MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes of teachers who are responsible for teaching ELLs in an inclusion setting. In this study, inclusion refers to the integration of ELL students into mainstream classes with no ESL teacher to assist in the classroom. ELL students participate in traditional middle school language arts classes, but may be pulled out for ESL services.

A survey developed by Reeves (2002) was modified and used to determine attitudes of middle school language arts teachers in North Carolina. This study occurred in one school district with a large ELL population in each of the eight regions. There were 740 teachers invited to participate in 68 schools, with a 51% response rate.

Teachers indicated positive attitudes toward the inclusion of ELL students, however 89.6% expressed that ELL students needed to attain a minimum level of English proficiency prior to entering the mainstream classroom. A large percentage of teachers (89.3%) reported that ELL students require longer than two years to acquire English with 82.4% supporting legislation to make English the official language of the U.S. Responses on the Likert portion of the survey indicated that teachers felt they were supported, yet indicated support was a challenge when asked to write in their response.

Recommendations for future research and implications for practice and policy include exploring the relationship between mainstream teachers and the ESL teacher, examining the role culture plays in the school setting and conducting qualitative research. Future policies should reflect research and best practice.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

> As I look at the students in my classroom, I see children who are not only diverse in their appearance, but also diverse in their language, culture, experiences, and skills. The demographic makeup of my class has changed considerably in the last ten years. There are now a large number of students who speak other languages and there are times when we have difficulty communicating. While these students receive assistance to achieve academically, they spend most of the school day with me and their English speaking peers. Yes, I am responsible for teaching students content area curriculum when many of the students barely understand English. This is an overwhelming task put before me and I feel ineffective as an educator. (K. Wise, Middle School Teacher, personal communication, September 28, 2007)

As I listened to this teacher talk about her experience as a middle school language arts teacher and then continued these conversations with other mainstream teachers, there seemed to exist little understanding of the ELL students entering their mainstream classrooms. It is possible that their lack of understanding can be exhibited in attitudes toward this growing population, however Reeves (2002) noted that "…little information is available on teachers who have experienced the inclusion of ELL students in their mainstream, subject area classrooms" (p. 3). Research studies conclude that teacher attitudes play an important role in the overall learning process (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002; Garcia, 1992; Larrivee & Cook, 1979). To address the importance of teacher attitudes,

this research study attempted to explore teacher attitudes toward the achievement of ELL students from the perspective of middle school language arts teachers in North Carolina.

Background

Throughout the United States, schools are enrolling students who are linguistically diverse. Many of these students, generally known as English language learners (ELLs), enter school unaware of expectations in the classroom, exhibit varying levels of proficiency in speaking English and often times require specialized instruction to succeed academically in the classroom (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). These conditions present challenges for middle school mainstream teachers in providing all students a quality education (Bracey, 2002). Mainstream classes are core or elective courses taken for credit and are not designed as language service or special needs classes, however ELL students and students with special needs may enroll in mainstream classes. The inclusion of English language learners in middle school mainstream classes requires teachers to teach subject area content to students who vary in culture, language, abilities, and many other characteristics, yet English language learners are held to the same accountability standards as students who are fluent in the English language and familiar with cultural norms (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002). Inclusion refers to the integration of ELL students into mainstream classes with no English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher to assist in the classroom. ELL students participate in traditional middle school language arts classes, but may be pulled out for ESL services.

According to federal requirements, states must adopt challenging academic and content performance standards and achievement tests that accurately measure performance for all students (NCDPI, 2008). This mandate presents a unique challenge

for schools that enroll ELLs when students may not yet be proficient in English (Batalova, Fix, & Murray, 2007). In addition, after being enrolled in U.S. schools, ELL students, depending on the state in which they enroll in school, are given a limited amount of time to learn the language before they are required to take the English version of state achievement tests in reading and mathematics. Consequently, the test results reflect low scores when in fact the low scores typically reflect their inability to use the English language rather than their content mastery. Low test scores then affect school results which may determine school sanctions. As the number of ELL students enrolling in schools continues to increase and due to the limited time students have to learn English and content material, the inclusion of ELLs has been a source of contention among many educators. The increase and the limited time students have to learn English and content material are of particular interest in a time when federal legislation holds schools and teachers accountable for the academic achievement of all students. The recent increase in the number of ELLs in mainstream classrooms suggests the likelihood that teacher attitudes will affect teacher behavior toward the achievement of English language learners (Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004). Therefore, this research investigated middle school teacher attitudes toward the achievement of English language learners in mainstream classes.

During recent years, there have been considerable changes in the demographic makeup of the student population in schools across the United States. During the 2000-2001 school year, 4.7 million students were identified as having limited English proficiency or a home language other than English (United States Department of Education, 2007). In comparison, during the 2007-2008 school year, there were more

than 11 million school-aged children who were identified as English language learners (United States Department of Education). Non-English speaking children represent the fastest growing population of school-age children in the United States (Alsup & Bush, 2003). In fact, the English language learner population has increased by 169% since 1990, while the general school population has grown by only 12% (United States Department of Education). It is estimated that by the year 2030, 40% of the public school population in elementary and secondary schools will be ELLs (Thomas & Collier, 1997). California and Texas have the largest reported number of students receiving ELL services at 2.9 million and 1.6 million students, respectively (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). While California has an overall higher percentage of English language learners enrolled in public schools, there are school districts which have documented as many as 125 different languages spoken by the student population in a single district (Ukpokodu, 2003).

The student population in North Carolina schools mirrors this shift in demographics. The cultural and linguistic change in North Carolina residents is reflected in the student population enrolling in schools throughout the state. A report published by the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, Inc. (2005) indicated that between 1990 and 2000, North Carolina had the fastest growing Hispanic population at 394%, representing over 300,000 new residents. In addition, 45% of these new residents settled in rural counties. Although the Hispanic population represents the greatest number of new residents who speak a language other than English, North Carolina has become home to over 100,000 individuals identified as Asian (North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, Inc.). This population trend is further supported by the

results found in the 2010 Census. The U.S. Census Bureau (2010) reported that in the year 2009, North Carolina was comprised of 618,878 individuals who were foreign born. Further disaggregation indicated that 808,019 spoke a language at home other than English. Of those speaking a language other than English, 66% spoke Spanish while 34% spoke another language, with 48 % not speaking English very well; hence, a population reflecting a new blend of languages and cultures. In the classroom, according to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) records, there have been English language learners (ELLs) in North Carolina schools since 1977 with very few school programs to address their instructional needs (J. Marino, personal communication, April 10, 2007).

To address the needs of English language learners during the 1980s, under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, North Carolina school districts received monies from Title VII, known as the Bilingual Education Act. The Act provided financial support to address the diverse needs of these students (NCDPI, 2007a). Before the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) included among its goals the development of language enhancement and language acquisition programs, including to the extent possible, native language skills of English language learners (NCDPI). Competitive grants were awarded to school systems that developed and implemented programs in these areas. Currently, Title III, Section 3102 of NCLB (2001), known as the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act includes funds for language instruction for limited English proficient and immigrant students. The Act stresses the rapid teaching of English, with no mention of native language development (NCDPI).

The number of English language learner students enrolled in North Carolina public schools has steadily increased. In 2002, there were 60,012 ELL students enrolled in North Carolina public schools with an increase in 2007 to 111,923 ELL students enrolled in public schools across the state (Marino, 2007). Furthermore, there has been an increase of ELLs in each of the State Board regions of North Carolina. The State Board of Education has divided North Carolina into eight regions, with a number of school systems within each region (Appendix A).

Region one is located in the northeastern portion of the state, Region eight is located in the far western end of the state, and Region five is located in the central portion of the state. While all eight regions experienced an increase in the number of ELLs between 2002 and 2007, according to the limited English proficient student count done in October of each year, Region six included the largest number of ELL students at 17,035. In Region six, the languages spoken by students are Spanish, Vietnamese, French, Korean and Chinese, in addition to Arabic, Hmong, Gujarati and Lao. There are 125 languages spoken and approximately 149 countries represented (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, 2008). Region five had 6,115 ELLs and Region eight had 1,896 ELL students (Marino, 2007). Interestingly, the largest increase of ELLs between 2002 and 2007 occurred in Region six with a 154% increase, followed by Region five with a 123% increase. Overall, all State Board Regions have experienced significant growth in the number of ELL students enrolling in North Carolina public schools ("Teaching English Language Learners," 2009).

The data show a steady increase of ELLs in U.S. schools and schools in North Carolina. As the number of ELLs continues to increase, so do the challenges for school

districts and schools. To assist in meeting new demands placed upon teachers in mainstream classrooms, there must first be an understanding of teacher attitudes toward the achievement of ELLs. An understanding of teacher attitudes toward their achievement will help meet the needs of students and teachers, while providing teachers, administrators, teacher education programs, policy makers and others with the insight to help pave the way for the success of ELLs in mainstream classrooms.

Statement of the Problem

The increase in students with limited English proficiency presents challenges for school districts and teachers as educational expectations have been raised for all students. To provide ELLs with an opportunity to complete school successfully, there is a need to determine and understand teacher attitudes toward the achievement of ELLs in mainstream classrooms.

In the present study, North Carolina middle school teacher attitudes were examined. Middle school teachers face many challenges in educating adolescents. In middle school, students experience emotional and physiological changes and the academic environment changes from a sense of family with individual assistance and coddling in elementary school, to more independence, the challenges of fitting in and additional homework to complete in middle school (San Antonio, 2006). To address specific needs associated with middle school students, teachers must balance academic support with social guidance.

While academic support and social guidance are offered, effective instruction is required in the middle school classroom to ensure learning occurs. An important part of educating middle school students is teaching them language arts. Language arts teachers

are responsible for providing students with language arts instruction, including writing, literacy skills and literature. While ELL students receive at least some instruction from a qualified English as a second language teacher or tutor, often times it is the language arts teacher who feels most responsible for the language acquisition of ELL students (Karabenick & Noda, 2004).

There is little research available on middle school language arts teachers' attitudes toward the achievement of ELLs in mainstream classes. Research has previously been conducted regarding teacher attitudes and perceptions toward ELLs in schools situated in locations which have a large diverse population, as well as areas where a diverse student population has been prevalent for many years (Hirschfield, 2004; Hollis, 1997). Research has also been conducted examining the attitudes and perceptions of English language learners in content area classes (Cummins, 1996; Fu, 1995; Harklau, 2000; Mace-Matluck, Alexander-Kasparik, & Queen, 1998; Walqui, 2000). Additionally, research is available which focused on the perceptions and attitudes of high school mainstream teachers, but very few studies have explored attitudes and perceptions from the perspective of mainstream language arts teachers in the middle school setting, as well as in school districts across an entire state (Fu, 1995; Harklau, 2000; Reeves, 2002; Walqui, 2000).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes of middle school language arts teachers who are responsible for teaching ELLs and their achievement in an inclusion setting. Attitudes are used to determine the rules about the world and reactions to the world (Sapsford, 1999). For the teacher, his or her understanding of the rules about the

world and reactions to the world become evident in the classroom. "Teacher attitudes toward their students significantly shape the expectations teachers hold for student learning, their treatment of students and what students ultimately learn" (Pang & Sablan, 1998, p. 42). Teacher attitudes toward their students motivate teacher behavior in the classroom, therefore affecting student achievement (Nieto, 2005).

In preparing all students to succeed in the classroom, educators must consider the culturally and linguistically diverse students entering schools. Teacher attitudes should remain constant and positive toward their students despite their linguistic or cultural background. Therefore, this study is a quantitative examination of North Carolina language arts teacher attitudes toward the achievement of ELL students in mainstream classes. The questions addressed in this research study included (Note that the factor analysis completed after the collection of data caused re-naming of some of the variables, the research questions hereafter will use different names for some of the variables):

1. What are the attitudes of middle school language arts teachers toward ELL students, native language, the instructional strategies used, and the support received?
2. Is there a relationship between the number of years taught by middle school language arts teachers and the attitudes toward ELL students, native language, the instructional strategies used, and the support received?
3. Are there differences in attitudes toward ELL students, native language, and the instructional strategies used among teachers who have taught ELL students and those who have not?

4. Is there a relationship between middle school language arts teacher attitudes toward the support received and their attitudes toward ELL students?
5. How much time have middle school language arts teachers spent in training to teach ELL students?
6. What types of training have middle school language arts teachers attended?
7. How has the training North Carolina middle school language arts teachers attended affected their teaching?
8. What training do middle school language arts teachers feel they need in order to more effectively meet the needs of ELL students in their classroom?
9. What do middle school language arts teachers consider to be the greatest benefits and challenges of including ELL students in mainstream language arts classes?

Significance of the Study

Examining the attitudes of teachers who are responsible for the achievement of ELL students and employ ELL inclusion in their mainstream language arts classes is significant for a number of reasons. There is little known about the inclusion of ELL students and how mainstream language arts teachers are adjusting to the inclusion. School systems are experiencing an increasing number of ethnically and linguistically diverse students, and while this is not a new phenomenon, the high academic standards and performance levels currently imposed have increased the need to change educational practices (Berube, 2000). Although there has been research conducted by Hirschfield (2004), Hollis (1997) and Reeves (2002) regarding ELLs in a school district or a school, this study ascertained teacher attitudes toward ELL achievement in school districts throughout North Carolina. Attitudes provide a foundation for teacher behaviors in the

classroom. This study will assist in filling the gap in the research currently available on middle school language arts teacher attitudes and ELL achievement in mainstream classrooms.

Definition of Terms

To avoid ambiguity and lend specific meaning to terms used throughout this dissertation, Table 1.1 provides a list of terms with definitions.

Table 1.1

Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Attitude	An attitude is how teachers feel about the inclusion of English language learners (Reeves, 2002).
Content Area	A discipline of study is a content area. Content subject areas include English language arts, mathematics, social sciences and physical education, for example.
English Language Learners (ELLs)	ELLs are students whose home language is not English and who are in the process of learning English (Yedlin, 2003). In North Carolina, determining if a student is an ELL begins by the answers provided on a Home (Primary) Language Survey form completed by all parents enrolling their children in school (NCDPI, 2007a).
English Proficient	English Proficient is a term used to describe students who are native English speakers. This term is also used to describe second language learners who have achieved proficiency. In North Carolina, English language learners take the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) as a screening tool to determine English proficiency (NCDPI, 2007a).
English as a Second Language (ESL)	In this study, English as a Second Language is a type of program for students who are learning English (Rossell, 2005).

Hispanic	This term is often used to describe an individual who is from Spain, but can also refer to anyone from a Spanish speaking country.
Home (Primary) Language Survey	A Home (Primary) Language Survey is a survey completed by all parents who have a student enrolling in North Carolina public schools to determine the primary language spoken in the home (NCDPI, 2007a).
Inclusion	In this study, inclusion refers to the integration of ELL students into mainstream classes with no ESL teacher to assist in the classroom. ELL students participate in traditional middle school language arts classes, but may be pulled out for ESL services. When done well, the inclusion of ELL students create a positive educational atmosphere and benefit all students. In inclusive classrooms, ELL students are welcomed by mainstream teachers who support making English the official language, believe ELL students are not able to acquire English within two years of enrolling in U. S. schools and should attain a minimum level of English proficiency prior to enter the mainstream classroom. .
Latin	This term is often used to describe an individual who is from Latin America, but is sometimes used in general terms to identify individuals from other Spanish speaking countries.
Limited English Proficient	Limited English Proficient is a term used to describe students who have not become proficient or reached fluency in English. This term is seldom used and has been replaced with English language learner.
Mainstream	Mainstream classes are core or elective courses taken for credit and are not designed as language service or special needs classes, however ELL students and students with special needs may enroll in mainstream classes.
Middle School	In this study, a middle school consists solely of grades six through eight. All other middle schools were excluded.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

There are limiting factors with regard to this study. There was no way of verifying the honesty of the participants' responses to the statements on the survey, as the responses to the survey were self-reported. There was the assumption that the participants responded honestly, as the responses were anonymous. Finally, a limitation was that in three regions, the school district with the largest ELL population did not grant permission, which required the researcher to contact the next largest district until permission was granted for middle school language arts teachers to participate.

Delimitations are also noted. Language arts teachers were surveyed, excluding other mainstream teachers. The survey was given to middle school language arts teachers; therefore, language arts teachers in each district which participated in the study were the only source of data. An additional delimitation had to do with the size of the districts. There is a possible threat to external validity. Generalizing results to districts with a smaller number of ELL students is unlikely because the study focused on districts with a large ELL population.

Organization of the Remainder of the Dissertation

This dissertation contains five chapters. Chapter one includes an introduction to the study, background information, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, and a list of terms defined. This chapter also includes possible limitations and delimitations of the study. Chapter two is a review of the literature. Chapter three includes the purpose and research questions, population and sampling, the participant selection process, instrumentation, data gathering, ethics and the procedures used for data analysis. Chapter four describes respondent demographics, the

findings from the data analysis and answers to the research questions. Chapter five provides a discussion of the results, the, need for further research and the implications for practice and policy.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The increasing number of English language learners in schools today is presenting significant challenges for educators who are stressed by the everyday demands of teaching. Mainstream teachers are finding themselves responsible for the inclusion of ELLs whose linguistic backgrounds are very different from their own (Taylor & Sobel, 2001; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). The demands of teaching vary among individuals, however for many teachers the demands may include teaching in classrooms with large numbers of students, having limited resources and materials, and coping with discipline problems (Markham, Green, & Ross, 1996). To add to the stress, there is increased pressure from state and federal mandates to prepare students for standardized testing who are not yet proficient in English. With the number of ELLs entering school expected to rise, educating a changing student population continues to be one of the most critical issues facing educators (Nieto, 2000).

With a changing student population, teachers must be accountable for what occurs in the classroom. In fact, 78% of academic achievement has been traced to the quality of interaction between the teacher and the student (Good, Grumley, & Roy, 2003). Caine and Caine (1994) also suggested that the teacher in the classroom significantly affects learning. This is further supported by Larke (1990) who reported that a high correlation exists among educators' attitudes, beliefs, and behavior toward students of other cultures and their academic performance. Therefore, an exploration of teacher attitudes was conducted, as attitudes toward students are central to student success.

Beginning with an introduction to the literature review, the first portion of this chapter will focus on the influences in education, with particular consideration given to

state and federal mandates, in addition to the English-only debate and language policies. Educational practices will be addressed, focusing on language programs, instructional strategies and teacher support. The chapter will continue with a description of English language learners, including how language is developed and the benefits and challenges of including ELL students in mainstream classrooms. The chapter will conclude with an explanation of the significance of teacher attitudes and the research on teacher attitudes and student achievement.

Influences in Education

The responsibility of educators in public schools is to provide all students with a quality education and prepare them with twenty-first century skills to be productive citizens in the greater society. Educating all students requires addressing individual student needs to ensure academic achievement. In doing so, school districts and teachers must work to close the achievement gap between all groups of students. Such demands have required states to change the way in which student achievement is measured. In addition, federal mandates have expanded the federal role in education, which has insisted upon greater accountability through the proficiency demonstrated by groups of students within each school (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002).

State Mandates

Throughout the country, states have accountability measures in place to determine the level at which students should achieve. Student achievement is then gauged against state standards to ensure students are performing comparably to other students in the same grade level and subject area. In North Carolina, the ABCs (strong Accountability, mastery of Basic skills and localized Control) of Public Education was implemented

during the 1996-1997 school year as a way to improve schools (NCDPI, 2008). The ABCs model measured growth over time and determined the performance composite for the school as a whole. Students were to show a year's worth of growth through student performance on end of grade tests, which determined school status. Schools that showed growth based on state target goals received financial incentives for teachers and staff, however the incentives have ceased due to budgetary shortfalls. Student performance outcomes on the end of grade tests determined the amount of the financial incentives teachers received (NCDPI). With the implementation of a sophisticated model to gauge student achievement gains, along with the past financial incentives that were tied to those gains, teachers are feeling the added pressure to focus on instructional improvement and an increase in student achievement.

To ensure that all students are academically proficient, state legislation requires that students take state tests, regardless of their proficiency in English. Upon entering schools, parents or guardians of students enrolling in school must complete a Home Language Survey indicating the student's first language and the language that is spoken most often in the home. Based on the information provided on the Home Language Survey, the decision is then made to screen the student to determine his or her English language proficiency level in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Depending on their level of English proficiency, students may qualify for services to assist them in increasing English language proficiency. In grades three through eight, students who have recently arrived to the United States, enroll in school, and receive a low score on the language proficiency assessment, may have a first year exemption from the end of grade reading and writing tests for up to one year. High school students just entering the

United States who enroll in school and score low on the English language proficiency assessment receive guidance to optimize their schedule so that it does not include courses that require state standardized assessments to provide them with additional time to adjust to the culture, language, and a new environment. The courses that include an end of course test can be easily avoided with course offerings designed to provide support, along with language instruction. Following the ELL students' first year, they are required to take state standardized end of grade tests in grades three through eight or end of course tests in high school with their peers regardless of their proficiency levels, but may be eligible to receive accommodations on tests based on their language proficiency assessment results (NCDPI, n.d.). ELL students are not only expected to become proficient in English in a limited amount of time, but also learn subject area content taught in mainstream classrooms (Gitomer, Andal, & Davison, 2005). The limited time to become proficient, in addition to learning subject area content, increases stress among both teachers and students.

