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STUDENTS IN TRANSITION:
INTRODUCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS FROM ASIA, AFRICA, AND THE MIDDLE EAST TO U.S. HISTORY

A Dissertation Presented

by

Bill Clark

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of

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education
Specializing in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

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Abstract

This two-year action research project discusses the transitions that English Language Learners (ELLs) experience in moving from remedial second language learning to content-area courses. Two cohorts of twenty-seven ELL students from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East—fifteen students in 2015-16 and twelve in 2016-17— participated in a U.S. History course while attending the pseudonymous West Ackerly High School.

Absent a pedagogical bridge connecting ELL instruction with social studies practice, I created a curriculum that emphasized the democratic principles embedded in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution—concepts that general education students have known almost from birth—as an entry point for ELL students who lacked any knowledge about these documents. I followed this introduction with thematic choices about immigration, imperialism, Westward Expansion, the Civil War, Reconstruction, civil rights, and current events. We examined the social construct of race, and how it weaves through American society.

My combined roles of practitioner and researcher created a unique awareness of the principles of second language instruction, especially best practices and co-teaching strategies that merged language learning and content instruction. I then evaluated students' critical thinking and teachers' methods of working with ELL students, experienced the value associated with co-teaching, and developed practical techniques to bring content knowledge into the ELL curriculum as a way to aid students in their transitions.

In two journal articles (Chapters Three and Four), I combine "scholarship and story," reminiscent of Ladson-Billings' *The Dreamkeepers* (2009), in a personal scholarly narrative about co-teaching U.S. History. Both Ladson-Billings' narrative and the stories about the West Ackerly immigrant students describe the struggle that children of color experience. My reflections about co-teaching revealed innovative ideas that emerged from our *practice*, helped us better understand the backgrounds of our students, explored best practices for ELL instruction, and showed how an adapted mainstream U.S. History curriculum could work for second language learners.

The second article describes Socratic Seminar techniques that contribute to students' learning and discourse development, with scaffolded instruction that incorporates the application of Common Core principles based on the work of Zwiers, O'Hara, and Pritchard (2014). I describe a thematic approach to U.S. History instruction that avoids "covering" all the material while highlighting what students need to know in order to function in American society.

Hopefully, this work will bring greater awareness of the struggles experienced by ELL students in their academic and cultural transitions. In the end, I hope secondary teachers and administrators will understand that ELL students require extensive skill development around reading, writing, and research in order to transition into—and then successfully navigate—content-area classes.

Dedication

In the past ten years, hundreds of second language learners passed through my classrooms expecting to learn—and taught me so much more. Nameless in this narrative, they live in my heart and in our ongoing correspondence as they continue with their college and work lives. Their e-mail messages continue to inspire me long after they have left my classroom. They have become young men and women of honor, dignity, and incredible self-worth. It has been my privilege to join them on their journey toward language freedom. I dedicate this writing to them.

Acknowledgments

Many individuals have woven their stories into this narrative with conviction, consistency, and love over a period of thirty-five years: Anita Silvey patiently gave a young writer a chance and support at an early stage of my career. An editor, publisher, lover of reading, and mentor to many writers, she continues to write books that both delight and inform. More recently, authors, teachers, and friends Bob Walsh and Bill Lipke patiently read early drafts and provided much needed encouragement. Their teaching continues, long after their respective retirements. In numerous meetings over coffee and bagels on Sunday mornings, Bob dissected my work and remained a constant factor in channeling my energies to this project. His questions and (sometimes irascible) comments stayed with me long after our time together.

My colleagues—Marc, Brent, John, Becky, Chris, and Christina—asked questions, offered encouragement, read early drafts, and helped me mature as a teacher. My co-teacher, Mr. Casino, remained constant in his support and willingness to add to this narrative. Cynthia Reyes introduced me to my first class of English Language Learners, led my first project about discourse and digital story, helped me begin this research long before I thought to enter a doctoral program, and continues her mentorship today.

KG—an anonymous second language learner—became the inspiration for this work. Her story concludes Chapter One and resonates in my daily teaching and research. Like many of the hundreds of second language learners who entered my classrooms, she

personified the grit and determination needed to pursue an education. Once a scared student shaking in front of a podium, she transformed herself into a mature, sophisticated, and capable public speaker. Hers is the example that I give to my students every day of how an English Language Learner can succeed.

Along the way, I benefited from numerous relationships with faculty and staff at the University of Vermont. I selected my committee for the expertise they have shared with me over the years and the academic inspiration they have provided in their classes and our discussions.

Table of Contents

Dedication ii
Acknowledgments iii
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study 1
Transitions for English Language Learners 1
Instruction for the Second Language Learner 8
Paths of Transition: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture in ELL Education 10
An ELL Teacher's Perspective 14
Study Overview 15
Commitment Over Time: Watching Change Through Action Research 16
Examining Colonial Attitudes Through Action Research 18
Action Research Perspective 29
Policy Overview Around Second Language Instruction 31
Meeting the Challenges of Transition 33
Chapter 2: Literature Review 36
Knowledge 36
Key Sources 36
Action Research 37
Pedagogy 43
Educating ELL Students 46
Social Studies References 53
Literature Leads to Essential Question 61
Chapter 3: Methodology: Action Research 63
Why Action Research? 63
Research Overview 64
Instructional Overview 66
Participant Selection and Description 67
Student Demographics 68
Essential Questions 70
ELL Learning in a Content-Area Class 74

Teaching for Social Justice 77
Research Design 83
Data Collection 84
Data Analysis 88
Research Focus and Methods 96
Article 1: English Language Learners in Transition 98
Introducing Room 202 100
Profile of West Ackerly, Vermont 101
Background: Educating English Language Learners 102
ELL Students in Vermont 103
What About Teachers? 106
What About Students? 106
Connecting Cultures: Story and History 108
Student Profiles 109
Committed But Struggling: Josephine 109
Leaving the Violence in Iraq: Uthman 111
A Listening Challenge: Bhajan 112
Building Relationships: Pierre 114
Ongoing Effort: Subhas 115
The Struggling Reader: Fibril 116
Legal Requirements and Precedents 116
The Immigration Debate 120
Domains: Structured Language Learning 123
Creating Scaffolds to Support Second Language Learners 132
Power of Story: The Socratic Seminar 133
Teacher Role: Socratic Seminar 142
Big Picture 143
Article 2: Co-Teaching English Language Learners 148
Our Experience 153
An Equal Partnership 155
Cooperative Teaching and Learning 157

Selected Student Stories 162
Skillsets, Expectations, and Proficiencies 170
The Future of Multicultural Education 180
Recollections: Challenges of Co-Teaching 183
Future Direction for Co-Teaching 187
Chapter 5: Concluding Thoughts 192
Limitations and Delimitations 192
Focus on Transition and Learning 201
Epilogue: A Forward-Looking Reflection 201
Expanded Course Offerings 203
Lessons Learned from Teaching U.S. History to ELL Students 207
Present (and Future) Practice 209
References 212
Appendix A: Graduate Expectations 229
Appendix B: BICS & CALP 230
Appendix C: WIDA Scores, 2015-16 U.S. History Cohort 231
Appendix D: Can Do Descriptors 232
Appendix E: Reading & Math Scores, Basic Level and Above 234
Appendix F: Syllabus 2015-16 & 2016-17 236
Appendix G: Rubrics 239
Appendix H: Letters About Refugees 240
Appendix I: Conversation Skills Poster & Response Starters 242
Appendix J: Graduate Expectations: Planning Document West Ackerly Middle and High School (2013-14 edition) 244
Appendix K: Published Graduate Expectations (GX) & Proficiencies (GP) 246
Appendix L: Co-Teaching Checklist 247
Appendix M: Do Now 248
Appendix N: Comparison and Evaluation of Literature Relating to Students in Transition 251

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

> No man steps in the same river twice for it is not the same river, and he is not the same man.
>
> —attributed to Heraclitus (6th century BCE)

Josephine's family emigrated from the Congo to the Dominican Republic, where she was born. She acquired French and Spanish along the way, and arrived in Vermont in 2014. As the oldest of five children, she expected to quickly finish high school and attend college. Her face shows the signs of maxillofacial surgery, which impedes her ability to speak clearly. Her tears and anguish greeted the school's decision to postpone her graduation until she could demonstrate proficient listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. In spite of her obvious intelligence, resilience, and drive, she found herself—like so many second language learners—"in transition," waiting to improve, in order to move forward with her education.

As her teacher, I saw her anguish first-hand. In a microcosm of the second language teaching model, she demonstrated a combination of frustration, despair, disappointment, and anger mixed with an incredible determination to succeed, all factors in the progression that accompanies immigrant students as they transition to life in the United States and leave behind their former lives.

Transitions for English Language Learners

Defining students in both political and academic terms, school districts and governmental agencies designate English Language Learners (ELLs) as students "… unable

to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds, and who typically require specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and their academic courses " (Glossary of Education Reform). In reality, English learners likely bring a wealth of diversity as well as "an incredible sense of self-reliance, survival skills, a strong work ethic, and a strong sense of community" (Fenner, 2014, p. 15). Much of the English learner's success, however, depends on educators offering these students: "an equitable education based on a culturally and linguistically appropriate framework with high but attainable expectations and collaboration among various stakeholders" (p. 14). The depth of their life experiences means that English learners "come to school in possession of funds of knowledge" (p. 15), perhaps in the form of life lessons outside the purview of academic instruction. While possibly deficit in knowledge of English, they possess a richness of skills and abilities, which perceptive teachers can tap to assist them in their schooling.

Research about English Language Learners suggests that they transition into general education[1] classes with difficulty (Bean & Harper, 2010; Cummins, J., 2009; Duran, 2008; Gunderson, 2008; Morrow & Dougherty, 2010; Portes & Salas, 2009; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999). Unfortunately, the structure of a typical school might create a divide among educators. Fenner (2014) links general education teachers with those involved in content-area instruction, and highlights differences between the instruction that English learners receive: "Many ESL [English as Second Language] teachers express that they feel

[1] This document uses the term "general education" to indicate classes attended by students who speak English as their primary language. As "non-native speakers," English Language Learners attend classes designed to improve their English fluency and literacy skills as well as general education classes.

that content area or general education teachers see ELs [English learners] as the 'ESL teachers' kids'" (p. 29). In reality,

> All educators must first share a sense of responsibility for providing an equitable education for ELs so that they will be willing to change the ways in which they work with ELs to recognize ELs' unique strengths as well as address ELs' specific linguistic and cultural needs through instruction" (p. 27).

Some distinction exists between students raised speaking English as a primary language (L1) and those who learn English as a second language (L2). ELL students face a conundrum because of their arrival time in the U.S. On one hand, Morrow and Dougherty (2010) stress the need for early development of literacy skills, which includes attendance at "a quality preschool with a language and literacy focus" (p. 42) in order to achieve grade-level capability by the end of third grade. Bleakley and Chin (2010) discuss the critical period for second language acquisition as existing around age nine, with the result that "…immigrants who arrive before age nine are uniformly fluent in English while those arriving later tend to have worse proficiency" (p. 2). The concept of a critical period for language learning means that, when ELL students arrive later in life—age-appropriate for middle or high school classes—they fall behind their peers in language and literacy abilities. As a result, these students have needs for both remedial instruction and adjustment to a new environment.

Any transition consists of certain defined steps that involve letting go of an old situation, confronting the confusing time of living in between the old and new experiences, and then beginning the new experience. As part of one's personal development, transition is

"the natural process of disorientation and reorientation marking the turning points in the path of growth" (Bridges, 2004, pp. 4-5). This psychological adaptation to new experiences requires "inner reorientation and self-definition" (p. xii). Having left one country and its familiar patterns, the immigrant abruptly enters into a new world, moving from "*how-the-way-things-had-been*" and giving birth to a new "*way-things-are-going-to-be*" (Bridges, 2004, xiii-xiv). While the term "transition" can apply to many personal situations—death of a loved one, changing jobs, marriage and divorce, a physical move to a different part of the country, aging—this writing focuses on the act of leaving one's homeland, where the attendant difficulties of poverty, trauma, and forced resettlement have affected a family's development, and demands starting life over again in a new country[2].

The transitional principles associated with an immigrant's experience carry with them a sense of leaving a known culture (and possibly never being able to return for the refugee), learning a new language and customs, and entering into an educational world with different parameters and expectations. The circumstances of an immigrant's transition demand significant adaptation and restructuring of beliefs.

An immigrant or refugee[3], brought up and defined by cultural values and experiences imparted by parents and family members, and speaking a language other than

---

[2] The distinction between an immigrant and a refugee depends on choice and circumstances. According to Martinez and Marquez (2014), an immigrant chooses to resettle in another country; a refugee has been forced to leave his or her home country because of the fear of serious harm. In particular, U.S. law provides for a hearing to determine a child's immigration status and validity of an asylum [protection by the government] claim.

[3] The United Nations web site defines a refugee as "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries." Refugee law originates with the 1951 Geneva Convention (UNHCR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017).

English, maintains strong connections to a home culture. Only by immersing themselves in a new culture—through sports, food, school, and social media—can immigrants begin to see value in transition. Although the pull of a home culture remains strong because of memories and family influence, the student must adapt to (and learn) academic content that differs from her past experiences and family beliefs. This achievement gap might "point to a deficit paradigm in which ELs are viewed primarily for their insufficient level of English proficiency and lack of familiarity with U.S. culture" (Fenner, 2014, p. 13). In reality, the second language learner requires new learning because she lacks prior knowledge of most elements of U.S. pedagogy, beginning with the language and continuing to the content knowledge required for American history, language arts, science, and math. Educators should know that "ELs bring often-untapped strengths and have much to offer the educational system in the United States" (p. 14).

The English Language Learner perspective. Although specifics might vary, the story of Josephine that begins this chapter resembles that of many English learners. The students I teach at West Ackerly Middle High School[4] come from various parts of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. They represent minority populations within the 4.6 million English Language Learners enrolled in U.S. public schools (Musu-Gillette, Robinson, McFarland, Kewal Ramani, Zhang, & Wilkinson-Flicker, 2016, p. iii). The small immigrant population in Vermont public schools—English Language Learners totaled 1,442 students in 2014 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016)—seems less significant when compared to states with more than 100,000 ELL students enrolled: California, Florida,

[4] Although the school, the students, and the teachers portrayed in this study are real, the names are not. Pseudonyms aim to protect the anonymity of everyone involved in this study.

Texas, New York, Illinois, Colorado, Washington, and North Carolina. These eight states contain "more than two-thirds of the nation's ELL student enrollment in public schools" (Ruiz Soto, Hooker, & Batalova, 2015, p. 1).

Some Vermont neighborhoods in Burlington, Rutland, and Barre participate in nationally organized refugee resettlement programs, incorporating cohorts of immigrants into their regular educational structure. The website for the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI, 2017) states their intention to "open doors for uprooted people, helping the world's most vulnerable rebuild their lives." This collection of state agencies "breaks through social, cultural, and economic barriers so previously interrupted lives can flourish" with the intention of helping immigrants navigate "American culture, laying solid foundations for a fresh start, and making essential community connections to successfully integrate into our community" (USCRI, 2017). Whether designed for hundreds of thousands or several hundred immigrants, these programs thoroughly support the transition of immigrant families.

The immigrant student profile varies by state. In *The Condition of Education*, the U.S. Department of Education (2017) reports that over 3.7 million ELL students speak Spanish/Castilian as their home language. Other commonly reported home languages include Arabic (109,165), Chinese (104,279), Vietnamese (85,289), English (83,230), Hmong (37,412), and Somali (33,712). Nationwide, the report shows that the number of ELLs who reported a home language of Karen (spoken by immigrants from Burma/Myanmar and Thailand) or Nepali more than quadrupled between 2008–09 and 2014–15, from 3,000 to 12,600 students for Karen languages and from 3,200 to 14,400

students for Nepali (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, "English Language Learners in Public Schools, 2017).

Although Spanish-speaking migrant workers pass through Vermont, most immigrants in the state speak an African dialect, Nepali, Karen/Burmese/Thai, or Arabic. Vermont ELLs represent 1.7 percent of the school-age population, joining twelve other states with less than three percent of ELL students. Only West Virginia (at one percent) contains a smaller percentage of ELLs than Vermont (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, "English Language Learners in Public Schools, 2017). At West Ackerly (and in similar Vermont refugee resettlement communities), language learners constitute approximately forty percent of the district population, with the expectation that the number of second language students will continue to grow.

Projections of the changing demographics of the United States anticipate an 85 percent growth of the foreign-born population (versus a 22 percent growth of the native population), outpacing the native born rate, which will represent 19 percent of the U.S. population by 2060 (Colby and Ortman, p. 2)[5]. Clearly, teachers must find a way to adjust to the presence of second language learners, and help them transition to content area classrooms.

[5] The native population is expected to reach 339 million by 2060. The foreign-born population is projected to grow from 42 million to 78 million (Colby and Ortman, p. 2).

Instruction for the Second Language Learner

ELL students generally receive some form of scaffolded instruction and assessment. Vermont educators follow the WIDA[6] Consortium standards and conduct yearly ACCESS[7] assessments to set baseline skill levels and evaluate progress in the four domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The WIDA Consortium "advances academic language development and academic achievement for children and youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse through high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional learning for educators" (WIDA Consortium, "Mission & the WIDA Story," 2014).

Table 1 shows the generally accepted distinctions for developing second language learners. *Newcomers* (Level 1) are recent arrivals with limited English fluency, who receive remedial instruction in the four domains; *Beginners* (Level 2) practice their developing literacy skills aided by basic scaffolded support; *Intermediate* students (Level 3 and Level 4) have acquired literacy skills but require instruction within a scaffolded environment. Students who demonstrate proficient literacy skills may remain in higher-level ELL classes, "test out" of second language remedial programs, or transition to general education classes (Level 5 and Level 6). Based on a combined objective and subjective assessment of the

[6] Formerly an acronym meaning the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment. This non-profit group affiliated with the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin provides second language learner standards and assessments for 39 state education agencies, including Vermont. In 2014, the organization opted to retain its familiar letter designation but no longer use the acronym definition.

[7] "ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is a secure large-scale English language proficiency assessment administered to Kindergarten through 12th grade students who have been identified as English language learners (ELLs). Given annually in WIDA Consortium member states to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English. ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is only available to Consortium member states" (WIDA Consortium, "ACCESS FOR ELLs 2.0 Summative Assessment," 2014).

student's proficiency, ELL specialists may recommend an ongoing ELL placement or opt to informally monitor students who no longer require regular language skill assessments.

