportunities for professional development to address this gap in her pedagogical knowledge about ELLs. Professional development is cited most often as the avenue of district or school support for teachers as they seek to address the instructional challenges of teaching ELL students (August & Hakuta, 1998; Lucas, 1994; Minnicucci & Olsen, 1993; National Research Council, 1997). In Heidi's case, in

particular, there were two forms of professional development support that she felt were supportive of her need to develop her practice: the ATLAS school reform model being implemented at Stonybrook and Reading Renaissance, a week-long summer institute that deepened her knowledge of reading instruction using the Accelerated Reading materials and computerized assessments that the school (and district) had adopted. However neither directly focused on the needs of ELL students and though they may have supported the development of her practice and curricula for her mainstream students, they did not support or address her need to develop some differentiated instruction for ELLs in her classes.

On the other hand, in light of the literacy needs of the ELL students in her classes, the support in reading instruction provided to Heidi may have benefited her ELL students. Though their particular needs might not have been targeted, these were students who were reading below grade level and may have benefited from the use of 'level books' from the program. Thus, though Reading Renaissance, Accelerated Reader and the Star program may not have addressed ELL needs directly, they may have inadvertently supported Heidi in her reading instruction for those ELL students.

In sum, Heidi may have perceived that her ELL students had different educational needs than her mainstream students, but she could not speak to what they might be and had not made attempts to identify them through collegial or professional development avenues. The next section deals with the second research question: How do high school English teachers accommodate ELLs in their classes and what is the effect of standards-based reform on their accommodations? Essentially, what did the

case study teachers do in their classrooms based on their perceptions of ELL student needs?

Heidi's Practice and her ELL Students

In the previous section, I established that Heidi did not have a clear perception of what her ELL students needed. An examination of Heidi's classroom practices might shed additional light on how these perceptions were reflected in her instruction. I observed Heidi's focus class formally on six occasions looking each time for evidence of her practices for her ELL students. I looked for instances where she: modified assignments, materials, or instructions to make them more easily understood; or drew her ELL students into small or large group discussions to support their development of English language skills. I examined curricular choices and the implications those choices would have for her ELL students. I examined the language she used in the classroom and her style of interaction with students. I also focused on the places in the curriculum or lessons where standards-based reform seemed to be shaping activities and the affect upon her ELL students. Given that her perception of their needs did not give her a differentiated direction in which to pursue their instruction, finding instances of the above was difficult. The following analyses of the six observations should not be seen as an evaluation of her practice, it is only meant to provide a glimpse of her practice in terms of the ELL students in her class.

The language arts class upon which I focused included four ELL students within a class that had 28 students officially enrolled, but only 24 students regularly attended. Of those students 12 were White, the remaining 12 came from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. The class met during second period in a science classroom. Across the

observations, it was clear that Heidi had an easy rapport with most of the students in her class. I observed Heidi and her students sharing personal stories and experiences, and joking with each other. However, there were some characteristics of her style of speech that appeared problematic for her ELL students. Heidi tended to use sarcasm fairly often when speaking to the class as a whole: across observations, approximately 25% of her comments or instructions to students tended to include a sarcastic tone which, according to the literature, may confuse students who are learning English, as the tone denotes a different meaning than the word spoken. For instance in talking to one student about his missing assignments, she said, "You don't want to break your record? Most consecutive homework assignments not turned in (Observation, 5/30/00)." She also tended to use a number of idiomatic expressions that also may confuse ELLs. For example, in one class she talked about "beating around the bush (Observation, 6/6/00)" in their writing. On the other hand, her creative use of drama in explanations and in reading literature aloud may have increased her ELL students' understanding. Her drama background seemed to shape her ability to be entertaining and engaging, especially in lessons involving literature. It also seemed to influence her choice of texts, in that for four of the six observations the students were reading Shakespeare's, *The Merchant of Venice*. Four of her mainstream students were in her drama club and interacted much more regularly and informally with her, providing the bulk of responses during class discussions (approximately 75% of student responses came from these four). Nevertheless, her choice of text appeared problematic, in that the language used seemed particularly difficult for her students, at least half of which (from her accounts) read below grade level. At one point in one lesson, one mainstream student

said upon receiving a set of questions about Act III, "I don't think any of us get it (Observation, 6/6/00, p.4)." If the Elizabethan language was problematic for her mainstream students, it would appear to be even more so for the ELL students in her class.

Activities during her classes tended to be structured consistently, in that certain activities occurred regularly thus creating a stable classroom structure on which students could depend. The class began with a 15-minute Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) period, instituted school-wide, during which students were to read from Accelerated Reader (AR) level books and then complete a reading log in which they wrote a few sentences about what they had read in their books, either in reaction or summation. If a student completed a book, then he could spend the SSR period taking the computerized assessment for that book in which he answered mainly literal questions. Upon passing the assessment students printed their assessment and grade for Heidi and then charted that completed assignment on a chart displayed on the wall. This particular activity seemed to be one that had differentiation built into it, in that if students used their documented reading level to choose books within a close range to that level, they would be making appropriate choices in terms of books. The majority of students (88%) seemed to be on task during this time period, and the requirement that students read at least two books per semester, and that Heidi 'sign off' on whether they wrote in their reading logs appeared to ensure compliance. The AR reading activity seemed appropriate for her mainstream and ELL students, including those who were reading below grade level

The bulk of class time was spent reading *The Merchant of Venice* and answering written questions about one Act at a time. A few students (those four drama students and one or two others in the class) volunteered to read parts of the text out loud, while Heidi provided dramatic readings for several sections each class. In an interview following this lesson, Heidi explained that she used to 'force' students to read, but moved to this voluntary system rather than "treating (them) like little kids (Observation interview, May 6, 2000 p. 2)" Her talent for making the play engaging and entertaining for all the students was apparent. From student comments and questions during the period, they may not have always understood the vocabulary, but through the use of present-day examples and language, Heidi was able to make the general plotline and individual scenes or interactions between characters understandable to most of the students. For example, when in Act III the characters were discussing "four score ducats" Heidi wrote a formula on the board showing that a score meant 20 and that ducats were worth approximately $200. A student then calculated that in the play the merchant's daughter had spent $16,000 which started a discussion about how she was "going through her Daddy's money" and his reaction. Although it was difficult to know for sure if the ELL students understood, they did not take part in any class discussion nor did they ask any questions during the discussion or reading of the play, and Heidi made no effort to provide differential support to them during this whole class activity.

The ELL students in the class sat together at one table and seemed to work diligently on written assignments, closely monitor the text as Heidi or a mainstream student read aloud, and frantically confer with one another when answering questions about the play. When mainstream or ELL students asked for help with these written

questions, Heidi most often directed them to the page upon which the answer might be found. It appeared that most of the questions regarding the text were more literal in nature, serving as a check for comprehension rather than asking students to engage further with the text or go beyond. When I asked Heidi if these comprehension questions prompted review or alerted her to gaps in student understanding, she reported that she did not have much time for review. It appeared that the purpose for these informal assessments was to provide a grade and perhaps a more general check of the progress of the class as a whole rather than providing diagnostic information from which to differentiate or address gaps instructionally for individuals. During this particular activity, Heidi walked around the room helping individual students with the assignment.

Another activity I observed being used in Heidi's classes was a journal in which students were given a prompt, in the two instances observed the prompt referenced a situation in the literary text and then asked the students to apply that situation to one in their own experience and write about it. For example, one prompt was:

> In the *Merchant of Venice*, Antonio was willing to risk his life to help out his friend. Have you ever put your life on the line for a friend? What's the biggest risk you have ever taken for friendship's sake? (Observation May 29, 2000, p.6)

Heidi provided the prompt, reviewed the situation in the text that prompted this question and then provided her own example of helping a friend in a risky situation. When asked about the use of the journal and purpose behind it, Heidi explained that she wanted the students to practice their writing more and that she was "trying to connect them to the story (May 29, 2000,p.8)." Again, this assignment was not modified for any group of

students, however in her explanation and in providing an example, Heidi did appear to be trying to make the assignment clear to all of her students, including her ELL students.

In sum, it did not appear that Heidi was differentiating her instruction, assignments, or materials for the ELL students in her class. Then again, from her interviews it was not clear that she had a good sense of what those needs or ability levels were or what accommodations would have been appropriate for her ELL students.

Heidi's Perception of District and State Policy: Reform Assessments as "a rather unifying beast"

The last part of the question concerning the accommodations made by Heidi for her ELL students has to do with the affect of standards-based reform upon her accommodations. At the time of the study, the state's standards-based reform appeared to be most visible and relevant to Heidi in the form of the state assessments. From Heidi's perspective, there were some policies that did shape what she did in her classroom, though in her mind it was more a lack of influence that stood out. As a researcher, it was clear that even when prompted, Heidi's consideration of policies, programs, and her responses to my questions were devoid of references to her ELL students or the consequences for them. On the other hand, Heidi did point to the state assessment (WASL) as offering clearer guidance on curriculum than had existed before.

> Okay they'll be able to write a five-paragraph essay by the time they're through--about what?...I've been able to get some more out of that---the WASL has since stated that they're supposed to be able to do expository, narrative, and persuasive. So, by God, my kids know those terms. They know what that means. (p.136)

She credited the WASL with adding focus to her instruction in multiple instances.

> There's pressure also from the WASL---that's a big part of what's going on these days, which actually I don't object to. Anything that creates focus in this situation and in this environment is all to the good and it has been a rather unifying beast. I've seen adjustments that strike me as good because of it. (p.135)

As a new teacher, struggling with defining her curriculum and making choices about materials, the lack of clear and specific guidelines seemed to frustrate her. In her mind, the WASL was the 'unifying beast' that had been missing in terms of curricular guidance. The consequences of the WASL as a high-stakes assessment for her mainstream and ELL students did not appear to be of concern at the time of the study. This may reflect the situation statewide because at that time, the consequences for schools in terms of sanctions or rewards for student performance on the WASL had yet to be determined and the accountability measure for students tying the WASL to graduation was still a distant promise.

Experienced, Overloaded and Isolated--Martha, a Veteran Teacher

Martha was a feisty, veteran English teacher who often advocated for her high-needs students even when it resulted in negative consequences for her own career. Her long hours (she arrived between 4 and 5AM to begin her day) and tireless persistence made it obvious that she was dedicated to her students, many of whom were facing their last chance in the district's education system. Martha grew up "always wanting to be an English teacher," went to college in Eastern Washington, taught in a rural town for two years, then got married and moved to Typfield where she began working as a substitute teacher at Stonybrook. The teacher for whom she subbed never came back and she was

hired for that position. She taught for several years at Stonybrook--then went to Greenlake High School for sixteen years. After twenty-two years in the district she was "surplussed"[10] and went to teach at the middle school level. She reported approaching that assignment with trepidation, but found the faculty to be very supportive and community-minded--much more so than the high school level. She regarded this foray into middle school as "the best education training she had ever received (p.2)." As she said,

> I walked onto that campus and within 24 hours every faculty member had dropped by my room to introduce themselves and offer support. I'd been at Greenlake for 16 years, and I didn't know half the staff....Middle school takes care of its people much better than high school. You're less isolated and there's a better support system—maybe in reaction to survival (p.2).

After several years at the middle school, Martha returned to the high school, but this time at Stonybrook. Martha was certified under the 'old rules' in Washington[11], which allowed her to be assigned to teach any subject K-12-- a "universal certification" as she referred to it. In her more than 30 years in the district, she had taught a number of different classes at both the middle school and high school level. However only recently had she been assigned to teach a class outside of the Language Arts area—in mathematics.

Martha was seen (by the administrators at both the school and district levels) as a teacher who reached all levels of students, but did particularly well with 'high need' students. Based on observations and interviews with the other case study teacher and

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[10] Also referred to as RIF-ing, or reduction in force, when a district or school due to a budgetary crisis or drop in enrollment (resulting in the former) must reduce the number of teachers. Generally, teachers with greater seniority remain in a building and the more recent hires are either laid off, or moved to open positions in other buildings within the district if they're available.

[11] There have been a series of changes in certification requirements and requirements for endorsements in the state. Teachers certified after 1987 are required to complete coursework in a specific subject in order to receive an endorsement or to be certified in that area.

the principal, her classes tended to have certain traits: more students in general (her class size ranged from 25 to 39 students); more students at low skill levels (she taught *all* "regular" classes); a greater number of transfers from other schools, suspension, other classes, and the juvenile court system (which tended to translate as students with behavior problems). As Martha reported, "I work well with students who have special needs; I've done it a lot. I'm willing to take on more. They (administration) will come to me and ask me...the teachers ask me (p.16, 17). "

Considering her workload and her level of experience, the type of support that Martha needed as a veteran teacher was different from that needed by Heidi. However, it was clear Martha also longed for and could have benefited from opportunities to connect with other teachers at Stonybrook. As a further complication, it appeared that Martha's stance of not accepting decisions made by the administration without question put her at odds with the principal and district officials who had deemed her a "troublemaker." Consequently, when administrators had to make choices to fill leadership positions or to assign a teacher to a higher status class or program, Martha was not considered.

Though Martha recognized that she was 'out of favor' with the administration, she appeared to purposefully continue to challenge that same administration. She described herself as an advocate for high need students both in the district and more specifically at Stonybrook. She questioned resource allocations for special programs at Stonybrook targeted to attract more college-bound students rather than allocating resources for programs aimed at the larger population of students already enrolled at

Stonybrook who needed to significantly improve their reading skills. She spoke about her conversation with the principal:

> They have nine sections dedicated to (the special Academy program), that's nine teacher periods for one hundred kids (in fact there were less than 90 students enrolled in the program at the time)...we've got 25% of our students reading at 3rd grade level or below...we don't have a reading program. I was told we couldn't because we didn't have a teacher--period(p.120).

At a time in her career when she had seniority and the privileges that might accompany it, Martha had little say in the courses, physical space, or students to whom she was assigned. In a review of the master schedule, she appeared to have one of the most diverse and challenging student loads at Stonybrook considering her class size and the number of high needs students assigned to her. She described the make-up of her classes in this way:

> ...between ESL, transitory populations, plus students coming out of a multi-month suspension...I've got a student who hasn't been in school before this year; A girl who had been out since October on suspension [this statement was made in the middle of February]; another one who had been expelled last year and chose not to come in until second semester [having been court-ordered to either attend school or go to jail](p.15).

One can only imagine the challenge of teaching in this environment, especially considering the diverse array of skills and ability levels represented. She recounted:

> this year-long class, and I had lost four students, so I thought that I would be down to 24; first day of the semester, 15 new students come in from ESL. None of them spoke English very well. So I added fifteen students to that class...they took two of my sophomore (classes) away and gave me the two-hour block. My reading class was supposed to be a year-long, but I got half new kids there. Then I walked into my fifth period class, my best class, and the first day of the semester I had 44 students; they just kept coming... they had collapsed a class; the computer had it under different names...so instead of reaching 32 and putting closed, it kept going. I went with that for five days before they would do anything....and I got it down to 36.(p.15)...In my fourth period class, thirteen are in Connections (the at risk program), four of them are ESL, and five of them are special ed--all in one period.

> So, out of thirty, three quarters are special-problem students. That is tough on everyone (p.17).

Though based on observations of her practice and from accounts of administrators and teachers at both district and school levels Martha was particularly good at serving high need students, she appeared to have reached a breaking point. She was physically and emotionally exhausted. The sheer number of students in her small classroom as well as the large array of needs and skill levels insured that all of the students in her large classes could not be served well.

The physical space of Martha's classroom was a further complication to her practice. She was assigned to a portable classroom that actually stood on the campus of the adjacent middle school, physically separated by a parking lot and a steep hill from the rest of the high school campus. The classroom was small and cramped for her typical class sizes, which ranged from 25 to 40 students. Seating was designed ideally for 20-25. In the class I observed, the average attendance was 25 students, five of those were ELL students (according to Martha) and four of the students were White. The room had windows on two sides and was not well insulated making it less-than-ideal all year. The room was stuffy and uncomfortable in both cold and hot weather. In warmer temperatures, the windows couldn't be opened because the portable was located on the athletic fields of the middle school which meant large numbers of middle school students were noisily playing out her window making it impossible to hear either student responses or Martha's instruction. In colder months, the roar of the heater left students and teacher shouting to be heard.

Martha's physical isolation limited her ability to collaborate with other teachers. Other teachers in the English department were spread all over the campus making daily contact a challenge. Her proximity to the ESL teachers who might have provided some assistance, materials, or suggestions for serving her ELL students were located at the furthermost point on campus from her classroom. The aforementioned existence of the two separate lunch periods and the physical distance between teachers made interactions with other teachers during lunch improbable.

In recent years, Martha had been assigned only freshman and sophomore students. In one interview, the principal reasoned that Martha prepared the students well for the WASL. However, this assignment had been done without her being consulted, which appeared to frustrate her. She had requested a section of Honors students for the past several years and felt that she was qualified having taught summer school classes for the district's gifted program for several years. The principal requested documentation from Martha justifying her assignment to an Honors English class. Martha complied, but was assigned regular freshmen and sophomore English classes. The high needs of the students in these classes were matched to Martha's talents; however, seeing 160 of them per semester was burning her out. She felt an assignment to an Honors English class would be a break and a chance to branch out.

Again, this description of the conditions in which Martha's work was constructed—the assignment to students and classes, her physical space, and the programs that existed to support teachers and students at Stonybrook speaks to the structural, physical, and demographic conditions at the school and program level that

supported or hindered her efforts to meet the needs of ELLs in her class. In the next section, I analyze interviews with Martha to determine her perception of the needs of her ELL students.

