

Effectiveness of English-as-a-second language instructional strategies for English
language learners

A Special Project

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the schools' effectiveness of English-as-a-second language instructional strategies for closing the achievement gap for English language learners. The English-as-a-second language programs at two socio-economic schools were compared. Both schools implemented the pull-out program model. Instruction was provided differently at each school. The survey was completed by thirteen teachers and forty-two students. The survey focused on school climate, communication and attitude towards the program using a 5-point Likert scale. Growth was measured in reading proficiency on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning from the school year 2003-2004. Only one school showed growth. The study suggests more focus is needed on teaching strategies to teach second language learners.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

In the United States, historically, education has changed dramatically in the last decade. Educators were faced with the challenges of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, No Child Left Behind law, and bilingual education. The new challenge for educators was closing the achievement gap. For English language learners, all the aforementioned would be considered to be a detriment for English language learners, if the instructional focus did not raise academic success. The No Child Left Behind Act created assessment requirements for all students to meet state academic standards. English language learners were at risk for failure due to limited levels of English proficiency and appropriate and differentiated instruction. Rhodes, Ochoa, and Ortiz (2005) reported, “Bilingual education has a long history in our country, which was a country of immigrants when it was founded” (p. 62). Moreover, bilingual education still dealt with controversy over the effectiveness of bilingual programs for English language learners and in what language the learners should be instructed.

The two low socio-economic elementary schools were located near the Columbia River in southeast Washington. Both schools set new third grade reading goals in 2007. Only one school was under the school improvement plan for not making adequate yearly progress.

In October 2006, in grades K-5 at one elementary school, 522 students were enrolled. The majority of the students were Hispanic, 62.5% of the population, 31.2% were White, 1.7% Asian, 0.4% American Indian and 2.3% Black. In May 2007, 71.1% received free

or reduced-price meals, 7.1% received special education, 39.4% were in transitional bilingual programs, and 37.4% qualified for migrant status (Report Card, 2007).

At the other elementary school in October 2006, in grades K-5, 485 students were enrolled. The majority of the students were Hispanic, 73.4% of the population, 22.7% were White, 1.0% Asian, 0.2% American Indian and 0.2% Black. In May 2007, 88.6% received free or reduced-price meals, 8.7% received special education, 40.7% were in transitional bilingual programs, and 32.2% qualified for migrant status (Report Card, 2007). In November 2007, a total of 477 English language learners received bilingual services from both schools. The common assessments for both schools were the following: Reading and Mathematics Measures of Academic Progress Tests, Washington Language Proficiency Test II, and Washington Assessment of Student Learning.

Both schools relied on the pull-out program model. The schools' instructional focus was to develop the students' English-language skills. Students received forty-five minutes of English-as-a-second language instruction. The teacher or Para-professional provided the instruction depending on the group size. The grouping of English language learners was based on the level of language proficiency. Students were pulled-out during the introduction of a core subject to

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attend the English-as-a-second language program. For both schools, the focus of instruction and instructional strategies being utilized was distinctly different.

Finally, instructional strategies must be implemented based on the English language learners' needs. According to Hamayan, Marler, Lopez-Sanchez, and Damico (2007) wrote, "ELL who received traditional ESL instruction as opposed to content-based ESL

instruction will likely experience more academic difficulty” (p. 85). Pull-out programs must be implemented properly in order to ensure academic success for English language learners.

Statement of the Problem

Rhodes, Ochoa, and Ortiz (2005) acknowledged, “The lack of effective instruction has been cited as one reason why culturally and linguistically diverse students do not experience academic success” (p. 29). Schools who have had limited guidance on developing a comprehensive program for English-as-a-second language were a concern.

Thomas and Collier (1997) stated the following:

But local and state decision-makers have had little or no guidance and have, by necessity, made instructional program decisions based on their professional intuition and their personal experience, frequently in response to highly politicized input from special interest groups of all sorts of persuasions (p. 12).

Overall, English-as-a-second language programs have not shown to be an effective program model. Yet, the pull-out model was being utilized in the schools. The instructional focus raised a concern. As written by Hamayan,

Marler, Lopez-Sanchez, and Damico (2007), “Research strongly suggests that content-based ESL instruction produces greater student growth in English language acquisition than ESL instruction that utilizes a traditional approach that focuses on aspects of language such as grammar and vocabulary” (p. 125).

Purpose of the project

The purpose of this project was to examine the schools' effectiveness of English-as-a-second language programs for closing the achievement gap for English language learners. Has the English-as-a-second language pull-out program effectively closed the achievement gap for English language learners in reading? Thomas and Collier (1997) stated, "Schooling must thus be made accessible, meaning, and effective for all students, lest we create an under-educated, under-employed generation of young adults in the early 21st century" (p. 13).

Delimitations

The project involved students who participated in the English-as-a-second language pull-out program. In this project, thirteen teachers and forty-two students provided feedback from the survey. The survey focused on school climate, communication and attitude towards the program using a 5-point Likert scale. An interview was conducted where the English-as-a-second language teachers were asked to define the program. The project was conducted from November 2007 until April 2008. A delimitation was the surveys. The number of participants and limited responses were also a delimitation. The survey results

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were difficult to discern based on a person's state of mind the day the surveys were disseminated. The outcomes could go either way negatively or positively.

Assumptions

The English-as-a-second language teachers and Para-professionals were being utilized in the English-as-a-second language program. The teachers and Para-professionals were assumed to be highly qualified and trained to work with English language learners'

students. The utilization of instructional strategies and materials were assumed to be researched based best practices.

Research Question

The writer sought to study the following questions:

1. Would the English-as-a-second language program improve the achievement of English language learners' students?
2. Would program "A" be more effective at teaching English-as-a-second language than program "B" to increase student achievement?

Significance of the Project

In the 21st century, English language learners needed to be well educated and fluent in both languages to compete for jobs in the global economy. In today's world of education, closing the achievement gap was a priority. As English language learners entered the U.S. schools, the schools must differentiate instruction because the expression "one size fits all" no longer considered appropriate. Schools were held accountable to increase student achievement.