Table 1.

Assessed Learning Levels Used at West Ackerly for English Language Learners

Proficiency Level	Title	Description
1	Entering	Newcomer, recent arrival; limited English speaking and writing skills.
2	Emerging	Uses some academic vocabulary; writing exists, with errors.
3	Developing	Understands spoken and written forms; developing vocabulary; some grammatical errors; can construct meaning from text.
4	Expanding	Communicates well but challenges exist with complex academic language and concepts; reads independently with some comprehension.
5	Bridging	Fluent expression on academic and social topics; vocabulary approaches grade level; shows structured writing, and complexity.
6	Exiting	Tests out of second language assessment; monitored.

Note: The boxed area indicates intermediate level designation used by West Ackerly instructors.
Adapted from WIDA *2012 Amplification of the English Language Development Standards, Kindergarten-Grade 12* and *TESOL Pre-K–12 English Language Proficiency Standards Framework.*

Although each of the groups in Table 1 includes students in transition, this research focuses on intermediate students (those with test results that place them in Level 3 Developing and Level 4 Expanding categories) who have completed introductory work and begun to take general education classes. In their subsequent education, these intermediate students confront content area classes, including U.S. History.

Paths of Transition: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture in ELL Education

While making use of their reading and writing skills that result from prior learning, students must also weave through ingrained *racial*, *ethnic*, and *cultural* factors, all of which influence their new learning. Tyrone Howard (2010) defines *race* as "a social construct based primarily on phenotype," *ethnicity* as the ties to "a group's ancestral homeland or place of origin," and *culture* as a powerful force that "shapes learning in unique and meaningful ways" (p. 53), through its relationship to "learned norms, values, beliefs, behaviors, and ways of knowing" that individuals apply to their social world (p. 52). Specifically, cultural factors may require adjustments from students in order to make entrance into a new environment possible. The following examples from Rodriguez (1982), Gibson (1988), and Tyrone Howard (2010) illustrate portions of the roles that cultural differences play in students' education.

In *Hunger of Memory*, Rodriguez (1982) speaks of an "adjustment to the classroom" and how the child's emotions swing between obedience to the academic world and the need to continue as part of the family's culture. In many ways, academic success leads the child away from the family's cultural influences (pp. 50-51). Yet, no single path from past immigrant generations merges with the schooling that second language learners must accomplish to replace aspects of their cultures with academic work that demonstrates some level of English proficiency. Patterns vary as immigrant cultures adjust to their new lives in America.

Another group in transition, Sikh immigrants from the Punjab (an area spanning eastern Pakistan and northern India), settled in California. Gibson (1988) writes of the

performance of these immigrant children in *Accommodation Without Assimilation*, and how "the family and community forces" influence student performance (p. 5). "Sikh parents encourage their children to become skilled in the ways of the dominant group… they counsel their young to resist complete assimilation and to maintain strong roots within the Sikh community" (p. 24). As a group, Sikh immigrants tend to retain their separate identity, although they are "proud to become Americans" (p. 24). This group tends to adopt elements of American culture while maintaining their own: "In the process of acculturation their Punjabi culture is itself transformed" (p. 25).

The ingrained attitudes of Punjabi immigrants allow them to view formal education as "the single most important key to future job opportunities in America" where "Punjabi parents provide strong support for education, although they themselves have little contact with school officials and rarely become involved in school affairs" (Gibson, 1988, p. 28). This transition seems to work for Punjabi youth "in spite of sharing group characteristics … correlated with school failure—parents with low-income, low-status jobs, little formal education, little or no proficiency in English, and a culture tradition regarded as 'backward' and un-American …" (pp. 28-29). Transition for Punjabi children allows them to maintain strong cultural ties, overcome social deficiencies associated with poverty and lack of English proficiency, and successfully join American cultural groups, especially in the work environment.

Finally, in *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*, Tyrone Howard (2010) discusses how some African American students "suppress their racial identity or surrender their own cultural knowledge in order to achieve high academic success in school" and

many students from “culturally diverse groups” strive to “learn the codes of power or intentionally underachieve” in order to reach a state of “cultural integrity” (p. 55). Fitting in culturally carries greater importance than striving for academic recognition.

These patterns—whether formally recognized or simply part of the assimilation process—enter into the student’s learning equation, and tend to dictate progress across cultures and throughout the educational system. Some students are more successful than others but all must understand at a deep level how to transition between their known culture and into a new one with American values and assumptions.

No matter where their cultural roots originate, in order to graduate from high school, and either pursue post-secondary education or join the job market, immigrant students must demonstrate proficiency in content areas of math, science, social studies, and grade-level English classes. A cachet of success surrounds the high school diploma, principally because it opens the world of personal and academic development. In my experience, immigrant parents often put inordinate pressure on their children to achieve high grades and on teachers to award such grades. In several parent conferences, I have had to caution parents and students that successful schooling takes time, that academic English in particular requires years of practice before an ELL student can enter an “all-English classroom” (Coleman & Goldenberg, 2012, p. 64).

Yet, immigrant children remain in an interstitial world, “where the strange is becoming familiar and the familiar strange” (Patel, 2014, p. xviii). Their lives involve “a longing for home and a penchant for appropriating the music, patterns, and habits of this

new place … that they now inhabit," based on a memory of what no longer exists (Patel, 2014, p. xviii).

Within their schools and communities, students in transition find unity in their common adjustment, no matter their country of origin. As part of a cohort of second language learners, Patel (2014) alludes to the experience of "a complicated set of relationships between oft-invoked discourses about multiculturalism, diversity, and the lived realities of racism and discrimination" (p. 4). Further, Patel (2014) admits that the educational opportunities that await immigrant children also intersect with "many societal factors," including "gender, age, life-stage expectations, work responsibilities, documentation status, and racialization" (pp. 8-9). In reality, these "social conditions shape the opportunities and restrictions that amount to advancement and stasis in society" (Patel, p. 17). These educational and social settings influence the lives and decisions that students in transition make, ultimately affecting their awareness of the world, themselves, and their futures.

In this world, students in transition receive yearly assessments to measure their progress towards cultural and academic expectations. On a less structured level, they change internally in order to assimilate into a new culture while leaving the old one behind. Rodriquez (1982) summarizes the dichotomy of these choices in his experience: "I was not proud of my mother and father. I was embarrassed by their lack of education… I took for granted their enormous native intelligence. Simply, what mattered to me was that they were not like my teachers" (p. 55). In this thinking, the student in transition tries to walk a line between the familiar and the new, her culture and what she sees around her in an American

school, culture, and friends. She must accommodate her new culture, "become skilled in the ways of the dominant group" (Gibson, 1988, p. 24) while following a strategy of *acculturation*—a process involving cultural interaction, with subsequent change and adaptation—without *assimilation*—losing identification with her primary cultural group (p. 24). The path of transition on which the ELL student walks contains multiple choices, some of which may feel more comfortable than others. Yet these choices themselves make up the transition to a new life and new learning.

An ELL Teacher's Perspective

As I write this chapter in my ninth year teaching ELL students, I remain amazed by my students' dedication to learning and determination to succeed, all in the face of obstacles that likely would hamper more traditional students.

Do we need better understanding of the transitions that ELL students experience as they move from scaffolded second language instruction to traditional content-area lessons and post-secondary opportunities? I see three specific challenges emerging in ELL-oriented pedagogy: (1) ELL students find themselves in content-area classes for which they have limited prior knowledge (such as U.S. History); (2) teachers need greater awareness of their second language students' cultural background and greater understanding of students' struggles as they transition to content-area classes; and (3) ELL students require extensive skill development in reading, writing, and research in order to successfully navigate content-area classes.

Unfortunately, no simple pedagogical bridge connects ELL instruction with social studies (or other) content-area practices. When they enter a secondary-level social studies class for the first time, ELL students experience what native English speakers have known almost from birth: Exposure to democratic government principles; historical narratives, personalities, and events; and a republican form of government ensconced in the framework of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Study Overview

This study highlights the challenges faced by ELL students and teachers in a West Ackerly classroom focused on U.S. History instruction. The curriculum developed during this study attempted to build skills and assist students and teachers in understanding the needs and practice of content area instruction. We pieced together accepted ELL strategies, provided basic understanding of the origins of the United States, and helped students develop critical thinking abilities by emphasizing writing and reading instruction. In effect, students had to demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing in order to successfully complete the class. Teachers first adapted the curriculum thematically and then aligned those new ideas with students' prior knowledge—including cultural experiences.

In bringing together multiple elements surrounding ELL education, this dissertation explores how scaffolded instruction can assist students in their transition from ELL-only classes to a content-based U.S. History class. Through the twin lenses of auto ethnography and action research, it examines changing educational practices and the co-teaching dynamic, while evaluating the needs of multicultural students in content-area classes. It considers the development necessary to enhance listening, speaking, reading, and writing

skills as ELL students[8] develop their academic and social lives. Finally, this research suggests methods and measures to better serve the multicultural students in our high schools.

Ultimately, a child's ability to transition into mainstream classes and the teacher's ability to prepare for that transition create a dynamic that promotes growth mindset. Dweck (2007) describes a pattern of resilience, hard work, determination, and direction, illustrated by students' passion and perseverance, which makes high achievers special. "This growth mindset is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts" (p. 7).

Commitment Over Time: Watching Change Through Action Research

Action research allowed me to watch students achieve dreams, experience adversity, succeed, and fail. Most ELL students displayed great persistence on a daily basis. They discussed their losses in leaving their countries and emigrating to the United States. Yet, their words also demonstrated a work ethic based on diligence and strength with the goal of making dreams a reality. Lincoln (2001) cites the commitment necessary to conduct action research, and how researchers should "believe in the possibility of effecting change in a

[8] This summary of terms explains some of the references to students learning English. (1) Lessow-Hurley (2003) defines a student in the process of learning another language in addition to a primary language as a "**second language learner**." (2) The school district where this study takes place uses the term **English Language Learner** (ELL) to differentiate a type of instruction, the students who receive that instruction, and the teachers who administer it. Some practitioners shorten the term to EL, or **English Learners**. (3) At the state level, teachers receive an endorsement allowing them to teach **English as a Second Language** (ESL). (4) Federal and state administrators describe second language learners as **limited English proficiency** (LEP) in their reports. To minimize the negativity associated with LEP, some practitioners refer to **Language Enriched Pupils**. (5) The term AAVE or **African American Vernacular English** describes a dialect—sometimes shared by ELL students as they learn English—defined as "the everyday speech of millions of people in largely segregated African American districts" (Pullum, 1999). Jones (2014) confirms this dialect of English and adds that, although AAVE "suffers extreme stigma due to the history of race in America… [it] has a systematic, coherent, rule-bound grammar." For simplicity and out of long-standing personal practice, this document uses **English Language Learner** (ELL) or **second language learner**, unless another term more appropriately describes the situation, issue, or condition.

positive and more democratic direction" (p. 130). Because I observed students while working closely with them in the classroom, I could remain committed over an extended period of time. I saw change in them and in my teaching practice. I could apply that learning on a daily basis in my classroom, which I came to realize as an unexpected benefit of action research. My research proved to me that "Long-term, enduring relationships in the field characterize many action research and PAR [participatory action research] projects" (p. 130). In some ways, I remain committed to these students long after I completed the data collection. I am fortunate to have worked so closely with these students over such an extended period of time, and gotten to know them so well through the research.

Most important, the observation and analysis associated with action research brought together the components of second language instruction within the content area of U.S. History. This study involved reflections "… based on something empirical—our own knowledge foundation—our personal experiences, understandings, and ways of being. They are matters which are there in our psyche" (McIntosh 2010, p. ix). Much examination of second language learners occurs at the macro level: Collecting information from large datasets. In comparison, this study focuses at the micro level: The student who struggles to participate in a classroom discussion, finds it difficult to understand a textbook chapter, or flounders when asked to write a research paper. Action research provided insights about both macro (research data obtained through journals and books) and micro (the classroom experience) perspectives as I examined second language instruction through a teacher-researcher's point of view.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle's *Inquiry as Stance* (2009) describes practitioner-conducted research as "part of larger social movements for school reform, societal change, and social justice" (p. 89). They explain that "children and teachers are shapers of meaning and interpreters of experience" (p. xii) and they discuss an "equity agenda that improves the learning experiences and outcomes of those traditionally least likely to have quality learning opportunities and most marginalized by the system" (p. 52). In many ways, ELL students find it difficult to speak for themselves. Hopefully, this project gives voice to their concerns about learning a second language and adjusting to life in a new and different cultural milieu.

Examining Colonial Attitudes Through Action Research

Language and cultural differences can impede effective instruction, and may prevent researchers from adequately assessing instruction and learning. Patel (2014) describes the ideal for education research as "… the study, theorizing, and praxis of learning…" with an inherent integrity. Instead, educational research has "… shown the most discipline-specific manifestations of settler colonialism" (p. 372). Patel (2014) argues that

> … the current context of growing numbers of immigrants from non-English-speaking homes has led to a plethora of educational research studies investigating how to make these populations fluent in standard academic English as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Such studies and policies work from a tacit premise of meritocracy… Although fundamentally flawed … this predominant focus on the transmittal of standard academic English

> also echoes the genealogy of settler colonialism through a contemporary coloniality that seeks to erase in order to replace, but with a replacement that cannot provide access to higher status... (p. 366).

Highlighting this subtle colonial mindset in contemporary educational policies reminds us of the inherent vitality and uniqueness that second language learners possess. Both myself and other teachers may need reminders of the versatility and perspective that second language learners bring to the classroom. These learners compensate for a lack of English literacy practice or language skills with intelligence, perseverance, and inquisitiveness. They simply seek equity in education, with appropriate scaffolds to help them achieve a successful conclusion to their academic lives.

As a teacher-researcher placed within a U.S. History classroom charged with teaching two separate cohorts over a two-year period, I tried to understand the larger picture behind ELL and content-area instruction. Late in the process, my research led to Phillipson's (2009) definition of linguistic imperialism as "… a feature of the way nation-states privileged one language, and often sought actively to eradicate others, forcing their speakers to shift to the dominant language" demonstrating how "…language dominance dovetails with economic, political and other types of dominance…" (p. 2). Through their intrinsic intelligence, language learners develop competence with linguistic skills and ignore the system of inequality and exploitation.

Through the two-way mirror of researcher-teacher, I realized that my lessons around Western Expansion and imperialism neglected the imperialism of language domination in my own teaching. While I accept the impossibility of teaching all my students in their native

language, I also must perceive how language learners struggle to understand a culture and history so different from their own. My experience as a researcher and teacher resulted in greater awareness of second language learners' needs and perspectives.

Phillipson (2009) mentions that a subconscious reciprocity challenges the language differences between the native speaker and the Other: "These terms themselves—native/non-native—are offensive and hierarchical in that they take the native as the norm, and define the Other negatively in relation to this norm. Thus are hierarchies internalized subconsciously and serve hegemonic purposes" (p. 40). Investing one language with power over another creates a not-so-subtle expectation for ELL students. Several of my students keep silent because they think their English is poor. Yet, in conversations with their cultural peers, they become animated and loquacious. Their language of choice, their primary language (L1), brings them comfort while their second language (L2) introduces uncertainties, highlights their inexperience, and results in discomfort and insecurity, especially when talking with native English speakers. I might have missed this subtle difference if I had not spent so much time observing as well as teaching—fulfilling the commitment necessary for action research—in an ELL-oriented classroom.

Action research gave me a way to evaluate my own teaching methods and practices. In effect, the research structure deepened my understanding of my teaching and my students. I realized that not every second language learner can (or should) convert to American culture, even though the educational system seems to expect it. At the same time, I became aware of the difficulties facing second language learners and their teachers. Understanding the stories of their overseas lives and the difficulty of their transition to the U.S. has changed

my perceptions about teaching. Some students through grit and perseverance rise above the difficulties; others resist the struggle and remain encapsulated in their culture, unable to make the transition to a life of academic English learning. In effect, both options result from the student's transition and attitudes. While avoiding judgment, I can only encourage every student to pursue their goals, whether they involve an academic education or simply a full and functioning place in society. Most important, I discovered that not all my solutions for second language instruction worked; not all students achieved proficiency in my classroom. I could only attempt to create an environment where learning could take place.

Evaluating student progress. Traditionally, developmental work for the ELL student begins in the newcomer and beginner classes where they acquire literacy and numeracy skills. Eventually, they leave the structured environment of supported classes and join general classes in the educational mainstream. Initially, however, students "in transition" require support and encouragement in order to build competence, awareness, and proficiency in content areas. Their transitions to English fluency often involve struggles with basic academic skills, such as reading academic texts, understanding lectures, conducting research, and writing papers. While troubling to someone observing their difficulties, this conflict hinges on their need to understand complex material in a different language. Acquisition of language skills tends to simplify their understanding of content.

Fenner (2010) discusses the "deficit paradigm in which ELs are viewed primarily for their insufficient level of proficiency and lack of familiarity with U.S. culture," in finding reasons for the achievement gap between ELL students and native or more proficient speakers of English (p. 13). In reality, "culturally and linguistically diverse families …

possess a vast range of cognitive resources, skills, and knowledge and provide their children with a variety of learning opportunities and experiences" (p. 15). These English language learners are by no means "deficit." Instead, they bring a wealth of "cultural capital… the cultural background, knowledge, dispositions, and skills that are passed down from one generation to another" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1973, quoted in Fenner, 2010, p. 15). What some define as deficits, English language learners value as strengths.

In a blog post, Gorski (2010) defines multicultural education as a way for "all students [to] reach their full potentials as learners and as socially aware and active beings" (Critical Multicultural Pavilion, Working Definition, p. 1). In moving away from the deficit paradigm that implicitly criticizes the student, Gorski recognizes the critical role that schools play in laying the foundation for the transformation of society and the elimination of injustice through a holistic critique and response to "discriminatory policies and practices" p. 1).

The assumption that all second language learners can meet standards established for general education students alludes to a colonial attitude for behavior and practice. It seems impractical and inequitable to treat a developing English learner with the same standards used to assess students who have lived in the U.S. all their lives. Unfortunately, uninformed or unaware educators see underdeveloped student writing *skills*—spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization—as contributing factors to students' lack of understanding about the *content*. Multicultural students will make errors of fact in in papers and presentations, which may impact the meaning inherent in the instruction. In my opinion, the answer lies in supplemental skills-based instruction in English structure and mechanics —

including reading comprehension, interacting with a text, researching a topic, outlining, prewriting, and presentation of ideas—to build up the multicultural student's academic skills as an entry point to understanding the social studies content.