Martha's Perception of ELL Student Needs in Her Classroom

Though Martha had considerable experience in teaching high-needs students, it did not appear that this experience included the kinds of differentiated instruction that might be helpful to ELL students. Martha, like Heidi, appeared to lump together her students who had special needs, or low reading levels, behavior problems, etc. Her experience with ELLs and with the ESL program seemed to be less extensive than with her past work with special education teachers around meeting the needs of students with disabilities. For several years of her career, Martha had worked as a counselor for students with developmental delays which seemed to color her perception of ELLs needs. When Martha was asked if she felt like she had support for the ELLs in her class, she replied:

> ...not for ESL. For hearing impaired, in years past...and they're fabulous[12]. For ESL, I have come to recognize that students are the best resource. We have a huge Hispanic population, so I just find someone who speaks the language and get them to interpret. If I run into a real problem, (the ESL teachers) will send someone to me if I say that I have a problem (p.17).

In this statement, her confusion between the "Hispanic population" and the "ESL" population pointed to a lack of knowledge not only about their differing needs, but of a misidentification of Hispanic students as ELL. The ELL population at Stonybrook certainly included immigrant students from Spanish-speaking countries, however it also

[12] The school houses the district's Deaf and Hearing Impaired program with the appropriate staff including American Sign Language teachers, interpreters, special education teachers, and instructional aides.

included Eritreans, Somalians, Cambodians, Russians, and students from a variety of other language groups.

Martha's perception of the needs of her students did not appear to be differentiated by student population—even when pressed, her responses to questions about the needs of her ELL students were couched in terms pertaining to all 'special needs' students. It did not appear from her statements that she regarded the needs of her ELL students as any different from those with low reading abilities, except with regard to the need to translate upon occasion. This perception, in terms of the need for instructions or assignments to be translated into a student's primary language, was only talked about when she spoke of her method for addressing this need—in pairing ELL students with other Spanish-speakers. The statement above where she said that "students are the best resource," and she "just find(s) someone who speaks the language and get(s) them to interpret" is the best illustration of this perception.

In regards to finding support for her ELL students, Martha did mention that if she were to "run into a real problem" she would contact the ESL teachers. However, Martha seemed reluctant to ask for help describing the situation in this way: "They get thirty-five totally non-English speaking people and they are supposed to teach them. It's criminal what's happening in ESL. It's no one's fault. We can't find teachers (p.18)." It was Martha's perception that the ESL teachers and classified personnel (instructional assistants) had their hands full with their own classes and couldn't spare the time to help her own practice. On the other hand, it appeared that Martha thought about accessing their assistance only in terms of direct support for students rather than as a source of support to enhance her own teaching. This may have had to do with the

cultural norms constraining collaboration in place at Stonybrook, the physical constraints on accessing other teachers mentioned previously, or Martha's own professional norm where she tended to 'handle things (p.19)' by herself.

Martha's Practice: Accommodations for her ELL students

During my six observations in Martha's classroom, I focused on the second research question: How do high school teachers of the core curriculum accommodate English language learners in their classes and what is the effect of standards-based reform on their accommodations? I examined her practice across the observations to determine if and when she was differentiating instruction, assignments, materials, and assessments for her ELL students. I also examined her practice looking for instances when she had provided opportunities for English language development through interaction and communication for her ELL students, either in small or large groups or individually. Based on the previous section, her perception of their needs was not differentiated from the other high-needs students in her classes, but the observations allowed me to look for evidence I her practice.

I observed Martha's second period class in which she had 30 students on her roll but only an average of 25 students in attendance across the six observations. In one class, 27 students were in attendance and her earlier comments about overcrowding became very real as one student had to sit at the teacher's desk, as every seat was full. Four of the students were White, and there were five ELL students (according to Martha), though it was not clear if they had more recently been in the ESL program or had been exited for some time. There were a few students who stood out as particularly challenging behavior management problems. One of the students whose behaviors had

proven to be a challenge had been mainstreamed from special education. His need for individualized attention and instruction was proving problematic in that when he wasn't receiving one-on-one attention, his behaviors were disruptive for the rest of the class. These behavioral challenges seemed significant because they kept Martha from providing individualized instruction to other students—the accommodation she reported as her method of addressing different student needs. In fact, Martha did provide individual attention, instruction, and assistance on a regular basis to the majority of the students who asked for help. In the six observations, Martha spent the majority of the class time moving around the room assisting individuals and small groups of students with assignments. Her ELL students also received this individualized assistance, however it seemed that students with disruptive behaviors gained more of Martha's time during her classes.

Like Heidi's class, Martha's class also began with a 15-minute Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) period during which students were observed to be reading their Accelerated Reader (AR) books, writing in their reading logs, and completing the computerized assessments linked to those books. She also tracked their progress with a chart that listed each student's completed AR books. In addition, she had provided additional high-interest, low-level books for her lowest level readers for whom the AR books at their level were perceived to be "babyish" according to Martha. She required students to write three sentences summarizing what they read during SSR and three sentences reacting to the reading in their reading log. Martha did appear to be supporting the different levels of literacy of her students in reading through monitoring and assisting student choices of texts. She also appeared to be supporting their different

writing levels through the use of individualized instruction and templates for writing with clear expectations for grading spelled out. I observed her helping students with writing for a variety of assignments where she assisted them with phrasing, and in explaining the template and how to use it.

Of the six classes I observed, the majority of activities in five of them were focused on writing. Martha reported that she was trying to prepare students for the upcoming WASL, so she was trying to include assignments that asked students to do tasks that were similar to those required by the WASL. Of the five writing assignments, which varied from short reading log entries to longer three and five paragraph essays and even included the design of a student and teacher survey for the Stonybrook community, Martha included attention to the writing process in two of them. In those two assignments, she required students to go through the process of writing a rough draft, proofing and editing, and revisions for a final product. Martha gave the same assignment to all of her students and seemed to accommodate their different levels of ability by helping them with their writing individually or in pairs. Thus, the level and quantity of writing produced by students varied widely in those assignments, perhaps because of the level and variety of needs and the limitations of Martha's ability to provide individual attention to each of her 25 or so students.

Because Martha recognized that she couldn't always provide this individual attention, she also paired stronger students with students who had lower writing or reading levels. In addition, Martha had a former student who volunteered in her class twice a week. In the one class in which the volunteer was observed, she worked one-on-one with individual students who in previously observed classes had been disruptive,

freeing up more of Martha's time to work with her other students and ELLs. Only about 25% of the classes observed included whole-class instruction, where Martha stood at the front of the room and spoke provided instruction to all of the students at the same time. It appeared that Martha's main method of providing differentiated instruction was to individually assist each student to accomplish the same whole class assignment, which seemed problematic due to the size of her class. In fact, Martha's statements regarding her frustrations with her work appeared to mainly focus on overwhelming nature of student needs due to their sheer number as when she said,"When you have 35 kids, explain to me how you individualize instruction (p.53)?"

In terms of assessment of student progress, Martha completed and sent home progress reports for each student every five weeks in which she provided both a student self-assessment and her own assessment of the student's progress. She also included a list of the criteria and a rubric against which each student was assessed. She reportedly saw these progress reports as a "reality check" for students. However, perhaps because her ELL students were completing their assignments with the assistance of the after school tutoring program, this monitoring activity did not alert her that her ELL students were struggling with their assignments. This may have been an illustration of the previously reported "masking effect" of the after-school tutoring program where her ELL students received assistance with their assignments and homework. Perhaps, in conjunction with the large number of students that she was attempting to monitor, both behaviorally and academically, her ELL students' needs did not rise to the fore.

In terms of the affect of the standards-based reform on the accommodations that Martha provided for her ELL students, it seemed clear that though she provided some

individualized support for her ELL students (in fact for most of her students), these accommodations were not adequate to meet the needs of her students, especially in light of the state reform. Though individual or class-level performance data were not available, the percentage of students meeting standard at Stonybrook in the year after the study (the results for this class of students), as measured by the WASL in the reading and writing portions of that assessment was only 42% and 18% respectively. Because Martha was assigned a significant portion of the 'regular' students at that grade level (she taught five of the six 10th grade regular Language Arts classes), this suggests that her students were not being particularly successful at least in terms of the state's expectations for reading and writing. Martha's practice, especially her classroom assessment was observed to have been shaped by the state WASL. She reported having changed her assessment practices. Though I did not observe her prior assessment practices, I did observe her using the Six Trait writing rubric to score her students' assignments and from district and school accounts, this rubric had only been "delivered" at the secondary level recently. However, in regards to her ELL students, it was not clear that she was differentiating her instruction, assignments or materials for their unique needs beyond providing the individual assistance she gave to all of her students. Though Martha had changed the ways in which she assessed students in her class because of the state reform, this did not appear to have shaped her assessments, assignments or assistance for her ELL students in particular.

Heidi and Martha: Questions Answered?

Thus far, this chapter has focused on exploring the first three research questions through a description of Heidi and Martha's perception, practice, and work

environment. Looking across the two teachers, it seems clear that their perceptions of the needs of their ELL students were influenced both by the environments in which they worked and by their own experience and knowledge. The diverse array and level of student need in their classrooms interacted with the challenges of space, curriculum, classroom management, attendance, school political climate (as it affected each teacher's assignment to classes), and professional isolation to impact both teachers' perceptions and actions. Though both Heidi and Martha included ELLs in their description of the diversity of student needs present in their classes, neither offered more specific detail about how ELL student needs differed from the needs of their other students, even when I prompted them to do so. The question concerning what mainstream teachers see as the needs of ELLs and their challenges for teaching them assumes that these needs make themselves known or that teachers will recognize them. This also assumes that other students' needs aren't in direct competition with those of ELL students', as seemed to be the case in observations of classroom practice. In fact, this condition seemed to have a large influence over what needs the teachers were aware of or addressed.

The question concerning the accommodations made for ELL students assumes that the two teachers perceived that a differing need existed. Heidi did not describe accommodations that she made specifically for her ELL students. Martha only mentioned utilizing other students who spoke the language (Spanish in this case) to translate (p.17). However, the ELL students observed in Martha classes were not solely Spanish-speaking. Four of the students observed spoke Eritrean and Cambodian, for example. In neither case were other speakers of those languages available to translate

sufficiently. In observations of Heidi and Martha's classes, ELL students used the same texts as their mainstream peers, were give the same assignments, and did not receive any modified materials or extra assistance. Though both teachers were observed assisting ELLs during written assignments in class, the teachers were giving the same assistance to ELLs' mainstream peers.

In addition, from policy choices made at both school and district levels, it appeared that although they were serious about serving ELLs in the ESL program, the mainstreamed ELL population was not seen as one needing targeted services. No district or school professional development resources were expended on supporting mainstream teachers for serving ELL-specific needs. Strong advocates for ELL students did not appear to exist beyond the ESL teachers who were stretched serving the students within the program, much less the students that had exited.

School Conditions and Policies: Impacts on Teachers' Work Environment

Finally, there were several points that initially stood out in describing the collective policy environment at Stonybrook, and the ways in which this was translated to the faculty as a whole and specifically to Heidi and Martha. Collective policy environment in this study is defined as the collection of policies and decisions made by administrators and teacher leaders (i.e. department heads or chairs) about a full range of elements affecting the school organization---how teachers, students, courses, and physical spaces were assigned; how students had come to be at a school or in a particular "track" or level of classes; how specific curricula or materials came to be utilized; how time was used or organized (e.g. instructional time, "passing time" for moving between classes, lunch time, extracurricular time, etc.); how resources were

allocated, including professional development opportunities for teachers; and a host of other decisions. The final research question speaks to those influences that Heidi and Martha may or may not have perceived to be present or salient to their work, but that did appear to impact their work environment—determining who, what, where, and how much they taught and with what tools or supports. The final research question states: What effect do policies, reforms, and decisions made at the state, school, district, and program levels have on mainstream teachers' abilities to address the needs of ELLs?

Thus far, this chapter has mainly been focused on the school and teacher levels, however the policies created and implemented at district and state levels also impact what occurs and the kinds of decisions made at the more immediate school level.

District and State policies and their intersection with Stonybrook High

Much of the direct and more obvious influence from state and district policies according to Stonybrook teachers and administrators appeared to come from the district in the form of work a focus on state learning standards and pressure to change classroom assessment in order to prepare for and improve student performance on statewide assessments. Professional learning opportunities led by district staff or outside experts focused on improving student learning and performance on the WASL assessments and did not include special attention to working with ELLs in mainstream classes. Topics of these workshops included:

- Teaching Reading Across the Curriculum,
- Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum,
- Teaching Mathematics Across the Curriculum, and
- Using WASL Assessment Formats for Classroom Assessments.

Other district-led workshops were focused on using the state writing scoring rubric on a regular basis in classrooms, or analyzing the formats used on the assessments in order for teachers to prioritize which formats to use more often in their classrooms based on the number of points students could gain by de-emphasizing certain formats and content and paying more attention to others. The influence of district and state reform policies on teachers' work and school environments might then be seen in several elements of school and classroom decision-making. However, these particular formats did not stand out to either case study teacher as particularly supportive of their work, especially in terms of their work with ELL students in their classes. On the other hand, both Heidi and Martha did mention the guiding effect that the state assessments had had on their classroom practice. From Heidi's perspective, where she was searching desperately for curricular guidance, the "unifying beast" of the WASL was a particularly helpful source. The focus on writing for the WASL also seemed to have shaped Martha's practice influencing her choice of assignments and her use of rubrics for scoring students' writing assignments. However, in terms shaping the two teachers practice for their ELL students, it did not seem that the state or district policy environment influenced either their perception of their ELL students or their accommodations based on those perceptions.

CHAPTER SIX
FINDINGS: TWO ENGLISH TEACHERS WITHIN GREENLAKE HIGH SCHOOL

At first glance, the climate at Greenlake High School appeared quite different than that of Stonybrook. Administrators at the school and district level touted its academic and technology programs, successful sports teams, and the large percentage of students going on to postsecondary schools. Because of Typfield's 'choice' policy, which allowed students to choose which district high school to attend, administrators had direct evidence as to which high school was the most in demand, and Greenlake was the school chosen by students wanting a good comprehensive education with the accompanying extracurricular activities.

Comparing teachers' work across such different climates at Stonybrook and Greenlake, one might expect that the ways in which they served their ELL students would also be different. Like Chapter five, this chapter focuses on two teachers-- their perceptions of ELL student needs, their practice and thinking regarding these needs, and their school work environment as well as policies and conditions that shaped it. The two case study teachers at Greenlake, Kathy and Lila were Language Arts teachers and like the case study teachers at Stonybrook, these teachers stood at opposite ends of the career spectrum. Kathy was in her second year of teaching, and Lila was at the end of her teaching career having taught in the Typfield district for over thirty years.

I begin this chapter by addressing the first research question, namely: What are the structural, physical, and demographic conditions at the school and program level that support or hinder these teachers in their efforts to meet the needs of ELLs? A description of the physical environment of Greenlake, the structural and programmatic

conditions, and the demographics of the school population provide a context within which the two case study teachers' work was located and constructed. In order to address the second research question which focused on the perceptions of mainstream teachers regarding their ELL students' needs and the challenges of teaching them, I provide a description of the two teachers, one at a time. Following this introduction to the teachers and examination of their perceptions, I address the third research question: How do high school English teachers accommodate ELLs in their classes and what is the effect of standards-based reform on their accommodations? This section of the chapter focuses on an examination of their practice through analyses of classroom observations. Finally, I conclude with the last research question and an examination of the ways in which policies, reforms and decisions made at various levels in the educational system appeared to affect these teachers' abilities to address the needs of their ELL students.

Greenlake High School: Students, Climate and Physical Space

Greenlake High School appeared to be a relatively good place to teach and to learn in this district as evidence by the number of teachers in the district applying to transfer to Greenlake, the low turnover rate of staff (hiring an average of approximately five teachers a year), and the high graduation rate (approximately 55% on time graduation) and rate of students going on to post-secondary institutions (around 43% for each 2-year and 4-year enrollment) compared to other district high schools. During the year of the study, almost 40% of Greenlake's 10th grade students had met the state's reading standard on the WASL, just below the district average but several points above Stonybrook's students. Approximately 25% of the students had met the math standard

on the WASL, still below the district average but considerably above Stonybrook's average, and almost 39% had met the writing standard, above the district average. At the time of the study, it served about 1500 students in grades 9-12 with a faculty of approximately 75 teachers. Table 2 provides information about the make-up of the student population and the percentage of students eligible for the ESL program and services through the special education department.

Table 4 *Demographics of Student Population: Greenlake High School*

Ethnicity	% of Student Body	Special Programs	% of Student Body
White	65%	ESL	7%
Black	6%	Special Education	6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	14%	Free/reduced Lunch	22%
Hispanic	13%		
Native American	2%		

While a comparison of student demographics is not the focus of this chapter, it should be noted that the percentage of ethnic minorities and students eligible for ESL and special education services at Greenlake was quite a bit lower than at Stonybrook. At 22%, Greenlake's population of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch was considerably less than Stonybrook's (over 40%).

A few years before the study, the school schedule had been restructured in the form of a four by four block schedule to "maximize student-teacher contact time," according to the principal and several teachers. Classes shifted from 55 minutes to 84 minutes in length, creating significantly more time per class. The implementation of the block schedule had been relatively comprehensive with accompanying professional

development for the faculty focused on instructional practice best suited to the extended class time. This extended time in class seemed to allow more time for class discussions, and for a variety of activities to occur within a class period. It also allowed for more time between classes. In observations this seemed to slow the pace of activity in the halls and allow for more time for teachers to speak with students and other teachers without having to rush to start the next class.