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Educators needed to examine the effective instructional practices utilized in the classroom for English language learners to help students succeed. Crawford (1995) noted the following:

Instruction that strives to change students "into something else" inevitably discourages academic achievement, notes Josué González. When children are painfully ashamed of who they are, they are not going to do very well in school, whether they be taught monolingually, bilingually, or trilingually

(p. 35).

Procedure

The bilingual coordinator, English-as-a-second language teachers, curriculum administrator and curriculum data analyst conferred over the project. The curriculum data analyst offered to retrieve the data. The fourth grade reading Washington Assessment of Student Learning scores from the school year 2003-2004 for both schools were utilized.

Definition of Terms

achievement gap. Achievement gap was the differences in academic performance among groups often identified racially, ethnically, and by income levels.

English language development. English language development was a guide for providing effective instruction based on five proficiency levels in four language domains plus comprehension.

limited English proficiency. Limited English proficiency indicated students who had limited mastery o English.

school improvement plan. School improvement plan was created to describe the vision of the schools for raising student achievement.

total physical response. Total physical response was a language-learning tool method used to teach learning opportunities through physical activity.

Acronyms

ELD. English Language Development

ELL. English Language Learners

ESL. English-as-a-Second Language

EALRs. Essential Academic Learning Requirements

L1. First Language

L2. Second Language

LEP. Limited English Proficiency

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NCLB. No Child Left Behind

NRP. National Reading Panel

OCR. Office of Civil Rights

OSPI. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

SIP. School Improvement Plan

TPR. Total Physical Response

WASL. Washington Assessment of Student Learning

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

The literature selected to be reviewed dealt with schools' effectiveness of English-as-a-second language instructional strategies for closing the achievement gap for English language learners. The selected review of literature came from journals, books, and educational periodicals. The review provided information on the history of bilingual

education, bilingual programs, ESL definition, WASL background, NCLB law, achievement gap, assessments and instructional methods. Conclusions were then drawn for the project following the review.

Bilingual education history

Historically in the beginning of the 20th century in the United States, bilingual education was not allowed in the schools. For this reason, President Johnson signed the bilingual education act in 1968, which allocated funds for the development of dual-language programs. In the 1930's, ESL was developed to meet the needs of language-minority students (Crawford, 1995). According to Rhodes, Ochoa, and Ortiz (2005), "In the 1980's, the English-only movement attempted to make English the official language in the country" (p. 62). In 1981, the fifth circuit court *Castañeda v. Pickard* made a decision on the education of language minority children. A three part test to evaluate the school districts effectiveness of implementing programs for ELL students was developed. The three part tests were a sound educational theory, effective implementation and

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program evaluation and modification. The reauthorization of Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education act took place in the 1990's (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 1991).

Bilingual program

In *Lau v. Nicholas* in 1974, the Supreme Court ruled that putting limited English proficiency students in an English-only classroom without any instructional support was illegal. The instructional programs for limited English proficiency students were bilingual education and ESL. Bilingual education focused on both the native first

language and English as the second language. On the other hand, ESL focused only on English instruction.

The bilingual education programs were two-way/dual language, maintenance/late-exit/developmental, and transitional/early-exit programs. The English-as-a-second language programs were content-based ESL/sheltered English and pull-out ESL programs. According to Rhodes, Ochoa and Ortiz (2005) stated, “Also noted that Limited English Proficient students in English-as-a-second language programs were the “most likely” to drop out, whereas those enrolled in a maintenance or dual-language program were the “least likely” to drop out of school” (p. 67). Washington had identified instructional focus and program model as services to be provided to limited English proficient (LEP) students. There were four types of instructional focus identified. They were primary language development, academic language development, and limited assistance in the primary language and no primary language support (p. 12). The

program model described the setting of where the delivery of services would take place. There were five program models identified. They were self-contained, center approach, in-classroom, and pull-out and tutoring.

The overall goal of the bilingual program was to develop English language proficiency while academic instruction was provided. Current research from Zeckler (2004) stated, “In general, dual-language programs are considered ideal, fertile grounds for true multicultural education that promotes high academic achievement and strong bilingual competence for minority as well as majority students” (p. 253). Due to the

research on dual-language programs, the U.S. Department of Education over the next five years intended to increase dual-language programs nationwide (p. 253). According to Washington School Research Center (2003) stated, “No matter what approach is used, LEP students are taught the same curriculum as their native English speaking peers with a strong emphasis on English language development” (p. 20).

Definition of English-as-a-second language

Hamayan, Marler, Lopez-Sanchez, and Damico (2007) reported ESL was defined, “Referring to programs or classes that target students identified as English language learners, with the goal of promoting the language development and social integration of these students” (p. 223). Another author defined ESL as, “A program of techniques, methodology and special curriculum designed to teach

ELL students English language skills, which may include listening, speaking, reading, writing, study skills, content vocabulary, and cultural orientation. ESL instruction is usually in English with little use of native language (U.S.

Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 1999). The ESL program was a program model that described the setting and delivery of services with the focus of transitioning ELL students into the English-language instructional classroom.

Washington Assessment of Student Learning

Historically, the WASL was the result of the 1983 publicized report of *A Nation at Risk*, by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Nelson, Palonsky, and McCarthy, 2004). The president in office was Ronald Regan who triggered setting the

higher standards for public education. The WASL was defined as: A standardized educational assessment that was used as a high school graduation examination. A criterion referenced tool designed to show students have made adequate progress in each of the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALR). Reading, mathematics, writing and science were four subjects students were assessed on the WASL. Orlich (2003) reported, “At the federal level there is need to examine the practicality, reasonableness and statistical logic of setting adequate yearly progress targets” (p. 8). The WASL was identified as an accountability tool and a criterion-referenced test.