Transition to content-area instruction. In examining best practices in moving transitional students into content area classes, I reflected on how to develop effective instruction based on the learning needs of English Language Learners. That question lies at the root of this study and involves the progress of immigrant students through the educational system. Admittedly, skill building takes time but it remains an essential part of ELL instruction. My researcher mind wants to objectively assess the conflicting needs of skill building versus content while the teacher wants to dive deeply into the content. Yet, skill building must come first, so I adjusted the U.S. History schedule and incorporated skills within the content instruction. I remain willing to trade off U.S. History breadth—from Jamestown to the present—for an exploration of themes and highlights of the American experience—such as slavery and civil rights, the Constitution and the nation's founding, current events and imperialism—as events that students would understand and remember.

Following the ideas of Moje (2015), this introductory U.S. History class aimed to "make radical change in student learning and well-being" (p. 254) by reframing the teacher's perspective, making it less about "meeting standards and more about teaching youth to navigate the multiple literary contexts in which they live, learn, and work" (p. 254). This change in perspective involved literacy, discourse, and skills development, specifically writing, drawing upon, creating, and linking to prior knowledge.

Action research principles helped focus and organize the data, allowing me to produce a snapshot of these learners working within a challenging curriculum, in an environment that demanded meeting graduate expectations in order to move forward with their education. My personal background as a technical writer allowed me to adapt the curriculum and include written and oral assignments that focused students' learning into two areas of need: (1) effective oral and written communication, and (2) critical thinking and problem solving.

The majority of students in both the 2015-16 and 2016-17 cohorts generally showed less self-sufficiency and required extensive scaffolding. As teachers, we questioned the wisdom of including these struggling students in a content-area class in which the instruction assumed a strong skills-based experience for the acquisition of content knowledge. Struggling students became frustrated with the demands of the class; several stopped contributing; assessments became less informative because of the volume of information we taught. With these facts in mind, we revised our curriculum and set an objective to develop proficiency, especially with the 2016-17 cohort. We created a systematic daily review of content already discussed, which kept the material fresh and at the top of students' minds. By relying on social discourse skills and questions about the topic, we engaged each student in discussion, focused on areas of proficiency, and minimized academic reading and writing skills. We made connections between students' cultures and U.S. History. We scaffolded reading assignments, used marked-up handouts, provided research options, and reviewed multiple drafts before concluding a reading-based research assignment.

Overview of study findings. In the action research protocol, I observed my instruction, reflected on it, and developed the following findings about teaching U.S. History to second language learners:

- Content-area instruction challenges ELL students. Instructional demands for academic ability and greater prior knowledge require them to read informational texts and write academic responses at a level that frequently seems beyond their capabilities.
- Language learners lack adequate preparation for a content-area class. At least three students in one cohort and four in another took U.S. History for one year and failed to demonstrate proficiency. Subsequently, by repeating the class, they developed sufficient skills and familiarity with the subject matter to pass.
- Prerequisites could help language learners qualify for a content-area class. Demonstrating basic informational/nonfiction reading and writing skills may help minimize the adjustment to content-area classes.
- Objectives or learning goals can help students understand the purpose of the instruction, as noted by Armstrong (2017) in her summary of analysis and synthesis, entitled "Why Use Bloom's Taxonomy?" with reference to Anderson & Krathwohl (2001).
- Improving writing skills—which represent lagging indicators of proficiency for intermediate-level language learners—would help students adjust to content-area instruction.

- Skills development (that is, notetaking, outlining, reading-for-understanding, researching, preparing presentations, and public speaking) represents an integral part of the curriculum. Second language students should either meet prerequisites that assess these skills or the curriculum should allow instructional time to develop these capabilities.
- Although remedial instruction should result in successful transitions to general education, even high-performing language learners often require basic academic skills instruction in order to successfully handle content-area classes.
- An overreliance on speaking proficiency (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills or BICS) in classroom discussions and interactions may hinder a student's Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), particularly around Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary (Lemov, 2010, p. 272), critical thinking (hooks), and writing. Teachers must emphasize reading and writing—as well as discourse—as essential skills.

Residual colonial attitudes. In some ways, the colonial idea of teaching a people to abandon their cultural knowledge and transform themselves into the privileged class lingers in our education system. Critics such as bell hooks (1996) acknowledge that standard English remains the "oppressor's language [which] has the potential to disempower those of us who are just learning to speak, who are just learning to claim language as a place where we make ourselves subject" (cited in Macedo, 2000, p. 23). Apropos of the situation in which second language learners find themselves is the underlying struggle around culture and ethnicity as immigrants attempt to assimilate their beliefs with the much larger American society. Macedo (2000) speaks of an ethnic and

cultural war, the "…creation of an ideologically coded language that serves at least two fundamental functions: On the one hand, this language veils the racism that characterizes U.S. society, and on the other hand, it insidiously perpetuates both ethnic and racial stereotypes that devalue identities of resistance and struggle (p. 15).

A cultural war continues at an organizational level because colonialism influences education and research. Tuck and Yang (2012) state that invisible aspects of colonialism "mark the organization, governance, curricula, and assessment of compulsory learning" with a subsequent repackaging of perspectives into data and findings that subsequently influence individual students because they "rationalize and maintain unfair social structures" (p. 2). Frankly, I came to an understanding of colonial attitudes only in researching this dissertation, principally through the work of Patel (2014) and Gary Howard (2006). While few teachers and administrators would admit to having colonial attitudes that enforce a system of privilege and power, they might suggest that second language learners move more quickly through the system, in spite of the fact that researchers believe a four- to seven-year timeframe is necessary to master academic language (Cummins, 1986/2001). As recent arrivals, second language learners should not be assigned a subordinate position in society because of a perceived lack of language skills. They will succeed if given sufficient time and support.

In-class adjustments. The findings from this study suggest that U.S. History instruction for second language learners in transition involves helping language learners adjust to U.S. culture while maintaining some connections to their heritage. Fortunately or unfortunately, teachers must expose language learners to a general education mindset

that allows them to merge language learning, content acquisition, and prior cultural knowledge while promoting student growth and development.

Although essential for newcomer- and beginner-level language learners, scaffolding for intermediate students in U.S. History shifts to student-directed efforts of independent reading, partner- or group-based writing, and demonstrated self-sufficiency. As noted in Johnson's (2014) summary of reciprocal teaching (RT), the teacher releases responsibility for instructional strategies to the student, becoming a "guide" who adds reminders of strategies that assist in reading, which leads to increased student control and a release of student support (p. 25). In quoting Oczkus (2010), Johnson (2014) stresses the flexibility of reciprocal teaching for comprehension instruction devoted to core reading or curriculum (p. 25).

Equity and equality. The ubiquity of colonial attitudes became clear during my tenure with an academic scholarship and awards committee. In 2017, the committee faced the challenge to award a four-year college scholarship to the highest performing student in the junior class. Hundredths of a percentage point separated the grade point average (GPA) of two students, one of whom began her academic career as a second language learner and had subsequently tested out. Her transcript included more classes than the general education student, including ELL-specific classes. In a decision that seemed to lack an equitable perspective, the committee awarded the scholarship to the general education student, although both students effectively tied for the honor. Although I protested the decision, and requested a judgment based on other factors besides the GPA, the committee held to its decision. A subtle colonial mindset, which tends to prevail in

education, suggests a need for more equitable assessments of second language learner performance, with less reliance on grades and greater assessment of overall student proficiency. Admittedly, this conclusion applies to a broader perspective of U.S. education beyond the scope of a project that describes the transitions experienced by English language learners.

Action Research Perspective

As the equity issue makes clear, separating research and teaching interests proves difficult because each area influences objectivity. In a similar context to this current study, Greenwood & Levin (1998) admit that action research brings together "… research, action, and participation… [in a] form of research that generates knowledge claims for the express purpose of taking action to promote social change and social analysis (p. 3) while allowing the "… involved community or organization members to control their own destinies more effectively and to keep improving their capacity to do so" (p. 6). Educators should realize the need for an analytical awareness of colonialism and equity to create social change and accommodate development of second language learners.

Greenwood and Levin (1998) also stress the "reciprocal and symbiotic" academic relationships that researchers bring to the classroom (p. 89), which help "shape an activist agenda and thus [are] part of larger social movements for school reform, societal change, and social justice that directly confront and are intended to change existing structures and opportunities" (p. 89). My activist agenda includes writing memos to promote equity (as I did when sitting on the scholarship committee), speaking out in meetings about equity issues

for language learners, introducing new courses, advocating for curricular change, and writing this dissertation.

This study documented methods of connecting with students in transition, exposing them to general education principles while building on social and academic knowledge. As a researcher-teacher, I became aware of Greenwood's and Levin's (1998) "…factors and forces outside of school, including failed social policies, poverty, and racism as well as a system of schooling in which low expectations and outcomes for certain groups and subgroups of students are endemic" (p. 1). As a result, I reminded myself, other teachers, and administrators that, although second language learners might lack content knowledge and academic skills (through little or no fault of their own), they exhibit great stores of resiliency, determination, and "grit," the quality that Angela Duckworth (2016) describes as "… holding the same top-level goal for a very long time" (p. 64) and a "combination of passion and perseverance" (p. 8).

Using action research principles allowed me to examine the pedagogical underpinnings of second language instruction; highlight students' need to develop facility in academic skills development; and propose strategies for teachers to use in similar instructional situations with transitional students. Acknowledging action research principles helped develop my pedagogical practices for U.S. History instruction, which made me aware of the nuance and accuracy necessary to balance students' cultural backgrounds with American cultural assumptions around colonial attitudes and white privilege.

Policy Overview Around Second Language Instruction

At the time of this study, Vermont required U.S. History instruction for high school students (16 V.S.A. § 906). The state currently administers the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC) to determine "student mastery of Common Core Standards" and collects "statewide data on student performance," which permits evaluation of "overall progress statewide with respect to mastery of standards…" (Vermont Agency of Education, "Why We Test," n.d.).

Standardized assessments simultaneously assess linguistic abilities and content knowledge, which challenge language learners to perform in unfamiliar learning environments. Noting that ELL students' standardized test results generally fall below scores normed on native speakers, Pandya (2011) highlights how second language learners often lack understanding of English nuances, which contributes to ELL students lagging behind grade-level peers in linguistic or content knowledge (p. 28).

In addition, Federal and state requirements stipulate regular assessments for all students. Under the No Child Left Behind legislation, signed into law in 2002 as an update to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, states and schools had to improve performance of ELL students as well as poor and minority children (Editorial Projects, 2015). West Ackerly policies assessed students based on these guidelines and did not meet the required "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) standards, beginning in 2010 (Mr. Spyder, personal conversation, 22 July 2016). In fact, Vermont now labels all its schools as "'low performing,' because every single student in every single school is not scoring as 'proficient.'" (Vermont Agency of Education, "Why We Test," n.d.). The manual for the

Smarter Balanced Assessment requires testing for eleventh graders, including ELL students because "All students (including students with disabilities, ELLs, and ELLs with disabilities) are to be held to the same expectations for participation and performance on member assessments" as defined by Federal laws around assessments: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2016, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (reauthorized in 2008) (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium [SBAC], 2017, pp. 2-3).

Implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act began with the 2017-18 school year (Editorial Projects, 2016), and the Vermont Agency of Education submitted accountability plans to the U.S. Department of Education in May 2017 (Vermont Agency of Education, Vermont State Plan, 2017).

Students may receive some assistance with the assessments. The SBAC guide outlines "numerous universal tools and designated supports," which include English dictionaries, glossaries, and translated test directions (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium [SBAC], 2017, p. 33). The assessment makes universal tools available to all students—such as, the ability to take breaks; a digital notepad, and English dictionary and glossary, and various computer tools, including highlighting and zoom functionality. Designated supports—such as, color contrast, masking, mouse pointer, some text-to-speech and translated test directions (the latter principally for math items)—require documentation of the student need through an IEP or 504 plan. Translations are available in some language dialects/variants (p. 25, pp. 33-34). The assessment holds all students accountable to the same expectations in grades 3-8 and 11; exceptions exist for students with significant

cognitive disabilities and English learners enrolled in a first-year program of a U.S. school (p. 2). The manual states that "students participate in the assessment regardless of the language" (p. 13).

Most students at West Ackerly accept the Smarter Balanced Assessment as another test and take the time to complete it. A few attend the session but choose not to participate. English language learners struggle with the computer-based technology and the demands of writing, reading, and doing math in English. As a proctor for several of these test sessions, I understand that few students see the benefit of taking this assessment. They consider it an onerous task. After the test, English learners report that they understood very little of the ELA and math language.

Meeting the Challenges of Transition

Heraclitus might see little resemblance between the children who left their native countries and those same children entering my classroom in Vermont. Their "rivers" have changed, as have their personalities and minds. My personal "river"—my life as a teacher—has changed with each year I have taught these students. This dissertation tells the story of my personal change and that of the students I teach. In this narrative, all of us are "in transition."

For these and other students, no pedagogical method works perfectly. Awareness of transitional needs and the ability to accommodate them, however, provide routes over or through the river into a world of change. This two-year study of second language learners in a U.S. History class attempts to match instructional material with the needs of ELL students. We challenged students, sometimes putting them in a safe place to fail, in order to help them

learn. In hindsight, the real lesson, underlying the pedagogical imperative, involved learning to move forward when doubts and fear predominate and a situation becomes difficult. We challenged students to commit themselves to developing mastery by concentrating on situations in which they had to exert effort and push the limits of their skillset (Duckworth, 2016).

Such was the case for a Nepali woman with few public speaking skills. The thought of standing behind a podium and speaking to the class terrified her. For a summative assignment, we created an overarching topic then requested that students write an essay and deliver a presentation. The task seemed daunting to her.

"In twenty-two years," said my co-teacher, "no one has ever died giving a speech in my classroom. You may be the first," he continued to the chuckles in the class. "But I doubt it."

That young woman survived that initial speech but continued to approach the podium in fear and trembling. Yet, she met each assignment, demonstrating significant qualities of persistence and grit. The following semester, she registered for my Communications of Ideas class, which required daily public speaking sessions. Her fear had lessened; she became an accomplished public speaker, and could handle a variety of extemporaneous speaking challenges.

As a *coda* to this ongoing story, I later invited this young woman to address a college-level class in order to explain how her education had progressed and how teachers-in-training could work with ELL students. She emerged as a poised young woman and a confident teacher, explaining her progress through secondary education, the need to walk

through her fears, and her victories as she became comfortable with public speaking. She amazed the audience—and me—with her wisdom and ability. Her transition, while ongoing, had reached a high-water mark. She had left that scared and trembling little girl hiding behind a podium. Now, she was brimming with confidence, succinct in her answers, and voluble in her responses. Truly, I had witnessed a transformation in less than three years of transition. She had become a confident, practiced, mature young woman because of the opportunities, challenges, and support initially given her in that U.S. History class.

Her success represents the goal for students in transition: Encouraging and motivating them to accept challenges and supporting them in their drive to succeed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This dissertation describes the challenges and changes English Language Learners (ELLs) experience as they arrive in U.S. schools, acquire fluency and literacy in English, and then use these acquired skills to transition into content-area classes. Teachers experience similar transitions as they adjust to multicultural education and the demands of co-teaching ELL students. The borderland where immigrant students reside—an area between where they were in their home countries and where they are going as assimilated members of the U.S. educational system and work force—remains an area of change, where secondary education includes various groups of second language learners and educators must define best practices for working with those students well into the future.

Knowledge

Two years of research with two cohorts of ELL students in a U.S. History class provided the raw material for this project. My nine years teaching English Language Learners at the secondary level framed the two school years conducting research about them. This dissertation weaves the stories that these immigrant students told me into a narrative that describes their efforts to understand informational subject matter as well as the co-teaching practices that allowed me to develop a viable curriculum for their instruction.

Key Sources

Of the dozens of texts and other sources incorporated into this work, the references contained in this chapter stand out as pillars upon which I based by research. These texts fit

into the action research protocol, which forms the basis for my writing: the pedagogy of teaching immigrants and children of color; a focus on a professional practice dissertation and qualitative research; practical approaches to co-teaching; nonstandard ideas for teaching U.S. History; and contemporary accounts about education, current events, and social studies. In addition, interviews with my co-teacher and compilation of journal notes over a two-year research period buttressed my research and led me in the direction of finalizing this dissertation.

Action Research

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) offered practical suggestions for developing and formatting practitioner-based research. In *Inquiry as Stance: Practitioner Research for the Next Generation*, the authors examined the "… disparities in learning opportunities and outcomes among students from different racial, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds…" (p. vii). They also stressed how inquiry could challenge embedded thinking in educational settings, allowing practitioners to become "… part of larger social and intellectual movements for social change and social justice (p. viii).

Early in my teaching career, I realized that social justice played a key role in my perspective around secondary level students. English language learners came from various backgrounds, experienced literacy and fluency gaps, and needed assistance in adjusting to a social context far removed from their countries of origin. Adjusting to their needs, while remaining aware of curricular and pedagogical requirements, required grounding in social justice perceptions. Awareness of their backgrounds and the trauma

and deprivations many experienced enhanced my ability to plan lessons and offer instruction.

I also came to realize that Cochran-Smith and Lytle's broad-based term "practitioner research" applied to those inside and outside the classroom. Their list includes teachers, but also

> … school and school district administrators and other leaders, teacher candidates, teacher educators, community college instructors, university faculty members and administrators, adult literacy and language program practitioners, community-based educational activists, parents, and others who work inside educational sites of practice (p. ix).

As a practitioner, I opened my classroom to a variety of observers and colleagues. I informed my principal and superintendent at various times of my work, and addressed the school board about my practice. Hallway conversations with colleagues often included examples from my U.S. History teaching experience, as well as collaborative work with my co-teacher. I presented summaries of my teaching practice to university-level linguistics classes, teachers in training, and conferences for social studies and second language practitioners. Other observers included pre-service teachers and university professors. My work provided myriad ways to inform the public inside and outside the school system about English language learners' developing understanding of a content-area subject matter and their transition from language learners to active participants in the secondary education community.

One heavily annotated chapter in my copy of *Inquiry As Stance* revolves around "working the dialectic" (p. 93), or merging the dichotomies between research and practice, so that they relate to each other "in terms of productive and generative tensions…" that produce "a reciprocal, recursive, and symbiotic relationship," which leads to a beneficial synthesis of the research and practitioner roles (pp. 94-95). In my action research, I tried to meld my teaching role with my research activities, creating activities and roles both "integrated and dynamic" (p. 95).