Facility

The facility at Greenlake had also recently undergone some changes, as it had been remodeled and updated. The traditional brick exterior and façade remained, however the entire school had been gutted, reconfigured, and wired for internet and telephone connections in classrooms. This allowed teachers opportunities for interaction and collaboration simply because of the proximity of classrooms, especially through assignment of teachers to areas of the building by department. Many teachers had adjoining classrooms with shared areas for meeting and working together. In addition, all classrooms at Greenlake had access to email and computers, to better connect teachers to other teachers, parents, and administrators as well as the student information database (allowing teachers access to student records of attendance and achievement—possibly informing teachers of individual student issues either at home or school).

The district had also located two extracurricular performance arenas adjacent to Greenlake's buildings. The first was the district's sports stadium, which allowed Greenlake's sports teams optimal practice facilities. The second was the district's performing arts facility, which allowed the high school's drama and music programs to

utilize the space for staging performances without facing the same transportation issues encountered by other schools in the district.

Programs: Opportunities for High and Low Ability Students

At the time of the study, administrators reported that Greenlake served its college bound students and its at risk students well and tended to leave the "regular" student to fend for themselves. Greenlake employed two dropout prevention specialists who had initiated several programs targeting students who were at risk for dropping out. These programs included two mentoring programs: one that linked students with adults from the school and community and another called Link Crew that paired freshmen with juniors and seniors to help orient them to high school. In addition, the school had a reading program for its lowest level readers. At the upper end of the spectrum, Greenlake offered quite a few advanced placement and upper level courses in several disciplines. Students in sports and extracurricular activities were well supported, and the high tech computer program (funded by a grant) trained many students allowing them to gain Microsoft Certification and garner large salaries from the region's technology sector right out of high school.

Programs and services that targeted the special needs of particular populations at Greenlake employed teachers and staff members who were able to offer support not only directly to students, but also to mainstream teachers through suggestions based on their experience and knowledge of instructional strategies, curricular modifications, and accommodations for serving the diverse array of student needs in their classrooms. There were several such programs at Greenlake. However from statements made by the

case study teachers, two of these seemed pertinent. These were the programs targeting: struggling readers and ELLs through the ESL program.

Remedial Reading Instruction

The remedial reading program was run by a classified staff member who was also one of the school's drop-out prevention specialists. She had several years of experience tutoring students reading at below-grade level.[13] Though she was not certified, the case study teachers and administrators reported that she had a good rapport with the students. As such, teachers at Greenlake seemed to recognize that she had some expertise in this area. Several teachers in the English department mentioned receiving some assistance from her, both for individual students and for addressing reading issues in their instruction.

One apparent reason for the frequency with which teachers seemed to consult this teacher was the proximity of her room, located within the English wing and adjacent to both case study teachers' rooms. Both Lila and Kathy had gone to this teacher for suggestions for reaching the struggling readers in their classes. She had suggested that their choice of texts for their classes were problematic because of the high reading level required to access those novels, for example Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* used in Lila's class had a Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score of 10.75 (indicating that the book was written for students reading at approximately the latter half of their 10th grade year) which meant her students should be reading above their

[13] The reading program also included a peer-assisted learning element that provided training to seniors to then be matched with freshmen who needed reading help. Seniors received an elective college credit from a Washington university that housed the training program and freshmen received peer tutoring. This took place during one class period and involved 15 seniors and 15 freshmen for one year during the time of the study.

current 9th grade level. Acting on her suggestions would have required some major shifts in practice for the two case study teachers that they did not appear ready to make. In Lila's case, she stated, "I'm not ready to dump *To Kill a Mockingbird*." In terms of the needs of ELL students in teachers' classrooms, this support did seem to address the low reading levels with which ELLs entered the mainstream. However, because the suggestions the reading specialist made required teachers to work with small groups and use different texts, neither of which they appeared to have experience in using, the assistance did not seem to influence their practice.

ESL

The ESL program at Greenlake was staffed by three full-time ESL teachers with considerable knowledge and experience in serving ELL student needs. However, like Martha and Heidi at Stonybrook, the case study teachers at Greenlake reported that they had sought out the ESL department, but only as a last resort to remove students from a class and to directly support students rather than to help them with instruction. Kathy's comments illustrate this.

> I have sent kids to them saying, 'This kid's never gonna pass this class.' Their language is just so . . . they need the ESL and . . . But sometimes they've gone through the program and . . . it's time for them. Like, you'll have a junior in your freshman class because they've gone through the ESL program (p.34).

Teachers in the ESL department confirmed that many of the teachers who came to them for help were asking for a student to be removed from their classroom, while a few others were looking for instructional strategies. The ESL department chair reported:

> Because some mainstream teachers are very receptive and others can't make it up to the standards which is understandable.... So if an ESL kid has problem, then the teacher will come down usually and talk to us and say well, 'what can

> we do?' Sometimes the only solution is to move your kid. The kid is in a math level that is too high, got placed there mistakenly, can't do the work, so you put him in the next lower level, see if they can do the work. If they can, fine and if they can't then, you have a conference with the kid and the teacher and figure out what you can do (p.10).

As in the case of Stonybrook, teachers at Greenlake did not appear to perceive their ESL department as a source of support for their own learning or practice, but rather as a direct support for students. Kathy, the novice teacher did note that the ESL department provided some orientation to the translation services that the ESL department could provide when she said:

> They offer a lot of . . . I think . . . it's more me than them that I don't get more. They offer it. And give us a list of 'These are all the people that we have that speak the language.' You know. 'These are the different languages we can help. If you need help, just let us know.' -, and I think they are there. I think it's more me not really knowing. You know, when you first start teaching, there's so much stuff you have to figure out (p.44).

It is interesting to note that at Greenlake, where the number of students eligible for ESL services was considerably less (at 7% versus approximately 17% at Stonybrook), the case study teachers did not cite ESL program 'overload' as a reason not to access their help. It did appear that with the more distinct departmental structures that existed at Greenlake in which fewer teachers were assigned to multiple subject areas, interactions between departments occurred less often. This might have contributed to the lack of interaction with the ESL program staff around instructional strategies and a lack of a perception of shared responsibility for ELLs who were expected to get their support from the ESL program. In the literature concerning the provision of ESL services and structure of programs, this particular issue often occurs when ELLs are seen to be under the purview of ESL staff rather than a part of the

mainstream student body where all teachers are responsible for their success (Olsen, 1996).

Departmental Support

Greenlake's character had remained fairly constant over the years. Compared to other district schools, teacher turnover was quite low. At the time of the study, the faculty averaged just over 17 years of experience. The school was an attractive place in which to work, evidenced by the relatively high rate of teacher transfer to Greenlake from other district high schools.

One apparent positive effect of staff stability and perhaps of teacher experience was the strength of individual departments. Though not all departments at Greenlake were considered strong support networks for teachers, the Language Arts Department in particular stood out as a place where new and veteran teachers had opportunities to build collaborative relationships; spend significant amounts of time discussing students, curriculum, and instruction; and share professional knowledge about instructional and curricular innovations gained through professional development activities. This department will be discussed more fully through the perspectives offered in the Lila and Kathy's cases which highlight the experiences of both veteran and new teachers within the Language Arts department.

Though the principal seemed to play a role in maintaining a stable and safe high school, the greater role for teacher support appeared to lie at the department level. The administration appeared to hold the Language Arts department in high regard, due to the strength of its leadership, the amount of collaboration that was perceived to be

occurring among faculty, and the ability of the department to attract and retain teachers from both outside and inside the district. As the principal reported:

> At Greenlake, the strong department that is leading the way is the Language Arts department. They tend to team more often, get together a lot, go on a retreat during the summer and work with other departments over the year on writing, reading across the subject areas....the other departments are working on getting stronger to get to where the Language Arts department is (p.22).

This initial characterization, and continued reports concerning the nature of the Language Arts department from teachers both within and outside of the department suggested that this department was particularly supportive of teachers. This sub-climate within Greenlake stands in contrast to the department culture or lack thereof at Stonybrook. In interviews and observations of the case study teachers, the influence of this sub-climate became more and more apparent. The department was a particularly salient support structure for Kathy because she was a novice teacher.

Consequences of these Conditions: Case Study Teachers—Their Practice and their Perceptions

The best way to understand the implications for teachers' practice is to examine specific teachers and their experiences, perspectives, and classroom practice. I examined two teachers' practice and perceptions regarding the educational needs and challenges of their ELL students, as well as the perspectives of administrators and other teachers on the faculty at Stonybrook in as much as they helped illustrate and corroborate the contextual elements of those teachers' work environments. Each teacher offered a unique, though interestingly, mutually reinforcing look at teacher practice in language arts classes at Greenlake High School: one through the lens of a novice and the other through the perspective of a 30 plus year veteran.

Kathy: "When you first start teaching, there's a lot of stuff you have to figure out"

Kathy came to teaching later in life after a career in business where she moved from Sales and Marketing to Finance to computers, a career spanning close to three decades. She explained that she always wanted to teach, but chose a Communications degree in college, with a minor in psychology because "it's the late 70's and everybody went into business." As she explained:

> after two or three years in a job here, a job there, a job here...my husband actually just finally said 'You've always wanted to be a teacher. Why don't you go back to school and be a teacher?'(p.3).

She enrolled in a 5th year certification program at a local private university to become certified in English, with endorsements in speech and debate, psychology, and business (though she was just shy of the courses needed for the business endorsement). Kathy did her student teaching at Greenlake and credits her cooperating teacher and mentor with giving her "real" preparation for teaching and going "to bat for me." After completing one semester as a student teacher, a position in the English department suddenly opened. She received an emergency certification and was hired by the high school to teach Language Arts and Speech, and to coach the Debate Club.

Kathy considered her mentor (who had been her cooperating teacher) to be very influential, and a "master teacher"-- one she could easily go to with questions about students, instruction, or curriculum. She was just starting her second year of teaching during the study and spoke candidly about the worries and frustrations of teaching, as well as the parts that she enjoyed and felt confident about. She appeared to be quite

settled at Greenlake, as she lived nearby and had access to a familiar mentor and a "very supportive department."

The assignment policy at Greenlake seemed to play a large role in influencing Kathy's perception of her work. When asked about how she came to be teaching her classes she replied, "I believe I inherited my classes (p.5)." Kathy's course assignments included:

- 11th grade Language Arts,
- Honors American Literature,
- a Debate class which was made up mostly of students in the Debate Club, and
- for the first time a 10th grade Language Arts class (undertaken during the course of this study).

Interviews with the principal neither confirmed nor denied her appraisal. Though the principal was ultimately responsible for creating the master schedule, he shared this responsibility with his department chairs who had a lot of input as to class assignments. Since the principal was new to the position, it appeared that he had adopted the chairs' recommendations almost wholesale. For her part, Kathy reported feeling less comfortable teaching 10th grade students, but she did report enjoying the curriculum and students in her 11th and 12th grade classes. In observations of her upper-level classes, her banter with most mainstream students appeared to make them feel at ease and willing to contribute and participate in classroom discussions. The more mature and "academic" students were active participants in her activities and discussions. The assignment match, between her subject matter strength in literature, her background in debate and communications, and older students appeared effective. However, Kathy seemed to recognize that she was better matched to some students over others:

> I think my style lends itself more to that (teaching college-bound students). I'm not a babysitter, and I like class discussion, I like the thoughtful presentation of ideas. I think it might be a little more my style and my intent might be more towards the honors (p.17).

In fact, Kathy was preparing herself for teaching more Honors and AP courses because the department chair had indicated that there would be a high demand for those classes in the coming years. The *other* students in her classes, those with lower reading abilities, ELLs, those with less confidence, and less mature students who made up more than half of her classes, including her 11th grade class had a different experience. The emphasis on class discussion in which less than a third of the class was observed participating seemed to indicate that many of the students in Kathy's class were not fully benefiting from this discussion.

In examining the conditions that created the context in which Kathy worked and that determined which students and courses she would taught, I have focused on the structure of the school, its programs, and her class assignment. While this describes the nature of her work, it does not illustrate the ways in which Kathy perceived her students, particularly her ELL students. In the next section in answer to the first research question regarding mainstream teachers' perception of their ELL students and their needs, I discuss Kathy's perceptions based on an analysis of interviews with her and on discussions of her practice that followed classroom observations.

Kathy's Perceptions of ELL Student Needs

Kathy reported feeling confident in her knowledge of content, but recognized that there were some groups of students that she felt less able to "deal with". However, the reality of the Greenlake environment required that she would have a diverse range

of students in at least in some of her classes. Here, Kathy talks about the make-up of her most challenging class:

> My fourth period class—I have a kid from Afghanistan. I have a girl from Lebanon. I have a guy from Somalia, one from Ethiopia. I have three Hawaiian kids in there. I have a kid who is half Navajo and half Mexican. And who else is in there? Two special ed kids. And, oh gosh, I'm thinking of a couple of more...(p.23)

In an observation of this particular class, it seemed that Kathy had not assessed the needs of these diverse students particularly well, perhaps because of her lack of experience with higher needs students. For example, the three "Hawaiian kids" she mentioned were in fact from Samoa and were actually ELLs. In regards to her ELL students, Kathy seemed to have a misperception similar to many mainstream teachers. She talked about the social communication abilities of one student in her class during class discussion and seemed to assume that his academic language was at a similar level of development. Much of Kathy's perception of her students and their comprehension of the texts was based on her assessment of their oral language skills through their participation in class discussions. However, this was problematic because of the participation levels of her ELL students observed in her class. In my observations, not one ELL student participated in a class discussion. On average approximately 75% of the 84-minutes of class time were spent in whole-class discussions, during which less than 20% of her students participated. Because of this emphasis on oral language production and participation, Kathy appeared to have an incomplete understanding of her ELL students' language skills.

Another example that seemed to point to Kathy's incomplete understanding of her ELL students' needs occurred during an observation of her class in which later she discussed one of her ELL student's abilities explaining that:

> She (a Cambodian immigrant) came from a "magnet program" in California-I'm surprised at how low her skills are. I've talked to another one of her teachers and neither of us could believe she came from that other school with a B average--her skills are much lower (p.45).

It appeared that Kathy had a misconception about magnet programs and students' level of language and skills upon exiting such a program. She seemed to expect that a magnet program prepared ELL students for mainstream classes to a greater degree than the level at which ELL students were prepared within an ESL program like the one at Greenlake.

Kathy's perspective on her ELL students seemed contradictory at times. At one point, she said, "actually, a lot of the ESL kids are your best students (p.24)." When pushed on this statement, it appeared that her conception of them as her best students came from their classroom behaviors—specifically their lack of negative behaviors. Kathy described her ELL students by saying they "don't give me trouble (p.42)." In observations, Kathy's ELL students appeared well-behaved, courteous, and less demanding of her attention. Though they never were observed participating in class discussions, they were not disruptive and seemed to be trying to follow along. The ESL department chair further described this characterization of ELL students by mainstream teachers and gave them credit when he said:

> The mainstream teachers have been real perceptive. In no small part probably because the kids are better behaved than some of the kids they have to deal with regularly, they are more motivated. Not all of them, probably many of them. They are hungry, they haven't "made it" yet. They know what it takes to make it, so the teachers are glad to help them (p.17).

In observations, it did not appear that Kathy knew quite *how* to help them. The next section describes Kathy's practice in greater depth through analysis of the four classroom observations.

Kathy's Practice and her ELL Students

In the previous section, I established that Kathy did not have a clear perception of what her ELL students needed. An examination of her classroom practices might shed additional light on how these perceptions were reflected in her instruction. I observed Kathy's 10th grade "regular" English class on four occasions looking each time for evidence that she was differentiating instruction for her ELL students. I looked for instances where she: modified assignments, materials, or instructions to make them more easily understood; or drew her ELL students into small or large group discussions to support their development of English language skills. I examined curricular choices and the implications those choices would have for her ELL students. I examined the language she used in the classroom and her style of interaction with students. I also focused on the places in the curriculum or lessons where standards-based reform seemed to be shaping activities and the affect upon her ELL students'. Given that her perception of their needs did not differ from her perception of the needs of her other students. This did not give her a differentiated direction in which to pursue their instruction, finding instances of the above was challenging. The following analyses of the four observations should not be seen as an evaluation of her practice, it is only meant to provide a glimpse of her practice in terms of the ELL students in her class.

The 10th grade English class on which I focused included three ELL students, constituting 12% of the class of 25. Of those 25 students, 18 were white. The class met

during the first period of the day for 84 minutes. Though Kathy acknowledged that the match between her "style" and Honors students was a good one, she did not appear to recognize that this style was not as well received by other students in her 'regular' classes. Kathy's language in the classroom, especially during discussions with her class was quite rich. However, she tended to use many idiomatic expressions--language that could be deemed less than optimal, particularly for her ELL students whose oral language skills and knowledge of American language and idioms were still developing. In one class discussion she peppered her commentary of the story with references to "the baby boom" and "the red scare". In addition, her use of sarcasm appeared to not be appropriate for students with different backgrounds, with less of a grasp of the written or read material, or for students not familiar with this kind of adult banter. For example, in one observation, she referred to an author's disparaging characterizations of minorities and women as "equal opportunity racism (Observation 3/14/00)." As a result, Kathy's reliance on class discussions left her ELLs and many of their mainstream peers behind, with only about a third of the students participating. Her style seemed especially mismatched to the needs of her ELL students, for whom much of her language was not comprehensible.

Her language use in giving instructions appeared problematic as well. For example, in one class where the students had gone to the library to research a topic, Kathy had given them the guidelines for acceptable internet sources saying, "You have to make a convincing argument for why it's a credible source and worth printing (3/14/00 Observation)." This statement appeared to be the cause for much confusion. I observed multiple instances throughout students' time in the library where they called

Kathy to the computer screen with questions about being able to print information from a web page. It was evident that students did not understand the "credible" criterion. The internet sources they had found ran the gamut from inappropriate content to opinion-based personal web pages.