No Child Left Behind

In January 2002, the No Child Left Behind act was signed into law by

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President George W. Bush. According to Silliman, Wilkinson and Spahn-Brea (2004) reported, “The NCLB legislation requires that all children must meet basic standards (set by states’ core curricula) in mathematics and reading” (p. 104).

This law was designed to hold schools accountable for student achievement. Nelson, Palonsky, and McCarthy (2004) stated, “States are required to develop a “single statewide accountability system” to ensure that schools and school districts - not individual students – are making “adequate yearly progress” in mathematics, reading/language arts, and by 2005-2006, in science” (p. 154). From the NCLB came the foundation for reading developed by the National Reading Panel (NRP). The five elements included phonics, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. August and Shanahan Executive Summary (2006) reported,

“The NRP, given the enormity of the task before it, made a conscious decision not to include scientific literature available in the development of language and literacy for those students learning to read in English for whom English was not their first or native language” (p. ix). The research from the English Language Proficiency Assessment in the Nation reported the following:

Congress passed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act with the goal of increasing academic achievement and closing the achievement gaps among different student groups, with a particular focus on those who are economically disadvantaged, those who represent major racial and ethnic groups, those who have disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency (p. 14).

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Achievement gap

Achievement gap began for students as soon as students entered kindergarten. Silliman, Wilkinson and Spahn-Brea (2004) reported, “A racial/ethnic and socio-economic gap in emerging literacy knowledge is evident when young children enter kindergarten” (p. 104). Achievement gap was defined as disparities in measurement results among groups who were often identified racially, ethnically, and by income levels. Effective instruction must be implemented in the classroom for all students in order for the achievement gap to disappear. (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2002). For traditionally low-achieving students, teachers must utilize research based instructional strategies. Thomas and Collier (2001) researched, “When English language learners (ELL) initially attend segregated, remedial programs, these students do not close the achievement gap after reclassification and placement in the

English mainstream” (p. 7). Remedial programs were not shown to make instructional gains compared to an enrichment program. In later years, the gap for ELL was seen as maintained or widen. Thomas and Collier (2001) noted the following:

We have noted in the past that many school districts have “hidden” (intentionally or unintentionally) their English language learners’ large achievement gap by reporting together the achievement of ELL and non-ELL who are members of language-minority groups (p. 36).

The research also showed that the achievement gaps were evident eventually.

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Furthermore, Tomas and Collier (2001) stated, “Districts have also focused only on the short-term achievement of these groups ignoring the fact the achievement gaps continue to develop over time” (p. 36).

Assessments

Before the NCLB, the English language proficiency assessments were weak. The research publication “The English Language Proficiency Assessment in the Nation” (2007) founded, “Literature on the assessment of ELL students has raised concerns over the validity of information from these sources” (p. 3). The two sources of information were identified from home language survey and the English language proficiency test. The research publication “The English Language Proficiency Assessment in the Nation” (2007) researched the following:

An important aspect of the new Title III legislation that could easily be overlooked, but which is a critical element of the new law, is the demand that states align their ELP standards with their academic content standards at each grade (p. 14).

This action forced states to ensure that their language demands of content-area standards and language skills for ELL were being developed in order for ELL to master content-area knowledge. In Washington, English Language Development (ELD) standards were developed.

Assessments before the NCLB had many errors. The NCLB Title III created improvements of English language proficiency assessment. Rodriguez-Laija,

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Ochoa, and Parker (2006) stated the following:

The understanding of the relationship between language proficiency and reading growth is vital in providing educators with guidelines to assign appropriate instructional programs for ELL, as mandated by NCLB and the OCR, early in their academic career in order to narrow the reading gap with their native English-speaking peers (p. 88).

The mandate from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and NCLB held schools accountable for creating a monitoring system to monitor the ELL growth in language and academic. Moreover, the schools had to ensure equal educational opportunities for ELL to have success.

In the review, there were three standards utilized interchangeably to guide the instruction of English language learners to reach English proficiency. The three standards were ESL standard, English Language Development (ELD) standard, and

English Language Proficiency (ELP) standard (English Language Proficiency Assessment in the Nation (2007), p. 4).

In Washington, the Washington Language Proficiency Test II was the test utilized to measure the English language proficiency level of students whose home language survey indicated not English as the primary language. The English language proficiency levels were measured in four areas; reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Freeman, Y., Freeman, D., and Mercuri (2002) cited,

“An examination of mainstream instructional demands yields a listing of

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content area topics, thinking skills, and linguistic domains necessary for learning, not necessarily assessed through the above instruments [home language survey and oral language proficiency tests]” (p. 14).

Reading and writing skills cannot be measured by oral language tests. According to Pray (2005), “Critical analysis of language assessment is necessary to inform educators who place students in language support programs to their level of English-language proficiency, and those who refer ELL students into special education” (p. 388). The decision-making of placement into language support programs should not solely be based on language assessment scores. The decision-making process could mistakenly misplace ELL.

Instructional methods

Research had shown limited studies on what would be considered the most useful instructional methods for meeting the learning needs of ELL. Academic language skills

was determined an important factor for ELL to have success. The English Language Proficiency Assessment in the Nation (2007) reported the following:

This lack of proficiency in academic language affects ELL ability to comprehend and analyze texts in middle and high school, limits their ability to write and express themselves effectively, and can hinder their acquisition of academic content in all academic areas (p. 15).

For this reason, ELL lagged behind native English speaking peers with their

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achievement. The vocabulary and grammar became a challenge for the ELL in the academic content area. In the earlier grades, ELL reading difficulties were not significantly noticed. The Center on Instruction (2006) stated, “Yet, when the emphasis shifts from learning to read to reading to learn and text becomes central to the delivery of the curriculum and to overall academic success, they perform poorly on assessments of reading comprehension” (p. 15). Research has not shown cause for why ELL struggle with reading comprehension. Reading accurately was not the issue but understanding the meaning from the text was a factor for ELL.