The authors contrast traditionally formal research aspects—which carry with them an aspect of generalization, usability, and applicability—versus local knowledge, which carries "interpretative frameworks and theories of practice that are useful and usable in other contexts" (p. 95). In short, locally based practitioner research can offer just as much a universal perspective as the more formal inquiry-only approach. Lacking the closeness and in-depth awareness that the practitioner-researcher to the topic, an outsider might miss, misinterpret, or avoid the nuances embedded in the research situation.

In *Inside/Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge*, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) collected essays around their theories of teacher-based research, and initiated the epistemology of connecting the act of teaching with the what students learn in the school. The research inquiry is not limited to a particular time or place but actually begins with self-directed questions, in an attempt to make sense of personal experiences (p. 24). The conceptual research attempts to convince others about teaching practices while developing some understanding around teaching and learning (p. 35-36). As Frederick Erickson writes in the Forward: "The teacher comes to know teaching from within the

action of it, and a fundamentally important aspect of that action is the teacher's own intentionality" (p. viii).

Teacher-researchers bring "rich and complex" frames of analysis, which spans the immediate student work and that which has come before it. They document experiences both inside and outside the classroom, and "… bring a historical framework… they ask questions that other researchers may not ask, and they see patterns that others may not be able to see" (p. 58). The practitioner-researcher sees challenges within the system, such as the challenges that diversity presents. Without such recognition, a school could continue taking for granted culture, learning, language, and power. Administrators and faculty in an institution that remains committed to once-effective methods may resist the innovative ideas that participatory research produces because such ideas take issue with the *status quo*. In reality, action research brings teachers together, creating a core group of "highly professionalized teacher researchers" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 21), who can articulate the issues around equity, hierarchy, autonomy, which may lead to criticism of the "technocratic model that dominates much of school practice" (p. 21).

Herr and Anderson (2005) discuss the dilemma that the researcher-practitioner encounters in conducting action research, which involves ambiguity and messiness within a process that both sustains and nurtures the researcher. *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty* explains how researchers see an immediate problem, then recognize the need for ongoing collaboration, participation, action, and reflection to form a central core of research. In this way, a dissertation featuring

action research contributes to the knowledge base through its local perspective, one that might go unnoticed in a larger, more formal research context.

Thematic researchers follow the lead of Pablo Freire (1960s and 1970s), who connected research with social action in order to help adult participants gain literacy while critiquing the system (Herr and Anderson, 2005, p. 15). Positioning the researcher as an insider or outsider frames epistemological, methodological, and ethical issues (p. 30). The action researcher may begin to critique the narrowness of existing definitions of professional roles, especially when outsiders aim to control the professional's work. The *status quo* may promote fragmentation with additional supervision and assessment. In response, the action research takes on the tenor of a political movement to gain control over and redefine the profession.

Outsiders could say that the participating researcher lives in a messy, intuitive, anecdotal, and value-laden professional reality. The reflective nature of the action research model leads to a new professionalism, replacing "the old social engineer and craft models of practice" (Herr and Anderson, 2005, p. 67), while maintaining an ethical stance with fellow researchers and participants.

The authors imply that action research contributes knowledge of the practice. Because power plays a role in all research, traditional research usually involves consultative relationships with those in power while participatory research assumes resistance from the powerful (p. 16), for which the results might reveal solutions that overcome that resistance. The complexity of practice-driven research reveals many layers of understanding around cultural life, class structure, literacy, gender, social issues, institutions, communities,

curricular materials and texts, all of which have relevance to a diverse educational community, such as found at West Ackerly. Herr and Anderson feel that action research interrogates a personal stance. By working closely with those studied, the researcher can determine relevant problems, methods, and goals.

Writing the professional practice dissertation. My writing focused on producing a professional practice dissertation, one that met the checklist of components included by Willis, Inman, and Valenti (2010, pp. 24-25). Following this checklist, I envisioned a product that would reflect my involvement in the field and document a broad and interdisciplinary relationship between content and skills. I wanted to integrate my writing with the professional workplace while documenting my teaching practice and complementing my pre-teaching background and skills. Attending graduate school on a part-time basis enabled me to support myself while conducting research at the school where I worked. I could focus on the daily problems of practice and develop a real-world situational perspective, while using pedagogical theories from my academic courses. The resulting manuscript hopefully contributes to my own and others' professional knowledge.

The breadth of this study, however, required management of the literature from which I derived my information. As an ELL teacher, I relied on aspects of my specialized training and related research about second language learners. As a social studies teacher, I incorporated specific content-based details in my instruction, and frequently used newspapers and other contemporary media to enhance my instruction of current events. As a teacher, I brought several years of reading and practice into the classroom, especially around teaching dynamics, planning, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Finally, as a researcher, I

collected policy studies, action research, and qualitative assessments within a framework that touched on my work.

This literature review contains individual sections devoted to ELL practice, social studies and U.S. History instruction, general pedagogy, and qualitative research. As McPherson (1988) admits in his Biographical Note within his Civil War text, he could only include a fractional amount of the sources to which he had referred, and only "a portion of the sources consulted in the research…" (p. 870). In addition, "that research merely sampled the huge corpus of literature…" (p. 870). In contrast, my writing about second language learners and social studies represents a narrowly defined field of interest to a specific population of educators. Yet, McPherson and other nonfiction writers informed my construction of lesson plans, assessments, and evaluations. This pantheon of historical scholars—from McPherson to the pre-eminent contributors to historical research—contributed to my style in developing a professional practice dissertation. Fairness dictates that I acknowledge their otherwise uncredited role in this dissertation.

Pedagogy

Gary Howard (2006) examines dimensions of multicultural education, content integration, equity with pedagogical systems, and uniqueness related to school culture and social structure. He warns of the ongoing demographic shift within education and the need for equity in working with a diverse school-age population. In *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools*, Howard recognizes the need for additional teacher training and adjustment of long-standing attitudes in order to move forward into 21st century education.

The theme of social justice runs throughout Gary Howard's (2006) work, especially because educational change involves political work (as noted in Freire, 1970 and Parker, 2003). Teachers, for example, address students' commitment to pluralistic democratic ideas and speak out when violations of those ideals occur. "We teach our students the basic principles of 'freedom and justice for all,' and … empower them to identify and address the many realities of injustice and inequality they see enacted in their everyday lives" (pp. 7-8). In addressing the question of why we must address problems of racism and inequality (p. 5), Howard admits that gaps exist in the education of children of color that result from schools' policies and practices and bigoted ideas about intelligence and worthiness (p. xv), all of which bear political impact. Is there a causal relationship between the over-representation of white teachers in our classrooms and the under-performance of children of color in our nation's schools? (p. 4). Educators need to look within and consider personal racial markers, such as whiteness: "We need to understand the dynamics of past and present dominance, face how we have been shaped by myths of superiority, and begin to sort out our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors relative to race and other dimensions of human diversity (p. 6).

In order for teachers to become effective in creating an atmosphere of educational equity, Gary Howard (2006) introduces the Achievement Triangle, which requires teachers to develop knowledge of

- Practice (professional accomplishment and lifetime study);
- Self (race, culture, and difference); and

  Students (unique characteristics of culture, racial identity, language) (pp. 126-127).

The remarkable stories and fine detail within *The Dream-Keepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (Ladson-Billings, G. (2009) create a unique perspective around cultural importance for students of color. Based on the work of eight teachers (the original "dreamkeepers"), the book details their life experiences and the transformative moments that contributed to critical examinations of themselves and their students in their attempts to bring proficiency to instruction of African American children. Most important, these stories bring relevance to anyone with children of color in their classrooms, no matter their country of origin or ethnicity.

As part of my pedagogical approach, I relied heavily on Zwiers, O' Hara, and Pritchard (2014) to introduce literacy and discourse methods to my students that followed Common Core standards. Their work taught me that teachers can design lessons to use language and build whole ideas, while avoiding the need to shelter diverse students from complex language, literacy, or disciplinary thinking at grade level (p. 5). Designed for students who need "accelerated growth in their academic language and literacy" (p. 2), *Common Core Standards in Diverse Classrooms* provided clear and practical ways to: implement new standards in diverse classrooms; shift from access to ownership; move from piece skills to whole-message skills; adjust a focus on content and create language-literacy-thinking-content; replace emphasis on individual development with collaborative skills; leave behind playing school to a new model of learning in school; replace checklists of strategies with frames of practice; migrate from tests to assessment and beyond; and adjust silos to capacity (p. 2, pp. 10-14). These recommended shifts change "… the educational system from isolated pockets of practice to an integrated capacity-building model [which

features] coaching, collaboration, observations, data analysis, conversations, leadership practices, culture, and policies that support complex language and literacy …" (p. 14).

Educating ELL Students

According to the Pew Research Center (2014), Latinos became the "largest single racial/ethnic group" in California early in 2014, comprising 39% of the state's population. The numbers of Latinos in both California and New Mexico comprise a plurality—that is, they are not more than half the state's population but they comprise the largest percentage of any group (Lopez, 2014). The Pew Research Center also reports that the Latino population in the United States approached 58 million individuals in 2016; half of the national population growth since 2000 originates with the Latino immigrants; and Hispanics represent 18 percent of the U.S. population, "the second-largest racial or ethnic group behind whites" (Flores, 2017).

With increasing numbers of immigrants, educators must learn instructional strategies to reach these new Americans in their classrooms. State law allows for bilingual instruction in California and other states, which significantly affects the Hispanic population. Smaller cultural groups—such as the Nepali, Bhutanese, African, and Middle Eastern populations found in West Ackerly—have less access to bilingual education and learn the new language through English-immersion classes.

In evaluating the differences within English as a Second Language instruction and the numbers of ELL students in the United States, Bylund (2011) states that "only maintenance bilingual and dual immersion bilingual programs have been proven successful in closing the achievement gap between LEP [limited English proficiency]

students and their monolingual peers" (p. 2). While bilingual instruction works well for larger Hispanic populations in parts of the Southwest, West, and Midwestern urban areas, it lacks practical application for areas with significantly smaller immigrant populations from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Developing bilingual programs for such diverse groups would require extensive staff and facilities to implement an immersion program for significantly smaller immigrant groups. Bylund (2011) documents that without concepts—as required for success in a social studies class—students lack sufficient information about a topic, although they may recognize some of the words. Bylund uses Vygotsky's research to explain the dynamics of "thought processes" and the "process of thinking" (p. 2). Vygotsky (1930-34/1978) suggested that cultural development in children initially appears on the social level and then individually. Social interaction sets up the child to make internal connections at a later point. He relates this theory as the zone of proximal development in which the student becomes aware of the learning, attempts to internalize it, and then acquires new knowledge. In actuality, "thought processes" illustrate how ELL students hear or see something that they recognize (in whole or in part) and then hear it again or use it in their work, gradually internalizing the concept and creating new learning. In addition to introducing the concept of zone of proximal development, which challenges students to go beyond their current cognitive levels in order to develop understanding, Vygotsky posited that language serves as a "psychological tool for the purpose of analyzing and solving complex problems," a fact that Bylund equates with learning of academic language (Bylund, 2011, p. 2). Verbal thought becomes a cognitive tool only when the student "accumulates a widening range

of word meanings and forms a framework or structure connecting the concepts represented by those words." A semantic map "allows the child to transcend immediate experience by making associations that transform information into entirely new ideas" (Bylund, p. 2-3).

Evaluating English Language Learners. Assessments measure proficiency in "social, instructional, and academic language" allowing students to "engage with peers, educators, and the curriculum in schools" (WIDA, 2012, p. 3). To this end, the WIDA Consortium developed a series of texts and a web site (www.wida.us) to define English Language Proficiency (ELP) and English Language Development (ELD) standards, which are now used by 34 states and territories. These language proficiency standards form the basis of "valid and reliable assessment tools" required by Federal and state legislation to evaluate proficiency for ELL students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 (Gottlieb, Cranley, & Oliver, 2007, p. RG-6). This research aims to document the best practices for ELL students and their multicultural education in U.S. History.

In conversations about increasing numbers of English Language Learners, the idea of language instruction becomes increasingly important. Reyes (2013) emphasized the importance of language learning for content-area instruction in her original protocol to the Institutional Review Board:

> … the role of language is critical to developing knowledge. How language is used to teach different disciplines such as math, science, language arts, and social studies, and how it is used between teachers and students, as well as among students is of increasing interest to teachers, administrators, and educational researchers. Language

> as a basis for learning is a useful framework for understanding what constitutes effective literacy teaching and learning (Halliday, 1993; Vygotsky, 1987; Reyes, 2013).

Within Vermont and the other states that make up the WIDA Consortium, procedures exist to evaluate the language proficiency and development of the immigrant population on a yearly basis. These assessments provide markers to demonstrate progress or the need for further development. They also impose guidelines for entering and leaving ("testing out of") language programs. In its yearly evaluations of ELL students, the West Ackerly school district uses WIDA scores, teacher feedback, and documented student proficiency levels to place students at suitable instructional levels. Within this district and others, language proficiency has become part of the learning process.

Defining language proficiencies. In his writings, Cummins (1979, 1986/2001) describes the concepts of social and academic language, which have emerged as standard concepts for teachers of English as a Second Language. In evaluating language in the social studies classroom, Case and Obenchain (2006) focus on Cummins' definitions of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Students naturally acquire BICS through daily conversations and media sources. BICS represents the ELL student's first steps in adapting to his new country, one that relies on an informal oral system and begins second language (L2) acquisition. CALP, however, requires the "ability to express in writing higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation" (Case & Obenchain, 2006, p. 41). Even with literacy skills derived from their primary language (L1), students usually require four to seven years to

acquire L2 proficiency Cummins (1979, 1986/2001). Appendix B provides an illustration of BICS and CALP.

Zwiers, in *Building Academic Language* (2014), finds decreased complexity and abstraction in social language or BICS (p.22). Its "extralinguistic clues, such as pictures, objects, facial expressions, and gestures" simplify understanding, help "build relationships, and get things done in less formal settings" (p. 22). CALP brings with it degrees of complexity and abstraction, with minimal extralinguistic support (p. 22). A conversation about music preferences, for example, would fall into the social language category; writing a paper, or listening to a lecture, about the Selma-to-Montgomery March and the Pettus Bridge would fall into the academic language category.

Non-native history students generally show adeptness at BICS-level tasks, which allows them to handle basic ask, answer, and recall questions, and describe personal experiences around their lives. When confronted with unfamiliar historical content, however, they must slow down and function at less-than-proficient levels until they develop understanding of the concept. Proficiency-based learning implies that students will demonstrate that "they have learned the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn" during a particular "course, subject area, or grade level" (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2016).

Based on the table of student proficiencies in the 2015-16 U.S. History cohort (Appendix C), the ELL students included in this study show an intermediate level of proficiency based on the WIDA ACCESS assessment; they function below grade level (that is, do not meet proficiency) for vocabulary and comprehension. The U.S. History teachers

recognize the value of these assessments and provide vocabulary and comprehension support as part of their instruction. ELL teachers appreciate that WIDA scores are designed to set proficiency standards for English Language Learners; they appreciate that students with intermediate-level or higher WIDA scores generally function at grade level in content-area courses because they have shown proficiency in the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. An ELL student lacking vocabulary knowledge and comprehension skills, however, would have difficulty in a traditional content-area course, although scaffolded instruction might help minimize the anticipated difficulty.

Anticipating immigrant students. "Immigrants constitute the fastest growing group of students in U.S. schools," (Elfers & Stritikus, 2013, p. 306). and demographic predictions call for twenty to twenty-five percent of "students enrolled in elementary and secondary school enrollment will have limited proficiency in English" by 2025 (p. 306). The authors cite several difficulties in adapting current educational models to meet the needs of these learners, such as: Inability to meet social and academic needs of "culturally and linguistically diverse students"; "Inadequate teaching capacity" that creates "serious equity challenges for leaders" and difficulty in creating "equitable and effective educational opportunities"; lack of "well-trained and well-supported teachers," which prevents ELL students from receiving assistance related to their needs; and failure to allow ELL students to "access grade-level content and appropriate learning environments for language learning," which limits the promise of more advanced schooling. In effect, students with L2 capabilities end up with a large achievement gap (p. 306). From an instructional point of view, we can expect to see greater numbers of ELL students with limited English skills

within the next decade. These numbers will strain existing teaching capacity and present administrators with serious equity problems to solve. At the same time, these students will require content-area instruction in order to succeed and move on to post-secondary education.

Olmedo (1996) highlights how greater awareness of the strategies around English Language Learners in elementary and secondary education might help pre-service teachers prepare to teach second language learners. Without such awareness, teachers might misinterpret a student's lack of fluency for diminished cognitive ability, especially if the student cannot understand day-to-day instruction (p. 1). Olmedo feels that bilingual programs offer an opportunity to teach social studies in the student's native language, and recommends a curriculum that includes oral history, a practice in which students interview individuals about events in their lives. This pedagogical technique gives students an understanding of "…historical agency [which] implies that people in the past faced choices, that they made decisions, and that the resulting actions had consequences ..." (p. 1). This technique shows a personal side to history and allows the student to identify with personalities and narratives similar to their own. By examining the point of view of ethnic group members, communities, or others who may have experienced life in a refugee camp or the terrors of war, students develop a perspective different from that which textbooks typically record (e.g., "the perspective of the winners") (p. 2). This oral history technique relates to the Socratic Seminar techniques used in teaching U.S. History at West Ackerly with the 2015-16 and 2016-17 cohorts in the research study at the heart of this dissertation.

Social Studies References

After beginning his Introduction with the bald statement that "High school students hate history … [and] consider it 'the most irrelevant' of twenty-one subjects commonly taught in high school," Loewen (2007, p. 1) recognizes "the power of the past" and how "social structure and culture … shape not only our path through the world but also our understanding of that path and that world" (p. 9). Loewen positions history at the jumping off spot for students. He asks, then answers his own question:

> What exactly is our job as Americans? Surely it is *to bring into being the America of the future*." Citizens have an obligation to "evaluate the claims that our leaders and would-be leaders make. They must read critically, winnow fact from fraud, and seek to understand causes and results in the past. These skills must stand at the center of any competent history course" (p. xvii).

The syllabus for my U.S. History course reflects those high-flying goals and my efforts to teach two cohorts of ELL students. Loewen's book speaks truth about American history, even the dark past where the light of humanity had been dimmed by greed and negativity, as in his stories about Woodrow Wilson's white supremacist tendencies and efforts to "curtail the civil rights of African Americans" and "segregate the federal government (p. 19). The themes that Loewen raises inspire my teaching and confirm my desire to teach U.S. History truthfully, even when it hurts.