Federal Mandates

In conjunction with state mandates, federal mandates include the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB) (2002) which demands greater accountability through core measures designed to close the achievement gap among all groups of students. NCLB requires schools to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and provide school choice when schools do not meet AYP. States recognize the need to improve the proficiency in reading and mathematics; however, NCLB takes a different approach to student performance. Students are disaggregated by socio-economic status, race and ethnicity, disability, and limited English competency. Each category represents a subgroup;

however, under the provisions, a subgroup must consist of a number of students chosen by each state. For example, in North Carolina there must be at least 40 students of a particular classification within a school to be designated a subgroup. Each state has an expected proficiency rate and a target goal that will be raised periodically in increments in both mathematics and reading. Each subgroup must meet the target goal in both reading and mathematics, as well as meet other academic indicators in order for the school to make AYP. If one group does not make AYP, neither the school nor the district makes AYP. As a result of not making AYP, sanctions may be imposed until schools are able to show progress in deficient areas.

As teachers struggle to comply with strict requirements imposed by NCLB to ensure school sanctions are not imposed, the stakes are greater now than ever. With federal and state mandates at the forefront, greater emphasis has been placed on student achievement with little mention of students whose native language is not English and who have a limited time to learn academic language required to succeed in mainstream classrooms. In the classroom, language has long been viewed as the medium of instruction. To accommodate ELL students, teachers are required to think about language differently and as the number of non-English speaking students increases, so does the tension among teachers who struggle to educate, and communicate with their students.

English-Only Debate

In the United States, the English-only debate continues to be a source of debate among many. While the language debate appears to occur outside school walls, conversations about societal beliefs take place within schools, therefore affecting how

schools operate. To recognize the importance of language within an educational context, there must be a better understanding of language from a societal perspective.

Language is the source through which societies are born. Different groups take different stands regarding language. According to Christian (1999), it is only for the good of a nation to make sure that a nation's language is protected and if possible, further promoted. This statement speaks to the notion that English should be the national language and one must protect and promote it, instead of encouraging the use of another language. However, Marcos and Peyton (2000) believe that multilingualism not only helps maintain America's competitiveness, but it also protects political and security interests within the country. Restoring and using the language of immigrants and indigenous groups contribute to a country's diversity, and also hold the advantage of promoting intercultural awareness and tolerance for individual differences. Clearly, these groups are divided with regard to language, which has created a great source of controversy in the United States. In some states and among many groups throughout the United States, English is considered to be the official language. While this is a commonly held view, there has not yet been an official language selected in the United States. On April 27, 1981, the English-only movement formally began on a national level. Senator S.I. Hayakawa, a Republican from California, introduced to the Senate a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which would have designated English as the official U.S. language. Since then, an English language amendment to the Constitution has been proposed to each U.S. Congress, but none has been brought to a vote in either House (Schmidt, 2007). Advocates for the legislation of English-only promote common language unity at the expense of native language rights (English First,

2001). In federal and state government, groups seek legislation to terminate the use of languages other than English. For example, English First, a national lobbying group, works to make English the official language of the United States, gives every child a chance to learn English, and pushes to eliminate costly and what they deem to be ineffective multilingual policies. Similarly, United States English, a citizens' action group, is dedicated to preserving the unifying role of the English language in the United States. These groups propose legislation and use English as an integrating force to impose English as the American language (U.S. English, 2000). Twenty-seven states, including North Carolina, have officially declared English as their official language (Berube, 2000).

The English-only movement is centered on the notion that speaking one language, English, is necessary for the common good. It further purports that multiple languages "…would destroy the country's unity by promoting inter-ethnic discord" (Schmidt, 2007, p. 201). In an attempt to adopt English as the official language of the United States and amend the Constitution, Latinos were identified "…as a new source of social division and conflict in United States society" (Schmidt, p. 201). Furthermore, the English-only movement is based on the belief that "Latino immigrants are undermining the cultural foundations on which the United States has stood since its inception as an independent country" (Schmidt, p. 201). There is the assumption that the Hispanics who have immigrated to this country have not assimilated into mainstream culture like previous groups; instead, they have maintained their own culture and language. In fact, some parts of the country include communities where English is not required to communicate or

even exist, hence emphasizing the concurrent existence of different cultures and languages.

Political activists continue to seek support for English-only legislation and emphasize the need for one language and one culture based on "…the political rhetoric of justice" (Schmidt, 2007, p. 202). Justice, as used by Schmidt, reflects the belief that individuals who migrate to a country on their own accord should assimilate to their new culture and therefore speak the language of the country in which they have migrated. He further advocates that the country to which the newcomers have migrated should not be required to adapt to a new culture or language (Schmidt, 2007). Instead, the newcomers should learn English which provides them with more opportunities to succeed in their new surroundings. As political activists continue in their effort to unite the country through English-only legislation, the issue of cultural and linguistic diversity continues to be the source of debate among many.

The English-only movement prompted English Plus to emerge as a philosophy, which acknowledged the importance of English proficiency, while preserving other languages and cultures (Crawford, 1992). Consequently, English Plus attracted the attention of educator and civil rights organizations and established the English Plus Information Clearinghouse (EPIC) to centralize the information available on language rights and language policy, to respond to efforts to restrict the use of languages other than English, and to promote an alternative to official English (Crawford).

Proponents of English Plus view cultural diversity as a national strength and believe that it provides the United States with a "…unique reservoir of understanding and talent" (EPIC, 1992, p.151). Access to bilingual services is critical to build a bridge for

language minorities who are not yet proficient in English. Evidence suggests immigrant groups are motivated to learn English. Research conducted by Duke (1992) included a survey of approximately 2,817 Americans of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban descent, which indicated that more than 90% of the respondents believed citizens of the United States and residents should learn English. English Plus proponents pointed out lack of opportunity, not lack of motivation, as the primary barrier to acquiring English. English Plus supporters agreed with official English proponents that proficiency in English was crucial and that opportunities must be provided for all residents to learn English. However, English Plus does not believe a constitutional amendment would accomplish these goals; they argue that official English laws are counterproductive because they restrict the rights to access essential services for individuals who are not yet proficient in English. Despite the continued debate, there is consistency among them that to succeed, students must have basic rights and receive equal educational opportunities that allow them to receive a public education.

Educational Policies

For students who are not yet proficient in the English language, an equal education is not constituted as having a seat in a classroom or having assigned textbooks as evident by the *Lau* verdict. The *Lau v Nichols* (1974) verdict was a landmark decision made by the Supreme Court as a result of a class action suit representing 1,800 Chinese students who alleged discrimination on the grounds that they could not achieve academically because they did not understand the instruction of their English speaking teachers. The United States Supreme Court based their decision on the 1964 Civil Rights Act and concluded that identical education of English and non-English speaking students

did not necessarily constitute equal educational opportunities. The court ruled that districts must take affirmative steps to overcome educational barriers faced by non-English speaking students. The *Lau* verdict abolished the sink or swim practices of the past and led to the creation of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act in August 1974 to assist English language learners in overcoming educational barriers (*Lau v Nichols*).

The Equal Educational Opportunities Act (1974) mandated that no state could deny equal educational opportunity to any individual by, among other things, "…the failure of an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by students in an instructional program" (Equal Educational Opportunities Act).

In looking further at appropriate action, the case cited most frequently is *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981). In *Castañeda v. Pickard*, the court set out a three-prong test to determine whether limited English proficient students' rights were being violated:

1. Whether the school district was pursuing a program informed by an educational theory recognized as sound by some experts in the field or, at least, deemed a legitimate experimental strategy.
2. Whether steps were taken to implement effectively the educational theory adopted by the school.
3. After a legitimate trial period, was the program demonstrating that the language barriers confronting students were actually being overcome.

In other words, the program must be evaluated and, if found to be failing, must be modified by either changing the program itself (prong 1) or taking further steps to implement the adopted theory of instruction (prong 2). The court action on the

Castañeda case made a few other critical rulings. The first critical ruling was that students who were limited English proficient must be provided not only the opportunity to learn English, but also the opportunity to have access to the school district's entire educational program. Thus, in evaluating a school district's program, each of the three *Castañeda* prongs must be met. They must be met with respect to teaching English and with respect to teaching the entire curriculum. Second, the court left open to the district the sequence and manner in which these students tackled this dual challenge as long as the schools designed programs which were reasonably calculated to enable these students to attain parity of participation within a reasonable length of time after they entered the school system.

Following *Castañeda*, the *Plyler v Doe* (1982) class action suit was brought on behalf of Mexican illegal aliens against the State of Texas, the Texas Education Agency and various Texas school districts. In its finding, the Supreme Court struck down a Texas statute withholding from local school districts any state funds for the education of children who were not legally admitted into the United States. The decision indicated that illegal aliens were entitled to the protection of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and were not to be excluded from becoming educated. The Equal Protection Clause directs that all persons similarly circumstanced shall be treated alike (*Plyler v Doe*). With that, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states could not deny undocumented immigrant children access to a free public K-12 education, and to do so would violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. However, undocumented students are not entitled to a free education beyond grade twelve (*Plyler v Doe*, 1982). As a result of the *Plyler* ruling, public schools may not deny admission to a

student, treat a student differently to determine residency, require students or parents to disclose or document their immigration status, make inquiries of students or parents that may expose their undocumented status or require social security numbers from students (*Plyler v Doe*).

To ensure ELL students receive an appropriate education, several states have actively initiated requirements to ensure educators are meeting the challenges of educating and preparing all students to live as productive citizens in an increasingly diverse global society. Florida and Arizona have policies that require teachers to receive training in how to teach non-native English speakers effectively, along with California which restricts native-language instruction. In 2003, Florida public schools reached a milestone in that the number of minority students enrolled in schools surpassed the number of majority students (Cook, 2006). The change in demographics has been occurring for a number of years. To address the needs of an increasing number of students who are limited in their English proficiency, Florida legislators signed a Consent Decree, the Multicultural, Educational Training Advocacy (META), in August of 1990 (Florida Department of Education, 1990). The Consent Decree outlined identification and assessment, personnel, monitoring and measuring outcomes as necessary for the compliance of public school districts in Florida. The Consent Decree required that school districts submit a plan for educating ELL students and that all English language learners received equal access to educational programming, which was appropriate to his or her level of English proficiency, academic achievement and learning style. All teachers who provide instruction to English learners must receive appropriate language minority training. To meet the META requirement, South Florida, which includes Dade County,

required all content area teachers to receive 60 master plan points (the equivalent to units of credit) or 15 university or college credits in classes designed to provide teachers with assistance in teaching ELL students (Division of Bilingual Education and World Languages, n.d.).

In 2005, Arizona addressed the needs of a growing population who entered school with limited English proficiency by instituting a new certification policy for every certified educator, including administrators, teachers and psychologists, requiring them to complete 15 hours of sheltered immersion training by August 2006, with an additional 45 hours by August 2009 to renew their certification. Sheltered immersion training includes a system of using effective instruction focusing on appropriate strategies in content areas in classrooms with only ELL students.

In California, attention was given to the way in which ELL students were being taught. In some cases, ELLs were being taught in their native language. Bilingual teachers taught English language learners subject matter in their primary language most of the day, while teaching English development during a separate time of the day. The bilingual teachers responded that teaching ELLs in their native language would benefit the students and that English immersion would have negative consequences for their students (Sanchez, 2007). Teaching ELLs in their native language was cause for concern, however, and in 1998 California passed Proposition 227, which would later become the English Language Education for Immigrant Children Act (Sanchez). This law required bilingual teachers to provide instruction in English. In addition, California implemented a credentialing system that included preparing teachers to use appropriate instructional strategies and emphasized program standards. The standards required education

programs to prepare educators to provide effective instruction and accurately assess ELL students (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

English language learners enrolling in public schools deserve an education equal to that of their peers. Educational policies have provided specific guidance and direction to changes that must transpire. To improve instruction in the classroom, states have implemented additional instructional requirements for teachers of English language learners to demonstrate competence with linguistically diverse students. Through these changes, a variety of programs have been implemented to address a student's linguistic and educational needs in the classroom.

Educational Practices

To effectively respond to the needs and strengths of ELL students, there must be appropriate educational practices being implemented. Educational practices may look different, depending on the district, school, or student needs, yet must provide an opportunity for students to achieve academically and access the curriculum.

Language Programs

Schools and school districts are directed to implement an appropriate program that will meet the needs of the ELL students in the district, in addition to staffing the program with highly skilled teachers who are capable of teaching the students in the program. Providing appropriate instruction for English language learners and increasing students' academic language understanding within the limited time specified necessitates trained individuals in language acquisition, which in many cases is a difficult task, especially in rural areas or in schools with small numbers of ELL students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2004), 86% of public schools have

implemented instructional programs intended to take into consideration that ELL students vary in their ethnic background, educational skills, and access to the general curriculum, while representing a multitude of cultures, languages, and educational needs (Crandall, Jaramillo, Olsen, & Peyton, 2002; Short & Echevarria, 2005).

A common, but erroneous assumption is that programs implemented to meet the needs of ELL students are the same, however the programs are not identical, and to avoid confusion, it is important to distinguish between them. Although programs recognize that newcomers to the United States should learn English as efficiently and rapidly as possible, the approaches differ regarding how to achieve this goal, while also preserving the rights of limited English speakers. English as a second language programs primarily focus on assisting ELLs to acquire English through the instruction of the ESL curriculum and using language in the content area. In addition to ESL inclusion, bilingual education and sheltered immersion programs emphasize supporting ELLs as they learn academic content by providing language assistance. Thus, each type of program represents an approach of services for language minority students.

Schools are required to implement programs to teach English language learners which can be difficult to implement due to financial restrictions, lack of support, and the availability of qualified teachers. A popular program found in many schools is English as a second language (ESL) (Berube, 2000). The ESL program has been used to provide instruction by allowing an ESL teacher to remove students from the mainstream classroom for short periods of time during the day in small group settings to receive English language instruction as designed by the standard course of study (Rossell, 2005). During this time, the goal is to develop and foster basic English skills through content

language. ESL programs can accommodate students from different language backgrounds in the same class, and teachers do not have to be proficient in the home language of their students. North Carolina does require ESL teachers and tutors to demonstrate a high level of proficiency in speaking and writing in English prior to their hiring (NCDPI, 2008). Frequently, the ESL teacher removes students, ranging in a variety of grade levels, once or twice a week, depending on the number of teachers throughout the district and the number of schools and students requiring the service. Some districts, due to a limited number of qualified teachers, transport students to schools that have a large ELL population in order to decrease the number of schools which need ESL services and increase direct instructional time with non-English speakers. This ESL pull-out model is prevalent in many districts as a means of providing ELL students with language instruction.

The ESL inclusion model for English language learners is a co-teaching instructional delivery model. It requires collaboration, mutual respect, and cooperation between both teachers, the content classroom teacher and the ESL teacher, so that grade level and developmentally appropriate teaching exists (Curtin, 2005). It requires shared teacher planning time so that teachers can implement strategies that integrate language acquisition, literacy and academic content at the same time. The ESL inclusion model supports ELL students in content classes, while assisting the content teachers during the class.

A bilingual education program uses both the student's native language and English for instruction (Krashen, 1996). Bilingual education has a long and complex history in the United States. For example, at the beginning of the 20th century,

approximately four percent of the students in public or parochial schools were receiving some or all of their instruction in German. However, World War I and the resulting anti-German sentiment, as well as the societal trend favoring Americanization of immigrants through English language acquisition, resulted in rejection of bilingual education (Moraes, 1996). Although bilingual education is being restricted, evidence of the benefits of bilingual education is growing (Crawford, 2004; Krashen, 1996).

According to Greene (1998), limited English proficient students who are taught in at least some of their native language perform significantly better on standardized tests than children who are only taught in English. Students entering school whose first language is not English may require assistance in language development, however English language learners who demonstrate proficiency in their native language are able to transfer language skills more readily (Lee & Oxelson, 2006). Linguists emphasize that students speaking their native language are able to transfer skills to a second language which makes learning English easier (Genesee & Nicoladis, 1995). Cummins (1980) suggests that proficiency in the native language not only facilitates English acquisition, but also leads to higher academic achievement. Utilizing the native language of an English language learner, while difficult for many mainstream teachers, is a cultural resource that should be maximized in the classroom (Wong-Filmore, 2000). Although bilingual education programs have been recognized as an effective way of educating non-English speaking students by using both their native language and English, there is much controversy surrounding bilingual education ("Teaching English Language Learners," 2009). As of 2009, seven states including Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Wisconsin restricted native language instruction for

ELL students (Maxwell, 2009). States that continue to include bilingual education programs provide different forms of bilingual education in schools.

Traditional bilingual educational programs including the two-way bilingual program or two-way immersion program are difficult to implement. Different from a traditional bilingual educational program which requires only one teacher, the two-way bilingual or immersion program requires two instructors, including a native English teacher, in addition to a teacher who delivers instruction and speaks the language of the targeted population. Most important in this type of program is that students with limited English proficiency are integrated with fluent English speaking students. Initially, ELL students receive as much as 90% of their academic instruction in their native language. However, as the students gain mastery of English, they progressively receive less instruction in their native language. As can be expected, the need for two teachers in one class requires additional funding and qualified staff, and both are very difficult to secure. In addition, students are required to learn English as rapidly as possible to successfully achieve both in the classroom and demonstrate proficiency on state standardized tests.

Lastly, Sheltered Immersion Observation Protocol (SIOP) is an approach which provides instruction "… almost entirely in English, but in a self-contained classroom consisting only of English language learners" (Rossell, 2005, p.32). While worthy of acknowledgement, SIOP is not a program, but implemented as a way to provide English language learners with effective instruction. The SIOP model uses English as the medium for providing content area instruction. Classroom teachers include both a content and language objective in planning lessons. SIOP is an instructional approach used to make academic instruction in English understandable to ELL students. In the

sheltered classroom, teachers follow the eight components in the SIOP model and include explicit language and content objectives. The eight components of SIOP include lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input which focuses on appropriate speech, learning strategies, interaction, meaningful interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment. SIOP can be implemented in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and other subject areas (Echavarria, Vogt & Short, 2003). The SIOP model provides instruction through context-embedded experiences; that is, meaning is conveyed not through language alone, but with the help of gestures, body language, visual aids, demonstrations and hands-on experiences. The SIOP model activities provide immediate and concrete referents in which learning and curricular subjects and English occur simultaneously. The lessons are real subject matter lessons made comprehensible for the ELL student. The focus of instruction and evaluation is on the subject matter itself, not on the language. Sheltered Immersion classes are effective; these classes are limited because they require a larger group of ELL students, additional funding, and intensive training.

School systems across the country implement a variety of programs and instructional approaches to meet the needs of English language learners enrolled in their district and often times, financial restrictions and educational policies guide program implementation. Deciding on the appropriate program required to meet the needs of ELLs is complicated because it involves a more detailed description of the English language learners entering public schools. While the ESL pull-out program is frequently used, some schools with large ELL enrollments are implementing more effective,

innovative programs and models integrating content and using qualified staff to meet individual student needs.

Instructional Strategies

To meet individual student needs, instructional strategies are often used as a way to allow students to access the curriculum. Teachers face incredible challenges when educating students with the strict requirements handed down by federal and state mandates. To ensure that students learn, teachers must implement instructional strategies that address the needs of diverse learners. According to Darling-Hammond (2000), teachers who are able to use a variety of teaching strategies and an array of interaction styles, rather than a single approach, are more successful in working with ELL students. Equally important are those who can adjust their teaching to fit the needs of diverse students and understand the effect of appropriate instructional goals, topics, and methods. Researchers state that ELLs require support to succeed in "American classrooms" (Viadero, 2009, p. 25). Currently, the educational strategies practiced in schools are based upon the dominant culture's values and beliefs and are reflected in materials and curriculum used in schools (Garcia-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005). Approximately 10% of ELL students are exposed to appropriate instructional practices in the classroom to help them overcome their language struggles and reading deficiencies (Viadero). For this reason, implementing instructional strategies is necessary for the success of ELL students.