In addition to the internet problem, Kathy didn't seem to monitor students' topic choices for their project. Kathy had allowed the students to choose from their own interests, which seemed to result in some topics that were challenging to research. Kathy mentioned that this assignment was causing some apprehension among her students as they were confused between a report and research. I did not observe her previous instructions concerning the assignment, however few students had identified a research question, having only chosen a topic. Topics observed included cars, the war in the Middle East, tennis, and particularly problematic for the ELL student—Hmong animal sacrifice which yielded few 'credible' web sources and no print sources within the library. The Cambodian student's lack of experience using the library, the internet, and note cards for a bibliography seemed to leave her wandering without guidance. Some of her mainstream peers had also chosen difficult topics for which to generate a research question and find sources to answer that question, however they at least were familiar with the information necessary to complete the bibliographic note cards that were due the following day. During this library time, Kathy focused on checking the appropriateness of internet sources rather than monitoring student progress. In reviews of lesson plans from previous days, explicit instruction on either completing or the information required for bibliographic note cards was not included. She appeared to

assume her students knew the steps necessary to complete the assignment and left them on their own, not wanting to "baby them."

In contrast to this library observation, Kathy did report that she differentiated her instruction in a few ways for her ELL students. When I asked about what kind of supports or modifications she gave her ELL students on assignments she replied:

> The Somalian and Ethiopian kid I give s-, one of them is just very . . . they're not, . . . they're not exchange students, either; they're regular students here. I give them summaries of the chapters (p.24).

Though it was not clear how much these summaries helped the students in their understanding of novels like *The Lord of the Flies*, with the great number of cultural nuances, symbolism, and new vocabulary. This was an instance where Kathy had recognized a need for her ELL students and responded to it. In observations of her classes, however, the three ELL students did not appear to be referencing these summaries or participating in class discussions. As mentioned previously, ELL students in Kathy's class were not observed participating in any of her class discussion. When prompted about the students' use of these, Kathy did not report following up with her ELL students to see whether these summaries were meeting their comprehension needs.

In another class activity, Kathy asked students to create a character profile, including a butcher-paper drawing based on the characters and quotations from Wilson Golding's *The Lord of the Flies*. Students were assigned to small groups and a character, they then had to find three quotations from the chapters they had read thus far that illustrated the character enough that they could both draw and explain that character. Students within the groups took on roles. In most groups, one student took

on the drawing role, while the other students flipped through the book looking for passages that described their assigned character. The female ELL was assigned to a group including two mainstream girls whom I did not observe speaking to her during the activity. Upon receiving their assignment, one girl immediately started drawing on the butcher paper and the other two alternately flipped through pages in the book and chatted while the ELL paged intently through the book independently, her inclusion as a member of the group appeared questionable. The other two ELLs, boys from Somalia and Eritrea, were assigned to a group with two mainstream students. There was more interaction between the pairs of students in that group, with the mainstream students taking on the role of drawing the character and writing out the quotes on the paper, while the two ELLs paged through the book looking for quotes. The mainstream students in that particular group seemed to take on a helping role, directing the ELLs to particular chapters in which they might find descriptions of their character.

During this activity, Kathy was observed monitoring students' on-task behaviors rather than their specific activities or needs. As long as she observed students drawing or paging through the book, she seemed to assume that they were on-task and working together in their group. In this instance, her delegation of role and task responsibility to the small groups appeared to be successful in the one group and less so in the other.

In another area of the coursework, student writing, Kathy also appeared to be driven by an emphasis on correct grammar usage, with minimal consideration of students' differing abilities or need to provide differentiated instruction. The following statement regarding her expectations for their writing was troubling:

> I do make them write it until it's grammatically correct. Like the one kid from Somalia – he's just 'oh, my God!' 'Yes, you're writing it again.' I've made him write essays four and five times. You really have to work on your grammar – you have to get this right. So, I don't know if I do anything differently to try to teach them, what I expect them from them may be different. But I try to take it on a case-by-case basis – what do they need the most help on, do they have the ideas and just need to work on the grammar, or do they not get the idea. I don't want them to get the ideas first and then we'll work on...(p.25)

This exchange provided a good example of Kathy's lack of preparation or understanding of better ways of supporting her ELL students. In observations, this focus on grammar appeared to be quite frustrating for her students whose work included the elements of the text and ideas that she expected, but required multiple rewrites due to their developing skills in English.

Another area of Kathy's instruction where she reported including some differentiation for her ELL students was in classroom discussions. Though previous paragraphs have documented how she used idioms and sarcasm when teaching (likely a challenge for ELLs). Kathy did attempt to include her ELLs in some of her discussions. Kathy reported attempting to include her students by:

> I probably ask them questions. With 4th period I actually – especially when you talk about the American dream and talk a lot about it. Well, you weren't born in America, right? Well, why did you family come to America? 'It's just different.' Why is this different? So, your family has an American dream even though you're not born in American, right? One kid told me my dad owed somebody money so we had to leave. I said was it somebody who was going to break his legs? No, it was a bank. I guess I try to see if I can relate the topic to...and I guess it may be easy in American Lit because if you talk about being an American – they're here for a reason, so you can relate it. Okay, so now you're in America what do you think? What's it like in your country – how is it different? Do you think we're all a bunch of idiots because we think that we have these great ideals but don't live them (p.45)?

Kathy did appear to value the input from her ELL students, especially in class discussions. However in most observations of her classes, it seemed that these students rarely understood enough of the teacher talk to be able to produce more than single sentence responses to her questions, rather than full participation in the discussion. She seemed to recognize that their viewpoint had the potential to provide a different perspective that would make her discussions with the class richer and more varied. However, both she and her students seemed frustrated when these discussions did not develop in this manner in part because her own language was not always understandable and in part because her students' level of English language did not allow for it. Though it seemed that Kathy needed some assistance in reaching these students, she acknowledged that she had not sought help from even the most proximal source--the Greenlake ESL teachers.

As a novice teacher, Kathy was obviously still developing many aspects of her practice. Her struggles to include students with a diverse level of skills and abilities in her classroom discussions, to grade their writing assignments, and to aid their comprehension of literary texts were acknowledgements of those student needs. While her attempts to meet these needs were not particularly successful in terms of drawing ELL students into class discussions where in only one instance among the four observations did an ELL student participate, they were attempts nonetheless.

The concern that Kathy cited most often in interviews was over what to do about grades and her ELL students, as shown in the following comments:

> I don't necessarily give them high grades just because, but I do tend to – I have a different expectation. I want to know that you understand the ideas that I'm trying to get across, and I also want to know that you can write that idea to me in

> a sentence that I can read that is understandable. I might not be, for instance on an essay, if you don't have volumes and volumes and this eloquently written insight in your commentary, but if you have the idea and you understand the concept, you've met the requirements of the essay. You may not get an A, but I don't think you should get an F just because. I don't know if that's the right thing. But I try to think of what's the best thing for them – what will benefit the most, what will people expect from them on-going? They need to be able to communicate. You have to prove to me that you understand this (p.35).

Grading seemed to be the place in which Kathy's conundrum "lived"--where her concerns about being fair to all her students, while recognizing that she couldn't expect identical standards for all of them. She talked about how she sometimes discussed her students with their other teachers:

> ...if I know them. I'll say do you have so-and-so in class – how is their grade, what do they do, do they write well in your class – what have you seen? Because I want to make sure that it's not me getting fixated on something and if I just saw the other side of it, it would make sense to me (p.35).

However, she seemed to stop short of asking about ways in which she could develop her own teaching or curriculum for addressing the needs of these students. In observations of Kathy's practice and in interviews, it seemed apparent that Kathy did not lack for collegial support at least in terms of her social and emotional needs and also regarding some aspects of her practice. The physical proximity of the classrooms of her English department colleagues cemented this opportunity, where it was possible to: share materials and texts, co-teach and collaborate, observe each others practice or students and meet easily during preparation periods, during lunch or between classes. Kathy could not say enough about her department and the support that they provided:

> This, the department that I am in is very, very, very supportive. I feel blessed to, being around these people. We're great sharers of information and ideas and "I'm having this difficulty," or "I don't know what to do with this. Do you have some ideas? I'm really stuck on an idea of how to do this in this novel that I'm

> teaching." Or, "Have you done anything in the writing process that kind of helps (p.34)?"

Much of this 'sharing of ideas and information' occurred during lunch. In contrast to Stonybrook, both Greenlake's facility and block schedule meant that only one lunch was scheduled. This allowed students and staff the opportunity to use that time for a host of activities without a conflicting 2nd lunch period. Perhaps because of the status of their department at Greenlake, the English department had been assigned an office space in addition to their adjacent classrooms. The space included some elements of a kitchen (a sink, refrigerator and microwave) and was large enough to hold a few tables. For Kathy, the things that stood out were the fact that:

> Most days the department sits in here and eats. We have, uh, other people who always say, 'Well I want to be in this department.' So we have people from special ed, from social studies, from photography. So we have a pretty good group.

She pointed to the fact that her department had a chance to speak together almost every day-- some time to share information about students, curricula, and teaching strategies. This kind of support, though it did not seem to identify or provide instructional strategies, curriculum modifications for her ELL students (or her other students facing reading or writing ability needs), did seem to have the effect of making her feel supported.

One of the most salient ways in which teachers can be supported in their work, especially in their work with English Language Learners is through professional learning opportunities focused on addressing those students' needs. Greenlake teachers had received quite a bit of professional development around using the extended class time afforded by the block schedule. Even newer teachers, who hadn't been at Greenlake for the initial move to the block schedule and the accompanying learning

activities, reported receiving opportunities to work on instructional strategies geared toward the longer classes. However it is interesting to note that neither case teacher mentioned receiving any professional development focused on the instructional needs of English Language Learners or other struggling students. It was also not apparent that Kathy felt a need for this kind of professional development or instructional support. The professional development opportunities Kathy sought out and participated in were focused on teaching advanced placement courses—exactly the students that she did not report feeling challenged by. She did not seek to develop her practice in an area in which she felt weaker.

State Reforms and District Initiatives: Kathy's Perceptions

Though the high stakes pressures for students were still a few years from being implemented, it would seem that teachers might have begun to react to this pressure or at least reported this as a future worry. However, Kathy did not seem to be particularly worried about the implications of this reform or of the accountability measures for her students, particularly her ELL students. Her response to questions about pressures that she felt from her administrators or peers reflected this:

> Isn't this awful – I don't really know if I feel pressure. I think I feel more pressure from myself and what I expect, than from an outside force. Well, I believe that I must meet the expectations that the school has for me, because I'm not told that I haven't. I believe that I have an academic class and I believe that I try to engage students in many different ways. I believe that I meet those expectations as far as what we should be doing in our classroom, but I probably have higher expectations and put more pressure on myself. I don't really feel it from people I work with. I feel very dissociated from the District office, but I like that – I think that should be true (p.56).

Kathy mentioned a few orientation and professional development events, but on the whole, like the other teachers interviewed in the district, her awareness of district

policies, decisions, or reforms seemed fairly limited. Consequently, the effects of any district policies on her practice appeared almost negligible to her--though certainly, from an outside perspective there were indirect influences on a regular basis. The district activities or influences that she was aware of tended to be those events with a sort of district "stamp" upon them, these were reported as a sort of list:

> "I have never taken any of the district things. You know, it's one of those things where . . . I don't know why I haven't. You get busy. We do a lot of different, district things. We have a couple of days before the school, you know, our option days kinds of things. We have a couple of days where we, we focus on departmental across the district. Like all the English teachers will meet and we'll talk about certain things that are going on...when I first got here, they were breaking down the Essential Learnings. And had an outline for, 'Okay, what does that mean for Typfield School District? And what do you need to do in each grade in order to satisfy that (p.55)?'

It did not appear through either observations or interviews that Kathy was shaping her activities, assessments or instruction to address the state standards for any of her students. She did mention some professional development activities focused on curriculum, which according to district administrators were actually meant to articulate the standards across subject matter areas in the high school, and especially the writing, reading and math standards as they were elicited in the state WASL assessments. Kathy's characterization of these activities was somewhat different.

> In my opinion, the district does a lot of, we got something from the district on reading and breaking it out by grade, with actual specific things you can do in your classroom. 'Here's an activity you can do that addresses that.' I think that the district does a pretty good job of that. And during our staff meetings, most of th-, most of them have attached to them something from the district. For instance, we'll do a reading and writing across the curriculum. The last one we had was "How to get math across the curriculum," where we actually had to get into groups of departments and say, "Okay, how could we fit math into English, language arts? What, how could we make a math problem still related to our

> area?" So they do a lot of the cross curriculum stuff; that seems to be most of the focus (p.55).

In sum, in regards to the effects that the state reform had on her accommodations for her ELL students, there did not appear to be evidence in either her practice or her perceptions that there was a significant amount of influence from the standards or from the state assessments. In her previous statement regarding the external pressures she perceived, it seemed that she was not worried about the consequences of the WASL assessment and accountability measures for her students, including her ELL students even though from earlier statements she was not particularly confident in their writing abilities.

Kathy was a novice teacher caught up in developing her practice in a whole range of elements. From her own comments it was evident that she knew she was still developing her practice. The needs of her ELL students did not seem to be making it onto her radar screen. She almost seemed to be waiting for someone guide her development in particular ways or push her to take advantage of the knowledge around her. She seemed to know that she wasn't being successful with all of her students, but she didn't appear to know what to do next. She reported being frustrated with the behaviors and lack of motivation of her 10th grade students, but did not seem to know how to better assess the reasons behind their behaviors or to address them. At the time of the study, and at that beginning stage of Kathy's development as a teacher, she seemed to be focusing on her success with the students she was reaching rather than developing her practice to reach the larger group of students that she was not.

Lila's Case: A veteran teacher at Greenlake

Lila sat at the other end of the teacher career continuum-- nearing the end of her career as an English teacher after more than 30 years. At the time of the study, Lila was ready to leave full-time teaching to spend more time with her grandchildren. Like Martha at Stonybrook, she received her teaching credentials under the old rules, which meant she was licensed to teach all subjects[14]. She spent most of her career teaching middle school Language Arts, but then moved to the high school because the former high school principal knew her from when he was at the middle school and convinced her to move up. In the years she had been at Greenlake she primarily taught honors level Language Arts classes and creative writing. However in the year of the study, she was assigned a regular 9th grade language arts class in which she reported feeling challenged by the needs and behaviors of those students. Similar to Kathy, she felt she had a better rapport with honors students, and reported really enjoying teaching the creative writing class which was made up of 12th graders. The current principal at Greenlake felt she was a strong teacher, however, Lila reported that he had never observed her teaching or her class. It appeared that her assignment to the regular 9th grade Language Arts was not a good fit to her style or expectations, combining to make her final year, "one of her worst years ever (p.13)".

Discussions of this one 9th grade Language Arts class tended to dominate interviews with Lila. Though not explicitly stated, it appeared that Lila's assignment to teach the course most likely occurred because of the change in administration. Her new principal did not seem to be aware of her teaching strengths or talents, and had made the

[14] OSPI and district personnel refer to these teachers as "lifers"--those teachers certified before 1988.

assignment because he knew she was retiring (and would probably just cope with it) and he needed another section of regular 9th grade Language Arts. He may also have had the impression from the previous principal that she was a capable, veteran English teacher when he made the assignment. However, the result was a large class in which most of the students were struggling, and in which the teacher had few techniques in her "trick bag" to deal with these academic and behavioral needs. In interviews, this one class assignment definitely stood out as the most salient issue in her work. The challenges she mentioned most often had to do more with the students' attitudes and behaviors than with their academic needs. However it seemed probable that these disruptive behaviors emerged at least in part because of their frustrations with the latter. She stated:

> The regular class is very difficult. They don't get it, they don't even know what's expected of them in a classroom. They want to talk all the time. It doesn't matter if I'm talking or whatever, it's just very difficult. And they don't appear to care about their grades or learning anything. That really gets to me...I think the biggie is the apathy, it gets to me. I'm not sure, I don't see it that much in the honors class, I see it in individuals, but by and large they are motivated for whatever reason.(p.14).

This particular statement was a good illustration of Lila's lack of experience with, knowledge, and understanding of this student population. She understandably was unhappy with the size of this class, which topped out at 39 students (however, due to attendance issues the average number of students tended to be approximately 25), but it seemed that the nature of the students, not just the number of them was her biggest challenge. She did report that when she asked, she did receive assistance from the administration and her department:

> This is just an example, he (the principal) and Joan[15], she is the department secretary and she helps, and she has done a lot of scheduling and she works in the English office, comes in every first period and she does a lot of grading for me and whatever I want her to do. And that was like, he saw the need and he did whatever he needed to do (p.19).

According to Lila, this resulted in her feeling more supported, and helped with her work load. But it did little to alleviate the instructional or behavioral challenges that she faced.

As might be expected, this class was the one in which five ELL students were placed, compounding both the diversity of needs within the class and Lila's level of challenge. Her perceptions of the issues and needs facing the students in this class and their attitudes and motivation appeared to reflect some of the same assumptions that Lila's colleague, Kathy had made. In the next section, I examine Lila's perception of her ELL students' needs through an analysis of interviews and discussions of her practice following observations of her classroom.

Lila's Perception of ELL Student Needs in Her Classroom

Perhaps because of a lack of experience with the ELL population, Lila seemed to characterize her students' issues as being a one of motivation, of not wanting to work hard, rather than having academic or language development needs. She talked about one ELL student in particular:

> Apathy, I see a lot of that. I have one student who's, I don't think language is a problem, he is I'm not even sure what he is, I don't know if he was born in this country or what. I don't think it's a language issue. I was talking to the reading specialist about him last night. He just doesn't want to work hard enough to do anything. Because of the fact that so many kids seem to for whatever reason

[15] It should be noted that Joan did in fact have a part-time position helping the English dept. chair, however for the most part, she was a retired journalist who volunteered her time in the department, especially to help publish the school newspaper.