I believe that ELL students need to relate at a personal level with events associated with American history. Successful academic language instruction involves creating social studies lessons around race, racism, and civil rights that develop

immediacy, identification, and interdependence leading to awareness and knowledge. I hope the content in my social studies classes bridges historical facts with immigrant experience.

Interestingly, the secondary school ELL students involved in this study benefited from, and were impacted by, historical events. Immigration and current events reflect issues directly connected to their lives. As Rothenberg (1996) illustrates in great detail:

- The Naturalization Law of 1790 made citizenship available only to white persons, a decision rescinded 162 years later through the McCarran-Walker Act (1952);
- Various Supreme Court decisions restricted rights for persons of color, including prohibiting citizenship in the *Dred Scott* and *Elk v. Wilkens* decisions (applied respectively to African Americans and native Americans born in the US);
- The Supreme Court recognized that segregation violated no Constitutional rights in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and endorsed the confinement of Japanese citizens during World War II (*Korematsu v. United States*);
- The Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) prevented immigration based on nationality.

Although three Constitutional amendments specifically defined rights of citizens—the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment provided citizenship rights for the native born as well as equal legal protection, and the Fifteenth Amendment negated race-based voting rights—women and persons of color found that they still lacked certain rights of equal citizenship (Rothenberg, pp. 138-140). All of these themes form the core of the U.S. History course I teach at West Ackerly High School, although most years I run out of time before I run out of history.

Thematic structure. Connor (1997) describes thematic instruction as a method to organize course material around central ideas rather than on the more traditional chronological methods. This system "affords a better grasp of principal developments in the nation's history by treating issues in depth" (p. 1). By employing themes, teachers can span hundreds of years of history. Appendix D, for example, contains the thematically based syllabi used during the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years.

In response to a student's statement about "boring history (Loewen, 2007, p. 1), I can cite (Connor's, 1998) belief that "One strength of the thematic method is relevancy. Within each theme, students examine the past, but are brought up to the present" Students tend to remember history if the instructional narrative repeats key points. Fortunately, repetition remains a central tenet of ELL instruction. Other advantages of a thematic curriculum include the ability to respond to a diverse student body (featuring historical issues relevant to their cultures) and to local issues (a gubernatorial election in Vermont or the local Congressional delegation). Reading about challenges faced by "picture brides," the Japanese forced internment during World War II, the travails endured by Chinese immigrants working for the railroads in Gold Mountain, or the political blowback from the Syrian refugee crisis combine immediacy and connectivity of ideas within the social studies classroom.

White (1995) recalls that novelist and former social studies James Michener called for history instruction to include a "general framework in which to fit things but [not] a comprehensive knowledge of history …" (p. 160, citing Galvez-Hjornevik, 1987). Thematic teaching "allows for understanding through depth of coverage" and demands

that teacher and student "identify fundamental ideas within a subject" (p. 161). Although thematic teaching does not teach as much material as traditional instruction, it does allow students to "make meaningful connections with the subject matter," experience history "in a holistic fashion," and provide an understanding of "content in a meaningful and useful context" (p. 162).

Brown and Schell (2016) believe that the thematic approach to teaching history includes more current events and avoids the idea of history as a straight line. Students can "go from the past to the present multiple times as different themes are covered throughout the class (p. 2). Such repetition aids ELL students in reviewing historical events. Thematic teaching "abandons the encyclopedic nature of traditional chronological framework where content is covered a mile-wide but only an inch deep … teachers can help students develop a deeper understanding of the past" (p. 2). With the thematic approach, U.S. history becomes meaningful and better remembered. Students acquire the ability to evaluate contemporary events, political issues, and debates relative to our basic values over time (p. 4).

Reading for information? Because textbook authors "almost never use the present to illuminate the past" and "textbooks seldom use the past to illuminate the present," students and teachers experience history generally through texts that "stifle meaning by suppressing causation" (Loewen, 2007, pp. 6-7). In my U.S. History classroom, we use a textbook but I supplement it with readings about current events, TED Talks, and visual materials that link the now with the then. The volume of historical thought requires some codified but I believe texts must be used judiciously, as seasoning or to provide direction, not to form the main course.

Loewen (2007) compares various history textbooks and describes *The Americans* (Danzer, de Alva, Krieger, Wilson, Woloch, and Bowes, 2005)—a source used in the West Ackerly U.S. History classes—as "a 1,358-page textbook from McDougal Littell weighing in at almost seven pounds, [and with a] table of contents [that] runs twenty-two pages, [with] complex, disjointed thirty- to forty-page chapters…" (p. 4). It truly is a friendly monster, filled with facts but a challenge to sort out the important from the unnecessary. In *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, Loewen (2007) refers to the irrelevant and erroneous details included in textbooks, which often disregard key questions and facts (p. 301). He argues that "textbooks rarely present the various sides of historical controversies and almost never reveal to students the evidence on which each side bases its position" (p. 302). Loewen proposes that schools "help us learn how to ask questions about our society and its history and how to figure out answers for ourselves" (p. 356), which relates directly to West Ackerly's emphasis on graduate expectations, specifically *critical thinking and problem-solving*. Loewen endorses the use of thematic instructions, saying that "… we must introduce fewer topics and examine them more thoroughly" and thereby "help students focus on the larger picture" (pp. 357-358).

At West Ackerly High School, we emphasize that students complete research projects that involve critical thinking, a conceptual approach that aligns our graduate expectations with Loewen's (2007) discussion of historiography, or "studying the writing of history" (p. 360). Such a study helps make students "critical readers and crucial thinkers" (p. 360). In our work, we ask students to put on the "hat" related to a particular period of time, to remove their 2018 hats in favor of an 1861 hat or a 1917 hat. We ask

students to develop a sense of context for the historical events we discuss, and to consider the social structure or viewpoints of those we study. Finally, we ask students to form an opinion about the America they have studied (pp. 360-361).

Loewen makes a strong point that "history is central to our ongoing understanding of ourselves and our society" and that we should encourage our students—especially the new Americans in our classroom who have limited knowledge of U.S. History—"to use one's understanding of the past to inspire and legitimize one's actions in the present" (p. 361). Culturally, ELL students have an infinite supply of information to supplement a study of U.S. History. They came to the U.S. from many different backgrounds, and brought with them a diverse perspective about what history means. Making connections between their own experience and the history that they are learning reinforces the bonds around story and puts them in the center of their learning.

Introducing current events and visual learning. An ELL teacher brings content knowledge to U.S. History as well as an awareness of immigrant issues and advocacy. Once again, my role as a researcher merges with that of instructor. My research might lead me to a post from Bridging Refugees and Youth Children's Services (BRYCS) about bullying of Muslim students in Maryland (Bazar, 2016), which I then share with staff and administrators and introduce to students as a writing assignment. Such articles—from the *New York* Times, *Washington Post*, or local Vermont newspapers and media outlets inform my teaching and expand my students' conception of history. I fold that information into lessons and writing assignments, which broadens the scope of the subject area I teach and allows students to identify with current events. Race and racism

remain integral parts of my teaching, and video materials about Civil Rights protests, slavery, and even white supremacist marches give students a new perspective about history that is happening all around them as well as in the past. When I introduce the video entitled *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (California Newsreel, 2010), students begin to see the social construct behind race. Serious discussions follow, on a subject they have not thoroughly explored, although most of my students are children of color.

Although a grim testament about life in America, contemporary issues of race and racism can fill a history class with thoughts and ideas: The death of Trayvon Martin (Blow, C. *New York Times*, July 15, 2013) prompted intense classroom discussion and examination during the school year, as did the demonstrations in Ferguson, Missouri, with the death of Michael Brown (Editorial Board. *New York Times*, August 20, 2014 and Blow, C. *New York Times*, August 13, 2014). Other events—the suicide of Sandra Bland (Smith, M. *New York Times*, July 27, 2015), racism at Harvard Law School (Bidgood, J. *New York Times*, November 19, 2015), and the death of Freddie Gray (Editorial Board. *New York Times*, August 10, 2016) became focus topics of discussions around issues that could touch students' lives. Racial events become integral components of the curriculum, offering a current reality to the backdrop of history. The line between current and historical events can sometimes appear blurred because the past influences the present just as the present gives perspective to the past.

Current events also can bring the past and present into stark contrast, ranging from a film about Emmett Till's 1955 murder that connects to the Black Lives Matter movement (Holmberg, D. *New York Times*, August 30, 2016), the 2016 Presidential

campaign (Alcindor, Y. *New York Times*, August 1, 2016), popular culture icons such as Twitter (Chokhshi, N. *New York Times*, August 22, 2016), and memorable photographs connected to Black Lives Matter, particularly the iconic image of a young African American woman confronting armed black-clad police officers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (Cole, T. *New York Times*, July 26, 2016). Although the image went viral, my students only saw it when I introduced it to them as part of our discussion.

ELL students need to know that history bears a strong relationship to current events, and that they must create links between then and now. While students from all ethnicities should experience memorable ties to American history, ELL students in particular need to develop connections between then and now. They have arrived in a country about which they know only a few facts. Unlike their native-born peers, they are only learning about the Constitution now. They equate the Civil War, the American Revolution World War I, and Vietnam with the same time period. By introducing memorable current events, and linking them to a historical point, I can engage my students in attention-worthy discussions designed to create learning and identification.

In July, 2015, during a demonstration about retaining the Confederate flag in South Carolina, a white supremacist was overcome by the heat and Leroy Smith, a black state trooper, helped him reach a seat inside. Immediately, this micro-incident received press coverage. Trooper Smith said: "'I think that's the greatest thing in the world—love… And that's why so many people were moved by it'" (Tippett, 2016, p. 114 and Barry, 2015: July 25). I tell my students—frequently—that this is their world and they must learn how to deal with a life that might reject them but which will recognize their achievements, provided they

practice the values they learn in this classroom and in so many other places within their lives.

Literature Leads to Essential Question

This literature review contains references that connect to my research and my teaching at several levels. Action research serves as my primary focus because it links my teaching with my research, and then with my writing. Yet, at the heart of this chapter lies the work I do with ELL students, described as my professional practice. My co-teaching relationship remains a key ingredient in this approach, surrounded in turn by volumes of historical texts, journal articles, and contemporary media sources.

All this literature in turn revolves around my essential question: How to best teach English Language Learners, who are in transition, the intricacies of a content-based U.S. History program? The related questions all refer to students in transition: How do the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing fit into this instruction? How does the co-teaching model encourage greater participation and involvement of both teachers and students? Can discourse expand students' understanding of historical concepts? What instruction will best serve ELL students and help them transition into general education classes?

In summary, all my reading resolves into a simple statement of fact. ELL students can handle the demands of a content-area class, provided they receive sufficient scaffolding and support from co-teachers who involve students through reading and writing assignments, encouragement for active listening and discourse, and a platform that includes interesting and current materials that interest the students. These students show great

wisdom in handling difficult situations and adapting to a new life. The U.S. History class serves as a temporary stopping point on their academic journey, where they learn to apply academic language, gain academic skills in research, writing, and speaking, and begin to move forward into general education classes.

Chapter 3: Methodology: Action Research

The action research principles embedded in this autoethnographic study contain elements of literacy, discourse, and co-teaching. This study investigates the prior knowledge and language skills of English Language Learners (ELLs) by examining the curriculum, lesson plans, graphic organizers, and subject matter knowledge associated with a U.S. History class. It emphasizes an awareness of social justice issues, multicultural education, and methods of meeting the needs of ELL students. This dissertation includes two journal articles that discuss the effectiveness of structured ELL instruction around social studies instruction, with a co-teaching component.

Reflections on my own teaching practice center this work. I describe techniques such as scaffolding, written and oral strategies, and modeling as essential elements related to teaching ELL students. These reflections, while focused on one classroom, should help other teachers develop broad and effective practices for teaching social studies to ELL students by emphasizing discourse and creative thinking.

Why Action Research?

Much of the data from this study originates with observations and interviews of students and teachers. As Herr and Anderson (1998) demonstrate, collaborative research involves insider and outsider perspectives. My involvement in this project originates with my training as a teacher of English as a Second Language, and development of my abilities on how best to instruct second-language learners. This project merges academic

learning of "outsiders" with the practical instruction offered by an "insider." I consider this project participatory action research (PAR), following Glesne's (2011) definition that "action research [is] committed to social transformation through active involvement of marginalized or disenfranchised groups" (p. 23). This research aims to raise the consciousness of both ELL and general education teachers, giving them transformative information and a new perspective on the ELL classroom (Glesne, p. 24).

Research Overview

This research profiled the students involved; used World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) proficiency scores to describe students' reading and writing abilities; evaluated students' prior knowledge; created classroom descriptions; evaluated pre- and post-research testing data; and triangulated this collected data with peer-reviewed literature and teachers in order to demonstrate effective principles for second language learner instruction.

Research Setting. The study takes place at West Ackerly Middle High School[9], a suburban area in northwest Vermont, and examines a seldom-investigated population that represents a small minority of the English Language Learners in the United States. The district consists of a single facility, which houses approximately 900 students, from pre-kindergarten to grade 12, with approximately 40 per cent English Language Learners. During the 2015-16 school year, all students in the district qualified for free-and-reduced lunch (Vermont Agency of Education, 2015).

[9] This study uses pseudonyms for the names of students, teachers, and the school itself.

Site description. This research involved observing English Language Learners (ELLs) over a two-year period in a 35-week high school class entitled Foundations of U.S. History, which I co-taught. Cohort 1 took place in 2015-16; Cohort 2 in 2016-17. As a relocation area for refugees, the town of West Ackerly contains a plurality of English Language Learners. The Foundations of U.S. History class meets five times over a two-week period (block scheduling), with approximately 100 planned class meetings during the 173 class-day schedule.

Participating in the research study as a teacher-researcher expanded my access to information about the curriculum and the students. I used the district's computer and technology facilities to track progress and grading. The district provided data about student achievement, attendance, and performance that I could access through Web2School[10] (grading and administration) and Canvas[11] (curriculum and assignment planning). My personal involvement in the school simplified the collection of data and ensured my maximum participation in the classroom. I provided personal research tools (computer, books) to maintain confidentiality and separate the project from day-to-day instruction.

My co-teacher agreed with, and participated in, all curriculum planning and assessments. We discussed the research on an ongoing basis and he strongly supported my work. The research structure and conclusions, however, are my own.

[10] Information software from Wicked Good Software, Inc. Manchester, NH 03101.
[11] Learning management system from Instructure, Salt Lake City, UT 84121.

Instructional Overview

According to the high school's Program of Studies, students must demonstrate a level of academic achievement and proficiency in order to register for U.S. History. At the time of this study, the Program of Studies required that all students take U.S. History (or its American Studies equivalent) as a required course for graduation. Only entering tenth graders (or those who have completed tenth grade) could qualify for the U.S. History course.[12]

ELL students had to show language proficiency at the developing (Level 3) or expanding (Level 4) categories, with composite scores of 2.5 on average, as measured by the annual WIDA ACCESS test. Appendix C lists the WIDA scores of the 2015-16 cohort. Appendix D contains the Can Do Descriptors, a standards-based resource tool that describes students' language expectations for the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing along the levels of English language proficiency. ELL students who take U.S. History generally fall into the "developing" level of instruction, about the midpoint of the six levels, with outliers falling into the "beginning" or "expanding" levels (Appendix D).

We designed the U.S. History curriculum to provide basic thematic understanding. We expect little prior knowledge. Some students have taken history courses in elementary or middle school. Other recent arrivals at the high school take an ELL-oriented social studies class. We assume the typical intermediate-level student who enters U.S. History speaks English but lacks content-level vocabulary and reading comprehension skills.

[12] This long-standing policy changed for the 2016-17 school year. Scheduling difficulties prevented a sufficient number of sophomores, juniors, and seniors from taking this course. As an experiment, and in an attempt to fill the class, five ninth-grade students were added to the roster.

Therefore, we focus on major historical themes and academic skills, such as reading, writing, and speaking. Depending on their U.S. arrival dates or the need for special education accommodation, some students may require remedial help. In our experience, no U.S. History student has required translation services.

Participant Selection and Description

The U.S. History co-teachers evaluated twenty-four potential class members in Cohort 1 after publication of that year's WIDA scores. Several registered students could not meet the prerequisites, two students left the class after it began, and two students left before the class ended, resulting in the fifteen-member roster for the year. Enrolled students chose to participate in the research study by completing an authorization form and submitting a parental approval form. All students received the same level of instruction; opting out did not result in any penalty. Options for supplemental work existed for anyone choosing not to participate in the research, although no one opted out.

As mentioned earlier, the district serves lower income families, many of them immigrants from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. All students in this study spoke English as a second language. An inclusive class structure allowed accommodations for anyone with special needs. One student in this cohort required support for a hearing disability. Another student underwent evaluations for special needs during the course of the year, which one or both teachers attended to present evidence and work with counselors and parents.

Student Demographics

Students in the 2015-16 cohort fell into the 15- to 18-year-old age bracket. The 2016-17 cohort included a twenty-year-old student. Appendix C shows the countries of origin and expected graduation dates for the fifteen members of the 2015-16 cohort.

Researcher's role. In 2009, I began teaching English and history to middle school English Language Learners. In 2011, I moved to the high school. In addition to my ELL-specific courses, I co-taught the U.S. History class. In 2013-14, my co-teacher and I adopted a thematic approach focused on basic civics instruction and key historical documents and events

This research project evaluated the U.S. History course as offered in 2015-16, with additional perspectives from the 2016-17 cohort. The co-teachers consulted and shared grading responsibilities, provided after-class time and after-hours electronic access for student support, and brought an awareness of scaffolded instruction to their teaching practices. As a certified ELL Trainer, I brought this experience in co-teaching and content-area instruction to the workshops I conducted for other teachers in the district.

Researcher subjectivity. The curricular content in the U.S. History class stresses social justice and fairness, principles mirrored in the teachers' personal and professional lives. I bring nine years experience working with ELL students and evaluating them; my co-teacher brings twenty-three years experience teaching social studies to diverse populations. The nature of the co-teaching relationship in this class allows for various combinations of instruction and evaluation, including parallel teaching, station teaching,

alternate teaching, and team teaching (Conderman, Bresnahan, and Pedersen (2009, p. 49).