Middle school minority students fall behind their peers in reading and mathematics by grade four and as these students progress through school, the achievement gap widens ("National Assessment of Educational Progress," 2007). To

ensure all ELL students receive effective instruction, there are specific teaching practices that support ELLs in the classroom. Research suggests that often times ELL students require additional time to process new information and complete assignments (Cho & Reich, 2008; Curtin, 2005; Garcia, 1992; Thompson, 2000). Given an appropriate learning environment, the additional time would allow the student to process new information by providing opportunities to participate in meaningful dialogue, oral practice and peer interaction as part of cooperative groups, as well as utilizing non-linguistic representations as a way to elaborate on knowledge through graphic organizers and mental images. The additional time allows for in-depth understanding, while enhancing learning (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).

Learning in the classroom continues when teachers modify and simplify student assignments. In modifying student assignments, teachers should vary the way in which the lesson is presented (Garcia, 1992; Thompson, 2000). To vary the way in which the lesson is taught, teachers use realia or real life objects during classroom instruction which fosters peer interaction and instructional games, while reducing frustration among students. Modifying assignments does not mean avoiding grade level and content area expectations; it does mean that students will benefit from intentional teaching and comprehensible material.

Equally important to modifying the lesson is simplifying the lesson by using vocabulary with which the student is familiar. Simplifying the content is a means for implementing grade level content material in such a way that ELL students will understand. Some ELL students have a limited vocabulary and to encourage student participation, the teacher should provide direct vocabulary instruction so students are

more likely to understand the academic content taught in the classroom. Moreover, it is advisable for teachers to avoid correcting grammatical errors publicly in front of the other students to avoid embarrassment on the part of the student. To avoid such embarrassing situations, teachers should encourage students to speak up within small groups or with partners to gain comprehension and confidence (Romijin & Seely, 1983). Understandably, these English learners are caught between two languages and cultures, and teachers must therefore encourage their students to take risks to familiarize themselves with the school culture and how it works. Similarly, Carr, Buchanan, Wentz, Weiss, and Brant, (2001) indicated the importance of teaching to the student's level of vocabulary knowledge through simplifying the content and developing assignments at the student's level of understanding. They emphasized the use of picture books as a way to increase student learning. To simplify new material and facilitate student learning, picture books can be used to introduce new information. Picture books inherently scaffold material, which increases background knowledge and broadens the student's understanding of the content. According to Bennett (2009), teachers reported that using picture book read alouds increased the connections that were made to content material, while supporting the introduction of new subject matter. By doing this, teachers should not be seen as lowering student expectations which would negatively impact the entire classroom environment and how the teachers perceive their students (Cazden, 1988).

To enhance the educational experience of an ELL student and his or her peers, a teacher should utilize the native language of the ELL student since, like all students, their language is part of their cultural identity. Cummins (2001) emphasized that, "To reject a child's language in the school is to reject the child" (p. 19). Allowing ELL students to

speak their native language can be used as a learning experience for students who speak only English, while providing ELL students with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to speak a different language. Often times, this gives ELL students a sense of confidence they might not feel when trying to communicate in English. Research has shown that proficiency in the first language is positively related to proficiency in the second language (Cazden, 1988; Cummins, 2000a; Cummins, 2000b). Accordingly, the use of a student's home language in the classroom affirms the identity of language minority students while reducing linguistic barriers.

ELL students require appropriate instructional strategies to ensure they have access to the curriculum. In both qualitative and quantitative studies, teachers who implemented appropriate instructional strategies had students who were more successful on assignments (Cho & Reich, 2008; Curtin, 2005). Cho and Reich found that 65% of teachers provided ELL students with additional time to complete assignments, in addition to modifying and simplifying assignments. Curtin (2005) found similar results through observations and detailed interviews. In the classroom, teachers used appropriate instructional strategies, including modifying assignments, using native language, and providing more time to complete work. Through observations and interviews, it was found to be commonplace for mainstream teachers to work closely with teachers of non-native speakers who were qualified in appropriate instructional strategies and to implement them in the classroom.

Conversely, in low performing schools, Dentler and Hafner (1997) found few innovative instructional strategies used in mainstream classrooms with ELLs. In these classrooms, teachers dominated and students were treated as passive learners. Teachers

conducted class by lecturing, made use of worksheets, and practiced drills during the class instead of providing instruction that required the use of learning groups in which to process material, the oral practice of skills, modified and simplified assignments and more time to complete assignments. Mainstream teachers in these classrooms used traditional methods, with very little innovative techniques for instructing diverse students in the classroom.

Teacher Support

Support for mainstream teachers who teach ELL students manifests itself in different forms. Support for mainstream teachers is provided from administrators and district personnel, as well as through trainings and professional development opportunities offered within the district, at conferences, through on-line opportunities, and at local universities. Strong leadership remains critical in accommodating the demographic changes in schools. In today's global society, it is necessary for administrators to advocate for and support successful inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse students in mainstream classrooms. It is certain that educating teachers in the 21st Century should include acquiring knowledge with regard to cultural diversity and language acquisition, in addition to interacting effectively with students and families from diverse cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000).

Effective school leaders have a vision for the school with high expectations inclusive of all teachers and students (Henze, Katz, Norte, Sather, & Walker, 1999). Administrators promote the school vision, which affects the school norms that teachers internalize. To be effective, school administrators must create an environment in which

the administration supports teachers (Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004). According to Byrnes and Cortez (1992), administrators must support teachers in order for teachers to work successfully with ELL students. Administrative support requires a more systematic approach in identifying teacher needs and delivering the appropriate support. In fact, administrative support is critical to the success of both the students and the teachers. A study conducted by Ware and Kitsantas (2007) showed that teachers' perceptions of the support they receive from the administration was linked to improving self-efficacy. Teachers with a high perception of self-efficacy tended to try harder and persist longer in the presence of difficulties, resulting in improved student achievement. Accordingly, there is a likely relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and student achievement (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) linked teachers' perceptions of the support of the administration and their teaching self-efficacy. Statistically significant positive correlations were found between teachers' attitudes toward their ELL students and the support received from the administration. Teachers also require instructional support, which has not always been associated with the administrator; however, the theory that the principal is of major importance as an instructional leader in a school is supported by extensive research (Andrews, Basom, & Basom, 1991; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Stanovich & Jordan, 1998). Supportive efforts require administrators to create an environment where teachers feel supported when trying new instructional activities. Overall, there must be administrative support which increases teacher self-efficacy resulting in improved student achievement.

Teachers feel unprepared to provide quality instruction due to the lack of appropriate learning opportunities for them which focused on the unique needs of English language learners. Many content area teachers who have been trained have had minimal training in adapting the curriculum and their teaching practices to meet the needs of the linguistically diverse students (Byrnes, Kiger, & Manning, 1997; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). While mainstream teachers who teach in core areas attend professional development, "…the trainings too often fall short of the depth and detail needed to successfully serve the English language learner population" (Meskill & Chen, 2002, p. 1). Moreover, McCloskey reported in 2002 that, of those surveyed, approximately 12% of teachers nationwide have had specific training to work with ELLs. Furthermore, the National Center for Education Statistics (2004) reported that 41% of teachers in the United States at that time had English language learners as students, but only 13% of them reported receiving any instruction or professional development on the education of their ELL students. Samway and McKeon (1999) reported that by the year 2050 it is likely that every teacher in the United States will have English language learners as students. The disparity between the number of English language learners in classrooms and the percentage of teachers sufficiently qualified to teach them is an alarming indication of the need to help teachers coping with the unique needs of ELLs.

While there is great importance placed upon children growing and learning, teachers must also grow and learn. Adults, unlike children, are less comfortable in dealing with issues of diversity or race and should have opportunities to participate in meaningful professional development (Hoerr, 2005). Initial attitudes of pre-service teachers were looked at prior to taking a multicultural education course. Then looking at

the extent to which the group's attitudes changed subsequent to the instruction, findings of the pre and posttest suggested that taking a multicultural education class had a positive influence, leading to an increased awareness and appreciation for other cultures and the ability to adjust teaching when necessary (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2006). Furthermore, research conducted by Cho and Reich (2008) indicated that 90% of the teachers identified training in cultural understanding as very important.

Teachers now experience higher levels of accountability that place greater emphasis upon the successful educational experience of every child. Teacher attitudes toward their ELLs affect the teachers' receptiveness to participate in professional development and to attempt new instructional practices (Karabenick & Noda, 2004). In a study of 600 public school teachers who were surveyed in South Florida regarding the factors that affect teacher attitudes toward ELLs, the results indicated that specific training in working with ELL students was necessary for students to succeed and for teachers to feel comfortable in providing effective instruction (Hirschfield, 2004). Hollis (2005) surveyed and analyzed data from 50 certified public school administrators and teachers of grades K-12 located in a large metropolitan city. Similar to results found by Hirschfield, the results suggested that preparedness was necessary when teaching ELLs. The same point was made in comparable studies (Moughni, 2006; Owuor, 2004). The results identified participation in multicultural workshops, exposure to cultural diversity and the involvement in a variety of fieldwork experiences as critical to student achievement and teacher effectiveness (Capella-Santana, 2003; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Youngs & Youngs, 2001).

Additional insight regarding teacher attitudes toward the inclusion of English language learners focused on the attitudes and perceptions of high school mainstream teachers and the inclusion of English language learners (Reeves, 2002). Interestingly, the results of the study indicated that although participation in professional development activities was important, the respondents indicated ambivalence toward professional development activities. Respondents indicated they were not adequately trained in teaching English language learners, yet a little more than half (53%) indicated they were not interested in receiving more training. While teachers wanted to welcome ELL students, they were struggling to make sense of teaching and learning in a multilingual school environment (Byrnes, Kiger &Manning, 1997). In 1995, Clair pointed out similar results in a small qualitative study. Although they experienced an increasing number of ELLs in their classrooms and needed professional staff development opportunities, all respondents indicated they would not attend such offerings. One stated the strategies taught were not appropriate for her grade level, while the others explained that as experienced teachers, they were already prepared to work with ELL students. Experienced teachers come with a wealth of knowledge; however, ELL students require specific skills that are not usually part of a teacher's instructional repertoire. Leighton, Hightower and Wrigley (1995) stated that the rapid increase and change in the student population enrolling in schools "…outstrips the rate of increase in teachers with skills necessary to serve them" (p. 3). In addition, the majority of the teaching force, including individuals entering teacher education programs, is White and monolingual with limited experience with cultural diversity (Ukpokodu, 2003). In fact, the teaching profession is

82.9% White and projections indicate little change (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010).

As the number of English language learners continues to rise, teachers need administrative support in the classroom and through training to be prepared in providing ELLs appropriate instruction in mainstream classes. The literature revealed the importance of receiving administrative support in order to increase self-efficacy, as well as participating in training that involves in-depth and detailed multicultural activities and focuses on the needs of a diverse population. Unfortunately, the view also exists that although training on cultural diversity and language acquisition is helpful, if training was offered, not all teachers would participate. As diverse students entering the mainstream classroom continue, teachers must participate in specific training to be instructional leaders in the classroom.

English Language Learners

Students whose native language is not English enroll in U.S. public schools every day. These students, in part, are the result of a recent wave of immigration (McKay & Wong, 2000). While immigrants vary in every aspect, one reason for the increase in immigration was a result of surging employment opportunities, including those in agriculture and the service industry. This brought families to areas which had little experience with immigrants' social and educational needs (Maxwell, 2009). Economically, families of English language learners experience financial hardship more so than their peers (Maxwell). In addition, securing employment required families to move sometimes, which reduced schooling and increased learning gaps for children. The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (2006) reported that based on

state reported data, it was estimated that more than 4.8 million English language learner students were enrolled in public schools (Pre-k through grade 12) during the 2004-2005 school year. Schools, unlike other public institutions, have been directly affected by the wave of English language learners. In the past, linguistically diverse populations found their way to large urban areas, however, recent immigrant populations are moving to rural locations (Berube, 2000). The recent wave of immigration is evident in schools across North Carolina. North Carolina has experienced a large increase in ELL students; in fact, North Carolina ranks as having the highest increase of students qualifying for ELL services east of the Mississippi River, with just over 5%, or one in 20 (Johnson & Strange, 2007).

English language learners in North Carolina enter school at all levels, including elementary, middle and high school. There is a particular interest in ELL students in the middle school setting. Middle school is a transition period, however English language learners in middle schools can feel the transition more intensely and they do not do well, socially or academically. For many, middle school determines their academic and social futures. For English language learners, middle school is even more complex as they are learning subject matter in the content area, in addition to learning a second language, with fewer years of instruction remaining in school. With so many students who lack English language skills entering North Carolina Public Schools, consideration must be given to language acquisition.

Language Development

English language learners in a new environment and those who are insecure in their language ability are faced with the inability to communicate effectively in the

classroom. According to Chavez (1991), learning English enables linguistically diverse children to acquire academic skills necessary to succeed in content classes.

Students with limited English proficiency require additional skills in acquiring a second language in order to achieve academically in the classroom. To encourage a student population that is culturally and linguistically diverse, teachers need to be sensitive to the language and cultural needs of the population (Garcia-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005). ELLs enter schools having varying abilities; language acquisition occurs over time. Recent research shows that ELL students acquire enough English proficiency to be tested equitably in English only after five to six years of schooling (Tsang, Katz, & Stack, 2008). If ELL students are tested after only one to three years before they have acquired English, test scores are lower. Thomas and Collier (2002) found that testing ELL students in their native language is the most powerful predictor of eventual grade-level achievement in English.

The language barrier presents obstacles difficult to overcome, particularly when non-English speakers experience a "silent period" (Curran, 2003, p.335). The silent period may vary among ELLs, and those who are young or described as introverts may experience an extended period in which they may not communicate in the second language. The silent period is described as a time when ELLs may appear frightened and withdrawn, but are in fact preparing themselves to speak the second language by processing the language, their surroundings, the rules, relationships, and expectations of their new environment (Short & Echevarria, 2005). Proficiency in a language refers to the degree to which a person is able to use the language. With language development, there is a continuum of development beginning with basic conversational skills

continuing toward academic proficiency. Cummins (1980) described this development as a distinction between interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic language proficiency.

The beginning communicative level is typically context embedded and cognitively undemanding. Examples of this level include simple greetings, information requests, descriptions and expressions of feelings. The social dimension or the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) usually develops in two to three years (Cummins, 1980). Students demonstrate BICS with peers in school; however, teachers often times confuse this form of conversation for what is necessary to achieve in the classroom. Mastery of BICS occurs when a student can communicate with others during casual conversation. Conversely, mastering BICS does not carry over into the content areas where there are more sophisticated language demands.

In order to use a language correctly, the speaker must have cognitive processes or an extensive foundation related to the language. This foundation is acquired through using a language over a long period of time. The academic dimension of language, which is the Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), is context reduced and cognitively demanding. Cummins (1980) regarded Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) as necessary to function in an academic situation. CALP refers to all experiences associated with *language*, both concept development and linguistic development. This level of language development includes such skills as comparing, classifying, inferring, problem solving and evaluating. Success in school depends on proficiency at the CALP level, which takes between five and 10 years to achieve. To assume that students who demonstrate a beginning level of language proficiency can

understand the more difficult academic language of content lessons is problematic and requires teachers to address the language needs of their students. In addition to addressing students' language needs, teachers must implement instructional strategies to effectively teach ELL students.

Benefits and Challenges

Teachers are responsible for educating all students, and with an increasing number of linguistically and culturally diverse students in mainstream classrooms, teachers are experiencing benefits, as well as facing challenges as they work to ensure that all students learn. All students entering the classroom bring with them background experiences that differ in many respects. Differences are the basis for experiencing benefits, as well as the challenges, in an educational setting.

Addressing differences creates social outcomes that are beneficial in an educational setting (Boozer, Krueger, & Wolkon, 1992). Including ELLs in mainstream classrooms exposes students to different cultures; therefore increasing students' awareness and understanding of diversity (Harklau, 2000). A well-documented fundamental concept in the instruction of English language learners is to provide all students with instruction on culture and tolerance and allow students to share their culture through a cultural study assignment (Doherty, Hilberg, Pinal, & Tharp, 2003). Wells, Holme, Revilla, and Atanda (2004) suggest that diversity in the classroom promotes developing cross-racial friendships, learning how to work with students of different races and ethnicities and expanding the general knowledge of students about racial and culture differences. As a result, there is a higher comfort level among members of racial groups and an increased ability to function in diverse settings when students attend more diverse

schools (Yun & Kurlaender, 2004). Likewise, 70% of teachers surveyed noted that ELL students were an inspiration to other students in the classroom (Karabenick & Noda, 2004). English language learners in mainstream classrooms benefit everyone, especially when teachers ensure that students are prepared to enter a society in which diversity is the norm and acceptance is appreciated.

In the school setting, the benefits of having differences represented in the classroom also bring about challenges for teachers. English language learners enter the classroom with different backgrounds, a first language that is not English, and varying English speaking abilities. These unique challenges pose difficulties for teachers who are already feeling the effects of increased classroom size, lack of instructional time during the day, and limited assistance. Many times, mainstream teachers lack understanding of the background and culture of the students entering the classroom; they are frequently not prepared and trained to meet the needs of ELL students, and they have not had sufficient time to prepare for, as well as time to work with, ELL students. These challenges limit what can be done during the school day and require attention to improve the success of ELL students in the classroom.

To educate students, teachers of ELL students should be sensitive to and have knowledge of the culture and background experiences of their students (Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, & Clewell, 2000; Téllez & Waxman, 2006). Claire (1995) suggested that mainstream teachers often possess incorrect information about the cultural heritage of ELL students. Incorrect information or the lack of information about ELLs generates incorrect assumptions about them, which can lead to generalizations about them as a group rather than individuals. Many times ELL students come from a culture and have

background experiences that are very different from the teacher. Furthermore, most teachers have been trained to teach children much like themselves, which in many cases are monolingual individuals who come from the mainstream population, which can create additional challenges in the classroom (Swartz, 2003).

During the school day, teachers face many challenges in the classroom when meeting the needs of all students. Teachers are expected to provide instruction on the standards set forth by the state, and while teachers meet and understand the general needs of students who somewhat vary in their ability to perform academically, teachers lack appropriate training specific to the instructional needs of ELL students (Youngs, 1999). Many teachers believe that ELL students can be taught much like other students who have deficits. In fact, according to research, 43% of teachers whose classes consisted of a majority of ELLs received no more than one in-service training session in the past five years on how to instruct these students (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). To be effective in the classroom, meet state goals, and avoid sanctions, there must be learning opportunities for teachers responsible for the education of ELL students in content areas.

During the course of the school day, the daily schedule does not permit teachers enough time to provide ELLs with individual assistance, nor does the schedule allow for effectively planning appropriate lessons. The obstacles facing teachers then create feelings of frustration and the necessary instructional adaptations become a burden (Dong, 2006). Additionally, teachers are required to complete a plan for English language learners who participate in the program designed to assist in their English language development. The plan is developed with input from the content teachers,

parents, ESL teacher and others involved. The plan includes appropriate accommodations and modifications and the amount of time ELL students will received instruction from the ESL teacher. Adherence to district and state requirements of developing and following the specifications outlined in an ELL's educational plan, along with an increased number of ELL students in mainstream classrooms, increases feelings of frustration. There was a general consensus that "Teaching in a mainstream classroom has become more time demanding" (Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004, p. 141). As teachers became more familiar with the needs of their students, more time was often needed to provide appropriate instruction (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005; Verplaetse, 1998; Youngs, 1999). At the elementary and middle level, teachers noted the difficulty of finding extra time to help individual students and the problem of having students pulled out throughout the day. Additionally, there was an overall lack of time for planning. At the secondary level, there was not enough time to prepare for the effective instruction of English language learners (Cho & Reich, 2008; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005).

The lack of time to provide individual instruction, along with time to prepare for effective instruction, creates additional stress for mainstream teachers. Similarly, the added responsibilities of modifying assignments, reading aloud assignments in specific subjects, and attending meetings to discuss the progress of ELLs in class, coupled with responsibilities teachers already have, are often times more than teachers can handle (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005; Walker, Shafer, & Iiams, 2004). There must be learning opportunities for teachers, as well as sufficient time scheduled during the day to plan for teachers and students to be successful in the classroom.

Significance of Attitudes

In social psychology, there are different ways in which attitude is defined. An attitude can be the positive or negative evaluation of objects of thought. It is a predisposition to act in a positive or negative way toward some object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Attitude is a social orientation, an underlying inclination to respond to something either favorably or unfavorably. Similarly, attitude is a favorable or unfavorable evaluative reaction toward something or someone exhibited in one's beliefs, feelings or behavior. Attitudes can be associations between objects and evaluations of those objects. Allport (1935) defined attitude as a "… mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (p. 798). Attitude is defined as an accumulation of information about an object, person, situation or experience and is exhibited in one's beliefs, feelings, or intended behavior.