> they won't read. With my honors class, and actually other regular classes I've had too and I assigned Chapter 9 or something, and most of them won't read it. So many kids were not reading it, it's an exercise in futility. So I'm reading it to them and he still doesn't get it and he gets bored and so he just tunes out (p.16).

According to the literature (Short,1998; Olsen,1996; Hakuta et al,) this characterization of ELL students typifies the teacher who is not familiar with language development or ELL student needs and stages. In addition, these characteristics can be seen in mainstream or ELL students who struggle with the process of reading and writing.

Lila commented further about her struggles with ELL students in her class and her internal issues with holding different standards for them, especially in grading.

> They had English as a second language and that's very difficult for me – for all of us. Often they're very bright, they're language skills are very poor and I don't know how to help them – it's syntax, it's that kind of thing and there's only so much you can do and then they have to do it. And I always struggle with that because in grading I feel like if they're going to leave here and I'm saying they're a good writer, then they have to get that, otherwise they don't have a command of the English language on paper. So I really struggle with that. I've had kids come in after school sometimes and help them...And it's not the ideas that they have problems with, it's the syntax mainly of the language (p.19).

From this statement, it appeared Lila did recognize that there were some language issues with her ELL students, but though she stated that she didn't know how to help them, the bigger frustration for her appeared to be the problem with grading. Along with Kathy at Greenlake, and Heidi at Stonybrook, Lila also had some conflicted feelings in her grading of her ELL students. A lack of clear guidelines on grading seemed to cause an issue for a few teachers. However, it seemed that the department

focus did not tend to be targeted at the needs of ELL students or those 'regular' students who were at lower skill levels in reading or writing.

Lila's perceptions of her ELL students and their needs, in sum, were similar to those of the other case study teachers. Her interviews or conversations following observations indicated that she did not recognize that it was necessary to address her ELL students' needs any differently than the other students in her class. In the following section, I examine Lila's practice through four observations of the same regular 9th grade Language Arts class looking for accommodations she might have made for her ELL students. I looked for instances where she differentiated her instruction for her ELL students; where she addressed their needs to develop their English language through individual, small or large group discussions or interactions; or where she modified assignments, texts, or curriculum materials to scaffold their learning. In the previous paragraphs I discussed some ways in which she stated that she structured her lessons in this class differently based on their ability level or in her words, "their apathy." However, this was what she did for the whole class based on her assumptions about their motivation level and needs for increased time spent on grammatical structures and syntax.

Lila's Practice: Accommodations and Differentiations for her ELL Students

I observed Lila teaching her "challenging," 9th grade Language Arts class four times within a span of one month. The class met during the last period of the day. Of the 25 students in attendance, 19 were white and four of her students were ELLs. During the observations, the class was engaged in reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, writing paragraphs in response to prompts, reading books during Sustained Silent

Reading and giving oral book reports, demonstrating correct spelling and definitions of vocabulary words on weekly tests, and completing grammar exercises from a decades-old grammar textbook. The students were also observed writing a final draft of an essay entitled "Things that are important to me."

In examining Lila's practice and her comments following observations, it seemed clear that much of her willingness to address individual student needs was dependent on her perception that they were motivated to learn. In observations of several of her lessons her comments to students seemed to reflect her frustration with their lack of engagement. For example, after informing the students that it was time for the spelling and vocabulary tests, she said, "How many of you *actually* studied for this test (observation May 23, 2000)?" In an interview after this class, she spoke of how student motivation influenced her drive to help them, especially in terms of pursuing outside assistance:

> I think it depends on the kid. If the kid is really trying and is struggling, then I will go and get help for him. If the kid doesn't give a hoot, you know, I'm not as inclined to go out of my way to help him (p.21).

Lila complained about this lack of enthusiasm and motivation from her students, but in observations of her class, her comments to students exuded a disinterest in what they had to say when they did attempt to engage in discussion. In one observation, upon presenting the writing prompt, "He who angers you, conquers you," she then asked students, "Who can tell me what that means?" When three or four students began discussing the prompt in answer to her question she stopped them abruptly saying, "I'm not asking you to talk about it—we're going to write about it—think then write

(Observation May 23, 2000)." Her ELL students might have benefited from a brief discussion of this prompt, as it might have provided them with context-specific vocabulary and allowed them to either orally try out their own ideas or receive some from their mainstream peers.

Lila had constructed a Language Arts class that heavily emphasized writing both in terms of grammar instruction and in the number of activities that involved writing assignments. She had students keep a writing folder with several entries per week. The writing prompts she assigned appeared to be quite effective in engaging students in writing. Out of the four observed classes during which at least a ten minute period was spent around these prompts, only one student was off task during that portion of the class. However, her ELL students, though engaged, did appear to be struggling during these writing periods, especially in the larger essay assignment. Her expectation though was that students "were responsible for proofing and editing themselves." She "expected them to gather in the information and apply the rules from her grammar lessons (discussion following observation May 30, 2000)." This final assignment seemed to be a source of frustration and apprehension for her ELL students whose earlier writing assignments had been corrected significantly with many iterations (according to Lila, one student had done five drafts of an earlier essay).

In an observation of the students in a computer lab where they were expected to complete their final draft, it was not clear that when given the responsibility for proofing and editing their own essays, the students were capable of proofing their own work. Though three or four students had hand-written copies of their essay that they were typing into the computers, at least ten students were composing their essays

directly at the computer, indicating a lack of a proofed or edited first draft. Lila's *instruction* around writing did not appear to address her students' lack of ability to apply grammatical rules in a scaffolded way. Lila, in talking about her frustrations mentioned that she had gone to the reading specialist for suggestions. Lila mentioned the advice, but then talked about how hard it was to do in her classroom.

> As far as writing goes, she (the specialist) takes it just a little piece at a time and spends quite a time on that. Like coming up with a thesis or something and she'll go around a make sure each one of them has a thesis, and just takes it in smaller blocks....but it was difficult to do because of the kids I had in there. It was real difficult to work with individuals during class...Mine wasn't a large class – it started out larger, but it got down to around 25, which is not a huge class (p. 27).

This suggestion, if she had taken it, would have indicated some differentiation based on individual student needs and may have helped her students, her ELL students and her other struggling writers. However, in observations and in her statements in interviews, it appeared that she chose to continue providing instruction through leading the whole class through grammar exercises on discrete grammatical rules, rather than helping her students apply those rules to their writing, while completing writing assignments in her class. She was observed giving individual assistance to students in a few instances, however those occurred only while her students were completing grammar exercises rather than the larger writing tasks, doing little to assist students in transferring the grammatical rules to their writing.

Her methods for addressing struggling readers seemed to follow suit. Though Lila recognized that her students were struggling with reading, especially when assigned to read on their own, she still seemed frustrated by their "squirmy" behavior

when she assigned chapters for them to read individually. In observations of this class, it seemed evident that those students who wanted to 'sit' (rather than engage in the reading) during silent reading of the class text, *To Kill a Mockingbird* were having difficulty with the reading level and vocabulary of the book. Lila did talk about her students' low reading skills and her frustration with having them read on their own. As a result, she had adopted a strategy of reading the chapters aloud in class. This did not appear to address her students' need to improve their reading skills, and just seemed to frustrate her when they became bored listening to her read for 45 minutes to an hour. Lila mentioned consulting the reading specialist to help her with the students who were struggling with reading.

> We did talk some (the reading specialist). She said, of course I was in the middle of '*To Kill a Mockingbird*' at that time when we talked, and she said I wouldn't do that book with at risk kids because they just don't get it...They may not be able to read it, some of them, but if I read it to them and talk about it as I go through, and that's why it takes so long – if I just read it, it would not be worth that much. But we do talk about some of the main concepts and I think that there are some things in that book that are just life skills, and those kids of all need those life skills...I'm still not sure I'm ready to dump *To Kill a Mockingbird* (p.26).

Though in this statement Lila talked about discussing the main concepts in the book, observations of her practice revealed that this was rare. In the three observations in which she read from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, discussion of the book occurred for approximately one minute per 20 minutes of reading and seemed to cover literal references to the text. The purpose for these discussion breaks from the reading seemed primarily to keep students on task rather than to dig deeper into the meanings or situations in the story. During these discussions, her ELL students appeared to be

listening, but did not participate leaving Lila seemingly unaware of their level of comprehension.

Though Lila reported that her students were poorly behaved, during interviews, my observations revealed that they were quiet and compliant. In the observations in other case study teachers' rooms, the sustained silent reading (SSR) period tended to include disruptions, whispered conversations, students moving about the room sharpening pencils, getting books, papers, etc. However, in Lila's room you could have heard a pin drop. During class discussions, students raised their hands to answer and ask questions, rarely offering a comment without permission. Lila's class appeared to be quite structured with minimal latitude given to her students.

In having chosen Lila as a case, there was a complicating factor--her proximity to retirement--that might explain some of her implicit reluctance to learn new methods to address her students' needs. In observations of her upper level classes, her manner and interactions with students changed considerably. These were students she understood, ones who were motivated by grades and wanted to please the teacher. Interestingly enough, the extreme emphasis on grammar observed in her 'regular' class was not observed in her honors classes, especially as a discrete activity devoid of literature or writing contexts. Having observed her Honors 9th grade class in order to examine briefly how this class differed from her other classes, I observed a writing assignment that appeared particularly engaging for her students—writing an autobiography. I asked Lila why she had not given this same assignment to her regular 9th grade students. She replied, "These guys—their home-lives are pathetic. I'd never get it from them (discussion post observation May 30, 2000)." This statement seemed to

reflect Lila's assumptions concerning her students and seemed to shape her choice of curriculum, her focus on grammatical rules and frequent use of textbook exercises, and her style of interaction with her students which included little individualized assistance or attention based on her assumptions concerning their lack of motivation. Lila's experience and knowledge of the writing process, grammatical rules and structures, and literary texts appeared to be extensive, however the students in this class did not seem to be benefiting from this. For her ELL students, this class epitomized a "sink or swim" mainstream environment.

Although professional learning opportunities might have helped Lila address her struggling students' needs, she did not seek this kind of help. Her proximity to retirement seemed to keep her from taking on the hard work of changing elements of her practice. She stated:

> I'm kind nearing the end of my career, so I probably won't take anything. No, I mean things that we do as a staff or something I'll do, but as far as by going out just to get credit, no (p.32).

In addition, it seemed that her perception of professional development also seemed to influence her decision not to pursue these opportunities--the way in which she characterized professional development as just to "get credit" didn't reflect a belief that these activities were a support or would help her face these challenges.

Thus far, Lila's case has dealt with the research questions regarding teacher perception of ELL student needs, the accommodations made based on these perceptions, and the conditions and policies that shaped teacher work at the school level. Next I examine her perceptions of the larger policy environment and ways in which it might have influenced her work.

Lila and the State Reform: Influence on her Practice

Lila, like other case study teachers, spoke about the WASL when asked about pressures she felt:

> New pressures? There is a lot of pressure to do the WASL which isn't all bad. Because it's pretty basic stuff and it's stuff we should be teaching anyway. I don't like the assumption that we are teaching to a test, because we are not. We are teaching skills and the skills will be tested on the WASL. So I don't really feel a lot of pressure there. A lot of it is stuff I do anyway. A lot of this stuff has just been part of our curriculum for a long time. I don't, and maybe this is because I am so old and established, I don't feel any pressure to do anything. I just think that by and large I am respected for what I've done and I don't feel a lot of pressure...Just different skills that they would need on the WASL, which I think was just good teaching (p.40).

Lila's perception of what the WASL asked of her students appeared to be incomplete, or at least a bit misinformed. Like many teachers at that point in time, she had not received results from the WASL for any of her students, or at least had not analyzed those results. Certainly, her 9th grade students had not taken the WASL and her 10th grade students would not take the WASL until the end of their 10th grade year. However, at the time of the study, Greenlake students had not been performing particularly well on the WASL. Only 39% of the 10th graders taking the reading portion reached standard and 22% met standard in writing. Though the accountability measures for students weren't set to be implemented for a few years, these WASL results would seem to indicate that pressures to improve would be present. However, Lila's perception of the WASL as a pressure remained as an abstract, future pressure with little concrete knowledge or details to inform her practice, especially in terms of her ELL students. Consequently, though she was aware of the WASL and the fact that it was a pressure for teachers and should be addressed, her conception of what that

actually might mean for her students, especially for those whom she struggled to serve or for her practice remained less of a reality. This stance may have been influenced by Lila's impending retirement and the fact that she was not slated to teach a low level class in the last year of her work.

Perspectives Across the Two Teachers: Lila and Kathy

In light of the perspectives shared by these two teachers, it seems necessary to pull back from the classroom and briefly examine the larger context in which these classrooms existed—the department, which acted as a sub-climate, and the school where many of the decisions that shaped the work and classrooms of these teachers were made. The final research question includes this focus on the school level and those programs and departments within as well as on the two case study teachers, and the larger policy climate at state and district levels as they were interpreted.

There appeared to be one set of policies that seemed particularly salient within the Greenlake environment. This set of policies determined the assignment of teachers to courses, students, and physical space. It is important to note that though these policies have the possibility of greatly enhancing the learning experience of both teachers and students, many of them fall short of doing so to the extent that they might, especially in terms of the needs of ELL students at Greenlake. However, these policies appear to have strengthened both the collegial environment and the individual teaching environments within the English department.

Assignment and the Department as Supportive for Teachers

Assignment here refers to the set of decisions and more informal school-level policies that have arisen around the assignment of teachers to students or groups of

students, to courses or departments, to physical spaces (or classrooms), and to other activities (i.e. extracurricular clubs, programs, coaching positions, etc.). Assignment also refers to the decisions that determine where students will be placed, in which "tracks" or at which academic levels (i.e. vocational or technical, college-bound, honors, arts, etc.). Scheduling is another aspect of assignment, in fact it appears as the enactment of these decisions. This section includes a brief discussion of two areas of assignment which appeared to affect the working environment of Greenlake and contribute to the strength of the Language Arts department most saliently: the assignment of teachers to classes and the assignment of teachers to physical spaces. It should be noted that though the teachers in the Language Arts department reported feeling supported, this support could be characterized as fairly affective in nature beyond the sharing of materials or suggested activities. In addition, neither case study teacher ever mentioned receiving support in regards to their ELL students.

In observations and interviews with teachers across departments, as well as through a review of teacher schedules and assignments, it became apparent that the principal (and his predecessor) kept the degree of out-of-field assignment to a minimum. By degree, I refer to the adjacent nature of the subjects assigned. For example, Language Arts teachers tended to be assigned to related subjects or electives, like British Literature or Drama or Debate. A Science teacher might be assigned to teach one section of Algebra or a lower level Math class. This appeared to limit the amount of new preparation for the class, as well as the unease that many teachers reported when being assigned a course outside their field of expertise. Both case study

teachers seemed confident in their curricular knowledge, even if they were less so with the pedagogical knowledge necessary to reach their high needs students.

Administrators at Greenlake also seemed to pay attention to a second element of assignment-- the assignment of teachers to physical space within the building. Teachers within the same department tended to be assigned to adjacent classrooms, or at least classrooms in the same section of the building. Though this might have seemed like a trivial and traditional structure, when compared to the haphazard assignment of classroom space at Stonybrook, the opportunities that were afforded through this arrangement at Greenlake become readily apparent. For example, teachers in adjacent or adjoining rooms were able to share materials saving precious curricular resources. Teachers had the opportunity to more readily share strategies, and had easier access to observations of others' practice. At the very least, it allowed teachers the opportunity to align curriculum or watch each other's classes. While Greenlake teachers seemed to take this ability for granted and did not mention this as a source of support, the lack thereof at Stonybrook prompted this listing of physical proximity as a supporting factor. This physical proximity, in concert with the other assignment policies appeared to be a factor that contributed to the strength of the English department.

District and State Policies and Greenlake: Impacts on Lila and Kathy

The kinds of pressures, decisions, and activities that occurred in classrooms tended to be influenced *indirectly* by policies and priorities set at state and district levels. Teachers and to a greater extent, students, did not recognize direct policy effects, but decision-makers at school, district and state levels shaped decisions about a wide range of program, facility, curriculum and instructional elements with their

interpretations of policies. It's important to understand the most salient policies as they are the ones most likely to be on teachers' and administrators' radar screens.

One activity observed during the course of the study was reportedly prompted by the state reform and had to do with aligning high school courses with the state performance standards or EALRs. However few teachers spoke of workshops or prolonged professional development activities focused on that kind of work. Teachers and administrators seemed to think of alignment with the state standards as a kind of "referencing" activity, making sure they could point to some activity or portion of their lessons that covered the standard in question. This work did not appear to be thought of any differently than other professional activities in a teacher career.

Though Kathy and Lila both appeared to feel little pressure to improve their student test scores through changes in curriculum, classroom activities, or instruction, at least at the time of the study, the Principal seemed much more aware of the immediacy of the pressures and pointed to activities that his faculty had initiated:

> It's because of what's coming down the pike. On the WASL, I think in my building – I've got my results here someplace – but I'm looking at four for proficiency – 22%...that's how many kids would get a certificate in proficiency of mastery at this point. And that's to graduate? We have to meet a standard by a certain date and I think what it's done is it's focused people, and I didn't think this was going to be the case to some extent this quickly. But basically, it's a six-year target away, but you're seeing people saying 'you know, I'm having my departments analyze the WASL scores of what we can do better, what we need to improve on, where we need to realign the curriculum, what we need to do – maybe we need to add more of something, take away something to be able to have these kids meet these standards.' People have a sense of urgency. People say 'I don't want to be in a high school that nobody can pass the WASL, nobody can get a certificate of mastery.' It's a scary thought (p.18).