As a white male who grew up in an urban/suburban part of New Jersey, I perceived privilege and racial disparity in multiple ways. I lived in a principally white town but attended high school and college in urban areas with African American and Hispanic students. My freelance writing career put me in close contact with engineers from Asia and the Middle East. I became more aware of racial disparities when I lived in the integrated Dorchester section of Boston in my 30s and began teaching at schools in Vermont with diverse populations in my late 50s.

I grew up during the Civil Rights movement, and I became aware of the changes underway in my world. Later, my teacher education gave me the words for what I felt: equity, social justice, advocacy. And my teaching experiences taught me to demonstrate the feelings behind the words of John Lewis, the congressman from Georgia, who participated in Bloody Sunday: "You try to appeal to the goodness of every human being and you don't give up. You never give up on anyone" (quoted in Tippett, 2016, p. 110). When I entered an ELL classroom for the first time as a student teacher, I felt immediately comfortable and accepted. The students I met were simply younger versions of people whom I had known for most of my life.

In *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know*, Gary Howard (2006) discusses "dysconscious racism," an attitude that prevents white educators from seeing the intrinsic dominance that one race/culture has over another. I reflect on his assessment when I teach a class of students from around the world, many of whom have survived relocation,

refugee camps, and a life of poverty. I am confronted with what Howard describes as "feelings of inadequacy, discomfort and guilt" (p. 8). Yet this confrontation has proven transformative. While aware of social injustice in the world in and around the school—a fact of life that Howard realizes can "stifle the potential of too many of our students from all racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups"—I accept that educators see "political correctness" as less important than the "personal consciousness" that I feel as a concerned white educator "committed to social healing and positive change" (p. 8).

My co-teacher, Mr. Casino, graduated from the high school where he now teaches. He has seen waves of immigration, from the French Canadians who worked in the nearby mills to the Vietnamese who emigrated after the Vietnam War, from the Bosnians in the 1980s to the current groups of refugees from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Although he and his family live in another community, his two sons attended elementary school in the West Ackerly district because he wanted them to grow up with diversity as a foundational part of their lives. Mr. Casino has witnessed a multitude of community changes as a resident of the town, a high school student, a parent, and a teacher.

Essential Questions

Optimal teaching practice, scaffolding, and the creation of prior knowledge seem essential for teaching ELL students. As they transition into general education classes, perhaps for the first time, students hear new and different content information, develop ways to process it in their own language, and then assimilate it into an accessible English

syntax. These cognitive procedures generate a multitude of questions that interest teachers and researchers alike.

Content and discourse. In planning this research, and in developing course content over a four-year period, I devised a series of essential questions that demanded answers through action research. These questions focus on the heart of the problem, offer some purpose for change, and question both the status quo and how to change it.

- What expertise do ELL students need to transition from scaffolded instruction to more independent work?
- Does a thematic approach to U.S. History give multicultural students sufficient background knowledge?
- Can ELL students expand their understanding of social studies through an intensive concentration on discourse that also develops their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills?
- What social arrangements will help ELL students transition into general education classes?

Evaluating problem-purpose questions. In my experience, I find that ELL students experience difficulties in transitioning from ELL-only, heavily scaffolded language classes to content-focused general education. Murphey (2014) uses National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data to show that the "achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students—about 40 percentage points in both fourth-grade reading and eighth-grade math—has been essentially unchanged from 2000 to 2013" (p. 2). Appendix E compares reading and math scores for ELL, non-ELL, and former ELL students. These data

indicate the long-standing 40-point achievement gap, except when ELL students test out of ELL programs and tend to approach the levels of non-ELL students. These data suggest the need for content-area instruction that builds on and enhances scaffolded ELL instruction and that ELL students need sufficient time to assimilate this new higher-level instruction.

A backgrounder document produced by the National Education Association (NEA) – "Understanding the Gaps: Who Are We Leaving Behind—and How Far?"—points to the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students as "deeply rooted, pervasive, complex, and challenging… some of the most pronounced achievement gaps of any student groups" (p. 3). With graduation rates 20 points below the national average, "ELL students graduate from high school 'at the lowest rate of all student subgroups'" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015, cited in NEA, p. 3). Although time in the school seems to promote greater proficiency, the transitions that ELL students seek involve both economic and academic success. The need to help their families financially often conflicts with academic needs, even though ELL students can appreciate that more classroom time usually results in a diploma, better jobs, and greater opportunities for post-secondary education. Poverty, academic struggles, and traumatic experiences contribute to the difficulty ELL students experience in their academic transitions.

ELL-only classes teach the basics (speaking, listening, reading and writing). Then, ELL students must learn to apply that knowledge and those basic skills. In this transition, ELL students find themselves in content-based classes that involve higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation), skills acquisition (notetaking, summarization, public presentation, research, and writing), and a totally different, "foreign" subject. As a result,

ELL students face several challenges: They must discover and internalize facts by interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating material from lectures, documents, and other unfamiliar sources. They must learn and build on collaborative skills in order to benefit from the synergy that their varied backgrounds help them create. They must adapt what they know and apply it to a generally more rigorous classroom experience.

As a researcher following ELL students on their journeys through a content-area class, I developed certain questions to test assumptions and monitor students' progress. These questions span areas of personal perceptions and feelings around a content area, learning style and experience, strategies and techniques, needs and abilities, and pedagogical factors, principally co-teaching during this research project. Although not exclusive, these questions form the core of the research: (1) How do ELL students feel about U.S. History? (2) How do they demonstrate proficiency? (3) What factors influence their performance and motivation? (4) How can a "typical"[13] ELL student learn in a content-area class?

[13] Given that the ELL students at West Ackerly come from multiple backgrounds, speak a variety of languages, and demonstrate varying levels of proficiency on language assessments, we expect patterns to exist in students' growth and performance. Yet each student is unique, with different perspectives and abilities. One profile of a "typical" ELL student does not exist to my knowledge. A teacher can only recognize similarities and differences, and treat each child with care and consideration.

In the following sections, I will discuss these questions and bring out the details in my teaching practice and in the stories these students tell about themselves and the instruction they receive. The thread connecting these questions to these students reveals a pattern of transitions from remedial ELL instruction into more independent content-based academic work. Their struggle resides within that new and revised instruction.

ELL Learning in a Content-Area Class

The U.S. History content class carries with it a different atmosphere than the familiar, structured language classes that have made up the ELL students' curriculum for several years. Most students confront a sizable—possibly intimidating—textbook, extensive reading assignments, and study guides. They must participate in graded classroom discussions, which represent new experiences for them. They receive independent reading tasks to prepare for Socratic Seminars. They begin major projects that require cooperation from other class members. Finally, they become aware of the specter of grades looms underneath the daily requirements for homework and writing projects. Doing well means showing proficiency with grades of A or B. Lower grades reflect a "not yet proficient" category. As Dittman (2002) reports on a study by Crocker in the *Journal of Social Issues*, more than 80 percent of incoming college freshmen associate self-worth with academic competence, although motivation and studying for long periods of time did not result in higher grades. "Students who based their self-worth on academic outcomes also were more likely to report conflicts with professors and greater stress" (p. 16). West Ackerly students want to do well. Their parents view grades as a sign of success. Yet grades become a

measure of self-worth, and evaluating themselves in a time-tested grading system presents difficulties[14].

Graduate Expectations: History and Development. The West Ackerly administrators approved introduction of the graduate expectations in the fall of 2013 (Mr. Spyder, personal conversation, 22 July 2016). After additional development, West Ackerly High School used its graduate expectations during the 2015-16 school year, to initiate a move away from the "What's my grade?" standard to a demonstration of proficiency. During the school's development of proficiency-based grading, many questions emerged. The two U.S. History teachers frequently discussed the advantages of a scoring tool, such as a grading rubric, which I saw as an objective standard that allowed us to assess the component parts while evaluating students' mastery of the topic and their strengths and weaknesses. My assignments included a rubric so students could frame their work and direct their efforts to specific goals. Proficiency grading, however, seemed more subjective, with a longer baseline on which to evaluate students. Yet, at the same time, a proficiency system allows teachers to assess the degree of learning: Have students acquired expected knowledge and skills as they progress through their education? (Leadership in Action, 2015, p. 1). As co-teachers we reached an accommodation that allowed us to view grading as more art than science, both subjective and objective. We collected assignment scores and used them to assess students' proficiency levels. Because our cohorts included students assessed

[14] When this research took place, West Ackerly followed a grading system using Carnegie Units for Cohort 1 (2015-16). The grading system changed to proficiency measurement for Cohort 2 (2016-17). The Developing Qualitative Information section (p. 172) contains details about the West Ackerly grading system.

with both standards and proficiencies, our results attempted to create a class-wide equitable grading solution.

Our 2015-16 rubrics showed proficiencies on various scales (Appendix F) but we attached grades to that proficiency. Students and parents received a subtle message promoting coexistence of grading standards and proficiency. That coexistence changed in 2016-17 with an altered report card and a proficiency-based grading system beginning with the class of 2020. Additional changes to the grading system emerged in the 2017-18 school year.

During the years of this research study, West Ackerly High School introduced a set of standards—or graduate expectations (Table 2)—by which students would show proficiency and lead to graduation. A subset of these standards—or graduate proficiencies—provided teachers with a granular means to assess student performance. Teachers assessed student progress based on satisfactory completion of projects that included critical thinking and problem solving components (GX 3) and effective oral and written communication (GX 2). We included these assessments as part of regular class work. Biannual expositions determined students' overall proficiency based on their completion of specific graduate expectations. These school-wide standards offered teachers (and researchers) an opportunity to evaluate ELL students in transition and assess their ability to meet the school's graduate expectations. This research project fit neatly into the ongoing work on graduate expectations, and provided data to inform teaching practice in other content areas.

Table 2

West Ackerly Graduate Expectations with Descriptors

	Graduate Expectation	Students will …
1.	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Ask challenging questions, examine complex problems, identify and propose solutions.
2.	Physical, Social, and Emotional Well-Being	Identify personal strengths and weakness and take intentional steps to grow.
3.	Effective Oral and Written Communication	Demonstrate skills at taking in and expressing ideas in multiple ways.
4.	Creativity	Approach tasks in imaginative and innovative ways in order to produce meaningful products
5.	Persistence	Accept the challenge of difficult or long-term problems, and push to reach goals.
6.	Cross-Cultural Understanding and Community Engagement	Know and appreciate different people, cultures, and perspectives, and participate in the life of the community and the greater world.

Note: The school district formed committees to develop the graduate expectations (GX). This table was adapted from original documents created in June 2013, and revised in 2015 and 2017. As of this writing, the school primarily focuses on GX 1 and GX 3, with GX2 applied to physical education and health classes.

Teaching for Social Justice

Although I long for a world of equity and social justice, progress remains slow and takes time. The presence of an African American in the White House reflected one advance in an era of racial violence and ongoing discrimination. In spite of disappointments, I have discovered in my classroom a place "where healing and hope are still possible" (Howard, 2006, p. 11). In my classes, we learn about the hate mirrored in the public eye: the Confederate flag used as a claim to a past that no longer exists, except in the hearts of certain individuals; the iconic images of the violence in Ferguson, Missouri that is so reminiscent of Watts, Newark, Detroit, and Chicago in the 1960s. Suddenly, today's news

mirrors the violence and uncertainty of my youth, a perpetual news cycle that has come around again. Just as Martin Luther King's speech at the Lincoln Memorial signified something important, today is filled with micro-incidents to match the times.

Lessons from the past mirror the present in many ways. Taken in more or less equal parts with acknowledgment of those personal quiet spaces and today's current events, this amalgam with U.S. History provides an "abundant and immediate possibility for the power of conduct, of unromantic practical love, towards creating new realities that might just, over time, accompany and shape those larger challenges" (Tippett, 2016, p. 115). No longer can teachers simply teach the facts of U.S. History. Teaching—for immigrant students as well as those native-born—must make connections that allow students to engage in critical thinking and problem solving of these massive problems that have stymied our predecessors for so many years. In addition, I realize that teaching today must involve principles of discourse, equity, and relationships.

Discourse. Words matter. Accessing multiple languages requires thinking differently, with a need to "go beyond the boundaries of our L1, adjusting to the requirements and norms of other languages" (Grosjean and Pavlenko, 2015). In this way, introducing English to speakers of other languages creates understanding difficulties that only practice over time will resolve. We encouraged students to make this adjustment by using the Socratic Seminar to promote a higher level of discourse in our U.S. History class. In this unit, students learned about a topic during a lecture, read and wrote about it, then received a new article that they had to annotate and prepare for discussion. At each stage, they could make mistakes in expressing their understanding or pronunciation, and receive

feedback from their peers or their teachers. All these inputs created a feedback loop targeted at the discourse in which they engaged.

At the discourse or spoken word level, students gained insights into the academic ramifications of the articles they had read and the history lectures they had heard. Listening introduced the topic, reading and writing supplemented their understanding and helped them internalize their learning, then we called on them to converse with others to demonstrate the depth of their learning.

This level of discourse challenges students to use words from their reading and classroom experience. It pushes them beyond their comfort zone, so that the Socratic Seminar becomes the assessment of their learning. Although words act as containers for content, these students developed symbiotic links between words and meanings. "Words are crafted by human beings, wielded by human beings," writes Tippett (2016) in *Becoming Wise*. "They take on all of our flaws and frailties. They diminish or embolden the truths they arose to carry. We drop and break them sometimes. We renew them, again and again" (p. 16).

In this way, I hope, students in my classroom realize their intrinsic worth to a much larger world and their education serves as a pathway to educating the world. As I write this paragraph, six of my students find themselves at a college away from home, experiencing the rigors of those early days of post-secondary education. Four of them are pursuing careers in nursing and two in education. I can see their struggles ahead but I believe they will in turn "open possibilities" in others' lives because of their experiences.

Equity. The idea of multicultural education informs all my instruction because of the diversity of my classes. These students live and work in a diverse educational atmosphere. “Imagine a world in which, as a result of something over which you have no control—say, your racial identity, sexual orientation, or home language—you’re made to feel alienated or invisible at school” (Gorski and Swalwell, 2015, p. 35). Children receive socializing messages about themselves and one another as early as preschool. Many avoid mentioning their experiences with bias and discrimination (p. 38). In the classroom, we strive to create equity and include “a framework for both multicultural curriculum development and bigger efforts to create equitable classrooms and schools” (p. 36). Further classroom-centered research is necessary to determine whether teachers have the ability “to cultivate in students a robust understanding about how people are treated by one another and by institutions, and whether equity, rather than culture, is placed at the center of the diversity conversation (Gorski & Swalwell, p. 36). Our classroom contains many cultures, and we try to honor each of them in our presentations and interactions.

Any multicultural community must strive for balance while realizing that the institution may lack cultural models. If a primarily white population handles all administration and staff duties, for example, children of color will see few cultural role models. Such a structure may invest cultural energy in “surface-level cultural exchanges, fantasies of color-blindness, or celebrations of white-washed heroes [that ignore] the actual inequities,” a fact that makes the institution assume “an implicit complicity with those inequities” (Gorski & Swalwell, p. 40). American history contains virulent and malicious aspects, whether we refer broadly to slavery and Westward Expansion or specifically to the

Trail of Tears and Executive Order 9066 that interned thousands of Japanese Americans. We introduce such events with a caveat: This material does not make me feel good as a person or a teacher, but it is the truth. And we must teach the truth. It is for you to decide where it fits into American culture.

Relationships. Throughout the span of U.S. History, Americans see themselves as individuals, "raised by your bootstraps," and independent. History tends to ignore those groups who lack independence in a world of white male privilege: Africans and persons of color, Native Americans, women. In contrast, children in a diverse school demonstrate a level of intercultural cooperative engagement in classwork and social activities. Their different languages of origin pose few barriers to the greater need to connect with peers. Especially in presentations, students from all ethnicities support each other and compliment their peers on their speaking abilities and depth of their messages, even if the words lack accuracy or pronunciation falters. A sense of multiculturalism allows them to speak a universal language of the heart.

There is magic in joining various cultures in one classroom. Sometimes I fear that it may seem antithetical to the practice of teaching, as if I will be laughed at for having these deeper spiritual feelings. Yet, there is joy in the journey, and a sense of amazement at the power of relationships. In spite of the complexity and the multicultural aspects of my practice—facts of life that happen too infrequently in most of the world where homogeneity is a central fact of human existence—possibilities for development and change happen all around me, every day.

A philosophy of living entered my thinking and writing as I reflected on my teaching and my focus on how ELL students undergo their transitions from the safe world of remedial academics to a more intense perspective in which they must confront more difficult subjects. Suddenly, research papers, notetaking, and presentations influence their lives. They put themselves on the line in new ways and with high stakes that must reflect their proficiency. In this complex world, fraught with possibilities, they see many potential causes for failure yet remain optimistic. Here my students teach me. If they can show resilience and persistence in the face of difficulty, I too can take risks and express details that I might ordinarily keep to myself. I can step up and defend what is right and oppose wrongheadedness. I can approach my life with humor and resolve, lending a helping hand where I can. Perhaps there is one word that encompasses these feelings.

At Barack Obama's inauguration on the mall in Washington, D. C. in 2009, poet Elizabeth Alexander spoke of love. As Tippett (2016) reflects on Alexander's question about whether love is the mightiest word, she asks how such a new perspective changes our daily struggle:

> The question in and of itself invites each of us out of aloneness. The exacting, enlivening aspiration of love does send us inside to know and honor the particularities of our identities and our struggles. But it coaxes us out again to an encounter with the vastness of human identity (p. 109).

Those children in Room 202 during Block 3 bond with each other and their teachers. We form relationships through the study of U.S. History. Each of us influences the other. We

begin to understand each other's difficulties and more important the identities that make us uniquely ourselves. And, maybe that class has something to do with love.

Relationships involve belonging. Daily, ELL students confront how they once "belonged" to a family group or a culture. They left that life and entered a new, totally foreign community. A similar transition occurred during the Civil Rights movement, when the term "beloved community" entered into public discourse through the writings and speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Like the Civil Rights activists, ELL students and their parents had to have faith that their new direction would work, that they would reach a satisfactory destination.

Research Design

This dissertation includes a research summary and documentation of the project. It features two journal articles reflecting different aspects of the action research component: (a) An evaluation and practical summary of ELL teaching in a U.S. History class; and (b) A description of co-teaching and its effectiveness for ELL students.

Reasons for qualitative methods. Qualitative methods as part of an action research project can produce emerging data that change assumptions related to the direction of the project. In this study, I address three areas of learning:

- The literacy attributes of students in the classroom, specifically levels of discourse observed during Socratic Seminars.
- The development of discourse in interpreting and sharing content knowledge.
- The course structure, from a global as well as a student perspective.