One important finding was to implement strategies that focused on text-level skills and oral English language proficiency. The Executive Summary written by August and Shanahan (2006) reported, “The reason for the disparity between word- and text level among language-minority students is oral English proficiency” (p. 4). Instructional methods were seen different for native English speakers and language-minority students. It was founded that instructional methods had a positive learning impact with native

English speakers but not with language-minority students (p. 4). Furthermore, August & Shanahan (2006) noted the following:

Some studies also revealed the value of routines that include giving attention to vocabulary, checking comprehension, presenting ideas clearly both verbally and in writing, paraphrasing students' remarks and encouraging them to expand on those remarks, providing redundancy, and using physical gestures

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and visual cues to clarify meaning" (p. 354).

The research also suggested students needed to be highly engaged while learning new information.

Research was conducted on a new concept for educators called science of teaching. Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2005) stated, "Rather, it is because the "art" of teaching is rapidly becoming the "science" of teaching, and this is a relatively new phenomenon" (p. 1). The researchers, aforementioned concluded nine strategies for increasing student achievement for all learners. The research-based strategies were identifying similarities and differences, summarizing and note taking, reinforcing effort and providing recognition, homework and practice, nonlinguistic representations, cooperative learning, setting objectives and providing feedback, generating and testing hypotheses and questions, cues, and advance organizers. The eminent strategy considered was the core of learning which was identifying similarities and differences. The National Research Council (2000) reported, "Several groups have reviewed the literature of technology and learning and concluded that it has great potential to enhance

student achievement and teacher learning, but only if it is used appropriately” (p. 206).

Learning could be hindered, if technology was inappropriately utilized.

Research identified three principles of effective instruction for ELL. Hamayan, Marler, Lopez-Sanchez, and Damico (2007) reported, “These three principles are: increased comprehensibility, increased interaction, and the promotion of higher-

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order thinking skills” (p. 88). Content-based ESL and thematic units were methods mentioned for increased comprehensibility. Cooperative learning and peer-tutoring were approaches mentioned for increased interaction. Higher-order thinking skills should began as soon as ELL enter school, even if ELL were not fluent in English.

Finally the practical guide from the Institute of Education Sciences noted five recommendations to improve reading for ELL.

1. Perform ongoing formative assessments and monitor progress three times a year.
2. Instructional focus and delivery should be explicit and direct in an intensive small group. Three programs utilized were Enhanced Proactive Reading, Read Well and SRA Reading Mastery/SRA Corrective Reading.
3. Provide extensive and varied vocabulary instruction. The vocabulary list should be developed from the core reading program being utilized.
4. Instructional target was to increase academic English.
5. Set-up peer-assisted learning for positive impact on student reading achievement.

Summary

The selected literature reviewed provided insight on implementing an effective ESL program for ELL. The main highlights were drawn following the review.

The Castañeda court ruling laid down the foundation for school districts to provide an effective program for language-minority students. The Castañeda

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method was a standard developed to evaluate the school districts effectiveness of implementing programs for ELL. The three-part tests were a sound educational theory, effective implementation and program evaluation and modification.

The research published by August and Shanahan ended the controversy debate of bilingual education on what language of instruction was determined the best to meet the needs of ELL. The controversy issue now became what was considered the effective method for teaching ELL. The curriculum taught for native English speaking students should be the same for LEP students with an emphasis of English language development in deciding what method to use. The new wave of dual-language programs was considered a program model that supported high academic achievement.

The ESL program was a program model that described the setting and delivery of services with the focus of transitioning ELL students into the English-language instructional classroom. The goal of the ESL program could focus on language development, English language skills, social integration, content vocabulary using a variety of methods and special curriculum geared to meet these goals.

The WASL was identified as a accountability tool and a criterion referenced test. Reading, mathematics, writing, and science were four subjects students were assessed on

the WASL. On the WASL there was still a need to analyze the common sense and fairness of setting adequate yearly progress goals.

The NCLB was a law designed to hold schools accountable for all student

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achievement. From the NCLB came the foundation for reading developed by the NRP, which focused on five elements of reading success. The NRP did not include scientific literature for students whose first language was not English.

As early as kindergarten, the achievement gap began for students. Effective instruction must be implemented in the classroom for all students in order for the achievement gap to disappear. Remedial programs were not shown to make instructional gains compared to an enrichment program. The research showed that achievement gaps were not noticeable on a short-term but evident over time.

In Washington, ELD standards were developed. Also used in Washington was the WLPT II test. A test used to measure the English language proficiency level of students whose home language survey indicated not English as the primary language. No matter what assessment was used, the decision-making of placement into language support programs should not solely be based on language assessment scores. The decision-making process could mistakenly misplace ELL.

Finally, research had shown limited studies on what would be considered the most useful instructional methods for meeting the learning needs of ELL. Academic language skills was determined an important factor for ELL to have success along with implementing strategies that focused on text-level skills and oral English proficiency.

Research also identified three principles of effective instruction for ELL. The three principles were increased comprehensibility, increased interaction, and the promotion of higher-order thinking skills.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the school's effectiveness of ESL instructional strategies for closing the achievement gap for ELL. The ESL programs at two low socio-economic schools were compared. Both schools implemented the pull-out model. Instruction was provided differently at each school. The survey was completed by thirteen teachers and forty-two students. The survey focused on school climate, communication and attitude towards the program using a 5-point Likert scale. Growth was measured in reading proficiency on the WASL from the school year 2003-2004.

The qualitative research method was implemented to analyze the ELL from both schools to native English speakers to determine if the schools were utilizing effective instructional strategies to close the achievement. The research questions were answered based from the results of the reading WASL, surveys and interview questions. The data was collected on the demographics, perceptions and student learning.

Conclusions and recommendations were formulated from the reviews of related literature, reading WASL scores, surveys and interview questions.

Methodology

The fourth grade reading WASL scores for the two schools were used. The two-dimensional chi square was used to examine the differences between both schools for the reading WASL scores for the following six groups.