While the principal noted this sense of urgency in his staff, it appeared that the administration was much more aware or worried about this approaching WASL graduation requirement than the teachers. Much like those teachers in elementary and middle schools had reacted at earlier stages of the reform, the high school teachers at Greenlake did not appear to realize the full implications of the WASL for their mainstream students, and especially for their ELL population. Perhaps it was in hope that the state government would back down once the full implications of so many students not graduating were realized (and what to do with them). At any rate, though the teachers spoke of the pressure, and some of it could be seen in the activities involving classroom assessment, the sense of urgency mentioned by the principal was not entirely apparent.

In looking at ELL students in mainstream classes, it would seem that this pressure would be even greater, and that teachers would be aware of this and address the growing need to reach the state standards. Nominally, the district appeared to be supporting teachers through professional development activities to address new forms of assessments and "raising the bar" through improving curriculum by aligning it with the more rigorous performance and content standards. The school appeared to be pushing and supporting teachers to change their practice and take advantage of the increased instructional time of the block schedule, both through professional development and through this change in structure. The ESL program seemed to support ELL students in their need to acquire English and academic skills. What became apparent was that the ESL program and the students served by it, operated under the gun. Students needed to get those skills and exit the program if they expected to

graduate. Few ESL classes counted toward graduation, so the sooner a student could exit, the sooner they could begin acquiring credits. The chair of the ESL program explained the situation this way:

> (To get through the ESL program) It's usually going through the classes but it's also driven by the kid knows that he or she is say a sophomore, because you get moved by credits, you don't get moved by seat time or face time. So once you are a sophomore and you want to graduate, you know you've got to start taking some of the mainstream classes. Okay, or a junior, you definitely have to. So the kid will sometimes self-exit or choose to take classes that they know they need to take to graduate (p.14).

As previously discussed in earlier chapters and in the literature concerning this population, this, together with the eligibility requirements of the program, pushed students out of ESL classes into the mainstream, where teachers seemed both unaware of and unable to meet their unique needs.

CHAPTER SEVEN
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was designed to examine the ways in which two mainstream teachers in each of the two schools thought about and interacted with their ELLs and how the state, school, and local contexts influenced them. The two schools had different demographics, standing in the district, leadership, structures, facilities—the list of differences in climate, policies, and conditions at each school was long. The support structures for the teachers at each school also initially appeared to be quite different. However, in terms of teachers' beliefs and actual instructional practice, and the ways in which that practice was supported, ultimately what occurred in their classrooms for their ELL students seemed fairly similar. In this final chapter, I focus the discussion around the research questions across the two schools and pairs of teachers integrating more fully conditions and policies in place at school, district and state levels and the consequences for teachers' work with ELL students.

The organization of this final chapter continues the focus on the research questions but emphasizes instead their intersection and the main conclusions coming out of the two pairs of questions: first, discussing the main point from the questions regarding teachers' perceptions and practice; and second, discussing the two main points from the questions concerning how the conditions and policies at the school and district levels seemed to affect these. This discussion crosses school boundaries and includes all four teachers examining the differences and similarities that came to light.

Perceptions of ELL Needs and Teacher Practice Across Teachers and Schools

The literature on ELL students suggests that they have several academic needs: 1) English language development, 2) subject matter knowledge and skills, and 3) learning strategies with which to acquire the former and succeed within the educational system (Chamot, 1994; Gandara, 1997; Harklau, 1999; Lucas, 1994; Minnicucci & Olsen, 1992; Olsen, 1996; Short, 1999). The primary need for ELLs is obviously English language development. However, as posited by Vygotsky (1962), language development is also important because of the critical role of language in learning and thinking. It is crucial to both social interaction and intellectual growth. ELL students need to develop an array of academic language skills and functions, including reading both narrative and expository text, writing in different content areas, and using language to inform, explain, analyze, classify, and evaluate what is being studied in school. According to Chamot (1994), secondary teachers expect that most of their students will be able to use language functionally for learning in different subject areas. In this section, I briefly address the perceptions and practice of the four teachers in light of these three needs.

Language Acquisition Needs of ELL Students: Teacher Language and Classroom Participation Structures

Classroom discussion appeared to be an instructional method used fairly often in at least three of the case study teachers' classes. Discussion can provide opportunities for ELLs to produce and expand their knowledge of English through interacting with and listening to native speakers of English and negotiating meaning through spoken discourse. Krashen (1981) labels this activity developing language through an

"authentic communicative purpose." However Harklau (1999), in listing the elements of a teacher's talk that help ELLs acquire language, notes that these don't tend to be used in mainstream classrooms and that mainstream teacher talk may actually include elements that hinder ELL understanding such as the use of puns, asides, and idioms. Elements that help ELLs' understanding include reducing the speed and complexity of a teacher's language, increasing repetition and pauses, and contextualizing abstract concepts through nonverbal cues, pictures, demonstrations or gestures.

The case study teachers differed across these elements. Heidi, for example, did contextualize abstract concepts by using her drama background to act out and demonstrate situations and scenes from the play while she read it aloud to her students. Kathy's language use in the classroom was problematic because of the frequency with which she included asides and idioms making her explanations and instructions difficult to understand for her ELL students. Martha seemed to use repetition, pauses and a slower speed of speech in her classes in order to increase her students' understanding, though it seemed that she did this to address all of her students rather than targeting her ELLs. Much of Martha's interaction with her students was on an individual basis rather than using whole-class discussions. Lila's use of class discussions seemed less an opportunity for students to develop their authentic communication skills and more of, as Harklau put it, "a means of assessing comprehension (p.44)." Across all four teachers, the opportunities for ELL students to produce discourse was limited to word and phrase-level responses that could not be deemed authentic negotiations of meaning that further developed their language.

Across the four teachers, it seemed that the need for their ELL students to 'learn

English' was perceived to be quite important. However, it was not always apparent that they realized the array or depth of language development that their students required in order to participate in assignments and activities in their classrooms. The case study teachers, perhaps because of their lack of experience with or knowledge of English language development, reflected the assumptions posited in the literature that mainstream teachers do not have an accurate understanding of ELL academic language needs (Harklau, 1999; Olsen, 1996; Short, 1999).

Though all four teachers allowed for ELLs development of their English language through providing examples of spoken English from both the teacher and from their mainstream peers, the language used in classroom discussions and instruction did not seem to take into account ELLs' language development. Opportunities to practice or produce English within the classroom were available, but seemed limited. Thus, though there was an abundance of English being produced in these classrooms, little of it was coming from ELLs. Thus, the ELL students had little opportunity to build their English language in terms of production.

Building ELLs Subject Matter Knowledge and Skills: Teacher Practice and Accommodations

Another major need for secondary ELLs identified by the literature is subject matter knowledge and skills (Gandara, 1997). The diverse array of prior academic knowledge that ELLs possess and the resulting gaps in this knowledge require high schools to build both grade level content knowledge and skills and the prior knowledge that is the basis for that new knowledge. The linguistic demands of subjects such as social studies and literature make these subjects particularly difficult. Prior knowledge

of the American culture also plays a part in the structure of curriculum and learning in these content areas. High school teachers tend to build instruction and utilize materials based upon prior cultural knowledge obtained implicitly through living in the culture and explicitly in the educational system (Olsen, 1996).

In this study, class discussions regarding the literary texts used in three of the case study teachers' classrooms appeared to rely upon this implicit knowledge of American culture. Kathy and Lila's discussions of *Lord of the Flies* and *To Kill a Mockingbird,* and Heidi's use of *The Merchant of Venice* seemed rife with cultural allusions. Though Heidi interpreted and explained some of the language used in Shakespeare to improve the level of understanding among her mainstream population, her explanations tended to utilize present-day illustrations or examples from American culture that seemed to leave her ELL students confused. Kathy's questions regarding the symbolism in *Lord of the Flies* and the "beasts of the water and the air" and what those might refer to, kept her ELLs and other students looking for literal explanations as evidenced by their answers—"crabs and parachutes." Again, the perceptions of the case study teachers regarding the needs of their ELL students in this area, were not based on the particular needs of ELLs, but seemed to be more generally focused on what their mainstream students needed. They seemed unaware that their ELL students might need additional or alternative instruction.

Because this study focused on Language Arts classrooms, the subject matter knowledge *and* skills discussed above seemed to be linked in important and challenging ways for ELL students—in order to access the content they had to be able to both understand and utilize the language in written and oral presentations.

Learning Strategies for ELLs: Teacher Practice

The final area of need important for ELLs in high schools is the need to develop effective learning strategies for both content and language (Chamot, 1994; Lucas, 1994; Minicucci & Olsen, 1992). This particular need seemed one that perhaps all of the students in the case study teachers' classrooms, mainstream and ELL, could have benefited from. Many of the students in these classrooms appeared to be struggling with both reading and writing at their grade level. Three of the case study teachers appeared to have assumed that their students had already acquired a set of learning strategies with which to approach their high school coursework. Lila, Kathy and Heidi had assigned fairly complex writing and reading assignments and expected that their students knew the steps in the process necessary to successfully complete the assignment. Kathy assumed the students knew how to design a research project around a central question, determine "credible" sources, complete bibliographic note-cards, and write a research paper based on the information they collected from the library and internet. Lila assumed that students knew how to write, edit, and revise an essay into final draft form. Heidi assumed her students could listen in class while she and other students read part of the play, then read the rest of it at home on their own and answer comprehension questions. I observed her ELL students struggling with assignments including even which steps to follow to complete the assignments.

In contrast, Martha provided instruction in using a writing template that made explicit the steps through which the students should proceed in order to write an essay. Her criteria and expectations for elements of that essay were also made explicit. She referred to the template and individually assisted students in utilizing it in their writing

assignments. In this way, Martha's assumptions concerning her students needs differed from her colleagues. However, because of number of students in her classes and the diversity of student needs, she seemed limited in her ability to meet each student's individual needs. Her mainstream students with low level skills but highly disruptive behaviors used up much of the time she had available for providing assistance and instruction to individual students, leaving her quiet and compliant ELL students without that attention.

Apart from Martha's explicit instruction in the writing process, it appeared that the study teachers did not address their students' needs to develop learning strategies that they could apply within their English classes or other content classes. In this respect, the ELL students did not explicitly receive instruction in learning strategies--rather they were expected to use strategies that the teachers assumed they already knew.

In sum, the case study teachers did see their ELL students' needs. In general, they seemed to not distinguish them from the other high needs students in their regular English class. There appeared to be some individualized attention for ELL students in a few of the classes, but this was limited by a few conditions. Across the teachers, knowledge of the unique needs of ELLs was absent except for the recognition that "language" was a problem. Additionally knowledge of how to address the challenges that ELL students face was missing. When teachers were seen individualizing or providing learning tools for students, they were providing the same tools for all of the students rather than differentiating based on unique needs of students. When teachers utilized one-on-one attention to assist ELL students, their time with ELLs was limited because of the number of other high needs students in the class, especially those with

disruptive behaviors. In this instance, though providing individual assistance for assignments or to instruct a student might be effective in a smaller class, the number of students with the need for this assistance overwhelmed the teacher in these large classes.

Demographic, Physical, and Structural Conditions and Policies and Teacher Work in the Two High Schools

What conditions and policies in place in the two schools supported or hindered the case study teachers' ability to meet the needs of their ELL students? The list of structural, fiscal, physical and demographic conditions that together created the climate at both high schools was a long one. Initially, the school level conditions across the two schools seemed different. Though district resource allocations based on per student funding and FTEs were the same, the costs associated with each school were not. Greenlake's newly remodeled facility for example did not require the same level of spending on maintenance and repair as Stonybrook's overcrowded, crumbling facility. The student populations at each school also required different levels of instruction, remediation, and support structures. Whether as a result of their demographics or in light of them, Stonybrook had been characterized as a 'vocational' school versus Greenlake's characterization as a good comprehensive school for academic and extracurricular activities.

In terms of human resources, Greenlake's faculty differed in the level of experience and knowledge with over 8 years separating the averages in faculty experience. Stonybrook also differed from Greenlake in the stability of their faculty. At the time of the study, Stonybrook's administrators had consistently required 10-15

new teachers per year for the previous three years. Conditions at Greenlake were quite different—openings each year were limited and highly sought after by teachers from within and outside of the district allowing administrators to pick and choose from top candidates.

However, in terms of supporting mainstream teachers to meet the needs of their ELL students, these differences in conditions did not appear to result in significantly different work environments for the case study teachers. There were two main conclusions in regard to the conditions and policies that impacted the teachers' work at both schools and their ability to address the needs of their ELL students. First, was the way in which teachers and students were assigned, and second were the ways in which the teachers' practice was supported and developed to meet the needs of their students.

Assignment of Students, Teachers, and Courses

The ways in which student and course assignments were made at both schools for the regular 9th and 10th grade language arts class resulted in large classes that included a diverse array of high needs students. Meeting the different needs of these students within one class was certainly challenging. There is a recognition in the field (Harklau, 1999; Faltis, 1999) that students needing differential supports, like those found in ESL or special education classrooms should be placed in smaller classes. Both schools seemed to recognize this when assigning students to at risk programs limiting the classes to 15 students. However, ELLs did not appear to be considered a part of this at risk population. The regular language arts classes with their array of high needs students, including ELLs, ranged from 25 to 39 students.

According to the literature (Kaplan, 2002; Kariuki, 1995), the way in which courses, teachers, and students are assigned can also do much to support teachers and students. In each teacher's case, the classes and students to which they were assigned shaped the learning environment and the kinds of instruction that the teacher could provide to the students in her classes, especially their ELL students. Assignment decisions are certainly complex and challenging for administrators and leaders at high schools. At both Greenlake and Stonybrook, course assignment appeared to be made with different priorities in mind than the needs of ELL students. The knowledge base and experience of the four teachers appeared to leave them unprepared to meet the needs of the ELL students assigned to their classes.

Another element that seemed to add to the challenge of teaching these classes was assigning them to novice teachers who were still in the beginning stages of developing their practice. Both Kathy and Heidi were struggling with other elements of their practice as well as being challenged to meet the diverse needs of their students—Heidi with making curricular decisions, and Kathy with motivating her students.

Though I have discussed the similarity of the challenges that these four teachers faced across the two schools, there were some added challenges for the teachers at Stonybrook who were not only facing these conditions in *one* of their classes. In Heidi's case, the overcrowded, run-down classrooms, need to travel to a different room for each class, and assignment to different departments and programs hindered her ability to be successful, especially as a novice teacher. Although Martha did not face multiple preparations, she had the same overcrowded, very needy class with a different

group of students every period of the day. Both teachers appeared to be facing working conditions that made it very difficult to be effective teachers for their ELL students.

By assigning these classes in this way, without putting support mechanisms in place to assist the four teachers facing these challenges, the likelihood that the teachers and their students would be successful seemed limited. Simply limiting the number of students in these classes might have allowed for more time to address individual student needs. Heidi's assignment to multiple courses and multiple levels of students, especially as a novice teacher still developing the rudimentary aspects of her craft (e.g. classroom management), and the challenging nature of her assignment, seemed to limit her ability to either notice or address her ELL students' needs. In Martha's case, her assignment to all high needs students, in very large classes, confined to a small space, challenged her ability to address their individual needs in the way she knew best. Her lack of proximity to other teachers kept her isolated and far from the emotional support she might have received from her colleagues.

In contrast, at Greenlake the nature of the facility actually created opportunities for teachers in the English department to interact easily. Though much of the support observed and documented through interviews was social and emotional in nature, it remained a testament to the supportive nature of that very stable department. However, assignment to classes at Greenlake had also created some challenges for the case study teachers. With the benefit of hindsight and considering her position at the end of her career, Lila's assignment to the students she was more familiar with serving probably would have been a better match. From her statements, it also seemed clear that she was

not willing to invest time or energy in developing her practice at this late stage in her career.

Kathy, like Lila, did not have prior experience to help her meet the needs of her ELL students or her higher need mainstream students. The growing populations of high needs students in both schools seemed to be pushing the administrators to make difficult assignment choices. The faculty in Greenlake's English department had a great many strengths, especially in the way in which they served college bound students, but as a whole they seemed to have less experience or knowledge of the kinds of instruction needed to serve high need students. Consequently, assignment decisions were challenging for the principal. Finding and hiring teachers who came prepared to teach high needs students, rather than hiring and then providing the supports necessary to develop those areas of their practice was a challenge.

The second conclusion to be drawn from the analysis of these four cases was that the opportunities to develop and support the teachers' practice to better meet the needs of their ELL students were limited or nonexistent. There seemed to be two ways in which this might have happened: professional learning opportunities in the form of seminars, workshops or classes; and opportunities to consult and collaborate with other teachers about the needs of ELL students.

Professional learning opportunities focused on instruction or curriculum modifications for ELL students and opportunities in for collaboration or consultation with ESL teachers were neither observed nor reported by case study teachers. Interestingly, none of the teachers sought these or other supports for their teaching of

ELL students, perhaps because of the aforementioned challenges they faced in serving their other regular students.

Professional Learning

While Kathy listed several professional development opportunities in which she had participated, the workshops in which she had participated were not focused on supporting her work with her most challenging students. Rather, the learning opportunities she had taken advantage of were for future assignments in Advanced Placement courses. Consequently, those did not stand as supports for her work with her current students, especially her ELL students. Lila, apparently because of her proximity to retirement, did not participate in any professional development opportunities during the time of the study and seemed to be disengaged from the school-led and district-initiated workshops around the state's reforms.