Qualitative methods provided an avenue for hearing student voice as a commentary on the course and the subject matter in order to determine how students evaluate themselves and their learning. I embraced the qualitative methods of data analysis because of the descriptive nature of my research questions.

Data Collection

During this research, I interviewed teachers and students. I collected class notes, assessments, and student work. We followed the University of Vermont Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols, including requesting parent consent and student assent and allowing students to opt out of the study. The principal of the school approved this action research project and provided unlimited access for researchers. Students and parents documented their willingness to participate in this research and allowed us to record and photograph students in class by signing letters of consent approved by the IRB. Participants gave permission for us to use their work anonymously for analysis and publication. My co-teacher and I kept classroom disruption to a minimum, with visual and audio recording limited to presentations and Socratic Seminar assessments. We conducted audio recordings for several lessons as well as interviews with two teachers and six students.

The research features a loopback core of collaboration between the co-teachers involved and a second loopback with academic researchers involved in the ELL-related work. A third level of loopback involves the school itself, its administrators, teachers, and other students, who observed parts of the classroom activities of the target population in

public forums in which students engaged in oral and written communication and problem-solving activities.

Working with the cohorts. The West Ackerly grading schema changed from Carnegie Units[15] for all students (in 2015-16, Cohort 1) to proficiency-based for members of the class of 2020 (in 2016-17, Cohort 2). The average grade for Cohort 1 was 76, with one student failing and three receiving grades of 90 or more. Cohort 2 included eleven 9th through 12th grade students, and required two sets of assessments (proficiencies for 9th graders versus Carnegie Units for all others). Three students in Cohort 2 received final grades of 87 or greater. Four 9th graders lacked proficiency and had to re-take the class in 2017-18. One 9th grader passed with a high level of proficiency. Four upper class students, for whom Carnegie Units applied, passed the class with grades in the 70s.

Several students in Cohort 1 received attention because of their level of participation and willingness to support the data collection. I focused my participant-observations on these seven individuals as representative samples. Students most interested in the subject matter or with long-standing relationships with me agreed to participate in interviews. Students spoke frankly about their feelings and struggles with this content-area class, some of which entered into this study. While students in both cohorts agreed to participate in the research, not all of them agreed to interviews. I

[15] Developed in the early 20th century by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, this set of standards applied to courses, facilities, staffing, and admissions. The Carnegie Unit (or credit hour) "became the basic unit of measurement both for determining students' readiness for college and their progress through an acceptable program of study" (Bryk, quoted in Silva, White, & Toch, 2015, p. 3). Reform efforts in the early 21st century initiated a shift to "competency-based (rather than instructional time-based) metric" (p. 3). The Carnegie Unit measures "the amount of time students spend in the classroom rather than their mastery of subjects (p. 5).

omitted data from the two students who did not complete the year because of outside obligations.

Developing a work plan. The 2015-16 school year represented the fifth year of this co-teaching collaboration between me, as an ELL specialist teacher, and Mr. Casino, as a social studies teacher. The 2015-16 class followed a thematically based syllabus, with units that included discourse-specific activities, such as Socratic Seminars, solo and group presentations, and informal discussions. Data collection included audio and video recordings, plus copies of student work, assessments, grades, and test scores. Instructional materials included cloze activities (in which students received the beginning or ending of a sentence and had to complete it with factual content), word banks, and practice in academic skills (notetaking, reading for understanding, writing research papers, presentations). On a daily basis, students had to incorporate the four domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in classroom activities. Copies of student work reside in the school's classroom management system, in Google documents, and in paper and electronic archives created at the completion of the course in June 2016 and June 2017. A separate, secure hard drive contains electronic student- and teacher-generated course-related materials. Data collected during the study included curriculum materials (copies of assignments, handouts, the syllabus, student work); district communications; planning documents; transcriptions of audio and video interviews; WIDA ACCESS assessments; reading assessments; and district communications.

Developing Qualitative Information. Although twenty-one students participated in the classroom data collection, several students in both cohorts stood out for various

reasons. Six students received counseling or special education support and referrals. I participated in multiple meetings and worked with various clinical personnel to assist with the evaluations. For confidentiality reasons, I avoided taking notes or any mention of specifics that could jeopardize each child's anonymity.

Working with sources. I conducted open-ended and reflective audio interviews with my co-teacher, and recorded several classes containing our instruction, including segments of the Socratic Seminars. With the 2015-16 cohort, I conducted semi-structured interviews with seven students who volunteered to participate. These interviews lasted from ten to thirty minutes each. For scheduling reasons, I interviewed two students at the same time; I also conducted several individual interviews. Student interviews focused on (1) Student perceptions when they arrived in class in the fall; (2) Whether they had studied history prior to the class; (3) What they wanted to learn from the class; (4) A personal high point during the instructional period; (5) Their reactions to a co-taught classroom; (6) Their understanding of instruction during the year; (7) Reactions to attending an ELL-only U.S. History class; and (8) Their personal feelings about the changes they experienced in the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing during the year. I conducted student interviews outside of regular class times, in another classroom, and during U.S. History class work time.

In other interviews, my co-teacher and I talked frequently after class, as part of our reflection on the day's experience or to plan subsequent lessons. I tape recorded or took handwritten notes during these sessions. Through a telephone interview, I obtained

details about the graduate expectations development process (Mr. Spyder, personal communication, 22 July 2016).

Much of the documentation for the U.S. History class exists in electronic format. Plans, assignments, and grades reside in Canvas, the classroom management system, which the school district manages. Much student work resides as Google documents in a server maintained by the school district. My personal journal of the year's events, class notes, lesson plans, some student work, and related materials reside on my personal laptop computer, with backups made to a secure external storage device.

Data Analysis

The data collected for this study originates with students enrolled during two school years for the West Ackerly school district: Cohort 1 from August 2015 to June 2016 and Cohort 2 from August 2016 to June 2017. I attended sports events, met with parents, and observed students in other classes, in the library, at their homes and community events, and during college visits. I conducted interviews during 2016-17 and continued conversations that led to additional data from the fall of 2016, particularly a presentation I conducted in October at a local college for pre-service teachers, to which I invited several ELL students. I presented some of these findings as part of a linguistics class taught by Karen Vatz at the University of Vermont (whose students observed my ELL classes) and at the November 2017 Northern New England TESOL conference held at the University of Vermont.

I supervised two in-house field trips, during which ELL students from West Ackerly High School exchanged visits with another high school. As Ngo (2010) notes:

"These participant-observations focused on the ways in which students, teachers, and school staff understood and talked about culture and cultural difference…" (p. 127). The field trips included slide presentations that showed refugee camps where my students lived and explored various cultural aspects of their lives before arriving in the United States.

During both school years (and continuing to the present), I spent five days a week on campus as part of my position as a high school teacher. I taught and observed the students in class, in the hallways, at lunch, and during field trips. I spent time correcting assignments, planning lessons, and evaluating WIDA test scores on weekends and holidays. This research consumed a significant percentage of the 180 days in each of the school years studied, for a total of approximately 360 days of observations[16]. This combination of observations, classroom interactions, informal discussions, and interviews helped me triangulate formal teaching with both student and adult perceptions of that instruction. I also collected daily student work, assessments, and electronic planning documents to help with the triangulation of data.

Managing the analysis. Creswell (2013) uses a spiral image to describe the analysis phase, which begins with data collection then moves to data management. The researcher reads the collected data, writes about it ("memoing"), and follows up with description, classification, and interpretation before concluding with representation and visualization (p. 183). My data collection process began in September 2015. I recorded two Socratic Seminars and interviews with my co-teacher; I made journal entries and

[16] While observations took place every day, the alternating class schedule (A/B block scheduling) meant that work with U.S. History students took place every other day of the school year.

after-class notes that described the lesson. I developed categories to "build detailed descriptions, develop themes or dimensions, and provide an interpretation" (Creswell, p. 184), some of which became part of the articles for publication contained in this dissertation. I reduced the data into smaller bits of information around which I built themes that led to the dissertation narrative. These themes contain "broad units of information" (p. 186).

The inductive analysis in this study began with specific observations and built toward the general patterns described by Patton (2002, pp. 55-56). Open-ended observations followed from these categories or dimensions of analysis. Patton finds that significant participant learning occurs during unstructured time as a result of interactions with other participants. In my attempts to capture a holistic view of the U.S. History program, I used a journal to record notes from informal hallway conversations or passing comments, which allowed me to collect information while maintaining my role as evaluator observer (pp. 286-287). I transcribed the audiotaped interviews and classroom recordings; collated the WIDA ACCESS scores for individual students; sorted and prioritized student work; reviewed electronic planning documents; coded the material into appropriate categories, including analysis of transcripts, field notes, and data from peer-reviewed journals and other sources (Miles, Huber man, and Saldaña, 2014, p. 73). This coding led to possible ideas, themes, and issues that I discussed in the study. I subsequently analyzed my information to refine the major topics and sharpen my writing focus.

Going beyond the themes into interpretation created a "larger meaning of the data" and a greater level of abstraction that helped make sense of the data (Creswell, p.187). I connected the data from my classroom with the literature that has informed my teaching, creating a reinforcement loop. Further, I adopted some of Creswell's methods to represent or visualize the data. In keeping with the participatory action research concepts as outlined by Cochran-Smith and Lytle in *Inquiry As Stance* (2009), and matching the need for research validation (Creswell, p.188), I discussed results and data with study participants and included their input, as appropriate.

Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) advised "analysis concurrent with data collection" in order to think about existing data while developing methods to improve ongoing data collection (p. 70). I developed these methods in stages, both during data collection and in the writing process. Data analysis focused on conversational details as seen during Socratic Seminar sessions as well as narrative analysis of interview data. The Socratic Seminar component demonstrated students' familiarity with the material and their individual ability to respond to others after internalizing the information. I used real-time assessments to evaluate their discourse capability. Because these cohorts included intermediate learners in a content-area class, I avoided focusing on the "details of conversation, from time intervals between utterances to stress on certain words" (Glesne, 2011, p. 185), opting instead for a holistic evaluation of the content of each student's discourse while in the group. The narrative analysis included broad, open-ended questions based on a personalized script. Data analysis involved personal notes about a particular lesson or area of interest in a field log (Glesne, p. 189). I captured these ideas

in several ways: A notebook calendar, an electronic log file, and a digital tape recorder. I recorded class sessions to obtain the content and pacing of a lesson. These methods allowed me to keep track of my "perspectives, feelings, and interactions" (Glesne, p. 189).

This study followed Creswell's validation strategies, such as "prolonged engagement and persistent observation" and triangulation, or "multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence"; and peer review or debriefing (pp. 250-251). Interim reports systematically located me in the process and confirmed the research direction (Glesne, 2011, p. 192; Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014, p. 70). This review seemed essential when dealing with student data, curriculum planning, assessments, and scheduling. Glesne (2011) suggested that these reflections could lead to new ways of approaching the research; Miles *et al.* (2014) indicate that concurrent analysis and data collection offer "a healthy corrective for built-in blind spots" (p. 70).

During the writing period, I struggled with an overall plan for the dissertation. In trying to balance the needs of action research, scholarly personal narrative, and my own style, I sought an entry point where I could begin my documentation of the ideas at the core of the dissertation. As a fallback position, I opted for a series of vignettes, each containing a piece of a story or a critical research element. I then stitched these vignettes into the whole of the document. This method resembled a fiction writer's outline of the novel into acts, scenes, and beats (Kettell, 2014, p. 14) as an organizational tool for a narrative. This structure allowed me to maintain consistency in evaluating the data

acquired over time and avoid the "definitional drift," defined by Gibbs (2007) and quoted in Glesne (p. 197).

Curricular decisions. The curricular decisions I made in planning for the U.S. History course represent the "action" part of my action research. Because I had co-taught the class before beginning the research, I had mapped out an instructional path and determined optimal ways to capture the research. Of course, many variables intervened during the actual two-year instruction and research period. My co-teacher and I adapted the curriculum as needed. In particular, changes in the graduate expectations forced us to modify our assessments and grading plans.

One aspect of teaching a broader view of U.S. History within the confines of a structured curriculum involves determining what to leave in and what to exclude. Choices within the curriculum present difficulties because we want to convey the breadth and scope of U.S. History to our second language learners while providing a sense of history that merges with their various cultures and understandings. As a result, the core of our instruction includes non-negotiable topics such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and the Civil War. To these essentials, we add units around Westward Expansion, imperialism, and at least one modern war (World War I, World War II, Vietnam). Then, we underlay a series of important attitudes, philosophies, non-traditional ideas, and methods of cultural awareness. Some of these issues—race and racism, for example—remain integral parts of our instruction. We add other significant issues—women's suffrage, Reconstruction, Civil Rights, and current events—as time, student interest, and the politics of the day make them more relevant to the students' own stories.

The following section illustrates aspects of our curriculum that we emphasized, including race and racism, civics, and collaboration with another school.

Race and racism. A race and racism thread moves through our curriculum. We study the history of race in America, and the scientific research around it. Our theme involves the social construct or "illusion" that race has represented in America for hundreds of years. Our ELL students enjoy these discussions and we appreciate the opportunity to provide new information about American culture that they thought they knew.

We begin the discussion with *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (California Newsreel, 2010), a multi-part video presentation that examines the historical and scientific truths about race as we experience it in America today. The video opens students' eyes to an issue they considered fact but which in reality "evolved over time… constructed by a society to further certain political and economic goals ... the lens through which we view our world" (California Newsreel).

Civics. We discuss the structure of government as part of our work with the Constitution, making sure that students memorize the Preamble and develop an understanding of our elected officials in Vermont (including senators, representative, and governor) and the general structure in other states. In 2016, we focused heavily on the presidential campaign, asking students to watch a debate or read a news article. We showed video clips of key events and documents.

Philippa Neave's TED Talk vividly brought civics instruction to our ELL students because she described introducing election concepts to "fledging democracies around the world" (Neave, 2016). Neave discussed Article 21 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of

Human Rights, which confirms an individuals' rights "to choose who governs them"; how the United Nations reaches out to women and youth and helps them register to vote; ways to compensate for illiteracy through the use of graphic images on ballots; methods to translate Arabic so that everyday people can understand election terms. Some West Ackerly students speak Arabic and could directly appreciate the problems that Neave described. Others could understand the challenge to explain an election "where there are no words to describe the concepts that underpin a democratic society" (Neave, 2016).

Collaboration. In our collaborative work with another high school, we examined the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and engaged in discussions about proper courses of democratic actions around the world. Our ELL students contributed their personal experiences to these lessons, offering their primarily white visitors a look into a culture unfamiliar to them. Social time, with food the students produced from their own cultures and informal conversations, helped bridge gaps and provided significant understanding of ethnic differences. Interestingly, both districts brought administrators to the conference, which deepened the sense of cultural understanding.

One of the tenets we include in our curriculum involves the rights and responsibilities of citizens. In one conversation, students heard about their roles as they entered adulthood. A City Manager commented: "I want to be in the audience one day, when one of you has to answer questions about trash collection and snow plowing. That will be a great day for me to see you doing what I'm doing now" (K. Decarreau, personal communication, 8 November 2014). The issues of the future bring an immediacy and relevance to our U.S. History instruction. Students become aware that the stories involve

more than dead people struggling to conquer a country and deal with societal problems. Our instruction trains them to expect a role in this society because of what they learn in our classroom.

Research Focus and Methods

The myriad details and perspectives over the span of U.S. History tend to confuse and overwhelm our ELL students. Yet, if we can present key voices and ideas that give students something to remember and connects with their lives, the complexity of U.S. History lessens. Teaching about race and racism allowed students to examine discrimination they have faced or might yet experience. The Neave TED Talk described parts of the world where people "have been deprived of any form of what we know as civic education … [because it] doesn't really exist in that part of the world, and I feel it's really the right of everybody to know how these things work" (Neave, 2016). Neave's experience allowed our students to identify with circumstances in their own countries. And bringing an elected West Ackerly official into our classroom gave them an opportunity to speak with a member of their own community about everyday situations.

In our classroom, we bring new knowledge to students whose own countries generally lack a sense of democracy—countries consumed with terrorism, violence, and sectarianism, where leaders force emigration of minority populations to refugee camps in other countries as a means of covering over racial or religious discrimination. Neave (2016) wants to give people the means and words to know about democratic principles so that they can inform themselves, and subsequently "give themselves a voice" (Neave). I share that same goal in the U.S. History classes I teach.

This research project brings together curriculum and practice, with a central focus on students in transition who must learn a language and then apply new skills to an academic world of content-based instruction. These students must deal with two American teachers who describe in detail the intricacies of a subject formerly unknown to them. They must process this information and see themselves evaluated on their knowledge. And, in a world of reading and writing instruction—where the Socratic Seminar represents the *lingua franca* of daily life and a researcher collects their words and their thoughts—the students generally remained interested and committed to a life filled with adjustments, alterations, and new skills.

Article 1: English Language Learners in Transition

This article provides insights into the thinking and education of English Language Learners in transition. As the most likely candidates for movement into content-area classrooms, these intermediate learners face frustration and accomplishment as they bring what they know into a new world of questions and ideas. We define how we teach U.S. History and why. We explain our rationale for a thematic approach that avoids "covering" all the material in a typical high school curriculum and highlights important events and circumstances that students need to know in order to function in American society. We teach awareness rather than chronologies because ELL students in transition can only absorb so much content.

Abstract

In a mixture of "scholarship and story" reminiscent of Ladson-Billings' *The Dreamkeepers…* (2009, p. xvi), this essay documents my experience teaching English Language Learners in a U.S. History class. This paper examines the personal stories of both teachers and students as well as the pedagogical underpinnings of U.S. History instruction in the pseudonymous West Ackerly school district. With a population of more than 25 percent second language learners and children of color, the district represents an outlier for Vermont schools. I reflect on Ladson-Billings' statement about "keeping the dream alive" (2009, p. xvi), in situations where children of color represent a large percentage of our school-age population. Our immigrant students—unfamiliar with the content, new to reading and writing in English—struggle in transitioning to general education classes. Based on a two-year action research project, this paper summarizes U.S. History instruction and the feelings of the students who participated in our classes. I include conversations with my co-teacher, the backgrounds of our students and their interactions with us, resources for ELL instruction, and how an adapted mainstream curriculum works for second language learners. I conclude by describing a Socratic Seminar, with scaffolded instruction designed for diverse classrooms, including techniques that enhance students' learning, discourse development, and proficiency in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Introducing Room 202

Room 202 bears the look of a typical high school classroom. One-unit steel desks crowd together in rows. A poster of the Declaration of Independence graces the rear wall. Copies of the Constitution and historical texts line the bookshelves. A green chalkboard and a SMART Board® compete for prominence at the front of the room. At 12:05 p.m. on Green days, however, the room turns into an international bazaar. Young women wearing *hijabs* and head scarves gracefully enter in a joyful mixture of Asian, African, and Middle Eastern cultures. Staccato bursts of Nepali echo across the room. Adolescents confront each other in mock displays of power. The high spirits from lunchtime continue as they transition to their work. These 15 students of color make up this Foundations of U.S. History class for 2015-16. For the first time all day, the teachers become a racial and ethnic minority.