1. Group X: ESL Students from school (A)
2. Group Y: Native English speaking students from school (A)
3. Group X: ESL Students from school (B)
4. Group Y: Native English speaking students from school (B)
5. Group X: ESL Students from school (A)
6. Group Y: ESL Students from school (B)

The qualitative methods involving interviews and surveys were used. The ESL teacher, to an entire classroom at one time, administered the surveys. Before the administration of the survey, the participants were assured that their answers would be kept confidential. The survey was developed on the basis of the selected literature reviewed. The survey consisted of twelve questions for the students written in a yes or no format and fill in the blank. The teachers answered eleven questions using a 5-point Likert scale. The ESL teachers were asked six questions during the interview process.

Participants

Participants for school (A) and school (B) were fourth graders during the school year 2003-2004. As aforementioned, students were compared in six

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groups. There were a total of seventy students from school (A). Included from school (B) were seventy-two students. A total of twenty teachers and 59 ESL students were given a survey to complete. The interview process was held with two ESL teachers representing each school.

Instruments

The reading WASL scores for the school year 2003-2004 were utilized for fourth grade students at both schools. The reading WASL scores were provided on an excel spreadsheet. The standardized test utilized was the reading WASL scores. The WASL was a criterion-referenced tool that met the standards for validity. The reliability issue was undetermined. The reading WASL scores were retrieved from the curriculum data analyst. The surveys, for this study, were created for the students and teachers. The surveys met the reliability and validity standards.

Design

In the qualitative study, the teacher surveys were calculated by percentages. The student surveys were calculated by the total yes and no responses. Main points were noted from the ESL teachers' interview. The reading WASL scores came from an excel spreadsheet developed by the curriculum data analyst. The two dimensional chi square was used to examine the differences between both schools for the reading WASL scores

for the six groups. From school (A), thirty-nine students, ten teachers, one ESL teacher, and one special education teacher

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were involved. In addition, from school (B) were twenty students, six teachers, one ESL teacher, and one special education teacher.

Procedure

The bilingual coordinator, ESL teachers, curriculum administrator, and curriculum data analyst conferred over the project. The curriculum data analyst offered to retrieve the data. The fourth grade reading WASL scores from the school year 2003-2004 for both schools were utilized. An interview was conducted with an ESL teacher from each school. Prior to the interview, the ESL teachers were given a list of questions regarding the ESL program. A survey for the students and teachers was developed based on the selected literature reviewed.

Treatment of the Data

The STATPAK software was used to statistically calculate the reading WASL data and the student surveys. To examine the differences between both schools, the two dimensional chi square was used for calculation. The STATPAK software and the X^2 distribution table came from the text "Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications" (Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2006).

Summary

The statistical calculation from the two dimensional chi square was used to examine the differences between both schools for the reading WASL scores for

six groups. The perception data was gathered from the students and teachers surveys and the ESL teachers' interview.

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CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

Description of the Environment

The students who participated in the English-as-a-second language pull-out program participated in this project. The survey was completed by thirteen teachers and forty-two students. The survey focused on school climate, communication and attitude towards the program using a 5-point Likert scale. Growth was measured in reading proficiency on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning from the school year 2003-2004 from both schools. An interview was conducted where the ESL teachers were asked to define the program. A delimitation was the surveys. The number of participants and limited responses were also a delimitation. The survey results were difficult to discern based on a person's state of mind the day the surveys were disseminated. The outcomes could go either way negatively or positively.

Research Question

The writer sought to study the following questions:

1. Would the English-as-a-second language program improve the achievement of English language learners' students?

2. Would program (A) be more effective at teaching English-as-a-second language that program (B) to increase student achievement?

Results of the Study

As seen in chapter 1, the demographic data was drawn from two low socio-economic elementary schools. The ethnicity breakdown was similar for both schools except for school (A) had a higher percentage of white and black students. The programs offered were similar except for school (B) had a higher percentage of students receiving free-or reduced-price meals. The number of ELL students served was similar except for the enrollment was higher from school (B).

For the school year 2003-2004, the student learning data was obtained from the criterion-referenced reading WASL scores.

Table 1

2003-2004 fourth grade reading WASL for schools (A) and (B)

	Passed WASL	Did not pass WASL	Total of Students	Percentage
School (A) Native English Speaking Students	33	18	51	65%
School (A) ESL Students	8	11	19	42%
School (B) Native English Speaking Students	40	7	47	85%
School (B) ESL Students	16	9	25	64%

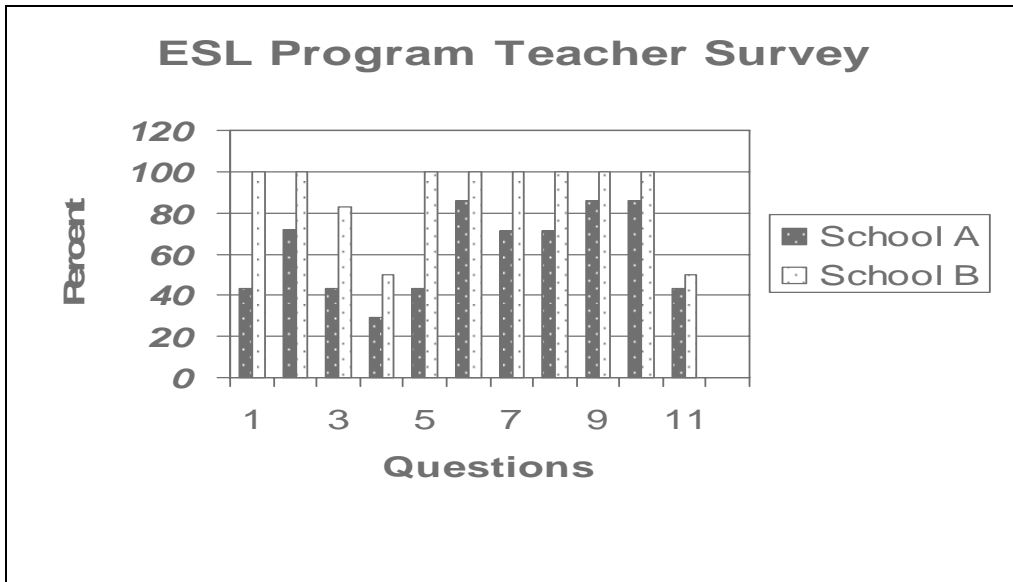
The student learning data consisted of the criterion-referenced reading WASL scores to measure growth. The two-dimensional chi square was used to examine the differences between both schools for the reading WASL scores between ESL