In contrast, Martha and Heidi had both participated in a week-long workshop entitled, *Reading Renaissance*, which utilized the Accelerated Reader (AR) program that, in observations, appeared to be addressing their students', including the needs of ELLs, needs for appropriate leveled reading materials. Both teachers were quite enthusiastic about this workshop in interviews, having recognized that their students had significant problems with reading. Though the school had adopted the AR program and spent precious funds purchasing the books and assessment software, other English teachers' use of the materials was less consistent according to the case study teachers. It appeared that their familiarity with the program and its appropriate uses came from this professional learning opportunity. Though this was not meant specifically to target

ELL students' needs, it apparently addressed their needs for leveled books and accessible reading material based on classroom observations. The Stonybrook case study teachers also had other professional learning opportunities that seemed to shape their practice including: work in faculty study groups around changing classroom assessments to better prepare students for the WASL; workshops on using the Six Trait Writing scoring rubric that was also used to score WASL writing prompts; release time to work on aligning their curriculum to the EALRs; and a district-initiated workshop entitled "Intergenerational Poverty." However, these opportunities did not appear to have shaped their practice in terms of meeting their ELL students' needs. Consequently, though these learning opportunities may have influenced their practice, they did not directly support the case study teachers' work with ELLs.

Consultation, Interaction, and Collaboration with other Teachers

Another one of the apparent consequences of the assignment pattern at Stonybrook was a logistical limitation on teacher interaction. The opportunity for teachers to find support from their department or other departments seemed limited because of the lack of proximity to teachers teaching the same students or subjects and to teachers who might provide expertise. The assignment of the teachers to classes, rooms, and students also paved the way for interactions with other teachers, or not. These interactions might also be characterized in some cases as opportunities to develop teacher practice through the sharing of expertise in a particular area, one type of professional learning. These opportunities for consulting with other teachers about their more challenging students (i.e. below grade level readers, ELL students) were only reported by the teachers at Greenlake. There, both Lila and Kathy had approached the

remedial reading teacher for suggestions in addressing the low reading levels of their students. Though they did not appear to have fully or even partially implemented those suggestions, they both had recognized a need and sought a remedy from an available source. At Stonybrook, it seemed that the logistical limitations that existed kept this kind of professional consultation, interaction, and development of practice from occurring.

Greenlake and Stonybrook administrators and teachers also made choices about which policies, structures, and programs *not* to implement. Previously I mentioned a few avenues of support that might exist for mainstream teachers who have ELLs in their classrooms. I have also established that these did not stand as supports for the case study teachers. Though the district had a steadily growing population of ELLs, administrators at both district and school levels had chosen not to provide supports for the mainstream teachers who were serving these students after they exited the ESL program. A document review of district professional development offerings and initiatives established that no seminars or workshops had been offered for mainstream teachers concerning ways to meet the needs of their ELL students during the two years before, and the year of the study. Neither school nor district administrations had provided the means for ESL teachers and mainstream teachers to collaborate or consult about their ELL students or their needs. Though Greenlake's block schedule and the resulting common times for teacher interaction, planning and collaboration were being used by the English department, collaboration across department or program lines around the needs of ELL students did not occur. Stonybrook's school reform model, which pitted groups of teachers against school issues, had not identified the needs of

their growing ELL population as a school issue. Consequently, no group of teachers was searching for a way to better serve the needs of ELLs in the mainstream at Stonybrook. Within the case study teachers' classrooms, it was evident that text and literature choices did not consider the needs of their ELL students. School-wide adoptions of textbooks and curriculum materials for the mainstream did not appear to consider either the ELL students or the mainstream students with below-grade level reading abilities. This list of choices *not* made to support ELL students and their mainstream teachers is long.

State Reform Influence on the District, Buildings, and Teachers

This final area of discussion is an interesting one. In part, because the national literature in both academic and public media has illustrated the growing challenge and pressures for teachers and students in general, but for ELL students in particular due to standards-based reform. Thus it was a focus in the research questions and a significant part of the conceptual framework. This was an area that was expected to be quite prominent in conversations and interviews with teachers and administrators at all levels of the system. Perhaps explained by the relatively new nature of the state reform elements of standards, assessments and accountability pressures at the secondary level, administrators and teachers did not seem as concerned as their counterparts at the elementary level. District workshops around aligning curricula to the state standards, creating specific district standards from the state EALRs, learning to utilize 6 Trait writing rubrics within their classrooms and changing classroom assessment practices to reflect the state WASL assessments were just beginning to spread to the secondary level and to involve more than a few teachers at a time. The implications of utilizing

assessment data for creating school improvement plans, required by the state reform, were just beginning to be considered. From interviews and observations of faculty and departmental meetings, it almost felt as if the reform was starting from scratch when it moved to the secondary level, rather than just being articulated from the lower grades. Due to the promise of accountability for high school students, this seemed problematic especially considering the considerable number of students who at that time had failed to meet the state standard measured by the WASL.

However, in light of the emergent nature of the pressures of the reform on the mainstream high school population, it is not surprising that teachers and administrators did not have ELLs in mind when making choices about programs, professional learning opportunities, or district curriculum and assessment adoptions. The implications for instruction and curriculum for the mainstream at the high school level were still being interpreted at the time of the study. The expectation that mainstream teachers and administrators would have begun to imagine the consequences of the standards or assessments for ELLs was unrealistic.

In closing, some of the initial issues that made this an intriguing yet difficult topic to study, have resurfaced. I was unable to isolate ELL performance data from aggregate district and school performance data, especially for those ELLs who were no longer eligible for ESL services (and no longer tracked in their performance), remained. Consequently, quantitative measures of how well ELL students who had left the ESL program were being served at Greenlake and Stonybrook, were not available. So, determining *how* these ELLs were performing and if their needs were in fact not being met was problematic. The case study teachers at both schools seemed unaware of or

unable to fully meet the specific needs of their ELL students due to a range of factors. The novice teachers were engaged in trying to develop other elements of their practice. Kathy was building her knowledge of instruction around the more capable students in preparation for teaching upper level AP courses or gifted programs. Heidi, on the other hand was working on developing her instruction for other struggling students in her classes through a focus on reading instruction.

The veteran teachers, though facing the same challenges in serving their ELL students without appropriate instructional techniques or materials, required different kinds of supports. Martha who probably had the instructional skill set that most closely matched her students' needs, including her ELLs, may have been able to better serve all of her students if she had fewer students in her class and less of a variety of high needs students. In trying to provide instruction for all of the very needy students in the same class, the quiet, compliant ELL students who demanded less, seemed to receive less attention. In contrast, Lila seemed to have experienced little in her many years of teaching that prepared her for working with the group of students she was assigned to at the time of the study.

In conclusion, it appeared that the complex web of policies, decisions, pre-existing and changing conditions played varying roles in creating the environments for teachers and students at each school. There seem to be two main policy and conditional points that came to light in this study and are reflected in more recent literature in the field. First, across the four teachers it was evident that none of them had been prepared in their teacher education programs to address the needs of their ELL students. Though they had been prepared at different times, the certification requirements and state

programs did not include coursework or training in the education of ELLs. The implications of this lack of attention in the certification policy arena would seem to be far reaching. In addition, none of the teachers had further training or professional development opportunities through either the state, district, or school in meeting or recognizing the needs of their ELL students. Consequently, it seems clear that these four teachers were not prepared to address these students' needs. In a more recent study, Gandara et al (2003) identified seven aspects of schooling in which ELLs receive an education that is inferior to their mainstream, English speaking peers. The first of these reflects this finding about the preparation of the case study teachers. Gandara et al. identify this aspect of inferior education as an assignment of ELLs to unqualified teachers. Though certainly, the case study teachers were technically qualified to teach the courses to which they were assigned, they did not have the training necessary to meet the needs of the *students* to which they were assigned. Even with the more recent and rigorous certification requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, these teachers would be considered qualified to teach these students. In terms of the preparation of teachers to teach ELL students, Gandara et al. (2003) and others (Tomas Rivera Center, 1994; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000) note that much of what is known about how to teach ELLs is not incorporated into teacher preparation efforts.

The second salient point that came to light and is also reflected in more recent literature is that these teachers are "largely left to fend for themselves with inadequate guidance, resources and training (Gandara et al, 2003 p.18)." Hayes and Salazar's (2001) study in California and Plecki and Elfers' (2005) study in Washington both include findings that teachers point to "the problematic lack of resources and training to

assist them to provide quality services to ELLs (Hayes and Salazar, 2001 p.23)." Like the schools in which the teachers worked within these other larger studies, neither Stonybrook nor Greenlake provided guidance or resources to assist the four case study teachers in serving their ELL students.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. First it is a study of only four teachers who worked in schools that included at least 60 other teachers in a district including 1000 other teachers who may or may not have mirrored their practice even within the same policy environment at the school or district level. The findings can not be generalized to other teachers. However, these teachers' practice and perceptions provide a lens into the climate in which mainstream English teachers in high schools in one particular district were working.

This study was also undertaken several years ago. Consequently, many of the conditions and policies present during the study may have now changed. At that time, the standards-based reform was just beginning to be implemented at the high school level. Many of the statements about a lack of concern or pressure noted by participants regarding the reform may now have become more salient since accountability measures for students are now in place.

In addition, there were some data limitations concerning the identification of the number of ELLs present in the schools and district at the time of the study and their achievement as these students were no longer identified upon being exited from the ESL program. Consequently, in presenting the magnitude of the problems facing ELLs in each school, the number of ELLs in each school and within the district is only an

approximation based on the number of ELLs both eligible for ESL services and those exited from the program. Their level of achievement within schools, classes, and in the district as a whole remain an unknown, as that data was not disaggregated from district averages at the time of the study. Consequently, though I assumed that ELL students were struggling based on observations of classrooms and their behavior and grades, district level data do not bear that out.

Finally, the focus of this study was the teachers and their practice rather than their ELL students. I can not make claims about whether the instruction provided for these students was successful or not. I can only document what that instruction looked like.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Stepping back, it seems easy to deride the teachers and administrators for decisions and actions they made during the course of the study. However the climate, resources, facilities, staff, and level and variety of student needs placed within a system beginning to feel the pressure of high stakes assessments and accountabilities for students and schools is not a place where decision-making is a slow, thoughtful process based upon reams of data and clear consequences or solutions for the bevy of issues. The level of needs and lack of resources within the classrooms and within the schools appeared to require teachers and administrators to prioritize which needs would receive attention and which ones would not. There has been much discussion of the consequences and realities, as well as the missed opportunities of assignment decisions made related to students, courses, physical spaces, and teachers. These are not clear-cut decisions for administrators. A decision to lighten the workload for one teacher may tip

the balance and overload another. Matching Lila, for example, with highly capable students, might mean that Kathy takes on another class of regular students taxing her practice and pushing her out of her Honors-student comfort zone. Assigning ESL teachers to teach ESL full-time at Stonybrook might create a more cohesive ESL program, but would mean that the part-time ESL teachers teaching transitional content courses for ELLs would no longer be able to do so. Consequently, mainstream content teachers would then teach these courses without the benefit of the experience or knowledge of instruction or development of ELLs.

The flexibility of the after-school Community Center at Stonybrook, allowed the program to hire ESL teachers and instructional aides as tutors for the ELLs whose needs were not being met during the school day. However, this seemed to ensure that these needs would continue to be served outside of the classroom—teachers were less aware that ELL needs were greater than the instruction being provided enabling them to focus on other students needs. In addition, because of the change of focus for the after school tutoring, the original target of building a program to bridge the community and the school seemed to have become a secondary emphasis.

Policy Considerations

In keeping with the emphasis on policy decisions that seemed to stand out as possible means of supporting these teachers' work, I close with a brief discussion of policy avenues for supporting mainstream teachers work with their ELL students. There seem to be three avenues that hold some promise outside the context and climate present in schools. The first has to do with the educational training of pre-service teachers, the second points to professional learning opportunities for teachers once they

are in the field, and the third has to do with the assignment of teachers, students, and courses. With the growing population of ELLs in our nation's schools, and in light of the findings of this study, it seems more important than ever that our teachers have a better understanding of the needs of these students. The likelihood that they will encounter ELLs in their classrooms continues to increase. Certification requirements might be increased adding even a rudimentary training requirement for how to address the needs of ELL students. However, as mentioned earlier and in literature in the field (Gandara et al, 2003; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2001) though research-based methods for teaching ELLs exist (August & Hakuta, 1997), they do not tend to be translated into teacher preparation efforts. In addition, in response to earlier standards-based reform efforts and more recent requirements for NCLB, certification requirements have recently been increased and still do not reflect the needs of a growing ELL population within the US educational system.

With respect to in-service teacher learning opportunities, districts like Typfield would seem a likely place in which to provide workshops or longer running seminars to support their mainstream teachers as they struggle to serve ELLs in their classes. However, serving immigrant students and allocating resources for those services is increasingly becoming a political issue. In the past few years, anti-bilingual, English-only initiatives have been adopted in many states. School boards and parent groups have not traditionally advocated for the ELL students enrolled in their schools. Immigrant parents in Typfield, and other districts have not tended to be vocal advocates for their children's educational rights due to a host of factors including a lack of

experience in the US education system, and because they may face legal issues if they are undocumented immigrants.

Finally, there could be required changes to the assignment practices in place at both schools that seemed to result in teachers without the preparation or time necessary to address the needs of their ELL students. These might be in the form of requirements that teachers assigned ELL students or other high needs students have the training referred to in the previous paragraphs. Another suggestion, in keeping with the decisions and policies already in place for other at risk populations, would be to place limitations on class sizes. This might provide the teachers with a more manageable level of student needs within their classrooms, perhaps allowing more time to differentiate and individualize their instruction or materials.

Implications for Future Research

The need for further research in the area of secondary ELL education, especially after these students have left ESL or bilingual education programs remains large. As established in the literature review in Chapter Two, though there have been many studies conducted at the elementary level, there is still a paucity of research at the high school level. In addition, there have been fewer still studies of ELL students who have left the purview of ESL or bilingual education programs. The growth in the use of high stakes assessments and their link to graduation requirements have increased the pressures for high school ELLs to leave ESL programs as soon as possible to begin their preparation in mainstream content classes for these assessments. Finding more effective ways to support mainstream teachers' efforts to serve their ELL students is imperative.

While this study documents a small slice of four teachers' work, their practice and their beliefs about their ELL students, it ultimately was a study of what supports or conditions might exist to assist these teachers and how teachers used those supports. This study's contribution to the field might be considered to be a list of conditions that hindered these teachers ability to recognize and address the needs of their ELL students rather than a documentation of supports. A similar study that documented the actual use of those *possible* supports and the conditions necessary for providing those and paving the way for their utilization might shed some light on which conditions are more effective or promising. Such a study might find additional supportive conditions or structures than those explored here.

Finally, while federal No Child Left Behind legislation was not in place at the time of the study, it has since increased the pressures begun with the state's standards-based reform package. Increased accountability pressures and frequency of assessments have made the consequences for ELL students more pronounced. The state's graduation requirement based on students meeting standards as measured by the WASL is in place for the class of 2008. ELLs are no longer exempt from state assessments. On the other hand, one issue that has remained a challenge in both the research and in educational practice has been the identification of the actual ELL student population and the resulting scope of their needs. In the past, assessment data was only disaggregated by those students who were eligible for ESL services. Identifying if ELL students were still struggling or needed additional supports or instruction after they exited ESL programs or even their basic achievement levels was not possible. Like the situation in this study, without a perception on the teacher's part that there was a

specific need that was not being met, there could be no accommodation or change in practice to address those needs. Without a clear identification of the scope of the problem, the educational system can not address those needs. Though there are parts of the No Child Left Behind legislation that have negative consequences for ELLs, in the area of student-level data collection and tracking No Child Left Behind holds some promise.

This study seemed to generate more questions than answers. It seemed to document more of what wasn't available to support these teachers than what was. Each teacher poured energy and time into their teaching, but seemed to feel overwhelmed with the number and variety of needs of their students. The schools seemed to be attempting to support their practice in some respects, but were also facing overwhelming challenges in terms of decreasing resources and increasing pressures for results. By conducting this study, I hoped to find answers to questions about the work of teachers in the mainstream and their ELL students. At the close of the study, however, I found that rather than finding an end, I found the starting point for a new round of research.

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Appendix A: Protocols

Principal

Climate, Students, Facility

1. When it comes to the education of ELLs, what's the approach in your school?
   Probes:
   - Placement, assessment, staff...
   - Where did this approach come from?
   - Why do it this way?

2. Would you do it differently? How?

3. What do you think is working well? Why?
4. What are the challenges?
   - For students
   - For teachers
5. What kinds of pressures are you feeling? From where?
   Probes:
   - WASL, EALRs
   - $$

Supports for Teachers

6. What kinds of supports exist for teachers in your building? (of ELLs and mainstream)
Probes:
   - In-service (targeting teacher needs, challenges; or general)
   - Time (for planning, for teaming, etc.)
   - Personnel (assign paras, team ESL with mainstream, outside consultants, evaluate and guide/focus improvement)
   - Materials (funds for adapted or primary language materials)

7. Why those kinds?

District ESL Coordinator

Individual Background

- Tell me about your role in the district.

2. What informs you in that role? (Experience? Education?)

District support for teachers

3. What does the district do for schools, teachers, ELLs? How are these decisions made?

Probes:

- Professional development
  - (what kind-extended time, in-class, feedback?)
  - Focused on what? (subject matter, general strategies, lang. Acquisition?)
- Paraprofessionals
  - Training?
  - How allocated/assigned?
- Materials
  - District or school based
  - Curricular
  - Assessment

- In your opinion, what's working well?

- In your opinion, should the district be doing something different? What? Why?

- What kinds of pressures are you feeling?

Probes:

- Where do these come from?
- WASL, EALRs
- Evaluation report (Sept. 1999 release)
- Budget

District Allocation

7. How are students and teachers assigned? Why?

Probes:

- Magnet programs
- Language based decision (para or teacher with same language?)
- Level based decision (age, grade, literacy)
- Residency based decision (neighborhood school)
- Where there's room? (facility capacity)

Budget

8. Where does the money come from? (federal sources, state sources, local sources)

9. Where does it go? Priorities? (Primary vs. Secondary) Who makes these decisions? (school board, superintendent, C&I, Special services, facilities, etc.)