Attitudes are further described by outward and visible behavior of human beliefs and determine what an individual sees, hears, thinks and does. It is believed that attitudes are acquired through the socialization process and individuals consequently create their own reality based on personal knowledge and experiences. Attitudes generally have three components. There is the cognitive component, which is made up of the thoughts and beliefs people hold about the object of the attitude or referred to as a storage component where information about an object is organized. The affective component consists of the emotional feelings stimulated by the object of the attitude. These feelings or emotions may evoke fear, hate or sympathy. There is also a behavioral component, which consists of predispositions to act in certain ways toward an attitude, object or the

overt behavior attached to our internal attitude. The emphasis is on the tendency to act, but not the actual acting. As indicated by early research, the cognitive, affective and behavioral components are associated with one another. For example, "If a person's attitude is supported by favorable cognitive content, then it is likely to be supported by favorable affective and behavioral tendencies" (Petty, Fabrigar, & Wegener, 2003, p. 754).

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) suggested that when a person forms beliefs about an object, action, or event, he or she "… automatically and simultaneously acquires an attitude toward that object, action or event" (p. 216). Attitudes develop early in childhood and are the results of parents and peer influences. Attitudes cannot be free from bias due to their early development and influence from life experiences, cultural roots and social interactions. The more accessible the attitude is in one's memory, the stronger and more likely it will be recalled and in turn influence behavior (Aronson, 1999). Attitude is characterized as a response that varies in intensity and tends to direct an individual's overt responses to an object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Moreover, Fazio (1990) suggested that strong attitudes are more likely to be resistant to change than are weak attitudes. This is consistent with the general view that strong attitudes involve issues of personal relevance and are held with great conviction (Petty & Krosnick, 1995). Attitudes, therefore, require significant attention since teachers form attitudes toward their students, which ultimately affect what occurs in the classroom.

Teacher Attitudes and Student Achievement

Teacher attitudes toward their students have been considered to be one of the most important teacher competencies that influence students in school (Brisk, 1998;

Rosenthall & Jacobson, 1989; Ukpokodu, 2003). Villegas and Lucas (2002) pointed out that "Teacher attitudes toward students significantly shape what students learn" (p. 24). Teachers impact student achievement and as a result must address their own beliefs and perceived understandings in order to recognize that "All students can learn, regardless of home life, socioeconomic status, race, culture, language, gender, ability or any other characteristic" (Kenkel, Hoelscher, & West, 2006, p. 35).

Teacher attitudes toward their students are relevant in education as attitudes impact a teacher's motivation to connect with his or her students. In a study conducted by Wentzel (1994), a correlation was found between the motivation of students to attend school, how much effort they exert when it came to academic performance, and their different perceptions of their teachers as caring individuals. According to the study, the results remained constant despite several instances where students may have undergone stages of psychological distress and other instances that were beyond their control. Although quite underestimated in some academic institutions, the ethic of caring is actually meaningful for both students and teachers. By fostering such a positive attitude toward students in the learning environment, teachers were able to demonstrate the relevance of knowledge to the lives of their students. Moreover, students were more likely to perceive their school as a place where they were looked after and for which they were cared. The same then held true for English learners who were in search of ways in which to be accepted by their peers, their teachers and the entire education system. The teacher's attitude affected student achievement and through acceptance, academic success was more likely to occur.

Teachers play a critical role in the teaching and learning processes of students. They also have the means to be change agents in their students' lives and enhance student achievement in school. In fact, student achievement depends substantially on teachers (Wayne & Youngs, 2003). While teachers have indicated favorable attitudes toward the inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classes, an investigation on the role of teachers' attitudes, beliefs and practices that helped or hindered ELL students' access to the general curriculum in mainstream classrooms found that teachers' attitudes, beliefs and practices affected ELL students' access to academic success in three ways (Sharkey & Layzer, 2000). First, the teachers believed that placing ELL students in lower level track and special education classes would make them feel more comfortable and the language challenge would be easier. However, in this placement, the students with learning problems became the focus, while the ELL students were observed to be despondent and excluded. Secondly, success was identified as trying, rather than actually succeeding. Thirdly, there were few opportunities for English language interaction because ELLs were sometimes placed in programs that did not address their needs. As a result, findings suggested that the achievement of ELL students was greatly impacted by teacher attitudes, beliefs and practices (Sharkey & Layzer).

There have been qualitative studies exploring the schooling experiences of ELLs, which have alluded to mainstream teacher attitudes toward the inclusion of ELL students. Teachers in those studies were described as holding negative, unwelcoming attitudes (Fu, 1995; Olsen, 1996; Valdes, 2001), as well as positive, welcoming attitudes (Harklau, 2000; Reeves, 2002; Verplaetse, 1998). Verplaetse found that teachers wanted to protect their students from embarrassment, so they avoided asking them questions and often

times would not allow them to complete their attempts to respond. By creating a comfortable environment without checking for understanding of content knowledge, teachers limit acquisition to content knowledge.

Attitudes, beliefs and expectations have been known to direct teachers' responses toward various students (Pajares, 1992). In the classroom, a teacher's attitude toward a student can impact what the student learns and should be taken seriously in the education of English language learners. Larke, Wiseman, and Bradley (1990) noted a significant correlation among an educator's sensitivity, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors toward students of diverse cultures, including their language and eventually students' subsequent successful performance in the classroom. For this reason, teacher attitudes toward his or her students are critical to the overall achievement of ELL students.

Many teachers enter the classroom with preconceived notions about students' home language. In the classroom, teachers' attitudes toward language can lead to negative teacher attitudes toward their non-native English speakers (Garcia-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005). Ball and Lardner (1997) observed that a lack of respect for the home language of students led to teachers' "… negative attitudes toward the children who speak it" (p. 472). In 1979, the court viewed teachers' language attitudes as a significant obstacle to student learning (Ball & Lardner). According to Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond (2000), negative teacher attitudes toward the native languages of English language learners may produce teacher behavior that can lead to teachers having negative attitudes toward the students themselves, which in turn affects their academic success. Because attitude formation begins early and is influenced by life experiences

and social interactions, attitudes formed toward language impact the education of non-native English speakers (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

There is limited research related to the significance of attitudes toward the achievement of ELL students, however the importance of teacher attitudes toward students has long been documented in research focused on teacher attitudes toward students with disabilities. A frame of reference for the significance of attitudes will comprise the research previously mentioned on teacher attitudes and ELL students and the research on teacher attitudes and students with disabilities, In fact, with regard to students with disabilities, one of the most important predictors of the successful integration of students with disabilities in the regular classroom is the attitudes of general education teachers toward the students they teach (Bacon & Schultz, 1991). Thus, a careful examination of the attitudes of educators represents a starting point for further understanding of teaching a diverse student population and the beginning of the move toward truly inclusive education.

The literature reveals that attitudes of general education teachers are one of the most important predictors of successful inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom (Coates, 1989; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991; Bacon & Schultz, 1991). Results of studies by Barton (1992) and Wilczenski (1993) indicate that attitudes held by both regular and special educators toward students with disabilities determine the success or the failure of inclusion. If educators hold a positive attitude toward students with disabilities, this allows and encourages the establishment of policies that guaranties the students' rights to be educated in regular classrooms are followed

through, whereas negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities in all aspects limits their opportunities to be integrated in regular classrooms (Jamieson, 1984).

According to Pace (2003), teacher attitudes toward the inclusion of students with special needs is important and reflected in the behaviors of teachers in the classroom. Teacher attitudes toward students will alter their behaviors in ways that confirm the initial expectations, thus the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy. The self-fulfilling prophecy explains how teacher perceptions create the social reality. Brophy and Good (1970) suggested that a teacher's behavior may change toward students based on their expectations, and that students may respond to teachers' behavioral cues and alter their self-concept and achievement motivation to conform to the teachers' expectations. With that, teacher expectations for students, if perceived as low, will then have students conforming to the low expectations, resulting in negative teacher attitudes.

Bandura (1982) noted that even when individuals perceive that specific actions will likely bring about a desired behavior, they would not engage in the behavior or persist after initiating the behavior, if they feel they do not possess the required skills. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) completed a meta-analysis of 28 studies conducted from 1958 to 1995 and found overwhelmingly that teachers endorse the general concept of providing support to students with disabilities. In spite of that, only one third of the teachers felt they had the time, preparation, resources, and skills needed for successful instruction. As a result, general education teachers do not provide the adaptations and accommodations that many students with disabilities need to succeed in inclusive environments (Baker & Zigmond, 1995; McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager, & Lee,

1993). Teachers would like classes to be inclusive, but the realities of every day school life dictate otherwise (Van Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2001).

Attitudes and the ability to teach students with disabilities in regular classrooms is a learned process and is greatly influenced by the amount of contact teachers have with persons with disabilities (Smith, Price & Marsh, 1986). Studies that examined teacher experiences noted that teachers' acceptance of inclusion is related to previous experience with children with disabilities (Hudson, Reisberg and Wolf, 1983; Shoho, Katims, and Wilks, 1997; Taylor, Richards, Goldstein, & Schilit, 1997). An interesting variable that related significantly to teachers' positive attitudes toward mainstreaming was their prior success and experience in working with students with special needs (Larrivee & Cook, 1979; Leyser, Kapperman & Keller, 1994). For some teachers, experience with teaching students with disabilities is difficult because it may be that selected teachers have students with disabilities assigned to their classes, while others may never have contact with them. Researchers have also indicated that while there are teachers who hold negative attitudes toward the inclusion of students with special needs, the teachers were found to be highly concerned for these students (Siegal & Moore, 2004). This concern was even greater for students with special needs who participated in full-time inclusion rather than being pulled out for special education services.

Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden (2000) found that educators varied greatly in their perceptions of which students should be included and who were acceptable for inclusion. This is further supported by research showing that teachers are more disposed to accept students with mild disabilities than students with intellectual, behavioral and emotional disabilities (Clough & Lindsay, 1991; Forlin, 1995; Ward, Center, & Bochner,

1994). A cross-cultural study of 14 nations found that teachers preferred certain types of disabilities for inclusion in mainstream classrooms (Bowman, 1986). Students with severe mental disabilities and multiple disabilities were considered least acceptable, whereas students with medical or physical disabilities were considered most acceptable. Teachers were also concerned about including students with learning difficulties as well as those with emotional/behavioral disorders, especially when there was little preparation for the needs of the students.

Positive teacher attitudes are a prerequisite for successful inclusion (Cook & Gerber, 1999; Larrivee & Cook, 1979). Teacher attitudes gathered through surveys all over the world mirror the same concerns revealed by teachers in the United States (Hornby, 1999; Meijer, 1998; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Generally, teachers resist accepting students with disabilities because a diverse student population adds another burden to their workload. An important aspect of the education of teachers is the shaping of positive attitudes toward students. Teacher training in the awareness of disabilities and appropriate strategies for teaching students with disabilities has a positive impact on academic success. Teachers who feel negatively toward students with disabilities or who lack training in appropriate strategies are less likely to be successful.

Teacher attitudes toward the inclusion of students with special needs are influenced by their philosophies and willingness to include students with disabilities in their classrooms. Teachers' own cognitions and beliefs may be in part of their experiences while they were students. Their own cognitions and beliefs may be falling in line with the prevailing ideas or beliefs within the context of the school, but more than likely, it is a product of their teacher training (Acker, 1990; D'Andrade, 1981; Pajares,

1992). There is considerable research that suggests that classroom teachers feel inadequate when children with special needs are included in a regular classroom (Monaham, Miller & Cronic, 1997; Schumm & Vaughn, 1992; Thompson, 1992). Although the reasons for this may vary, one contributing factor is the lack of training in special education (Monaham, Miller & Cronic, 1997; Thompson, 1992; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera & Lesar, 1991).

In order to achieve successful inclusion outcomes, teachers must receive adequate training (Bender, Vail & Scott, 1995). A relationship exists between teacher knowledge and preparation and their acceptance or resistance of including students with disabilities into general education classrooms (Gallagher, 1985; Pernell, Mclntyre, & Bader, 1985; Stoler, 1992; Taylor, Richards, Goldstein & Schilit, 1997). The lack of training and limited knowledge of instructional skills related to teaching diverse populations increases feelings of inadequacy in working with special populations. Stoler (1992) reported that in general, teachers expressed positive feelings toward the general concept of inclusion, but were less optimistic about the degree to which they were adequately prepared to successfully implement inclusion. Those with positive attitudes toward inclusion participated in specific educational opportunities and training related to students with disabilities (Coates, 1989; Gemmell-Crosby & Hanzlik, 1994; Wilczenski, 1991). Research also suggested that as teachers participate in more courses related to teaching students with disabilities, their attitudes are more positive toward the student's inclusion, however the specific number of courses was not noted (Bender, Vail, and Scott; 1995).

A large number of studies document the impact of the negative attitudes of teachers toward students with special needs (Lobosco & Newman, 1992; Phillips, Allred,

& Cronic, 1990; Siegel, 1992). Much of this negativity results from a lack of knowledge. The success of instructional practice requires that general education faculty be prepared to work with students with disabilities (Smith, Polloway, Patton, & Dowdy, 1995). Other studies have found that staff development failed to improve teacher attitudes (McLesky & Waldron, 1995; Wilczenski, 1993; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Researchers believe that the preparation programs for regular classroom teachers for inclusion are ineffective at both the pre-service level and the in-service level (Conte, 1994; Murphy, 1996; Wilczenski, 1993). Results indicated that a difference in the type and depth of in-service might be the deciding factor between having positive or negative attitudes toward inclusion. While, teachers waivered on the importance of training, they were firm in their belief that administrative support was associated with teachers' commitment to the inclusion of students in mainstream classrooms.

Administrative support was found to be related to positive teacher attitudes. In forming positive attitudes toward inclusion, there was the need for organizational support and resources (Kruger, Struzziero, & Vacca, 1995). More specifically, administrators needed to create a supportive atmosphere where taking risks was valued and individuals who had the ability to provide constructive feedback to improve instructional practices was available. Resources needed to be easily accessible for positive results.

In addressing differences among teachers, gender, level of education and grade level assignment have been identified as factors that affect teacher attitudes toward inclusion. According to Pearman, Huang, Barnahart and Mellblom (1992), a study from a single district in Colorado reported that male teachers had significantly more negative opinions of inclusion than did female teachers. However, males were significantly more

confident than females in their ability to teach students with disabilities. Research also found that teachers with a higher level of education were linked to more negative attitudes toward integration (Antonak, Mulick, Kobe, & Fiedler, 1995; Stoler, 1992), however other studies offer conflicting results detailing that those who attained a higher level of education had more positive attitudes (LeRoy & Simpson, 1996; Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin, 1996). The grade level one teaches was also associated with attitudes, more specifically high school teachers usually displayed a less favorable attitude toward inclusion and in general, secondary teachers showed more resistance to inclusion (Thematic Group 9, 1996). Conversely, elementary school teachers were found to have overall more positive attitudes toward students with disabilities than did their high school colleagues (Chalmers, 1991; Clough & Lindsay, 1991; Rogers, 1987; Salvia & Munson, 1986; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

Multiple studies corroborate the findings that teacher attitudes toward specific students correspond with the education students receive and are critical to the success of students in mainstream classrooms. The analysis of teacher attitudes toward their students with and without disabilities offers meaningful insight regarding the impact of inclusive reforms (Cook, 2001, 2004; Cook, Tankersley, Cook, & Landrum, 2000).

Conclusion

The review of the literature presents areas of importance that include the influences of education, educational practices, English language learners and the significance of attitudes. Within the influences of education, state and federal mandates provide insight to the increase of stress for both teachers and students to perform in the

classroom. The English-only debate and language policies, although political in nature, find their way to the school building and impact what happens in the classroom.

The section on educational practices includes the language programs offered in schools, which ultimately depend on qualified teachers and program implementation. To be effective in the classroom, consideration is given to the importance of appropriate instructional strategies. In school, English language learners exhibit varying levels of language development and require a variety of instructional strategies to access the general curriculum. The importance of teacher support concludes this section as teachers affect student achievement and the success of ELLs and must be supported by the administration in the classroom and through appropriate training opportunities.

The subject of English language learners follows the section on educational practices. A portion of this section centers on a description of the language development of ELL students. Language is a component of culture, along with values, beliefs and norms which should all be carefully evaluated when addressing the educational needs of ELLs. Although teachers express the benefits of having a diverse student body, there are challenges in meeting the needs of all students.

This chapter concludes with a section devoted to teacher attitudes toward student achievement. Studying teacher attitudes regarding the achievement of students in mainstream classrooms highlights teacher perceptions of their role as educators. While there is not a great deal of research on the inclusion of ELL students, research on teacher attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities provided a deeper analysis of the significance of attitudes toward achievement.

The review of the literature in this chapter provided insight on research conducted on teacher attitudes and student achievement. Throughout the review, the four factors addressed in the current study were embedded within the sections, including inclusion, academic expectations, instructional strategies used, and support received. Chapter 3 of this dissertation will present the methods and procedures of this study.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter includes the research questions guiding the study, a description of how the participants were chosen and recruited, details of the survey instrument, an outline of the data collection process with an explanation of changes made to the research questions, as well as the procedures employed to analyze the data.

Study Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore middle school language arts teacher attitudes toward the achievement of English language learners. In schools, 78% of academic achievement has been traced to the quality of interaction between the teacher and the student (Good, Grumley, & Roy, 2003). Caine and Caine (1994) also suggested that the teacher in the classroom significantly affects learning. This is further supported by Larke (1990) who reported that a high correlation exists among educators' attitudes, beliefs and behavior toward students of other cultures and their academic performance. Therefore, determining teacher attitudes should be considered, as attitudes toward students are central to student success.

Through a quantitative examination of North Carolina language arts teacher attitudes toward the achievement of ELL students in mainstream classes, the questions addressed in this research study included:

1. What are the attitudes of middle school language arts teachers toward inclusion, academic expectations, the instructional strategies used and the support received?
2. Is there a relationship between the number of years taught by middle school language arts teachers and the attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, the instructional strategies used and the support received?

3. Are there differences in attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, and the instructional strategies used among teachers who have taught ELL students and those who have not?
4. Is there a relationship between middle school language arts teacher attitudes toward the support received and their attitudes toward inclusion?
5. How much time have middle school language arts teachers spent in training to teach ELL students?
6. What types of training have middle school language arts teachers attended?
7. How has the training NC middle school language arts teachers attended affected their teaching?
8. What training do middle school language arts teachers feel they need in order to more effectively meet the needs of ELL students in their classroom?
9. What do middle school language arts teachers consider to be the greatest benefits and challenges of including ELL students in mainstream language arts classes?

Population and Sampling

In this study, the population included North Carolina middle school language arts teachers who taught in middle schools with a six through eight configuration from across the state. The state of North Carolina is divided into eight State Board Regions. There are a number of school districts located within each region (Appendix A). To ensure the best access to teachers who were likely to have ELL students in their classrooms, purposeful sampling was the chosen sampling method (Babbie, 1990). This form of sampling enabled the researcher to choose school districts with a large enrollment of ELL students. In each State Board Region, the school districts with the largest ELL

population (using the October 2007 ELL headcount reported to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction) were initially invited to participate, with one exception as the school district did not contain middle schools with a six through eight configuration. Consequently, in this region, the district with the next largest ELL population was invited to participate. Each district was contacted to determine proper procedures for obtaining permission for middle school language arts teachers in each six through eight middle school in the chosen district to participate in the study.

School Recruitment

In determining school district requirements for conducting research, a school district website search was conducted. I made pre-recruitment phone calls to the district superintendent to establish contact and discuss specific details regarding the procedure for conducting research. My conversation with the district superintendent provided information regarding policies and procedures specific to each district, in addition to identifying a contact person who would assist me with district participation. I then contacted the individuals who would assist me, which was helpful in determining how to proceed. Each contact person was then emailed information about me, along with an introduction to the study (Appendix D). Attached to the email was a permission form (Appendix E) to be signed and returned to provide documented approval for participation. I provided all the information requested by individual districts (including three mini-research proposals). The process of notifying school districts requesting their participation in this study was completed December 8, 2008. Four districts granted permission, although, one district required permission to be given by the school

administrator. Three districts declined to participate and one district did not have middle schools with a six through eight configuration.