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students, native English speaking students, and a comparison of ESL students in school (A) and school (B). The ESL Students from school (A) compared to native English speaking students from school (A), as measured by the chi square, showed the degrees of freedom was one. The table A.6: Distribution of χ^2 concluded $\chi^2=16.9336$, $p<0.001$. The ESL Students from school (B) compared to native English speaking students from school (B), as measured by the chi square, showed the degrees of freedom was one. The table A.6: Distribution of χ^2 concluded $\chi^2=10.5357$, $p<0.01$. The ESL Students from school (A) compared to ESL Students from school (B), as measured by the chi square, showed the degrees of freedom were one. The table A.6: Distribution of χ^2 concluded $\chi^2=2.8667$, $p>0.05$.

Table 2

2008 Teacher Survey Results



The perception data was gathered through teacher surveys and interviews.

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The teachers' surveys were calculated into percentages. Recorded on the table 2 were the percentage of strongly agree and agree for the eleven questions. From school (A), English-as-a-second language instruction showed results of three questions of disagreeing and four questions of strongly disagreeing and 3 questions of not sure for how the program was implemented. As for the school climate, fourteen percent strongly disagreed with four questions related in this area. In communication, fourteen percent strongly disagreed with one question and one question not sure. In comparison to school (B), English-as-a-second language instruction showed results of seventeen percent who strongly disagreed with one question, thirty-three percent and seventeen percent were neutral with two questions on how the program is implemented. In school climate, seventeen percent were neutral with two questions in this area. As for communication, thirty-three percent were neutral and seventeen percent disagreed with one question.

The students' perceptions were calculated as a comparison of school (A) yes responses to school (B) yes responses to the questions, as measured by the chi square, showed the degrees of freedom was eleven. The table A.6: Distribution of χ^2 concluded $\chi^2=23.5626$, $p<0.05$.

The interview responses for the six questions showed similarity and differences in implementing the ESL program. Both schools relied on the pull-out model. At school (A), the instructional focus was language proficiency were school (B) focused on English vocabulary. Both schools used materials from

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Total Physical Response (TPR) and Open Court. The instructional strategy used at school (A) was Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD). At school (B), a variety of strategies were used. Instructional strategies consisted of modeling, demonstrating, acting, providing realia and visuals, guided practice, and partner/group work. For how students were placed in program, both schools relied on the level of their WLPT II scores. At school (A), students who are below level 4 were eligible and monolingual students were a first priority. The MAP scores and teacher observations were also considered. On the other hand, at school (B) students were eligible based on the level one and level two scores. Both schools relied on the WLPT II assessment to monitor growth plus provided additional assessments. As for a cut-off for time spent in ESL, both schools mentioned there was no cut-off time. At school (A), students were exited by two parallel ideas which were reaching grade level reading or were able to articulate expressing ideas using proper grammar. Fluency reflected on the WLPT II was considered another way of exiting out of the ESL program. At school (B), students were

exited from the ESL program on a combination of assessments which were WLPT II, MAP and assessments embedded in the instructional materials and programs.

Finding

The data was analyzed for commonalities between the schools and interpreted in relation to the primary research questions. The data analyzed indicated that the ESL Students from school (A) compared to Native English speaking students

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from school (A), appeared to show significance between native English speaking students and ESL students, as measured by the chi square. The ESL Students from school (B) compared to Native English speaking students from school (B), appeared to show significance between Native English speaking students and ESL students, as measured by the chi Square. The ESL Students from school (A) compared to ESL Students from school (B), appeared to show no significance between ESL programs at both schools, as measured by the chi square. The reading WASL data results inferred that the native English speaking students demonstrated higher reading scores than ESL students. Overall, the survey findings appeared to show limited understanding of the implementation of the ESL instructional program. There were high percentages of strongly agreeing and agreeing of the ESL curriculum objectives being aligned with the school or district adopted curriculum but there was no current ESL curriculum being utilized. From this survey, communication between ESL teachers and general education teachers regarding information on ELL progress appeared weak. The student survey results showed from both schools that five students do not like to leave their classroom

for extra help. A total of 31 students do not speak English at home and eleven parents do not help students with homework. The comparison of both ESL programs showed no significant difference as to which program was more effective at teaching ESL students to increase student

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achievement. The ESL program appeared not to improve the achievement for ESL students.

Discussion

With the mandate of the NCLB, schools were struggling to meet the instructional needs of ELL. Providing districts with more guidance on the ESL program implementation was identified through observations and conversations. The analyzed data from the chi square appeared to show that the comparison of both ESL programs showed no significant difference as to which program was more effective at teaching ESL students to increase student achievement. The ESL program appeared to not improve the achievement for ESL students. The study confirmed that the instructional strategies used for ESL students were not making growth.

Summary

The reading WASL scores were calculated into six groups. The two dimensional chi square was used for calculation for the six groups. The responses from the students surveys were calculated by the two dimensional chi square for the number of yes responses for the two schools. The responses from the teachers' surveys were calculated by percentages. Main points were noted from the ESL teachers' interview. The study

outcomes demonstrated no significant differences for the two research questions. The first research question showed that the ESL program appeared not to improve the achievement for ESL students.

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The second research question on the comparison of both ESL programs showed no significant difference as which program was more effective at teaching ESL students to increase student achievement.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

Conclusions and recommendations were based from the study of the selected literature reviewed and the analyzed data. The purposed of this qualitative research study was to examine the schools' effectiveness of English-as-a-second language instructional strategies for closing the achievement gap for English language learners. The study was conducted on two low socio-economic schools.