- What does it pay for? (professional development, paraprofessionals, ESL teachers, materials)

Documents to collect

Policies/manuals for:

- Assignment to schools(ESL teachers, paraprofessionals, and students)
- Staff development, training, preparation, induction
- Assessment of students (exemption, inclusion, modification, accommmodation)

Budget and expenditure reports
Evaluation reports
Assessment reports
Curriculum/ materials lists/descriptions

ESL Teacher

Individual background

1. Tell me about your background in the district:

School level

2. How do ELLs get served here?
   Probes:
   - By whom?
   - Your role?
   - Whose responsibility?
   - How long?

- In your opinion, what's working well?
- What are the challenges?

Probes:
   - For students?
   - For teachers, the school?

District level

5. How does what you do here differ from other schools in the
- Who makes the decisions about:
  - Services?
  - Assignment
  - Budget

- What kinds of pressures are you feeling? From where?

8. What recommendations would you make
this school?

Documents to collect

Transitional bilingual education reports
- Test scores
- Language levels
- Courses offered (sheltered instruction and ESL

Teacher Exit

Policy:

1. What are the expectations or pressures on you?

Probes:

- A. Where do they come from? (principal, dept., district, parents, students)
- B. Have they changed? If so, why?
- C. How did you get assigned this class? These students? (Do you tend to get ELLs in many of your classes? Consistently?)

2. How could the district or school support you better?

- A. What kinds of things could they do?
- B. What kinds of things do you need?

- You've got some pretty diverse student needs in your class, how do you deal with that?
  - Do you have any help?
  - What would help you serve their needs better?

Teacher

Individual background

1. Tell me about your background.
    - Teacher preparation
    - Subject matter
    - Endorsements
    - W/special populations
    - Experience

Pedagogy/teaching methods

2. Tell me about your class.

3. What's going well?

4. What do you find challenging?

5. What's your general approach to teaching? Where did that come from?

6. How do you organize your class for instruction? Why?

Supports:

7. Do you work with other teachers or other staff members? (including paraprofessionals)

Probes:

- Which ones?
- Why?
- About what?
- How often?

8. Where do you go for help?

9. What would be helpful to you in your work?

10. Tell me about any staff development opportunities (formal or informal that you've been involved in.
    A. What do you think of them?
    B. Who offered them?

Documents to collect:

Lesson plans
Syllabus for class observed
Other syllabus

Student work (ELLs and mainstream students' stripped of identifiers)
Porfolios (if used stripped of identifiers)
Sample activities, worksheets, assignments
Documents from professional development
Curriculum materials
Any curriculum materials in ELL's primary language
Grading rubrics

Counselor

1. What's your role in this school? (kinds of counseling services --career, social/emotional, abuse, school, schedule, etc.)

2. How are counselors assigned to students (or vice versa)?
Probes:
- Different groups of students (tracks, ELLs, etc.)
- For how long? (high school career or change every year?)

3. How do you make your decision to assign a students to certain classes?
Probes:
- Criteria? Teacher; Grade level; Language level (how is this measured?); Literacy level (how is this measured?);Time in US; Age
- Where does this information come from? (ESL teacher, parent, student)

4. Is there a certain progression of classes or teachers for ELLs or immigrants?

5. What's the policy regarding ELLs and testing (ITED, SAT/ACT, WASL, etc.)? (exemption, accommodation, disaggregation)

6. Which teachers would you recommend I talk to about diverse learners in your school?(other than special ed and ESL teachers)

<u>Documents to ask for:</u>

Sample student schedules (ELLs of different levels-literacy, language, first, second, third year in country)

Policies/manuals/guidelines for:
- Assignment
- Course guidelines
- Prerequisites
- Testing Administration (inclusion, exemption, accommodation)
- Tracks (honors/college prep; vo-tech; low literacy; etc.)

Appendix B: Interviews and Worksheets

Descriptive Checklist

# of Mainstream Students	# of ELL Students

Subject (s) of Course	
Level of Course	
# of teachers	
Area of expertise?	

Ethnic background of ELL	#
Hispanic	
Somali	
Samoan	
Russian	
Ukranian	
Vietnamese	
Chinese	
Korean	

# of Paraprofessionals	
ELLs grouped?	
Mixed languages?	
W/mainstream?	
Ability grouped?	

Tally Box for Responses

# of ELL responses	Negative Feedback	Positive Feedback	# of Mainstream resp...

Modes of learning/teaching	√	# and type
Visual cues? (pictures, charts, graphs)		
Gestures?		
Repetition?		
Simplification of terms?		
Pauses?		
Decrease speed of speech?		
Puns or asides?		
Average wait time?(ELL)		
Average wait time? (mainstream)		
Modeling of correct grammar and pronunciation?		

% of class time for teacher talk	% of class time for student [illegible]

Materials

Name of curriculum	
Primary language text?	
Primary language supplementals?	
Translation of worksheets/exercises?	
Adaptation of worksheets/activities?	
Time extension?	
Pre-reading, pre-vocabulary exercises?	
Language dictionaries?	
Technology?	

Paraprofessionals (if assigned)

Translation only?	
Instruction and translation/interpretation?	
Work in ELL groups?	
Work mixed groups?	
Tutoring?	

Post-Observation Interview Protocol

1. Tell me your thinking about today's lesson?

2. What do you think worked well? Why?

3. What might you change if you taught it again? Why?

4. What did you think students got out of the lesson? How do you know?

5. Who do you think the lesson worked for best?

6. I noticed you have some diverse learners in your class. Tell me about that.
   Probe:
   - Challenges?

7. I noticed_____ tell me about that. (i.e., you grouped students, not everyone did the homework, some ran out of time, you used the visuals a lot, etc.)

Appendix C: Observation Guidelines

Student Portfolios documenting language growth & progression in formal and informal contexts (Salinger, 1996)(Note the use of these, perhaps sample with identifiers removed)

Encouragement and acceptance of student's attempts to communicate (errors a normal part of language learning)(Bredekamp & Coppolo, 1997)

- Learner centered teaching style? (Smrekar, 1994)
- Opportunities for output (Smrekar, 1994)
    - Social interaction encouraged?
    - Structured interaction?
    - Modeling of correct linguistic structures (Wong Fillmore, 1992)
        - Other students?
        - Teacher?

Activities and physical environment reflect diversity in students (Gutwirth, 1997; Morrison & Rodgers, 1996)?

- Multicultural literature choices?
- Opportunities to use materials in primary language when appropriate?
- Materials avoid stereotypical associations or inaccurate portrayals of cultures
- Authentic materials and projects?

Use of multiple modes of learning?(Harklau, 1999; Wong Fillmore, 1985)(lecture, activity-based, cooperative groups, etc.)

- Visual cues?
- Gestures?
- Repetition?
- Simplification of terms?
- Pauses and slowing of speech?
- Amount of wait time?
- Number of asides and puns from teacher

How much of teacher talk is comprehensible input?(Harklau, 1999)

- Document amount of time of teacher talk vs. student talk

Number of responses from ELLs vs. mainstream students? (Knott, 1987)

- Opportunities for responses (Swain, 1985)
- Negative feedback/positive feedback
- Corrections (helpful or punitive?)(Harklau, 1999)
- Use of written responses (Adamson, 1993; Saville-Troike, 1984)

Adaptation of materials (texts, exercises, handouts, notes, assessments)

- Translation (interpreter or written)
- Simplification of English vocabulary (instructions? Body of work?)

- Preparation for materials/activities (pre-reading, vocabulary, explanation)
- Extension of time allowed
- Use of language dictionaries/hand-held computers
- Choice of modes for response (written vs. oral, prepared vs. impromptu)

Grouping of students?

- heterogenous
- by primary language
- ELLs only
- mainstream w/ELLs
- ability (language level? Literacy level? Subject matter knowledge level?)(Harklau, 1994; Mehan, Hubbard, & Villaneuva, 1994)

Communication with parents/community of ELLs?

- Primary language
- How often?
- Comprehensible (doesn't assume knowledge of school culture)

Collaboration/teaming with ESL/bilingual teachers/paras?

- How often?
- To what depth?
- About materials? Assessments? Student information (levels? Language?)

Use of Paraprofessionals?

- For interpretation/translation?
- For instruction of small groups?
- One on one tutoring/assistance?

Appendix D

Document Collection List

State, District, and School Level:
Washington Administrative Code and Revised Code concerning-

- Bilingual education
- English as a Second Language
- Teacher initial and continuing requirements/endorsements for ESL and bilingual
- Teacher initial and continuing certification requirements for H.S. language arts, science
- Assessment of ELLs
- Education Reform legislation
- Legislation aimed at education (initiatives, etc.)
- Additional legislation affecting education (e.g. impending I-695 w/funding implications)

Budget and allocation schedule for education including-

- Federal sources (grants, categorical funding, Eisenhower, etc.)
- State sources (e.g. LAP, TBE, etc.)
- Local sources (taxes and levies)
- Other sources (private, corporate, etc.)

Teacher and paraprofessional salary schedule (state, district)-

- Including schedule of stipends, benefits, etc.

Curriculum Standards and Materials including-

- Textbooks, packages, etc.
- Procedure for textbook selection
- Content standards, benchmarks, curriculum frameworks
- Standards from other sources (NCTE, TESOL, etc.)
- Materials from comprehensive reform packages (ATLAS, Coalition of Essential Schools, etc.)

Professional development information-

- Curriculum materials
- Timelines
- Extent of participation
- Evaluations
- Source
- Budget

Student and Teacher demographic information-

- % Race/ethnicity, SES, LEP, free/reduced lunch
- Teacher education levels, experience levels, endorsements, out of field indicators
- Teachers from in or out of state?

Induction program information-

- Description
- Funding
- Levels of participation

Evaluations and reports-

- ESL
- Transitional Bilingual Education Program (annual)
- Student assessment reports (including LEP students-may be disaggregated)
- Reform evaluations
- District and state surveys of parents, staff, administration, etc.
- Enrollment reports
- Drop-out, retention, expulsion, suspension reports
- Disciplinary reports (school and district)

Student Documents including-

- Sample LEP student schedules (current and longitudinal)
- Student advising manuals (course requirements, etc.)
- Portfolios of student work (assessment or otherwise)

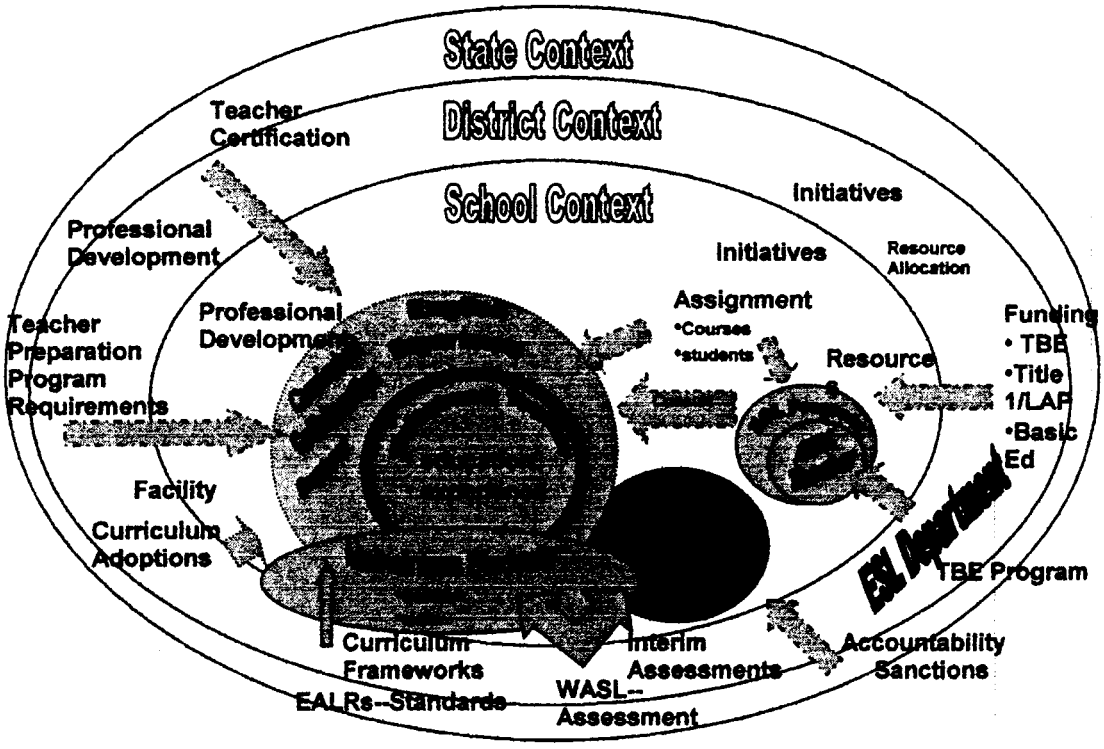
School Documents including-

- Master schedule
- Assignment roster for teachers, paraprofessionals, volunteers, specialists
- Hiring process/criteria
- Search school library for literature/materials in primary languages

Teacher Documents including-

- Professional development/credits/degrees listed for steps on salary schedule
- Endorsement areas
- Teacher education program description
- Lesson plans
- Faculty study group minutes/notes (ATLAS)
- Department meeting minutes/notes
- Syllabi for courses taught
- Materials for courses taught (textbooks, supplemental, literature, etc.)
- Collaboration/teaming plans/notes (amount of time?)

Appendix E: Conceptual Framework



Curriculum Vitae

Emily Bucknor Lenssen

Education:

Ph.D. 2006 University of Washington, College of Education—Seattle, WA
M.Ed. Special Education 1993, Idaho State University--Pocatello, ID
B.A. Government 1988, Bowdoin College--Brunswick, ME

Experience:
Research Associate 2006-Present, FACET Innovations Inc., 1314 NE 43rd Suite 207 Seattle, WA 98105
Research Associate 2003-Present, Research for Quality Schools, 1627 Peach Ct. E. Seattle, WA 98112
Research Associate 2001-2003, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington
Research Assistant 1997-2001, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington
Teacher 1993-1994 American Falls High School (American Falls, Idaho)---.5 special education, .5 Chapter One
Head of Department, Teacher 1994-1996 American Falls High School (American Falls, Idaho)---.5 special education, .5 Title VII, ESL, Migrant, Bilingual programs

Research:
Strengthening and Sustaining Teachers Project—Formative and Summative Evaluation, funded by the Gates and Stuart Foundations through Research for Quality Schools with Dr. Judy Swanson (President)—Winter 2004-Present

Marilyn Simpson Teacher Development Project—Summative Evaluation for Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (WA) and Stuart Foundation; Research for Quality Schools with Dr. Judy Swanson—Spring 2004

Professional Development Study---Exemplary Districts---Professor Mike Knapp, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy; Dr. Judy Swanson, Education Matters Corp. study of districts chosen for exemplary professional development by the Eisenhower program Fall 2000-Spring 2003

Core Study: Study of reform policy in 4 states, 4 districts and eleven schools (including 9 teacher case studies)---Professor Mike Knapp, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy—Fall 1997-Spring 2003

Professional Development Costs: literature review investigating the costs of professional development and comparing amount and type of expenditures in business

and education fields— Professor Marge Plecki, University of Washington, Summer 1998

Study of teachers in a Newcomer ESL school for secondary students and their responses to standards-based education reform---satisfied Research and Inquiry project requirement for doctoral program---presented results to faculty and students in college of Education, Fall 1998

Presentations:

The Balancing Act: Decentralized Districts Efforts to Promote Teacher Professional Learning—Symposium at American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL 2003
The Sieve, The Buffer, and The Quarterback Sneak—Three School Leaders' Responses to Reform Policies---roundtable presentation at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA 2002

More or Less Fertile Ground—Sowing the Seeds: Departments across Two High Schools and Opportunities for Teacher Growth and Collaboration---American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA 2002

Leadership in the Connection Between Policy and Instructional Practice ---University Council for Educational Administration Annual Conference, Cincinnati, OH 2001

Three Elevator Rides: Teacher Policy and Practice in Three States—University Council for Educational Administration Annual Conference, Albuquerque, NM November 2000

Audit of Teacher Policy Environment in Washington State—presented to Partnership for Teaching, policy stakeholder group for National Commission for Teaching and America's Future in Washington state, Spring 1999.

Professional Development: Constraints and Supports for Teacher Work—American Education Finance Association Annual Conference, Austin, TX March 1999

Dissertation Methodology presentation- National Association of Bilingual Education Annual Conference, San Antonio, TX February 1999

ESL Newcomer Teacher Responses to Standards-Based Reform---University Council for Educational Administration Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN October 1999

Teacher Islands, Policy Tides: Teachers of Marginalized Populations and Standards-based Reform---Northeast Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Ellensburg, NY 1998

Awards:
AERA- Fiscal Special Interest Group Dissertation Award, 2000
Moody Prize- Bowdoin College, 1988
Other:

- Program Chair- AERA- FIPEF group for Annual Meeting 2002
- Grant Proposal Reviewer- Rand Corporation Summer 2002
- Proposal Reviewer- American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting 1999-2003
- Manuscript Reviewer- Sage Publications 1999-2002; 2005
- President's Student Forum—16 member panel representing undergraduate and graduate students---met monthly with President of University of Washington to discuss policies and issues on campus—1999-2000, 2000-2001
- Tutor in after school program at B.F. Day Elementary School, Seattle Public Schools, Seattle, Washington---1997
- Field Researcher, Head Start Transition Project Evaluation---University of Idaho, Moscow Idaho 1991, 1992
- Certification—K-12 Special Education, State of Idaho
  K-12 Special Education, State of Washington
  K-8 Social Studies (endorsement), State of Washington