To receive permission from the district that required school administrators' approval, initial contact was made with seven school administrators by phone. They were then sent an email to introduce myself, along with an introduction to the study (Appendix D). Attached to the email was a permission form (Appendix E) to be signed and returned to provide documented approval for participation. After multiple contacts, three of the seven school administrators granted permission for their teachers to participate in the study.

To recruit the districts within the four remaining State Board Regions, I contacted the district with the next largest ELL population. Notifying school districts to request permission to conduct research continued until I received permission from each of the remaining districts. In three districts, the district with the second largest ELL population agreed to participate, while in the remaining district, permission was granted from the district with the sixth largest ELL population. Permission was granted and there was a school district representing each of the State Board Regions by March 5, 2009. Sixty-eight schools participated in this study. Within the regions, school districts included in the study served a total of approximately 32,000 ELL students. Overall, the percent of ELL students within each district ranged from 5% to 15%. Table 3.1 displays the number and percentage of ELL students, as well as the proportion of responding schools and teachers from each region. Participation from school districts in each State Board Region provided information that assisted in the generalizability of findings for other states and school districts that are similar in demographics and size.

Table 3.1

ELL Population, Number of Middle Schools and Respondents by Region

District	ELL Students [a]	Percentage of ELL Students [b]	Participating Middle Schools [c] /Total Middle Schools [d]	Respondents [e]/ Sample [f]
Region 1	1,099	5	3/7	8/12
Region 2	1,318	7	4/4	14/17
Region 3	603	15	2/2	3/7
Region 4	1,579	7	3/3	10/14
Region 5	6,115	12	12/12	62/85
Region 6	17,035	13	30/30	201/476
Region 7	1,578	8	7/7	38/68
Region 8	1,896	7	6/6	39/61

[a] ELL students reported during the 2007 ELL head count completed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.
[b] October 2007 Average Daily Membership and October 2007 ELL head count completed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.
[c] Participating middle schools during the 2008-2009 school year.
[d] Middle schools in each region during the 2008-2009 school year.
[e] Respondents in each region during the 2008-2009 school year.
[f] Middle school language arts teachers during the 2008-2009 school year.

Participants

All English language arts teachers in participating districts who taught in middle schools with a six through eight configuration were invited to participate. Surveys

(Appendix C) were distributed to 740 middle school language arts teachers across the state of North Carolina during the 2008-2009 academic year. Middle school language arts teachers included those who were teaching ELL students, those who were not currently teaching ELL students, but had taught them in the past, and those who had not taught ELL students at all. Teacher participation was voluntary and the pre-notice (Appendix F) explained the purpose of the study. Information in the cover letter (Appendix G) ensured participants that the data would be confidential.

To contact middle school language arts teachers, access to email addresses was needed to provide teachers with notices and a link to the survey. I contacted personnel directors, curriculum directors and directors of technology to gain access to teacher email addresses. In some cases, the email addresses were provided by the district, while other districts did not have access to specific groups of email addresses. The inability to access specific teacher email addresses required assistance from school office personnel, along with school and teacher web pages.

All survey data were distributed and returned by April 18, 2009. There were 379 surveys returned by respondents. Four survey responses were deleted from the total as the four teachers indicated they were English as second language teachers instead of English language arts teachers. There were 375 responses included in the study, giving a response rate of 51%. The demographic characteristics of the sample are reported in Chapter four.

Survey Instrument

A survey was used to determine attitudes of middle school language arts teachers (Appendix C). A survey by Reeves (2002) was located and determined to have portions

appropriate for this study. Her survey included pertinent information based on a review of the literature. Reeves used the survey to determine the attitudes of secondary teachers toward second language students in mainstream content classes through the use of themes. Dr. Reeves was contacted and agreed to allow the survey to be changed and used in the current study (Appendix B).

Survey of Secondary Teachers

Reeves (2002) utilized the term, *English as a second language (ESL),* to identify the students, along with the term, *subject area classes,* to refer to the core classes the respondents taught. Section A of the survey included questions 1 through 16 requiring respondents to indicate their opinion of *strongly disagree, disagree, agree or strongly agree.* In Section B of the survey, questions 1 through 11 were divided into three sections: classroom practices, impact of inclusion, and teacher support. Respondents were provided a three-point Likert scale, which included possible answers of *seldom or never, some of the time,* or *most or all of the time*. In Section C, questions one and two allowed space for respondents to consider the benefits and challenges of including English as second language students in subject area classes. Section D concluded with demographic information used to categorize the responses. These questions included the subject area taught by the teacher, the number of years as a teacher, and gender. There was a question for respondents to indicate whether English was their native language and another to indicate if they spoke a second language and the ability level attained in that language. Also, a question addressed teacher training in teaching language minority students. The survey concluded with a comment section.

Survey Used in the Current Study

With the assistance of the existing survey instrument constructed by Reeves (2002) and a review of the literature, changes and modifications were made to revise the survey in order to address the questions posed in the current study. Early on, there was a change in terms used to provide consistency in terminology. When referring to non-native English speaking students, the term was changed to *English language learner* (*ELL)*. There was also a change in the term to identify middle school language arts classes as *mainstream classrooms*. To ensure understanding, respondents received a list of terms and definitions (Appendix H). Respondents began the survey by describing their current experience. Respondents were initially asked to indicate whether they currently taught ELL students, they did not currently teach ELL students, but had in the past, or had never taught ELL students. If respondents indicated they had never taught ELL students, they were to skip questions 17 through 20 in Section A. Section A included questions one through 20 with response options of *strongly disagree, disagree, agree* and *strongly agree*. Questions were initially grouped to include attitudes toward ELL students, their native language, instructional strategies used by teachers, and support received. Section B required respondents to indicate the number of ELL students enrolled in their classes during the 2008-2009 school year, how many ELL students they had taught throughout their career, as well as the benefits and challenges of including ELL students in their classroom. Section C of the survey included demographic information requesting the number of years as a public school teacher, gender, ethnic background and the highest educational degree completed. The questions included whether the respondent had received training in teaching ELL students in the past five

years, if so, the type, and how many hours. There was an open-ended question to determine how the training affected their teaching and another to determine what types of training were needed to effectively meet the needs of their ELL students. If no training in teaching ELL students had occurred in the past five years, the respondent was directed to the comment section. All respondents had an opportunity to provide additional comments.

Survey pilot test. To increase reliability and validity of the survey used in the current study, pilot studies were conducted using the survey developed by Reeves, as well as the revised survey used in the current study. Reeves conducted a pilot study at a middle school with approximately 30 core teachers during a faculty meeting. The pilot study differed from the primary study in that the pilot study was conducted at a middle school; however, the middle school included the largest ELL population. Teacher feedback was used to determine the clarity and bias of the survey items. Participants made very few suggestions for revising survey items, but did suggest including a neutral or no opinion response. In the final instrument, the scale was not changed "… because the addition of a neutral category might have allowed participants to avoid expressing their opinions" (Reeves, p. 46). Respondents also noted difficulty with the term *ESL* student, even though a list of definitions was included in the cover letter. Respondents noted they took an average of 10 minutes to complete the survey.

A pilot study was also conducted using the revised survey in a middle school with ELL students. The middle school consisted of approximately 31 language arts teachers in grades six through eight. This middle school was not included in the sample. At a faculty meeting, participants received a pilot study cover letter (Appendix K) to read

prior to responding to the survey. The survey took approximately ten minutes to complete, with everyone agreeing to participate. The survey did not require changes as the comments on the feedback form (Appendix L) indicated the survey was well constructed.

Reliability of the survey was addressed with pilot study responses. Reliability coefficients were calculated for the four scales. Initially, attitudes toward ELL students were reflected in survey items one through seven, with language reflected in survey items eight through 11. Instructional strategies used were reflected in survey items 12 through 16 and support received was reflected in items 17 through 20. In terms of reliability, Cronbach's alpha indicated moderate to moderately high coefficients (α = .72 - .86), with support being the highest. Table 3.2 presents the reliability coefficients for the four factors initially used in the current study.

Table 3.2

Reliability Coefficients from Pilot Test

Construct	α
ELL Students	0.82
Language	0.85
Instructional Strategies	0.72
Support	0.86

To address the validity of the survey instrument, there was a careful review of the literature, along with an exploratory factor analysis calculated on the 20 survey items. Results indicated that while there were moderate to moderately high reliability coefficients for each of the four scales, the exploratory factor analysis identified different

survey items, which formed factors. Table 3.3 shows the percentage of variability accounted for, for each factor. As shown, factor one accounts for 27.5% of the variance.

Table 3.3

Variance of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Component	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	27.5	27.5
2	15.2	42.7
3	12.4	55.1
4	12.1	67.2

The factor analysis results were then used to alter the scales to create different scales. Table 3.4 includes the survey items rearranged accordingly, excluding five survey items that did not clearly load onto one of the scales. The change in the survey items required a change in the names assigned to the variables within groups. The group formerly named ELL students was changed to inclusion. Inclusion is defined as ELL students who are in mainstream classes create a positive educational atmosphere and benefit all students. In inclusive classrooms, ELL students are welcomed by mainstream teachers who believe they need longer than two years of enrolling in U. S. schools to acquire English, and should not be included in mainstream classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency. The inclusion variable also includes the belief that making English the official language should be supported. The group named native language was changed to academic expectations. Academic expectations includes the belief that ELL students can perform at the same or higher level than that of their

mainstream peers and they would be encouraged to use their native language in mainstream classrooms. The name of the two subsequent factors remained the same.

Table 3.4

Revised Survey Scales

Inclusion
1. The inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classes creates a positive educational atmosphere.
2. The inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classes benefits all students.
3. I welcome/would welcome the inclusion of ELL students in my mainstream classroom.
8. ELL students should be able to acquire English within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools.
9. ELL students should not be included in mainstream classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency.
11. I would support legislation making English the official language.
Academic Expectations
4. I believe that ELL students are capable of performing at the same or higher level than that of their mainstream peers.
10. I encourage/would encourage ELL students to use their native language in my class.
Instructional Strategies
12. I allow/would allow ELL students more time to complete coursework.
13. I provide/would provide materials for ELL students in their native language.
15. I simplify/would simplify (providing assignments at student's level of understanding) coursework for ELL students.
Support
17. I receive adequate support from district administration for ELL students who are enrolled in my classes.
18. I receive adequate support from school administration for ELL students who are enrolled in my classes.
19. I have received adequate training to work effectively with ELL students.
20. I am interested in receiving training/more training in working with ELL students.

Data Collection

To collect data, appropriate documents were submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) by October 27, 2008, and I received approval to collect data on December 2, 2008. I received approval from each of the eight school districts by March 5, 2009. Pre-

notices (Appendix F), cover letters (Appendix G), thank you/reminders (Appendix I) and final post cards (Appendix J) were emailed and mailed upon request between February 1, 2009 and April 13, 2009. All survey data were received by April 18, 2009.

The initial teacher contact was in the form of a pre-notice email (Appendix F). The pre-notice included a brief explanation of the study, information regarding incentives for participants, an identification number to use on the survey and the expected date they would receive the cover letter. The identification number assigned to each teacher consisted of the school district number, the school number, and a number representing each language arts teacher in that school. The identification number comprised eight digits. Two days after the pre-notice, I sent an email cover letter/consent form (Appendix G) to the participants, asking them to complete the survey (Appendix C). The cover letter/consent form included an introduction, the general purpose of the study, confidentiality/privacy information, risks and benefits of participation. To avoid ambiguity, a list of the definitions of key terms was included (Appendix H). The link to respond to the survey found in Ultimate Survey through Western Carolina University was also included in the message. There were four individual thank you/reminder letters sent at one week intervals to non-respondents (Appendix I). While the pre-notice letter, the cover letter and thank you/reminders were sent to the participants' school email address, the final mailing was a post card (Appendix J) via the U. S. Postal Service.

The 42 participants who preferred a paper copy of the survey received a packet. The packet included a cover letter (Appendix G), a survey (Appendix C), along with the definitions of key terms (Appendix H), and a return self-addressed stamped envelope. The thank you/reminder letters (Appendix I) were mailed at two week intervals with a

copy of the survey and a return self-addressed envelope. There were 740 teachers who received the email to respond to the on-line survey through Ultimate Survey.

To obtain informed consent, the cover letter indicated that by completing the survey, participants gave their consent to participate in the study. The letter also indicated that participation was voluntary and that participants had the right not to participate or to skip questions without penalty. The packet also included my contact information. A 50% response return rate was expected. While overall, 379 surveys were returned; four survey responses were deleted from the total as the four teachers indicated they were English as a second language teachers instead of a language arts teacher, bringing the total number of usable responses to 375, which was a response rate of 51%.

A $40.00 gift card was given to one participant from each of the eight school districts. After the designated date and in the presence of two witnesses, I drew eight names, one from each district for a gift card. The gift cards were sent through the mail.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected in the current study, teacher responses on the survey were downloaded from Ultimate Survey and then entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Graduate Student Version 15.0. Data from 42 respondents who requested a paper survey were coded and entered into SPSS. The data entered into SPSS included both categorical and continuous variables. The use of the software allowed for efficiency and accuracy of analysis.

Data analysis of the pilot study indicated moderate to moderately high coefficients (α = .72 - .86), as reported earlier. The exploratory factor analysis identified different survey items, which formed two new factors. Scales were changed to reflect

new scales and survey items were arranged accordingly. Table 3.5 includes the factors identified as a result of the exploratory factor analysis and survey items, along with descriptive data.

Table 3.5

Survey Items and Descriptive Data according to Factor

Factor	Survey Items	Range of Values	*M*	*SD*
Inclusion	1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 11	6-24	20.11	3.64
Academic Expectations	4, 10	2-8	6.76	1.29
Instructional Strategies Used	12, 13, 15	3-12	10.10	1.29
Support Received	17, 18, 19, 20	4-16	13.95	2.12

The change in the survey items required a change in the names assigned to the variables within groups. The group formerly named ELL students was changed to inclusion, and the group named language was changed to academic expectations. The other two factors remained the same.

Inclusion

Throughout the literature, there is very little information focused on inclusion and English language learners. The term inclusion is usually associated with students who have disabilities. Halvorsen and Neary (2001) define inclusion as students with disabilities who are educated with age-appropriate peers in general education classes and receive specialized instruction through their individualized education program (IEP) using core curriculum and general class activities. An additional characterization of inclusion was stated as the effort to ensure that students with disabilities attend neighborhood schools along with their friends, while also receiving the necessary

specialized instruction to access the general curriculum (National Institute for Urban School Improvement, n.d.). The definition of inclusion according to the United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2009) involves a change in schools to meet the needs of all students, regardless of their challenges.

The inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classes creates a positive educational atmosphere and benefits all students. In inclusive classrooms, ELL students are welcomed by mainstream teachers who believe they need longer than two years of enrolling in U. S. schools to acquire English, and should not be included in mainstream classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency. The inclusion variable also includes the belief that making English the official language should be supported.

Academic Expectations

Teachers provide instruction in the content area with the expectation that students will master the content. While there is research presented here that supports the notion that teachers influence student achievement, the expectations for learning may not be similar for all students. Initially, Merton (1948) suggested the self-fulfilling prophecy; and later, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1989) applied the self-fulfilling prophecy to teachers. The intention was that when teachers expected their students to do well, interaction between them was what guided their expectations to be fulfilled. Similarly, if teachers have lower expectations for students, then those students will perform lower than their peers. In fact, barriers to achieve expectations include teachers having low expectations for their students (Haynes, Tikly & Caballero, 2006), ethnic discrimination (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001), as well as low student ability (McWhirter, Torres, Salgado, & Valdez, 2007). To assist ELL students in overcoming academic challenges, teacher expectations

of student achievement is even more critical, and expectations should be high for all students.

Change in Questions

To address the newly identified factors, the research questions were changed to reflect the different scales acknowledged in the analysis. The new questions addressed in this research study are indicated with an asterisk below:

1. *What are the attitudes of middle school language arts teachers toward inclusion, academic expectations, the instructional strategies used and the support received?
2. *Is there a relationship between the number of years taught by middle school language arts teachers and the attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, the instructional strategies used and the support received?
3. *Are there differences in attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, and the instructional strategies used among teachers who have taught ELL students and those who have not?
4. *Is there a relationship between middle school language arts teacher attitudes toward the support received and their attitudes toward inclusion?
5. How much time have middle school language arts teachers spent in training to teach ELL students?
6. What types of training have middle school language arts teachers attended?
7. How has the training NC middle school language arts teachers attended affected their teaching?
8. What training do middle school language arts teachers feel they need in order to more effectively meet the needs of ELL students in their classroom?

9. What do middle school language arts teachers consider to be the greatest benefits and challenges of including ELL students in mainstream language arts classes?

In order to answer the research questions in this study, statistical analysis were performed on the collected data. The statistical analysis included descriptive statistics, including percentages. To determine relationships, Pearson Correlations and Spearman's Rho were conducted. The *t*-test projected to be used to analyze the results for RQ3 was not used due to the small number of participants in one of the two categories. A Pearson chi-square test was used in several instances to go beyond the research questions in order to develop a better understanding of the sample in terms of their positive and negative attitudes. Table 3.6 gives the method of analysis for each research question answered in this study.

Table 3.6

Statistical Analysis for Research Questions 1-9

Research Question	Statistical Analysis
What are the attitudes of middle school language arts teachers toward inclusion, academic expectations, the instructional strategies used and the support received?	Percentages and Confidence Intervals
Is there a relationship between the number of years taught by middle school language arts teachers and the attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, the instructional strategies used and the support received?	Spearman's Rho
Are there differences in attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, and the instructional strategies used among teachers who have taught ELL students and those who have not?	*t* Test Results did not allow for meaningful data due to the few numbers of those who had never taught ELL students.
Is there a relationship between middle school language arts teacher attitudes toward the support received and their attitudes toward inclusion?	Pearson Correlation
How much time have middle school language arts teachers spent in training to teach ELL students?	Percentages
What types of training have middle school language arts teachers attended?	Percentages
How has the training NC middle school language arts teachers attended affected their teaching?	Percentages
What training do middle school language arts teachers feel they need in order to more effectively meet the needs of ELL students in their classroom?	Percentages
What do middle school language arts teachers consider to be the greatest benefits and challenges of including ELL students in mainstream language arts classes?	Percentages

To further analyze the sample, respondents were identified as those who had positive and negative attitudes toward the achievement of ELL students. Twelve survey items (1-6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16) were used to define the two subgroups with a cutoff score of 30 to distinguish those who had negative attitudes from those who were found to have positive attitudes. Someone who answered *strongly disagree* or *disagree* to all of the items would have a total between 12 and 24. To capture a unique group, while not excluding those who might have responded *agree*, 30 was determined to be the cutoff. Hence, a person with a score on the 12 items of 30 or less was considered to have a negative attitude; one with a score greater than 30 was considered to have a positive attitude.

In the current study, negative attitudes were defined as respondents who believed that the inclusion of ELL students and what they brought to the classroom created an educational atmosphere that was not positive and was not seen as beneficial to the other students in the classroom. In the classroom of those who had negative attitudes, ELL students were not welcomed due to the perception of their being an increase in the teacher's workload and additional time required of them. There was the belief that ELL students were not capable of performing at the same or higher level than that of their mainstream peers and they should attain a minimum level of English proficiency prior to entering the mainstream classroom. Students' native language was not utilized and material in the student's native language was not made available as a resource. In addition, these individuals would not provide ELL students additional time to complete assignments, would not provide assignments at the student's level of understanding, or would not vary the ways in which a lesson was presented.

Ethics

The quantitative study involved the analysis of data from middle school language arts teachers throughout North Carolina. The data included survey responses from participants. The researcher obtained permission from the Institutional Review Board at Western Carolina University. Permission was obtained from one school district in each of the eight School Board Regions prior to distributing the surveys to individual participants. By completing the survey, participants gave their consent. The individual responses will remain anonymous and all data will be shredded after a period of three years.