Conclusions

In summary, these findings from this study were important. After analyzing the data, this study suggested that ESL programs were not closing the achievement gap for ELL. As the ELL population grows, the mindset of teachers needs to change. Being pulled-out for ESL instruction was not going to fix the ELL needs. Discussions needed to take place on modification of instruction. The teacher surveys appeared to show limited understanding of the implementation of the ESL instructional program. The pull-out model had been shown not to be an effective program but still utilized. Both schools needed to have discussions on making sure students were not being pulled-out of learning a core subject, were grouped by proficiency levels; instead of grade levels, and

communication needed to exist between the ESL teacher and the general education teachers. The teachers' surveys were noted weak on the communication section.

Recommendations

This study suggests that the goal of the ESL program should focus on language development, English language skills, social integration, content vocabulary using a variety of methods and special curriculum geared to meet these goals. Research is also needed to identify which instructional strategies will make a difference for ELL to have success. This study was done on a short-term format and should be looked at in a long-term format to identify the gap. Based on the study, an interesting point to consider is to conduct a correlation study on interventions given on two instructional strategies for outcome results for ELL improvement. The review of the Castañeda outline should be considered to ensure that ELL acquire English proficiency at the highest level and obtain academic achievement. Implementing engagement and critical thinking was a theme throughout the selected literature review. The curriculum used to teach English language learners should have the English language development standards embedded. Monitoring the language proficiency levels and the ELD standards was a recommendation for teachers to implement. Students whose level of proficiency does not make gains after 2-3 years, change in instruction needs to take place. Finally, academic language skills was determined an important factor for ELL to have success along with implementing strategies that focused on text-level skills and oral English proficiency.

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Appendix A

Appendix A: Sample cover letter for survey

March 31, 2008

Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Teacher:

The enclosed survey has been developed for my Masters special project in examining the effectiveness of English-as-a-second language instructional strategies for English language learners in your school building. Your responses are valuable.

The ESL Program survey consists of 11 questions on school climate, communication and attitude towards the program and ESL instruction using a 5-point Likert scale. Responses range from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Your responses will be confidential and will be combined with other responses for data analysis collection.

I realize that your schedule is busy at this time but the survey will provide your school with useful information. Your perception can indicate, if a change is needed to better the learning environment.

Please return the completed survey in the provided envelop no later than April 4, 2008. I can be reached at (area code) telephone number, if you are interested in the results of the survey.

Thank you for your participation.

Yours truly,

Name

Enclosures
Survey
Return Envelope

Appendix B

Appendix B: ESL program student survey results school (A)

ESL Program
Student Survey results School (A)

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. Are you comfortable speaking in English?	22	1	
2. Are you comfortable writing in English?	22	1	
3. Do you like to read?	22	1	
4. Do you feel comfortable using your English in this classroom?	22	1	
5. I like this school?	23	0	
6. Do you like coming to school?	23	0	
7. Do you like leaving your classroom to come to this classroom for help?	20	1	1
8. If you don't understand something, does your teacher help you in another way?	23	0	
9. Is learning fun in this classroom?	23	0	
10. Do you speak English at home?	3	20	
11. Do you speak Spanish at home?	22	1	
12. Do your parents help you with your homework?	17	5	1

Appendix C

Appendix B: ESL program student Survey results school (B)

ESL Program
Student Survey results School (B)

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. Are you comfortable speaking in English?	16	4	
2. Are you comfortable writing in English?	15	5	
3. Do you like to read?	16	3	1
4. Do you feel comfortable using your English in this classroom?	17	3	
5. I like this school?	19	1	
6. Do you like coming to school?	18	2	
7. Do you like leaving your classroom to come to this classroom for help?	17	3	
8. If you don't understand something, does your teacher help you in another way?	19	1	
9. Is learning fun in this classroom?	19	1	
10. Do you speak English at home?	9	11	
11. Do you speak Spanish at home?	19	1	
12. Do your parents help you with your homework?	12	6	1

Appendix D

Appendix D: English ESL program student survey form

ESL Program Student Survey

Directions: Fill in the blanks
Circle yes or no

Student information:

School: _____

Age: _____

Grade: _____

Boy/Girl: _____

Language:

Are you comfortable speaking in English? [yes] [no]

Are you comfortable writing in English? [yes] [no]

School:

Do you like to read? [yes] [no]

Do you feel comfortable using your English in this classroom? [yes] [no]

I like this school? [yes] [no]

Attitude:

Do you like coming to school? [yes] [no]

Do you like leaving your classroom to come to this classroom for help? [yes] [no]

If you don't understand something, does your teacher help you in another way? [yes] [no]

Is learning fun in this classroom? [yes] [no]

Language and culture:

Do you speak English at home? [yes] [no]

Do you speak Spanish at home? [yes] [no]

Do your parents help you with your homework? [yes] [no]

Appendix E

Appendix E: Spanish ESL program student survey form

Programa Encuesta de ESL Encuesta de Estudiante

Direcciones: Responde
Circule sí o no

Información de Estudiante:		
Escuela: _____	Edad: _____	
Grado: _____	Niño/Niña: _____	
Idioma/Lenguaje:		
¿Te sientes cómodo hablando en inglés?	[sí]	[no]
¿Te sientes cómodo escribiendo en inglés?	[sí]	[no]
Escuela:		
¿Te gusta leer?	[sí]	[no]
¿Te sientes cómodo usando tu inglés en esta clase?	[sí]	[no]
¿Te gusta esta escuela?	[sí]	[no]
Actitud:		
¿Te gusta venir a la escuela?	[sí]	[no]
¿Te gusta salir de tu clase para venir a esta clase?	[sí]	[no]
¿Sí tus no comprendes algo, la maestra te ayuda de otra manera?	[sí]	[no]
¿El aprendizaje es divertido en esta clase?	[sí]	[no]
Idioma/Lenguaje y Cultura:		
¿Hablas inglés en tu hogar?	[sí]	[no]
¿Hablas español en tu hogar?	[sí]	[no]
¿Tus padres te ayudan con tu tarea?	[sí]	[no]