Summary

This chapter was designed to provide an overview of the research methodologies used in this study. The population and sampling were explained to provide clarity. School districts were chosen based on the number of ELL students, and within each district, all middle school language arts teachers were selected to participate. The survey instrument was modified to reflect the focus of this study. The results of a factor analysis assisted in making decisions regarding the variables and a change in the survey items for each variable. The variables were changed to inclusion, academic expectations, with the subsequent factors, instructional strategies used and support received remaining the same. In addition, the wording of four research questions was altered to reflect the new scales. Data were collected from the teachers who participated in this study throughout the state of North Carolina. Western Carolina University's IRB approved the collection of data, appropriate permission was granted for middle school language arts teachers to participate in each district and participation was voluntary. Ethical considerations

concluded the chapter. Chapter four will include the results of the data analysis to answer each of the research questions and will conclude with a summary of the findings.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings relevant to each research question. There were nine questions to be answered in this study. The questions were as follows:

1. What are the attitudes of middle school language arts teachers toward inclusion, academic expectations, the instructional strategies used and the support received?
2. Is there a relationship between the number of years taught by middle school language arts teachers and the attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, the instructional strategies used and the support received?
3. Are there differences in attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, and the instructional strategies used among teachers who have taught ELL students and those who have not?
4. Is there a relationship between middle school language arts teacher attitudes toward the support received and their attitudes toward inclusion?
5. How much time have middle school language arts teachers spent in training to teach ELL students?
6. What types of training have middle school language arts teachers attended?
7. How has the training NC middle school language arts teachers attended affected their teaching?
8. What training do middle school language arts teachers feel they need in order to more effectively meet the needs of ELL students in their classroom?
9. What do middle school language arts teachers consider to be the greatest benefits and challenges of including ELL students in mainstream language arts classes?

Respondent Demographics

Language arts teachers in middle schools within each of the eight State Board Regions were asked to participate in the current study. Across the state, 740 middle school language arts teachers received surveys, with 375 useable surveys returned. Useable surveys resulted in a response rate of 51%. During the 2008-2009 school year, the year in which the surveys were distributed and returned, 99.2% (n = 372) of the respondents were teaching ELL students or had taught ELL students in their language arts classrooms. Teacher respondents comprised more females (80.8%, n = 303) than males (19.2%, n = 72). Seventy-five percent of the respondents were White (75.2%, n = 282), with a small percentage identified as Black (19.7%, n = 74) and Hispanic/Latino (1.9%, n = 7), respectively. A little over half had attained a Bachelors degree (54.9%, n = 206), slightly less than half had attained a Masters degree (43.2%, n = 162) and only a small percentage had completed a Specialist or a six year degree (1.9%, n = 7). Respondents had 1 to 34 years of teaching experience (M = 9.76, SD = 6.89). Furthermore, there was a large portion of teachers with five to nine years of teaching experience (33.33%, n = 125), and 26% (n = 96) having between one and four years at the time the survey was completed, resulting in over half of the respondents having less than nine years of teaching experience.

When looking at gender, most of the respondents indicated they were female (80.8%, n = 303) and there was a larger percentage of females (61.5%, n = 185) who had positive attitudes toward the inclusion of ELL students (38.5%, n = 116). In comparison, a larger percentage of males (47.2%, n = 34) were found to have had negative attitudes toward the inclusion of ELL students, however the differences were not statistically significant.

To determine additional demographic information and further describe the sample, ethnicity was analyzed. More of the respondents identified themselves as white (75.2%, *n* = 282), as compared to the 19.7% (*n* = 74) identified as Black, 1.9% (*n* =7) as Hispanic, 1.6% (*n* = 6) as Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.3% (5) as other and .3% (*n* = 1) as American Indian. When comparing positive and negative attitudes among each of the ethnic groups, 74.3 % (*n* = 55) of the Black respondents and 57.1% (*n* = 160) of the White ones had positive attitudes. While the groups were found to be different, the differences were not found to be statistically significant.

A little over half (54.9%, *n* = 206) had attained their Bachelors degree, with a slightly lower percentage completing their Masters degree (43.2%, *n* = 162). The smallest number of respondents, (1.9%, *n* = 7) had attained an Education Specialist or six year degree. A higher percentage of those who had attained more education, an Education Specialist or six year degree, were determined to have more negative attitudes (57.1%, *n* = 4) than positive attitudes , (42.9%, *n* = 3). A higher percentage of those who had attained a Masters degree were found to have more positive attitudes (58.6%, *n* = 95) than negative attitudes (41.4% *n* = 67). Similarly, those who had attained a Bachelors degree had a higher percentage of positive attitudes (61.3% *n* = 125) than negative attitudes (38.7% *n* = 79). None of these differences were found to be statistically significant.

Research Questions

The data presented in this section provide responses to the questions posed in this study.

Question 1

What are the attitudes of middle school language arts teachers toward inclusion, academic expectations, the instructional strategies used and the support received?

Research question one explored middle school language arts teacher attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, instructional strategies, and support. Table 4.1 presents response totals and percentages for each survey item.

Table 4.1

Summary of Survey Items for each Factor

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Inclusion	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. The inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classes creates a positive educational atmosphere.	0	0.0	39	10.4	197	52.7	138	36.1
2. The inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classes benefits all students.	0	0.0	40	10.7	160	42.6	175	46.7
3. I welcome/would welcome the inclusion of ELL students in my mainstream classroom.	0	0.0	13	3.5	177	47.2	185	49.3
8. ELL students should be able to acquire English within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools.	153	40.8	182	48.5	40	10.7	0	0.0
9. ELL students should not be included in mainstream classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency.	0	0.0	39	10.4	157	41.9	179	47.7
11. I would support legislation making English the official language.	0	0.0	65	17.3	106	28.3	203	54.1

Academic Expectations								
4. I believe that ELL students are capable of performing at the same or higher level than that of their mainstream peers.	2	0.3	79	21.1	96	25.7	198	52.9
10. I encourage/would encourage ELL students to use their native language in my class.	0	0.0	13	3.5	177	47.2	185	49.3
Instructional Strategies								
14. I allow/would allow ELL students more time to complete coursework.	0	0.0	13	3.5	125	33.5	237	63.2
15. I provide/would provide materials for ELL students in their native language.	0	0.0	39	10.4	252	67.2	84	22.4
16. I simplify/would simplify (providing assignments at student's level of under-standing) coursework for ELL students.	0	0.0	0	0.0	232	61.9	143	38.1
Support Received								
17. I receive adequate support from district administration for ELL students who are enrolled in my classes.	0	0.0	24	6.4	171	45.6	176	46.9
18. I receive adequate support from school administration for ELL students who are enrolled in my classes.	0	0.0	24	6.4	133	35.5	215	57.3
19. I have received adequate training to work effectively with ELL students.	202	53.0	159	42.4	11	2.9	0	0.0
20. I am interested in receiving training/more training in working with ELL students.	0	0.0	52	13.9	74	19.7	246	65.6

Six survey items addressed attitudes toward the inclusion of ELL students. Mainstream language arts teachers who responded (96.5%) indicated they would welcome ELL students in their classrooms, while 88.8% reported ELL students created a positive educational atmosphere. A large percentage (89.3%) reported that the inclusion of ELL students benefits the mainstream classroom, however, 89.6% also expressed the need for ELL students to attain a minimum level of English proficiency prior to entering the mainstream classroom. Respondents (89.3%) also reported that ELL students should be given longer than two years to acquire English with 82.4% supporting legislation to make English the official language of the U.S.

Two survey items addressed attitudes toward academic expectations. The survey items focused on the capabilities of their ELL students and the use of the student's native language in the classroom. Teacher attitudes toward academic expectations as indicated by respondents (78.6%) showed a common belief in the capabilities of their ELL students to perform at the same or higher level as compared to their peers, however, 21.4% indicated by their responses that their ELL students were not capable of performing at the same or higher level than their peers. Most respondents (96.5%) also reported they encouraged their ELL students to utilize their native language to achieve at the same or higher level than that of their peers.

Three survey items focused on teacher attitudes toward instructional strategies used. Specifically, survey items included providing ELL students with additional time to complete assignments, providing materials in the student's native language, as well as providing ELL students with assignments at their level of understanding. Most language arts teachers (96.7%) indicated they would provide ELL students additional time to

complete assignments, with a slightly lower percentage (89.6%) indicating they would provide materials in the student's native language. All respondents (100%) noted they would give assignments at the student's level of understanding.

The last area included attitudes toward support received. Support was described as support from the administration at the district and school level, as well as support in the way of training. Over 90% of respondents indicated they received support from the district level, with 92.8% indicating school level administration provided support. Most respondents (95.4%) stated they did not receive sufficient support in the way of training. More than 80% of respondents were interested in receiving training to teach ELL students. Table 4.2 provides descriptive statistics, along with a range of values used to estimate the value of the population. Using the *M* (SD), confidence intervals were calculated for each factor.

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics and Confidence Intervals for Factors

Factor	*n*	M	*SD*	95% CI
Inclusion	375	20.11	3.64	[19.74, 20.48]
Academic Expectations	375	6.76	1.29	[6.63, 6.89]
Instructional Strategies Used	375	10.10	1.29	[9.97, 10.23]
Support Received	372	13.95	2.12	[13.74, 14.16]

Among the variables, which included attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, instructional strategies used and support received, attitudes toward inclusion were generally positive, however respondents preferred that students have a

level of English proficiency prior to entering the mainstream classroom. Attitudes toward academic expectations revealed the importance of using a student's native language and that ELL students were able to perform at the same or higher level than their peers, but over 20% indicated negative attitudes toward the abilities of ELL students as compared to their peers.

Most teachers indicated they had positive attitudes toward instructional strategies by indicating they agreed with using appropriate instructional strategies to help ELL students access the general curriculum. Finally, while the respondents indicated positive attitudes toward the support district and school level administration provided, they also responded they needed additional support in the way of training and welcomed more training opportunities to improve the effectiveness of classroom instruction.

Question 2

Is there a relationship between the number of years taught by middle school language arts teachers and the attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, the instructional strategies used and the support received?

Participants in this study ranged from teachers who had one year of teaching experience to those who had over 30 years of teaching experience. Table 4.3 provides descriptive statistics for years as a teacher.

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics for Teaching Experience

	n	*M*	*SD*
Years as a teacher	375	9.76	6.89

A Spearman's Rho was calculated to determine if there was a relationship between the number of years taught by middle school language arts teachers and the attitudes toward the four factors. Years of teaching experience was correlated with inclusion r_s (373) = -.06, p = .27 [95% CI: - .02 - .04], academic expectations r_s (373) = .08, p = .12 [95% CI: - .02, .18], the instructional strategies used r_s (373) = -.02, p = .68 [95% CI: - .12, 08], and the support received r_s (370) = -.02, p = .69 [95% CI: - .08 .12], but no significant relationship was found.

Question 3

Are there differences in attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, and the instructional strategies used among teachers who have taught ELL students and those who have not?

The teachers who were currently teaching ELL students or had previously taught them were combined to include those who taught ELL students. The survey results did not allow for meaningful study of this question because only three respondents indicated never having taught ELL students while 372 indicated they had taught or were currently teaching ELL students.

Question 4

Is there a relationship between middle school language arts teacher attitudes toward the support received and their attitudes toward inclusion?

When determining whether there was a relationship between teacher attitudes toward the support received and their attitudes toward inclusion, the assumption would be that as the teacher received more support, then teacher attitudes toward inclusion would

tend to be more positive. However, there was no statistically significant relationship between the two variables r_s (370) = .07, p = .19, 95% CI [-.31, 0.17].

Question 5

How much time have middle school language arts teachers spent in training to teach ELL students?

To determine how much time middle school language arts teachers had spent in training to teach ELL students, the respondents were first asked if they had received training within the past five years. Overall, 75% (n = 281) had received training to teach ELL students, while 25% (n = 94) had not participated in any type of training focused on ELL students. Table 4.4 indicates the hours of training teachers received to teach ELL students. More than half of the teachers (69.8%) who responded to this question received training to teach ELL students and had received one to 10 hours of training.

Table 4.4

Hours Teachers Attended Training (n = 281)

Hours	*n*	%	95% CI
1-10 hours	196	69.8	[64.38, 75.12]
11-20 hours	63	22.4	[17.54, 27.3]
21-30 hours	14	5	[2.44, 7.52]
31 or more hours	8	2.8	[.9, 4.8]

To look further at attitudes, more specifically positive and negative attitudes and hours of training, Table 4.5 shows data generated from a Pearson chi-square test. Results indicated that while a higher percentage of those with positive attitudes participated in 31 hours of training or more, (87.5%, n = 7), the largest percentage of those with negative

attitudes participated in only 11 to 20 hours (49.2%, $n = 31$). Results indicated that hours of training are not associated with positive or negative attitudes ($x^2 = 6.24$, $df = 4$, $p = .18$).

Table 4.5

Attitudes and Hours of Training

			Hours of Training					
		Hours	0	1-10	11-20	21-30	31 or more	Total
Attitudes	Positive	Count	61	114	32	9	7	223
		%	65.6	58.5	50.8	64.3	87.5	59.8
	Negative	Count	32	81	31	5	1	150
		%	34.4	41.5	49.2	35.7	12.5	40.2
Total		Count	93	195	63	14	8	373
		%	100	100	100	100	100	100

Question 6

What types of training have middle school language arts teachers attended?

Teacher training occurs in a variety of forms and participants attend for different reasons. Of those who responded, 75% of the respondents answered this question. Table 4.6 provides the results of the analysis. Most respondents attended in-service workshops. In-service workshops may include professional development opportunities conducted at the teacher's school or a particular school within the district. Often times, in-service workshops are conducted to introduce a new district or school initiative or to address a specific need. For some, in-service workshops are a requirement, while others attend

voluntarily. A higher percentage of respondents with positive attitudes toward the inclusion of ELL students (56%) attended in-service workshops as opposed to those with negative attitudes (*n* = 44%).

Nearly 18% of the respondents indicated that they took college courses. Respondents were limited to indicating the type of training; therefore, there was no way of knowing whether the college class was part of the respondent's initial teacher training, a college class taken as part of a degree program, or a single college class taken for renewal credit. A small percentage attended training sessions at a conference, with few indicating they attended a different type of training, without specifying the type of training.

Table 4.6

Types of Training (*n* = 280)

	n	%	95% CI
In-service workshops	191	68.2	[62.76, 73.66]
College classes	49	17.5	[13.05, 21.95]
Conference training	32	11.4	[7.7, 15.16]
Other	8	2.9	[.91, 4.81]

Question 7

How has the training NC middle school language arts teachers attended affected their teaching?

Unlike previous questions, respondents were asked to provide an answer to this question by writing their response on the lines provided. This question yielded a very small group of responses; only 17% (*n* = 63) of those who completed the survey

responded to this question. In reviewing the data, first individually, then collectively, categories were drawn from teacher responses to include six areas. As shown in Table 4.7, teachers responded that training they received affected their teaching by helping them to better understand the culture of their students, increasing communication, offering them more support, giving them additional instructional strategies to use in the classroom, increasing their confidence and helping them to learn how language is acquired.

Table 4.7

Ways Training Affected Teaching (*n* = 63)

	n	%	95% CI
Cultural understanding	18	29	[17.41, 39.73]
Increased communication	15	24	[13.29, 34.33]
Support	9	14	[5.65, 22.93]
Instructional strategies	7	11	[3.35, 18.87]
More confidence	7	11	[3.35, 18.87]
Language acquisition	7	11	[3.35, 18.87]

Cultural understanding and an increased ability to communicate with ELL students accounted for 53% of the total responses. Support teachers received was also reported to be a way in which the training they attended affected their teaching and according to the responses, the final three categories included learning additional instructional strategies, acquiring more confidence, and understanding language acquisition.

Students in mainstream classrooms reflect the community in which they live and with an increased diverse student population, there is much to know about the students entering the classroom. Language arts teachers stated that training in cultural understanding affected their teaching. Cultural understanding was also identified as important for those who were identified as having positive (55.6%, *n* = 107) and negative (44.4%, *n* = 8) attitudes toward the inclusion of ELL students. In reviewing the responses, comments that reflected cultural understanding included similar terms and phrases that were suggestive of a single category. Terms and phrases included culture, learning about others, differences between cultures, understanding others and differences, as well as addressing differences in the classroom. Teachers need training in understanding that goes beyond the superficial aspects of culture for a deeper understanding, which should comprise values, and behavioral standards that outline approaches to child rearing and schooling. Respondents noted that the training helped them to learn about different cultures, the reasons why families of ELL students came to the United States, their beliefs, and values. One respondent stated, "Having participated in cultural understanding training has given me a way to connect with the families of my ELL students." In making connections with students and families, knowing how culture operates in the classroom is equally important.

Along with individuals and groups, schools have culture. Making schools places where all children can learn requires teachers to understand culture in the classroom. Students can sometimes be caught between the expectations of school and home and if forced to select one over the other, conflict will ensue. Understanding culture can reduce conflict within the classroom. A respondent reported training in cultural understanding

proved to be helpful in learning the differences between school and family expectations in the classroom. And knowing the differences decreases potential problems.

Along with cultural understanding, an increase in communication appeared to be of importance, especially with respondents who were found to be more positive (71.4%, *n* = 10) than negative (28.6%, *n* = 4) toward the inclusion of their ELL students. The training, which included taking a language course, learning to communicate with students and parents, and learning commonalities among languages was deemed to be very helpful in the classroom. The inability for teachers to communicate with students and their families presented challenges in the classroom. When there was limited communication, there was the chance of frustration and difficulty for both the teacher and the student. Moreover, the limited understanding of English affected the way in which parents were able to support their children in the classroom. Several respondents reported that merely attempting to communicate with their students and the families of their ELL students made the students and families feel more comfortable in the school building. Teachers, who make the effort to communicate, created a positive educational atmosphere for both students and parents. Respondents also indicated there were positive outcomes for their students as a result of the training in communication. One respondent stated, "I never really thought much about the language I speak and my identity as an American, but as a result of training in communication, I learned about the connection between an individual and their language and what that means to them and their identity."

The training respondents received affected their teaching by providing them support. More specifically, respondents reported that "…support to attend training and the encouragement to implement the new information" was necessary for positive

change. They also indicated access to resources was helpful to successful implementation. The support in the form of resources increased learning opportunities for teachers even after the training had been completed. Resources included educators who could assist in various fields, computer programs, websites, books, and materials. Teachers stated that having administrative support was crucial and administrators' acknowledgment of the need to attend training was encouraging to teachers.

Teachers who responded to this question also indicated that the training they attended gave them more confidence in the classroom. One respondent stated that, "As a result of the training, I felt better about what I was doing in the classroom when teaching ELL students." Empowered by these newly found skills, whether the skills came from training, additional resources or instructional strategies, teachers need to believe they are effective in the classroom.

Another area identified by respondents was obtaining additional instructional strategies. In the classroom, teachers are required to accommodate and implement instructional strategies as indicated by student need and often times student plans. Understanding and identifying appropriate strategies are essential to student success. For those who responded, training in instructional strategies affected how they taught ELL students. One respondent mentioned that she adjusted her schedule whenever possible to allow students more time to complete assignments to provide them opportunities to work in cooperative groups and to allow them to use their native language in the classroom.

Understanding language acquisition was also identified as affecting their teaching. Language acquisition was identified by respondents who used terms and phrases comprised of learning how one acquires a language, language and how to learn a

language, as well as learning what students go through while acquiring a language. One respondent expressed the importance of "… knowing how a second language was acquired and what children experience as they learned a second language." She stated that she learned, "… details included an understanding of the phases a student may experience while being immersed in a second language which provided greater insight and clarification to misconceptions regarding students who remained silent in the classroom." She went on to explain that, "…students who remained silent for a period of time were not refusing to speak, but instead, the students were processing their new surroundings." Another respondent reported that it was important to know that "… even though ELL students were talking with their friends did not necessarily translate to the academic language required in the classroom."

Respondents identified six ways in which the training affected their teaching. While responses to this open-ended question were few compared to the total number of surveys returned, of those who responded, having additional information in cultural understanding was identified as having affected their teaching the most.

Question 8

What training do middle school language arts teachers feel they need in order to more effectively meet the needs of ELL students in their classroom?

Thirty-seven percent (n =137) of the respondents identified specific training that would help them more effectively meet the needs of ELL students. As displayed in Table 4.8, trainings included Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), communication/language, cultural awareness, instructional strategies, and on-going training. In addition, the teachers included in this study had an average of approximately

nine years of teaching experience, giving them time to adjust as a teacher and give them more knowledge and insight about the training needed to be more effective in the classroom.

Table 4.8

Training Needed (*n* = 137)

	n	%	95% CI
SIOP	52	38	[29.83, 46.09]
Communication/Language	33	24.1	[16.93, 31.25]
Cultural awareness	26	19	[12.41, 25.55]
Instructional strategies	15	10.9	[5.72, 16.18]
On-going training	11	8	[3.48, 12.58]

Given that many teachers are not receiving the training necessary to teach ELL students effectively, respondents identified training that was needed. Respondents described the type of training that included scaffolding and language goals, along with content goals. These terms reflect training in SIOP. Training in SIOP was identified as being the training most needed in meeting the needs of ELL learners. SIOP includes the implementation of high quality instruction using scaffolding, providing appropriate background information, while integrating language and content objectives. One respondent noted, "I am hoping to be able to participate in SIOP training soon to increase my teaching strategies to use with my ELL students." Others indicated that SIOP had helped them a great deal in their mainstream classrooms. They were glad the district provided the training and recognized its value.

Training in communication/language was also identified as needed for mainstream teachers of ELL students, especially those who find the inclusion of ELL students a positive experience. The ability to communicate with students and their parents were of great concern for respondents. Several respondents noted that the difficulty in communicating with their students and respective families was solely based on the inability to speak English; therefore, learning English was crucial.

Parents of ELL students have a desire to help their children succeed and do well in school. One respondent reported that, "The language barrier between me, my students, and their families, hinders my ability as a teacher to address school processes and procedures in my classroom, which can sometimes lead to miscommunication." To assist in the communication barrier, districts attempt to secure resources that may include individuals in the community who speak a second language or hire interpreters who can assist with communication needs. One respondent noted that even though their district was larger and had access to more resources, for example interpreters, there were too few interpreters available and scheduling them was even more difficult.

Training in cultural awareness was also identified as a need for teachers in order to more effectively meet the needs of ELL students. Approximately 75% of the teachers who participated in this study identified themselves as White, indicating very few teachers who were minority. This adds to the disproportionate number of minority student to minority teacher ratio. Some stated they found themselves treating all ELL students the same, regardless of ethnicity, when in fact they should be treated like individuals. Several respondents reported they did not have an understanding of different

cultures. They felt there was a great deal they did not know and the more they learned, the more equipped they would be to meet the needs of ELL students in the classroom.

Training in instructional strategies and on-going training were identified as necessary for respondents to meet the needs of ELL students. They noted the need for instructional strategies specific to teaching ELL students. According to respondents, approximately 25% never participated in training to teach ELL students. Of those who indicated a way in which training affected teaching, 11% reported that training in instructional strategies affected their teaching. One respondent stated she wanted to "… use appropriate strategies unique to ELL students, but had a difficult time getting assistance from someone in the building." Finally, on-going training was needed to meet the needs of ELL students. One or even two trainings were not as effective as on-going training. Some respondents suggested that there needed to be a mechanism for follow-up and the ability to process lessons with colleagues; therefore, improving both teaching and learning.

Question 9

What do middle school language arts teachers consider to be the greatest benefits and challenges of including ELL students in mainstream language arts classes?

The final question requested middle school teachers to state the greatest benefits and challenges of including ELL students in mainstream language arts classes. Twenty-three percent (n = 87) responded by indicating the benefits of including ELL students in mainstream language arts classes. The benefits included the exposure to cultural differences, a positive example, bilingualism, and students' experiences. Table 4.9 indicates the frequency of responses.

Table 4.9

Benefits (*n* = 87)

	n	%	95% CI
Exposure to cultural differences	44	50.6	[40.06, 61.08]
Bilingualism	20	23	[14.15, 31.83]
Positive example	12	13.8	[6.54, 21.04]
Students' experiences	11	12.6	[5.66, 19.62]

Exposure to cultural difference (50.6%, n = 44) was found to be a benefit and received the greatest number of responses by those who responded to this open-ended question. Since schools comprise adults and students who are different in many respects, getting along with individuals who may be different creates learning opportunities throughout the day. In the current study, respondents expressed the importance of a diverse classroom and the need for students to understand differences. One respondent stated that "Having a diverse student population in a classroom creates multiple learning opportunities regularly."

A benefit for some was the ability for students to speak a different language and the possibility of becoming bilingual. While students are required to understand and speak the language of instruction, English, students enter the classroom with varying linguistic abilities. Teachers described the difficulties of having to learn a second language and the time it takes; however, when ELL students learn English and become bilingual, teachers find this to be an incredible achievement and acknowledge the benefits of being bilingual.

The last benefit noted was that of students' experiences (12.6 %, n = 11). ELL students bring experiences, both similar to and different from that of their classmates. One respondent stated, "Personal experiences bring rich discussion and understanding to the students in the classroom." Because the class includes students with various life experiences, there may be students who lack opportunities to explore the world around them. A respondent mentioned that when ELL students were able to share their personal experiences, classmates discovered another way of life which is sometimes inconceivable for students who only know their immediate community.

In addition to the benefits of including ELL students in mainstream language arts classes, middle school teachers also conveyed challenges (42%, *n* = 157). Interestingly, there were more teachers who provided responses to the challenge question than to the benefit question. As seen in Table 4.10, the inability to communicate with their students presented challenges for those who responded to this question. English is spoken in the classroom and is used to communicate with parents. For parents who do not speak the English language, communicating with school personnel is very difficult. A respondent stated, "The inability to communicate with students and their families made instruction and follow through at home very difficult." The respondent went on to explain that the parents of ELL students wanted very much to help their children, but the language barrier made it difficult for parents to understand an assignment.

Table 4.10

Challenges (*n* = 157)

	n	%	95% CI
Communication	51	32.5	[25.15, 39.81]
Lack of English proficiency	27	17.2	[11.3, 23.1]
Lack of teacher support	24	15.3	[9.66, 20.92]
Insufficient planning time	21	13.4	[8.05, 18.71]
Cultural difference	21	13.4	[8.05, 18.71]
Lack of school readiness	13	8.2	[3.97, 12.59]

Students' inability to use academic language increased difficulty for both the teacher and the student. A respondent affirmed that the ELL student's limited knowledge of English required teachers to change the way in which they presented instructional material. The lack of English proficiency was also noted to prevent students from fully understanding the vocabulary necessary and required the teacher to front-load the vocabulary, as well as provide background knowledge for a deeper level of understanding.

Teachers also indicated that a challenge to including ELL students in mainstream classrooms was the lack of support they received during the school year, as well as a lack of planning time. Some respondents stated that there was an overall lack of support and not simply a lack of support for teachers who taught ELL students. However, respondents who had positive attitudes (41.7%, *n* = 10) found support to be important, while a higher percentage of those with negative attitudes (58.3%, *n* = 14) found support to be a challenge. Several also stated that there was an overall absence of planning time or sufficient planning time, which was a challenge. Respondents expressed they never

had enough planning time to provide the necessary differentiated lessons required for all students.

Challenges also included cultural differences and lack of school readiness. Lack of school readiness was especially a challenge for those who accepted ELL students in their classroom (84.6%, *n* = 11). The comments provided by the respondents linked cultural differences and lack of school readiness. Cultural differences among teachers and students require a level of understanding by both groups to understand how schools operate and what occurs in the classroom. There are programs for children prior to their enrolling in school to ease the transition from pre-school to school. One respondent reported that one of the reasons ELL students lack school readiness "… refers back to their culture and the importance of the extended family." The respondent went on to explain that "Many times the cultural expectation is that children remain in the house until they are ready to begin school and extended family members care for the children while the parents are working." These culturally ingrained familial traditions may differ and be seen as potentially limiting learning opportunities for children.

This chapter analyzed the data gathered from middle school language arts teachers regarding their attitudes toward the achievement of ELL students. Data were analyzed and findings described to determine respondents' attitudes. Chapter five will discuss the findings, limitations and delimitations, implications for practice and policy and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

The recent shift in demographics has changed the student population enrolling in schools across the U.S. Similarly, North Carolina is experiencing a changing student population. Most recently, the change in the student population includes an influx of students who speak a language other than English, referred to as English language learners.

For years, schools have been the principal institution responsible for assimilating ELL students new to this country. While ELLs face unique challenges to academic success, federal and state policies have currently narrowed the definition of academic success as their performance on a state standardized test (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Performance on standardized tests is difficult when ELL students have limited English proficiency. Furthermore, the state of North Carolina policies require ELL students to demonstrate language proficiency after only one year, even though research suggests academic language acquisition necessary to succeed in the classroom occurs after five to seven years of instruction (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1996). Academic success is further complicated by the recent change in the location to which ELL families are moving. Previously, families of ELL students moved to larger cities with a greater prospect of employment opportunities and educational resources. More recently, these families have relocated to more rural areas with schools that have fewer ELL students (Singer, 2007). While policies dictate requirements related to services for ELL students, fewer ELL students scattered amongst the total student population make it difficult for administrators to justify additional teachers and resources. Moreover, in rural areas, the availability of qualified staff is extremely limited.

Purpose of the Study

This research study investigated the attitudes of middle school language arts teachers who have English language learners in their mainstream classrooms. In the classroom, teachers are in a position to influence student achievement and their attitudes toward their students are critical to student success. The most recent data available on attitudes toward ELL students describe attitudes toward students in one district or school, but there are very little data on the inclusion of ELL students in school districts across a particular state and within regions or data unique to middle school language arts teachers in North Carolina (Hirschfield, 2004; Hollis, 1997; Reeves, 2002). To address this gap in the literature, this study offered insight to teacher attitudes toward the achievement of ELL students specific to North Carolina.

This chapter will include a discussion of the results, limitations, and delimitations, recommendations for further research, as well as implications for future practice and policy. The following questions guided this study:

1. What are the attitudes of middle school language arts teachers toward inclusion, academic expectations, the instructional strategies used and the support received?
2. Is there a relationship between the number of years taught by middle school language arts teachers and the attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, the instructional strategies used and the support received?
3. Are there differences in attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, and the instructional strategies used among teachers who have taught ELL students and those who have not?

4. Is there a relationship between middle school language arts teacher attitudes toward the support received and their attitudes toward inclusion?
5. How much time have middle school language arts teachers spent in training to teach ELL students?
6. What types of training have middle school language arts teachers attended?
7. How has the training NC middle school language arts teachers attended affected their teaching?
8. What training do middle school language arts teachers feel they need in order to more effectively meet the needs of ELL students in their classroom?
9. What do middle school language arts teachers consider to be the greatest benefits and challenges of including ELL students in mainstream language arts classes?

To date, there is very little research focused on inclusion and ELL students.

Discussion

Language arts teachers who participated in this study indicated positive attitudes toward the inclusion of ELL students. Similar results were found in the study by Reeves (2002), which indicated that a little more than 70% reported having positive attitudes toward the inclusion of ELL students. In the current study, respondents indicated that the inclusion of ELL students created a positive educational atmosphere and benefited all students. Responses also indicated that language arts teachers welcomed ELL students in their mainstream classrooms. When asked to indicate the benefits of including ELL students, the exposure to cultural differences was found to be the response given by more respondents. An additional benefit was found to be the experiences that students bring to the classroom. Data reveal that teachers value the culture experiences that ELL students

bring to the classroom (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2006).). This belief could be explained by the overall changing demographics and schools' change in focus to now be on preparing students for a more global society.

At the time the survey instrument was modified and distributed, ELL students who received an eligible score on the state English proficiency assessment were provided up to two years before being included in the state's accountability model. The accountability model includes high stakes testing which requires ELL students to participate in the end of grade test in reading and writing in grades three through eight or the end of course test in English, Algebra and writing in grades nine through twelve.

Since the distribution and collection of survey responses, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2010) distributed a memo changing the length of time from two years to one year. With the inclusion of English learners comes their linguistic diversity. Students' native language is a fundamental part of who they are as individuals, however their limited knowledge of the language of instruction often poses difficulty in the classroom. Students are not given sufficient time to learn academic English, which requires five to seven years if provided support, although it could take as long as seven to ten years if not supported (Cummins, 1980). Language arts teachers (89.3%) indicated that two years was not long enough to acquire the English language. Their responses may signify a true understanding of the time it takes to acquire a second language.

Mainstream classrooms include students who vary in abilities and learning styles. Students should be given the opportunity to learn alongside their peers. In the current study, 89.6% of the respondents felt that ELL students should attain a minimum level of English proficiency prior to entering the mainstream classroom. This percentage is larger

than the results found in the study conducted by Reeves (2002). Results from her study found that 73.4% felt that there should be a minimum level of English proficiency attained prior to entering the mainstream classroom. While participants in both studies agree that a minimum level of English should be attained prior to entering the mainstream classroom, a class designed just for ELL students is difficult to justify.

Legislation to make English the national language has been a discussion among many for some time (Berube, 2000). There were a large percentage (82.4%) of respondents who would support legislation making English the official language. While interpreting the reasons for supporting such legislation is difficult, it may indicate the assumption that English was already the official language since North Carolina has declared English as the official language. It may also indicate an agreement by many in both studies that English should be the dominant language since it is used in the classroom, as well as in society.

The attitudes toward academic expectations provided indications of what might be occurring in the classroom. Students respond to the expectations of their teachers. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1989) determined that teachers form expectations for their students and then interact with their students based on those attitudes. The students who are responding to high expectations are treated differently from the students responding to low expectations. Students recognize the expectations and then act accordingly. The majority of teachers (78.6%) who responded in this study indicated that ELL students were capable of performing at the same or higher level as that of their mainstream peers. Those who believe that ELL students are not capable of performing at the same or higher level than that of their mainstream peers are more problematic. As indicated previously,

teachers play a role in the success of their students, if teachers do not expect students to achieve, then chances are that they will not.

Academic expectations included teachers who would encourage ELL students to use their native language in their classroom. Respondents (96.5%) overwhelmingly reported they would encourage the use of a student's native language. Research found that allowing students to complete assignments in both their native language and English deepened their understanding of the concepts and also raised scores on curriculum tests (Kenner, 2007).

While teachers may have indicated this belief, research offers a different perspective of what actually transpires in the classroom (Dentler & Hafner, 1997). During the school day, teachers are responsible for the education of a number of students. According to the N.C. Department of Public Instruction (2010), in grades four through nine, the teacher and student ratio include one teacher for 22 students, with up to 29 in a class. In grades ten and up, the teacher and student ratio include one teacher for 27 students, with up to 32 or more in a class (NCDPI). For teachers who teach four class periods per day, they could be responsible for the education of approximately 128 students or more per day. It is difficult to follow through with so many students who have a variety of needs when instructional time is limited; behavior problems demand attention, there is little time to plan and teacher responsibilities continue to increase. In reality, teachers find it difficult to encourage ELL students to use their native language when native-language resources are limited and ELL students are required to demonstrate English proficiency to meet state standards (Thomas & Collier, 1997).

During the school day, teachers stated they provide instruction in such a way as to meet students' individual needs. To access the curriculum, students often require accommodations to learn and demonstrate understanding. In the classroom, there are currently a larger number of students who have specific needs which are met through the help of a specific plan. While there are ELL students who have a 504 plan, a Transitory Impairment plan, or an Individualized Education Program which is a plan, many ELL students have an ELL plan. A plan for ELL students includes instructional and testing modifications and accommodations. These modifications and accommodations occur in the classroom and during testing, with providing additional time to complete assignments and providing assignments at the students' level of understanding to be the most widely used (NCDPI, n.d.).

Respondents in this study overwhelmingly reported they would allow ELL students additional time to complete assignments (96.7%), provide materials in a student's native language (89.6%), and provide assignments at the student's level of understanding (100%). Research suggests that teachers would provide additional time to complete assignments and assignments at the student's level of understanding as these are often used with many students. Those who understand the need for additional time may realize the effort that ELL students put forth to complete assignments. English language learners often times use a translating dictionary as a resource, which requires additional time.

Respondents indicated they would provide assignments at the student's level of understanding. Providing assignments at the student's level is not to be interpreted as "dumbing down the curriculum", but should reflect appropriate instruction. In Reeves

(2002), 60% felt that changes should be made to coursework for ELL students to have access to the general curriculum.

While respondents in the current study believed that ELL students should have access to material in their native language, providing material in the student's native language occurs much less (Cho & Reich, 2008). Many times, there are few resources in languages other than English. When searching for material in second languages, there is usually more available in Spanish than other, less frequently used languages.

The results from the survey items focusing on support showed positive attitudes toward support received at the district level (92.5%), and the school level (92.8%), but indicated they did not receive adequate training (95.4%) to work effectively with ELL student. Respondents (85.3%) did indicate they were interested in receiving training in working with ELL students.

District and school administration support is offered in various ways. Support may be in the form of scheduling time for teachers to complete paperwork or securing funding for professional development opportunities. While respondents indicated they received adequate support from the district level and school administration, of those who responded to the open-ended question, 42% (n = 157) identified teacher support as a challenge. The lack of teacher support is problematic in that research indicates that when teachers feel they are not being supported, their self-efficacy is affected. The support gives them more confidence in what they are doing. According to Karabenick and Noda however, teachers do not receive sufficient support at any level and effective training is always an issue (2004).

Regarding the support teachers actually receive, a contradiction in responses exists as respondents first indicated they felt supported by the administration, however, they also noted support as a challenge, indicating they did not receive sufficient support. When respondents were given a choice of agreeing with a positive statement, they more likely agreed or strongly agreed. One possible explanation is that teachers may have decided that they were supported because they had resources that might not be available to other districts that have smaller populations of ELL students. However, when given an opportunity to write in their answer, their written responses contradicted previous responses possibly revealing further insight to their reality.

Support in the way of training was identified as inadequate. Language arts teachers felt they had not received training necessary to provide effective instruction in the classroom. Of the 75% who indicated the number of hours of training they had participated in, 70% participated in one to ten hours of training, which is more training than reported in the results of a survey conducted in 2002 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

When respondents were clustered by those who had either positive or negative attitudes and looking at the training that affected their teaching, those with positive attitudes found language acquisition and increased communication to be ways in which training affected their teaching. For those who were found to have negative attitudes, support and more confidence were found to affect their teaching. There is not a definite explanation for teacher responses; however, it may be that teachers who are inclined to have positive attitudes are more confident in their abilities and knowledge as a teacher

(Reeves, 2002). It may also be that teachers with negative attitudes have those attitudes because they lack the confidence and the support needed to be effective in the classroom.

While teachers indicated they have not received adequate training to teach ELL students, there is currently not a law in North Carolina requiring teachers to participate in a specific number of hours of training or course credits to teach ELL students as is required in other states. The reason for this is perhaps North Carolina does not have comparable numbers of ELL students even though N.C was found to have the fastest growing ELL population (U. S. Census Bureau, 2001).

Throughout the U.S., current teachers have differing levels of teaching experience. During the 2007-2008 school year, 82% of teachers nationwide participated in the Schools and Staffing Survey (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). From those who participated, the average number of years of experience was 13.5. Similarly, the average number of years of experience for middle school language arts teachers across North Carolina who participated in this study was nine years. The analysis indicated there was no relationship between the number of years taught by middle school language arts teachers and their beliefs about inclusion, academic expectations, instructional strategies used, and the support they received. However, research available indicates that teachers with some experience are more effective than those with none, but more is not always better (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, Rockoff, & Wyckoff, 2007). Teachers tend to show the greatest improvements during their first few years on the job when they become better equipped to perform their responsibilities.

In looking at the difference in attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, and instructional strategies used among those who had taught ELL students and those

who had not, in this sample, 99% of the respondents currently taught or had taught ELL students. As a result, it was impossible to determine a difference due to the group totals. It would seem that perhaps those without firsthand experience would be more positive with higher expectations than those who had dealt with the reality of the classroom or, perhaps those without firsthand experience would see the task as bigger than it was, and have lower expectations as to what could be accomplished. Although the total number of respondents who indicated they had no experience with ELL students did not allow for a meaningful analysis, the large number of those with experience could be a direct result of the districts that were chosen to participate in this study as they were districts with a large ELL student population. It would seem appropriate for districts with a large ELL student population to recruit teachers with ELL experience to avoid spending additional professional development funds and time to train teachers with no ELL experience.

Respondents listed training that affected instruction and training they needed to have to be effective in the classroom to be comprised of cultural understanding, communication and language, as well as instructional strategies. Teachers understand the importance of these topics when teaching ELL students. Cultural understanding is helpful for teachers when responsible for educating a diverse population. Many times, teachers are not aware of cultural differences even though such knowledge would enhance their understanding of family expectations related to education. As part of this, family values often times result in keeping young children at home with extended family members instead of having the children participate in early intervention programs that prepare children for school (Delprit, 1995) This is insightful information considering teachers reported there to be a lack of school readiness.

Data were analyzed by teachers with positive attitudes and those with negative attitudes as a way to further describe the sample. A Pearson chi-square test was calculated, when appropriate. While no significant relationships were found, percentages reveal interesting results. A larger percentage of male respondents had negative attitudes than did female respondents. Pearman, Huang, Barnahart and Mellblom (1992) found similar results when they studied teachers who taught students with disabilities. Results found more males with negative attitudes than females, but males were found to be more confident in their ability to teach students with disabilities. The results of this study, while not specific to ELL students, may provide us with an idea of the attitudes male teachers are perceived to have toward diverse students.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

There are limiting factors with regard to this study. There was no way of verifying the honesty of the participants' responses to the statements on the survey, as the responses to the survey were self-reported. There was the assumption that the participants responded honestly, as the responses were anonymous, however teachers provided responses that were contradictory in nature. When asked to give a response on a Likert scale as to their agreement to support provided at the district and school level, teachers indicated they received adequate support. However, when asked to write in a response as to what they perceived to be the challenges of the inclusion of ELL students, 15.3% (n = 24) stated that support was a challenge. Another limitation was that in three regions, the school districts with the largest ELL population did not grant permission for the study to be conducted in their districts, which required me to contact the next largest

district until permission was granted for middle school language arts teachers to participate.