Appendix F

Appendix F: ESL program teacher survey results school (A)

ESL Program Teacher Survey Results

Key: 1- Strongly Agree
 2- Agree
 3- Neutral
 4- Disagree
 5- Strongly Disagree

School: (A) _____

Grade Level: _____

	SA (1)	A (2)	N (3)	D (4)	SD (5)	Not Sure
English as a second language (ESL) Instruction						
1. ESL curriculum objectives are aligned with those of the school or district adopted curriculum.	0%	50%	0%	0%	17%	33%
2. Instruction in ESL is provided to students on the basis of individual needs as identified through assessment.	50%	17%	0%	17%	17%	0%
3. Content-based ESL instruction is provided on a scheduled basis.	17%	33%	17%	17%	17%	0%
4. Technology is integrated into the curriculum.	0%	17%	33%	17%	0%	33%
5. Instructional materials reflect the curriculum objectives.	0%	33%	17%	0%	17%	33%
School Climate						
1. The school is a safe place for teachers and students.	33%	50%	0%	0%	17%	0%
2. Goals and expectations are clearly understood by students, teachers, and administrators.	0%	67%	0%	17%	17%	0%
3. Cultural diversity is valued in the entire school.	17%	67%	0%	0%	17%	0%
4. The school represents a sense of community.	50%	33%	0%	0%	17%	0%
Communication						
1. Communication is open in this school.	33%	50%	0%	0%	17%	0%
2. Information on ELL progress is communicated among all teachers on a regular basis.	17%	33%	33%	0%	0%	17%

Appendix G

Appendix G: ESL program teacher survey results school (B)

ESL Program Teacher Survey Results

Key: 1- Strongly Agree
2- Agree
3- Neutral
4- Disagree
5- Strongly Disagree

School: (B) _____

Grade Level: _____

	SA (1)	A (2)	N (3)	D (4)	SD (5)	Not Sure
English as a second language (ESL) Instruction						
1. ESL curriculum objectives are aligned with those of the school or district adopted curriculum.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2. Instruction in ESL is provided to students on the basis of individual needs as identified through assessment.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%
3. Content-based ESL instruction is provided on a scheduled basis.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4. Technology is integrated into the curriculum.	40%	20%	40%	0%	0%	0%
5. Instructional materials reflect the curriculum objectives.	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
School Climate						
1. The school is a safe place for teachers and students.	60%	20%	20%	0%	0%	0%
2. Goals and expectations are clearly understood by students, teachers, and administrators.	60%	20%	20%	0%	0%	0%
3. Cultural diversity is valued in the entire school.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4. The school represents a sense of community.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Communication						
1. Communication is open in this school.	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2. Information on ELL progress is communicated among all teachers on a regular basis.	40%	20%	40%	0%	0%	0%

Appendix H

Appendix H: ESL teacher school (B) interview questions/responses

Interview questions/responses (School A) Date: November 08, 2007

1. What type of model is used for your ESL program?

The program is a pull-out model for all grades. I see a group of students who are struggling with reading due to lack of vocabulary.

2. What is your instructional focus?

My instructional focus is language proficiency with all students. I work with students who have very limited understanding of English expression and my instructional focus is to get them to use content related vocabulary. I also do academic and social instruction and I also focus on reading abilities and writing expressions.

3. What are the instructional strategies/materials used?

I use materials from Total Physical Response (TPR) and lots of manipulatives for oral development. I use the vocabulary from Open Court and read naturally. As strategies, I use the Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD).

4. How is ELL students placed in program?

Students are placed by the level of their WLPT II scores. Students that scores are below four levels are eligible for ESL support. The classroom teacher and I use the map scores and teacher observations. I have consistent communication with the teachers and specialist in the building. The number of students I see varies consistently. The grade of students also varies consistently. The monolingual students are my first priority.

5. What types of assessments are utilized to monitor growth in the classroom?

The WLPT II assessment in the spring is one way growth is monitored. Language proficiency and observations are also done. Other assessments I do are the San Diego Quick, Core, and Jerry Jones, Critch low, and Dibels.

6. Is there a cut-off for time spent in ESL?

No. The student is exited when the student reaches on grade reading level or is able to articulate himself in expressing ideas using proper grammar. The two go parallel. Also if the students scores in the WLPT II reflect fluency.

Appendix I

Appendix I: ESL teacher school (B) interview questions/responses

Interview questions/responses (School B) Date: November 15, 2007

1. What type of model is used for your ESL program?

The program is a pull-out model. I see 2nd grade to 5th grade students for a class period of 45 minutes.

2. What is your instructional focus?

My instructional focus is developing English vocabulary and increasing listening, speaking and reading abilities.

3. What are the instructional strategies/materials used?

I use materials from the Total Physical Response (TPR), Scholastic Transition Program, Open Court, Kaleidoscope (taken from the intervention series of Open Court), and SRA Reading Laboratory. The strategies I use are modeling, demonstrating, acting, providing realia & visuals, guided practice, and partner/group work.

4. How is ELL students placed in program?

Students are placed by the level of their WLPT II scores. I serve students who are Level 1 and Level 2.

5. What types of assessments are utilized to monitor growth?

The students are yearly given the WLPT II assessment in the spring. I also do pre/post testing from teacher-created assessments. Additionally, I use the MAP and assessments that are embedded in the instructional materials/programs.

6. Is there a cut-off for time spent in ESL?

There is not cut-off time for students to be in ESL. I see students as long as their scores indicate that they still need assistance, however typically after being in my pull-out ESL class for 2 years (occasionally 3) they have acquired enough English that they do well on exams and exit my class. Students continue to be on the Bilingual list until the students pass the WLPT II. What exams are used to

exit from your class? I use a combination of the assessments mentioned above in question 5.