Delimitations are also noted. Language arts teachers were surveyed, excluding other mainstream teachers. The survey was given to middle school language arts teachers; therefore, language arts teachers in each district were the only source of data. An additional delimitation has to do with the size of the districts. There is a possible threat to external validity. Generalizing results to districts with a smaller number of ELL students is unlikely because the study focuses on districts with a large ELL population.

Recommendations for Future Research

The current study explores the attitudes of language arts teachers, but neglects to mention the role of the ESL teacher and his or her relationship with the mainstream teacher. Mainstream teachers face challenges in providing ELL students with a quality education and often times lack relevant training and skills. There is little known about how ESL teachers are utilized and what support they provide for mainstream teachers. ESL teachers are in a position to be a resource and mainstream teachers could benefit from assistance by those who, in many cases, have been formally trained in language acquisition and language development and have the background relevant to the needs of ELL students. Uncovering their perspective may assist in better meeting the needs of ELL students.

For some English language learners in mainstream classrooms, they suddenly become members of a culture they know nothing about and expectations that conflict with their way of life. The differences in what is deemed appropriate behavior in school and what is appropriate at home can cause children to choose one over the other, which

puts children in a complicated position. Responses in this study identified cultural understanding as training that is important when teaching ELL students. Research would assist in determining teacher's current understanding of differences in cultures and potential ways in which to alter what occurs in the classroom.

Finally, during the data analysis process, it was noted that teacher responses were contradictory. Teachers responded they were supported when responding to a Likert scale item, but when asked to write in their response, they noted support as a challenge. Therefore, using qualitative data gathering methods may provide insight into teacher realities. Observing the interaction between the teacher and the student in the classroom would add a deeper level of understanding. More information can be gleaned from what is actually occurring in the classroom. With this in mind, qualitative research may provide teachers an opportunity to give specific details regarding teacher behavior toward ELL students in mainstream classrooms.

Implications for Practice and Policy

The data in this study contribute to practice by establishing middle school language arts teacher attitudes toward the achievement of ELL students. The results provide insight into teacher attitudes toward inclusion, academic expectations, instructional strategies used, and support received. Because teachers have an incredible responsibility and can affect student's academic success, this study supports the need to include courses in teacher education programs, as well as training designed to address the needs of a diverse student population. Furthermore, research supports the notion that training can increase teacher self-efficacy (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005).

The more teachers know about their students or what to teach, the more confident they are in their ability to teach. The unknown often times causes barriers.

To provide effective instruction in the classroom, teachers need school administrators who support them. As a result of what teachers will need to be successful in the classroom, it is critical for school administrators to understand the needs of the teachers who are responsible for a diverse student population in his or her school building and support them during the day. Studies show that teachers benefit from additional time to collaborate with colleagues and prepare differentiated lessons (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2005). School administrators need leadership skills and an understanding of those in their school building to ensure positive student outcomes.

Teachers in mainstream classrooms are required to produce students who will show proficiency on state assessments. A score on a state standardized test defines student performance in the classroom, without looking at the whole child. Currently, one test score, maybe two if retested, on one day should not determine student performance, especially when students who do not speak the language are required to take a standardized test after only one year of instruction in English, while simultaneously learning content subject material. Research supports the need for students to have a longer period of time to learn the academic language necessary to learn content (Cummins, 1996). Respondents in this study also reported the need for ELL student to have a minimum level of English proficiency prior to entering the mainstream classroom. There is great concern that requiring students who are not yet proficient in a language and then testing them in the second language before they have had an opportunity to learn the language, which consequently could result in detrimental outcomes for students and

schools is not fair to the student or the school. Federal and state policy makers should delve further to gain a clear understanding of student linguistic needs so that federal and state policies will reflect accurate language acquisition expectations based on research and best practice.

The changing student population requires a change in what occurs in the classroom. To address this changing student population, states have determined that teachers need additional training in meeting the needs of this population. While the number of ELL students entering schools throughout North Carolina is still relatively lower than the ELL student population found in other states, respondents in this study identified the need for teachers to participate in training. In North Carolina, teachers are currently required to attain 15 continuing education units (CEUs) within a five-year period to renew their teaching license. It would seem appropriate that those making educational decisions would consider including a course or courses designed to address the needs of ELL students. This is not to increase the number of CEUs required by teachers to renew their certification, but instead become part of the 15 CEUs. Implementing this requirement would ensure that teachers would participate in training focused on the unique needs of ELL students. In addition, this may also persuade teacher education programs to include a course to address the needs of ELL students.

Conclusion

The increase in the number of ELL students in mainstream classrooms requires school districts to meet the needs of a diverse student population. Many ELL students enter the classroom with limited English speaking skills and little knowledge of their new surroundings. Results from this study provide a snapshot of the attitudes of North

Carolina teachers who teach ELL students in their mainstream language arts classes. This study adds to the research by providing data from middle school language arts teachers throughout the state of North Carolina regarding their attitudes, focusing on the inclusion of ELL students, academic expectations, instructional strategies used and support received. Future studies will be able to draw upon the findings to expand the current literature on the achievement of ELL students in mainstream classrooms.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table A1

North Carolina State Board Regions

Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4
Beaufort	Brunswick	Durham City	Bladen
Bertie	Carteret	Edgecombe	Columbus
Camden	Clinton	Franklin	Cumberland
Chowan	Craven	Granville	Harnette
Currituck	Duplin	Halifax	Hoke
Dare	Greene	Johnston	Lee
Gates	Jones	Nash-Rocky Mount	Montgomery
Hertford	Lenoir	Northampton	Moore
Hyde	New Hanover	Roanoke Rapids	Richmond
Martin	Onslow	City	Robeson
Pasquaotank	Pamlico	Vance	Scotland
Perquimans	Pender	Wake	Whiteville City
Pitt	Sampson	Warren	
Tyrrell	Wayne	Weldon City	
Washington		Wilson	
Region 5	**Region 6**	**Region 7**	**Region 8**
Alamance-Burlington	Anson	Alexander	Asheville City
Asheboro City	Cabarrus	Alleghany	Buncombe
Chatham	Charlotte-Mecklenburg	Ashe	Cherokee
Caswell	Cleveland	Avery	Clay
Chapel Hill-Carrboro	Gaston	Burke	Graham
Davidson	Shelby	Caldwell	Haywood
Guilford	Kannapolis	Catawba	Henderson
Lexington City	Kings Mountain	Davie	Jackson
Orange	Lincoln	Elkin	Macon
Person	Stanly-Albemarle	Hickory City	Madison
Randolph	Union	Iredell	McDowell
Rockingham		Mooresville City	Mitchell
Stokes		Mount Airy City	Polk
Thomasville City		Newton-Conover	Rutherford
Winston-Salem/Forsyth		Rowan-Salisbury	Swain
		Surry	Transylvania
		Watauga	Yancey
		Wilkes	
		Yadkin	

Appendix B

Permission for Survey Use

University of Nebraska Lincoln

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education

September 7, 2007

To whom it may concern,

Elizabeth Younce has my permission to use my survey "ESL Student in Mainstream Classes: A Survey of Teachers" for her own research purposes. My work and survey should be cited where appropriate in Ms. Younce's research reports.

I would appreciate a copy of the results of Ms. Younce's research findings.

Best of luck, Elizabeth!

Sincerely,

Jenelle Reeves
Assistant Professor, ESL Education

118 Henzlik Hall / P.O. Box 880355 / Lincoln, NE 68588-0355 / (402) 472-2231 / FAX (402) 472-2837

Appendix C

Survey (Page 1*)*

English Language Learner Students in Mainstream Classrooms

A Survey of Language Arts Teachers

START HERE:

Check the box that best describes your experience. (English language learners are identified by indicating a student's first language is not English on the Home Language Survey that is completed when enrolling all children.)

- ☐ I currently teach ELL students
- ☐ I do not currently teach ELL students, but I have taught them in the past
- ☐ I have never taught ELL students'

If you have never taught ELL students, please skip questions 17-20 in Section A.

Section A

Please read each statement and place a check in the box which best describes your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
1. The inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classes creates a positive educational atmosphere.				
2. The inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classes benefits all students.				
3. I welcome/would welcome the inclusion of ELL students in my mainstream classroom.				
4. I believe that ELL students are capable of performing at the same or higher level than that of their mainstream peers.				
5. The inclusion of ELL students in my classes increases/would increase my workload.				
6. ELL students require/would require more of my time than other students require.				
7. Upon the completion of two years in public schools, all ELL students should be included in North Carolina's accountability model.				
8. ELL students should be able to acquire English within two years of enrolling in U.S. schools.				
9. ELL students should not be included in mainstream classes until they attain a minimum level of English proficiency.				

	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
10. I encourage/would encourage ELL students to use their native language in my class.				
11. I would support legislation making English the official language of the US.				
12. I allow/would allow ELL students more time to complete coursework.				
13. I provide/would provide materials for ELL students in their native languages.				
14. I give/would give ELL students a passing grade if they display effort.				
15. I simplify/would simplify (providing assignments at student's level of understanding) coursework for ELL students.				
16. I modify/would modify (varying the way in which a lesson is presented) assignments for the ELL students enrolled in mainstream classes.				
*****If you have never taught ELL students, please skip questions 17-20.*****				
17. I receive adequate support from *district* administration for ELL students who are enrolled in my classes.				
18. I receive adequate support from *school* administration for ELL students who are enrolled in my classes.				
19. I have received adequate training to work effectively with ELL students.				
20. I am interested in receiving training/more training in working with ELL students.				

*****If you have never taught ELL students, please skip to Section C.***

Section B

21. How many ELL students were enrolled in your classes during the 2008-2009 school year?_____

22. Approximately how many ELL students have enrolled in your classes throughout your teaching career?_____

23. Please list what you consider to be the *greatest benefits* of including ELL students in language arts classes.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

24. Please list what you consider to be the *greatest challenges* of including ELL students in language arts classes.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Section C- All RESPONDENTS please answer

Please answer the following questions. Your answers will assist in the categorization of the responses.

25. How many years have you been a public school teacher (*including this year*)?

_____

26. Please indicate your gender

Male ☐
Female ☐

27. Please indicate your ethnic background.

White (non-Hispanic) ☐
Black (non-Hispanic) ☐
Hispanic/Latino ☐
American Indian ☐
Asian/Pacific Islander ☐
Other *Specify* _____

28. Please indicate the highest educational degree completed.

Bachelors degree ☐
Masters degree ☐
Education Specialist/Six-year degree ☐
Doctoral degree ☐

29. Have you received training in teaching ELLs in the past five years?

Yes ☐ If yes, complete questions 30, 31 and 32.
No ☐ If no, skip to comments.

30. If yes, please indicate the types of training attended. *Check all that apply.*

In-service workshop ☐
College class ☐
Conference ☐
Other
Specify _____

31. If yes, approximately how much time have you spent in training to teach ELL students?

1-10hours ☐
11-20 hours ☐
21-30hours ☐
31 or more ☐

32. If yes, when teaching ELL students, how has the training you received affected your teaching?

_____
_____
_____

33. What training do you feel you need in order to more effectively meet the needs of ELL students in your classroom?

_____
_____
_____

Comments: Please write any additional comments you may have concerning the inclusion of ELL students in mainstream classes.

_____
_____
_____

Thank you for completing this survey
Please submit survey when completed.

Adapted from a survey instrument designed by Janelle Reeves (2002)

Appendix D

Letter of Invitation to Superintendent/Designee

Superintendent/Designee
_____ County Schools
Address
_____, NC
September 29, 2008

Dear _____,

My name is Elizabeth S. Younce and I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Western Carolina University. I am in the process of completing a research study titled "North Carolina Middle School Language Arts Teachers' Attitudes and Perception of the Inclusion of English Language Learners in Mainstream Classrooms." The survey results will assist in providing valuable information for middle school teachers, as well as school districts and teacher education programs.

To conduct this research, I have received approval from the Institutional Review Board at Western Carolina University. I have enclosed copies of these documents of permission for your review. The survey should take participants approximately 15 minutes. Participating school districts, schools and middle school teachers will be kept confidential and a summary of the statistical findings will be included in my dissertation.

I am requesting approval to allow middle school teachers in your district to be contacted electronically and complete an on-line survey. I have enclosed a form which requires your signature for permission and if desired a request for a copy of the summary findings of the study.

Please reply by returning the permission form in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by October 10, 2008. If you have any questions, you may contact me at 828.226.3570, eyounce@jcpsmail.org or Dr. Sandra Tonnsen, 828.227.3324, tonnsen@email.wcu.edu. Thank you again for your assistance. I appreciate you taking time from your busy schedule to help me complete this important research study.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth S. Younce
Ed. D. Candidate

Appendix E

Permission Form

_____ I give permission

_____ I do not give permission

for middle school language arts teachers from _____ County to participate in the survey from Elizabeth S. Younce.

_____ I would like a copy of summary findings from this study,

_____ E-mail _____ Regular mail

_____ I would not like a copy of summary findings from this study.

Signature _____ Date _____
Superintendent/Designee

Appendix F

Pre-notice Letter

School
Address
_____. NC
Date

ID Number: _____

Dear Teacher:

As a middle school language arts teacher, within a few days you will receive an e-mail which will include a web address to complete a brief survey for a research study being conducted in school districts across North Carolina for a doctoral dissertation. The study will focus on the perceptions and attitudes of middle school language arts teachers of the inclusion of English language learners in mainstream classes.

This email is sent to you in advance as to provide you with prior notice and give you an opportunity to choose how to complete the survey. There are two ways in which to complete this survey. There is the option of completing the survey online or a paper copy may be sent. If you would like a paper copy, please respond to this email with the address you would like the survey to be mailed.

Please complete the survey by _____ 2008. As a token of appreciation for completing the survey, all participants will be entered in a drawing to win one of eight Visa gift cards. Each Visa gift card will be valued at $40.00.

Your time and completion of this survey is greatly appreciated as I know time limited and schedules are hectic. I believe the results will benefit our educational efforts in providing our students the education they deserve. If you have any questions, you may contact me at 828.226.3570, eyounce@jcpsmail.org or Dr. Sandra Tonnsen, 828.227.3324, tonnsen@email.wcu.edu. By completing this survey, you have given consent to participate in the survey.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth S. Younce
Ed. D. Candidate

Appendix G

Survey Cover Letter

School
Address
____, NC zip code
Date

ID Number: _____

Dear Teacher,

I invite you to participate in a research study I am conducting as a doctoral student at Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina under the supervision of Dr. Sandra Tonnsen.

This survey is to be completed by middle school language arts teachers who teach language arts in grades six through eight. Those who are not language arts teachers in grades six through eight should not complete the survey. Your total participation time in this activity should be approximately 15 minutes. To avoid ambiguity, there is a list of key terms and definitions included with this cover letter.

Please complete the survey by _____2008. As a token of appreciation for completing the survey, all participants who enter by ____2008 will be entered in a drawing to win one of eight Visa gift cards being given away in each district. Each Visa gift card will be valued at $40.00.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you have the right not to participate or to skip questions without any penalty to you. However, I hope you will participate and respond to all of the questions as your participation will provide valuable information in an effort to understand language arts teachers' attitudes and perceptions regarding the inclusion of English language learners. Your responses are held in strict confidence and survey responses will be reported for the group as a whole and the source of comments on the open-ended items will not be released. Instead of using your name, an identification number will be assigned to allow for anonymity. After completion of the study, the email list will be shredded and all completed surveys will be maintained in a locked drawer at all times and shredded after a period of three years. Respondents may request summary findings via the Internet.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at 828.226.3570, eyounce@jcpsmail.org or Dr. Sandra Tonnsen, 828.227.3324, tonnsen@email.wcu.edu. If you have any concerns or questions about how you are being treated in this study, contact Chair, IRB at 828.227.3177. By completing this survey, you have given your consent to participate in this survey.

The researcher agrees not to disclose specific information about school districts, schools, or teachers. All information disclosed will be reported as statistical data. Please respond to this email if you would rather complete this survey in paper form. I appreciate your willingness to help me with this study.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth S. Younce

Appendix H

Definitions of Key Terms

English Language Learners (ELLs): ELLs are students whose home language is not English and who are in the process of learning English (Yedlin, 2003). In North Carolina, determining if a student is an ELL begins by the answers provided on a Home Language Survey form completed by all parents enrolling their children in school (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2007b).

English as a Second Language Students (ESL): In this study, English as a Second Language is a program for students who are learning English (Rossell, 2005).

Inclusion: In this study, inclusion refers to the integration of ELL students into mainstream classes with no ESL teacher to assist in the classroom. ELL students participate in traditional middle school language arts classes, but may be pulled out for ESL services.

Mainstream: Mainstream classes are core or elective courses taken for credit and are not designed as language service or special needs classes; however, ELL students and students with special needs may enroll in mainstream classes.

Middle School: In this study, a middle school consists of grades six through eight.

Appendix I

Thank You and Reminder

Recently, you received an email with a web address regarding a survey about the attitudes and perceptions of middle school language arts teachers of the inclusion of English language learners in mainstream classes. If you already completed the survey, I sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate. If you have not yet had time, please consider completing the survey today.

I realize this is a busy time of the year, but as language arts teachers your responses are critical to the results of this study. As I mentioned previously, your answers are confidential and will be combined with others before results are reported. In case the previous email with the web address has been deleted from your email account, I am providing the web address for you _____.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me (Elizabeth S. Younce) at 828.226.3570, or by email at eyounce@jcpsmail.org. You may also contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Sandra Tonnsen at 828.227.3324, or by email at tonnsen@email.wcu.edu. If you have concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, you may contact the IRB Chair at 828.227.3177. By completing and returning this survey, you have given consent to participate in the survey.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth S. Younce
Ed. D. Candidate

Appendix J

Postcard Reminder

Dear _____:

Several weeks ago you should have received a survey on English Language Learner Students in Mainstream Classes. The survey was asking for your attitudes and perceptions regarding the inclusion of English language learners. If you have completed the survey, thank you very much! If you have not yet completed the survey, **please** do so as soon as you can. Also, if you could talk with your middle school language arts colleagues and ask them to complete the survey if they have not done so, it would be greatly appreciated.

For your convenience, you may complete the survey online at _____.

Thank you for your help and for your time in completing this survey. If you have any questions about the survey or you need the survey resent to you, please contact E. Younce at 828.226.3570.

Appendix K

Pilot Study Cover Letter

January 5, 2008

Dear Colleague,

I would like to invite you to participate in a pilot study. I am in the process of completing a research study titled "North Carolina Middle School Language Arts Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions of the Inclusion of English Language Learners in Mainstream Classrooms." Attached is a survey which is part of the research study and a list of key terms and definitions. The pilot study is conducted to ensure the quality of the survey constructed for this study. The survey data gathered in this pilot study will not be included in the final analysis of the data. After completing the survey, please answer the feedback questions included.

I believe this study is important and will benefit teachers throughout North Carolina, as well as school districts and teacher education programs. With the increasing number of English language learners enrolling in North Carolina public schools and federal legislation holding schools and teachers accountable for the academic achievement of English language learners, the goal of my study is to understand teacher attitudes and perceptions of the inclusion of English language learners in content area classes.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me (Elizabeth S. Younce) at 828.226.3570, or by email at eyounce@jcpsmail.org. You may also contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Sandra Tonnsen at 828.227.3324, or by email at tonnsen@email.wcu.edu. If you have concerns about your treatment as a participant in the pilot study, you may contact the IRB Chair at 828.227.3177. Thank you again for your assistance. I appreciate your taking time from your busy schedule to help me complete this important research study.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth S. Younce
Ed. D. Candidate

Appendix L

Feedback Questions for Pilot Study

Feedback Questions

Please answer the following questions after completing the survey.

1. Which, if any, items on the survey were unclear to you? *(Please explain.)*

2. Which, if any, items did you find difficult to answer? *(Please explain.)*

3. Approximately how long did it take you to complete the survey?

4. This survey uses a four point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree). While completing this survey, did you feel this scale adequately allowed you to express your opinion? *(If not, please explain.)*

5. In your opinion, which, if any, items on the survey display a bias on the part of the researcher?

6. Please provide any additional comments you would like to make.

Thank you for participating in this pilot study