My co-teacher—Mr. Casino[17]—and I handle the administrative chores of attendance. We arrange the desks in two rings so that one group sits in the center for the discussion and the other sits in the outer ring to observe. Clipboards snap on assessment sheets, we check recorders and iPads. Although a few minutes late, we seem ready to begin. It is 12:15 p.m.

[17] In accordance with institutional research protocol, pseudonyms identify students, teachers, and the school.

Profile of West Ackerly, Vermont

This paper focuses on a social studies class at West Ackerly Middle High School—a pseudonym for one of the 316 schools in Vermont—and how two cohorts of second language learners received their instruction between 2015 and 2017.

The study examines a seldom-investigated population that represents a small minority of the English Language Learners in the United States: Immigrant students from Nepal, Thailand, the Middle East, and Africa. The district consists of a single facility, which houses approximately 900 students, from pre-kindergarten to grade 12, with approximately twenty-five per cent of the students receiving English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. This extremely diverse student population includes thirty nationalities, represents twenty-four languages, and accommodates a population where at least fifty-two percent of the students qualify for free-and-reduced price breakfast and lunch (Vermont Agency of Education, 2015; Report on the Effectiveness… 2017).

Data and reflections from this two-year action research study create a narrow view of an issue that educators across the country are confronting: How to provide content-area instruction that promotes proficiency for second language learners and ensures college or career readiness for immigrants and refugees. The district addresses this question in the following mission statement:

> All students will graduate from the [district] college and career ready at a cost supported by a majority of the … community…. [S]tudents will lead healthy,

productive and successful lives and engage with their local and global community.[18] (Report on the Effectiveness… 2017).

At the heart of this research resides the story of the fifteen ELL students in the 2015-16 cohort who participated in a series of Socratic Seminars as part of their year-long U.S. History class. Additional details, based on the experience of eleven students in the 2016-17 U.S. History cohort, supplement this narrative.

Background: Educating English Language Learners

Over 4.6 million English language learners (ELL) in the United States attended public schools during 2014-15 school year, comprising nine percent of the overall student population. California reported the highest percentage of ELLs in public schools (22.4) with Nevada enrolling 17.0 percent. Twelve states reported the lowest percentage of English language learners, with Vermont listing a total of 1,442 ELL students (NCES, 2017). Vermont's immigrants, however, include heterogeneous mixtures of children from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, demanding that teachers uncover and discover methods that work for *all* students, no matter their country of origin.

Immigrant students connect to the American dream of success as surely as a magnet draws iron filings. Most aspire to an education and then a home and family. They focus on the frustrations of learning a new culture with the overshadowing requirement for academic performance in a new language. They demonstrate the virtues of persistence, bravery, curiosity, zest, and honesty (VIA Institute on Character), while experiencing massive challenges.

[18] Statement edited to preserve anonymity of research location.

ELL Students in Vermont

As the students in the West Ackerly School District transition to life in the United States, part of their ELL education involves discussions of the dominant white society surrounding them. Gary Howard (2006) refers to transforming white orientation as "fraught with ambiguity, complexity, and dissonance… because the dominance paradigm continues to enmesh us in the legacy of privilege [and the] limited awareness of the depth and complexity of our journey" (p. 139).

In our U.S. History classroom, we frame this country's development from Jamestown to the present with instruction around the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, including examples of white domination, nativism, and imperialism. In turn, students relate stories of life in refugee camps and discrimination they experience when walking down the street and visiting stores in the United States. We learn that a student of color, often a young woman wearing a *hijab*, seems a focal point for hurled epithets, even in politically conscious Vermont.

We encourage students to reflect on their own experiences and make comparisons. In many cases, students connect violence in their home countries to the "peculiar institution" (Foner, 2017, p. 405) of slavery in the antebellum South; Asian immigration and the Chinese Exclusion Act with their expulsion from homes in Bhutan or Burma; civil rights in the 1960s with parents leaving them in order to earn a living. Time after time, my students write about a journey from a warm homeland, their first airplane trip, inability to eat unfamiliar food, and arriving in the middle of a snowy Vermont landscape populated by individuals wearing puffy coats, hats, and gloves.

They remember many details of the journey. In 2008, for example, a young Burmese Muslim woman and her family left Thailand and came to Vermont. They belong to the Karen ethnic group and, after their expulsion from Burma (Myanmar), they moved to the Thailand refugee camps. She remembers that on their way to the Nu Pu camp the "… Thai army they caught us. I was there. They beat my uncle and aunt so bad." Now, she says, "I don't want bad memories in me because they make me hurt … I don't want to think about it" (Fabrizia Thant, personal conversation, 17 March 2017). This story makes me realize that immigrant students arrive with little in the way of goods but burdened with memories that can affect their lives in the United States. I had known her for six years before she told me this story.

Immigrants require the ability to rapidly adjust. Entering a Vermont winter with a "sandals and shorts" mindset and an immediate immersion in an English-only classroom where they cannot understand instructions, requires acceptance, mental agility, and friends willing to supply warm clothes. The real lesson, underlying the pedagogical imperative, involves learning to move forward when doubts and fear predominate and a situation becomes difficult: "One reason we change is that we learn something we simply didn't know before" (Duckworth, 2016, p. 87). Keeping this principle at the forefront of our U.S. History instruction, we challenge students to commit themselves to developing mastery by concentrating on situations in which they exert effort and push the limits of their skillset, which results in

> … a confluence of dozens of small skills or activities, each one learned or stumbled upon, which have been carefully drilled into habit and then are fitted together in a

> synthesized whole. There is nothing extraordinary or superhuman in any one of those actions; only the fact that they are done consistently and correctly, and all together, produce excellence (Duckworth, p. 36).

When West Ackerly students enter Room 202, they know what to expect: A Do Now or starter exercise, a short lecture or interactive reading, and a collaborative activity, all seasoned with a dependence on stories in a written and oral context, and enough variety to keep history interesting and personal.

Teaching Multicultural Students. Both the past and the transition to their new lives affected these students greatly, which complicates their adjustment to life in the United States. One of my students as a young man escaped from Iraq after seeing members of his family killed. A young girl from Myanmar lived in a Thai refugee camp for much of her life. My Nepali students cooked using huge solar reflectors.

When my colleague and I enter the classroom, we must consider the multi-dimensional individuals we see before us, and recall the events that have influenced their lives. Recently, I suggested that a student add more personal details to her paper and compare a historical event to her own life. I knew she had moved several times before emigrating to the United States, and had more to offer than a bland description of a far-off event. “I can’t do that, Mr. Clark,” she told me quietly. “I can’t talk about myself that way.” Inadvertently, I had sprung open that trap door between my classroom reality and her hidden past. I quietly accepted the work she offered, and asked her to make more modest revisions. Truly, this incident reflects one of the “great questions” of my practice, and I require both

"imagination and courage, to nurture new realities in the spaces we inhabit, and to do so unexpectantly and with joy" (Tippett, 2016, p. 13).

What About Teachers?

Can teachers understand the journey that brought second language students to their American classrooms? According to Gary Howard (2006), teachers need to develop a "culturally responsive teaching" attitude and a "transformations pedagogy" in order to create a place "where our passion for equity intersects with our cultural competence" (p. 133). Moreover, teachers "… are called to be gracious, competent, courageous, and worthy. If we offer ourselves in this way, we earn the right to expect from our students their respect, engagement, honesty, and effort" (p. 139). I have learned to share details of my life with my students. In turn, most ELL students in my experience bring high degrees of respect for teachers and adults. They willingly engage me about academic work, invite me to their homes, and share stories about their homelands.

What About Students?

The children in my classes have seen their world change drastically, yet they remain focused on the 21st century, in spite of an adolescent brain that is "…dramatically uneven; immensely powerful and creative at times and in places, reckless and destructive in others" (Tippett, 2016, p. 12). That unevenness parallels many of the events in their lives: The beauty of a nation's artwork, culture, and surroundings versus forced relocation, poverty, war, and trauma. Through it all, they follow Duckworth's (2016) exemplars of resilience and hard work, knowing their direction, determined to succeed. No matter their class ranking, these students treat their education with a "… combination of passion and perseverance that

made high achievers special. … they had grit" (Duckworth, 2016, p. 8). Duckworth maintains that grit predicts graduation more effectively than students' feelings about school, conscientiousness about studies, or even their safety (p. 11).

In reality, West Ackerly students require additional time to graduate: For the 2015-16 school year, West Ackerly achieved a sixty-seven percent graduation rate, or nineteen percentage points below the state cohort requirement. Although these numbers seem less than desired, data collected by the Great Schools Partnership (2017), demonstrate that extending time in high school "for economically disadvantaged students, English Learners, and students with disabilities" increases graduation rates from 3.6 to 12.8 percentage points and reduces achievement gaps "… between students in these subgroups and their peers … by a range of 3.5 percentage points to 6.5 percentage points." Extending their high school experience creates more parity for English learners, ensuring more development time, making the receipt of a secondary diploma more likely, and rewarding students' resilience and effort.

Instructional Methods and Strategies. In our classroom, we employ typical strategies, such as: A Do Now exercise (Lemov, 2010, pp. 152-153) at the beginning of class to assess prior learning and begin the next lesson; emphasis on four-way thinking (B. Rich, personal communication, 4 January 2013), in which students summarize, interpret, analyze, and evaluate a subject using a gridded template; and formative assessments that stress *effective oral and written communications* or *critical thinking and problem-solving* based on the school's graduate expectations (Appendix A).

Connecting Cultures: Story and History

Our classroom discussions around the Constitution and Bill of Rights extend to civil liberties, the Japanese internment (Korematsu, 2017) and the Syrian crisis (Barnard, 2015). We witness the past merging with current events: A film about Emmett Till's 1955 murder connects to the Black Lives Matter movement (Holmberg, *New York Times*, August 30, 2016). We focused on Black Lives Matter in demands from interest groups during the 2016 Presidential campaign (Alcindor, *New York Times*, August 1, 2016); how a Twitter handle defines political details (Chokhshi, *New York Times*, August 22, 2016); and memorable and relevant images (Cole, *New York Times*, July 26, 2016). These connections infuse history with current events, reducing the gap between students' knowledge and what has happened in the past. We cannot oversimplify history for these young adults but we can familiarize them with words used in the context of a daily newspaper, aim for a "student-friendly" approach to complex topics, and accept lack of proper usage in classroom discourse as part of the learning process.

Newspapers and news programs focus on stories, which makes learning more intuitive. Similarly, my co-teacher Mr. Casino tells students a story from his earlier teaching experience: During a class discussion, an American student disparaged a family of Vietnamese immigrants for buying a new car. The usually quiet Asian student to whom the remarks were addressed explained her family's reasoning quietly but firmly: Five family members shared both the car and the payments. They decided to purchase a brand-new car because they could trust the dealer to make repairs fairly and honestly. When they had owned a used car, she explained, a private mechanic had cheated them by making

unnecessary repairs. The issue was not one of extravagant spending, as the American student thought, but of fairness (Mr. Casino, personal communication, 4 December 2015). In our class, students viscerally identified with the Asian student and perceived the unfairness of the other student's comment. The history of immigration seemed less distant because the story encouraged relating to a story about a contemporary situation.

Student Profiles

Each of my students brings a story of leaving one country and trying to adapt to another. Sometimes those journeys spanned years, with multiple detours along the way. Each of these students speaks of hardship, when they can find the words to describe their experiences and someone to listen. They also share their achievements in writing a paper or attending a meeting in the Governor's office. They tend to advocate for themselves and for what they want to achieve, although they often want to finish high school sooner rather than later, so that they can move on with their lives. In their writing and in many conversations, I have heard parts of their stories and reproduce them on the following pages.

Committed But Struggling: Josephine

After a multi-year journey from the Congo to the Dominican Republic and to Vermont, **Josephine** makes me appreciate the traumatic journeys my students have experienced. I struggle to understand this committed ELL student, but she has taught me a great deal. She fits well into Campano's (2007) concept of a second classroom, or "… a space of shared inquiry" [where] the diversity of the student population [is recognized] as an epistemic advantage … to formulating alternative theories of practice that will facilitate the success of students" (p. 4). She comes in early (usually unannounced) to see me. She sends

e-mail messages, asking me to review her work. She meets with me in study hall. Her intensity bespeaks both a hard edge and an underlying fragility.

During our Civil War project, Josephine decided to tackle a complex writing project, critically examining the battles of Vicksburg and Gettysburg—with emphasis on The Angle (where Pickett's Charge ended) and Chamberlain's defense at Little Round Top—in order to demonstrate how these battles affected the outcome of the war. Showing great persistence, she worked assiduously to acquire the information and submitted several drafts. Unfortunately, she found it difficult to grasp the big picture and got stuck on the mechanics of research and writing (such as citation protocols, sentence structure, and subject-verb agreement).

Finally, we asked her to scale back her project and confine her efforts to the Battle of Gettysburg. Mr. Casino and I recognized that her frustration created high levels of stress. She finished the project, albeit with some resentment about the compromise. Yet, our solution alleviated some of the struggle necessary to complete the work.

Josephine displays drive and basic skills. She wants to attend medical school but finds reading for comprehension and sentence writing difficult and falls below grade level. I want her to succeed, yet academic demands make this class difficult for her. At the same time, her effort and attention to detail resulted in a strong performance. We recognized her work by awarding her an honors certificate in history during our final school-wide assembly. In fact, her determined efforts surpassed those of the other students in the history class.

Leaving the Violence in Iraq: Uthman

When asked about his life in Iraq, **Uthman** gets quiet and responds "It was bad." One day, his curiosity about grades and transcripts allowed me to probe a little deeper. We had developed a relationship of two men sharing a story while gathered around an existential fire. He told me of the gunmen killing his father, uncle, and cousin, and wounding him. He showed me the malformed fingers and the scar. His words defined a world filled with violence, far away from my peaceful classroom.

A generation older than his high school peers, responsible for the care of his widowed mother and a brother, he comes to school after driving a taxi most of the night. He's proud of what he does, proud of giving business travelers his card when he picks them up at the airport. His fares may take him to Montreal or the Northeast Kingdom near the Canadian border. He often returns at dawn—and then somehow manages to come to school.

Most of the time, he completes his assignments—although his eyes tend to close during a lecture or when the lights dim during a video. I find myself applying a double standard: Usually, I would discipline anyone sleeping in class. With him, I put a hand on his shoulder and whisper to stay awake. Sometimes I just let him sleep. He's earned the rest, his work is finished. Who am I to say that my words about the Civil War are more important than the war he survived in Iraq or the journey he made through the Middle East, crossing over into Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon in order to find sanctuary?

After four years putting up with children eight years his junior, I suggested that he attend early college for his senior year and meet other adults. He's already done well in classes at the community college. His writing—if it is indeed his writing and not that of a

supportive friend—has improved and flows. Someday he may tell this story in his own words and impress the reader with its starkness and eye for detail. For now, he must write a paper, read a book, drive a cab, care for his mother, and sleep. While he still must complete West Ackerly's graduation requirements, he began early college in September 2017.

A Listening Challenge: Bhajan

Sometimes an ELL student's physical disability interferes with normal language development. **Bhajan** suffers a hearing deficiency, one that took many years to diagnose and treat. Teachers helped explain the situation to her family, worked with audiologists and evaluators, and remained supportive while she adapted to her hearing aids. In her Nepali culture, loss of hearing means ostracism and shame, lessons her teachers had to overcome in helping her acknowledge a disability as a fact, not an indictment, of life. We were careful to sit her in the front row and enunciate clearly when we lectured. Her grades improved considerably after she received her hearing aids, especially her presentation skills.

Bhajan's deafness directly affected her listening. Initially, during her early childhood in Nepal, she must have acquired enough language to speak and understand the world around her, maintaining conversations and speaking clearly in Nepali. Later, as an older child in America, her English language acquisition progressed slowly. Generally quiet in class, her English speaking and writing emerged in short segments, as in the following response to a writing prompt:

"We do struggle achieve great things in our life. Every people has problem so we can solved by ownself. People have good opportunity to do good thing in their life" (personal communication, 4 December 2015).

Having a child with a disability in U.S. History demanded that I become more aware of my teaching role and the need to interact with the parent, hearing specialist, and counselor. I observed Bhajan closely, and regularly attempted to engage her in conversation. Medical records and family stories prior to her emigration from Nepal vaguely referred to her condition, perhaps because of the cultural bias placed on any disability or the fear of jeopardizing her immigration status. We only realized later that she had experienced hearing loss for much of her life. Bright and attentive, she experienced academic setbacks, which align with the research of Thakur, Singh, Mahalo and Singh (2015) about hearing loss at a young age—the period of "speech and language development and the early school years" … and the "life-long impact" that results (p. 52). In spite of her disability, Bhajan remained diligent and a competent student.

The socioeconomic conditions in Nepal generate healthcare issues, including auditory impairment. In their study protocol, Clarke, Richmond, Worth, and Wagle (2015) state that the most common cause of preventable deafness—Chronic Suppurative Otitis Media (CSOM)—affects "164 million people worldwide, 90% of whom live in low resource countries, such as Nepal" (p. 1). In these countries, the widespread acceptance of children's ear infections creates an atmosphere of normality, allowing parents to treat such infections as a low health priority (Clarke, et al., 2015). Adhikari (2009) found that 7.6 percent of children aged 5 to 13 years had CSOM, and cites a statement by WHO, the World

Health Organization (2004), that a prevalence of CSOM greater than four percent requires emergency measures.

Hearing aids and counseling allowed Bhajan to improve academically. Yet, because she had received this help so late in her high school career, she had to make up for lost time. Fortunately, her transformation from a quiet and shy student occurred almost overnight. Her presentations became longer and filled with details. She diligently set about doing her work. Although still experiencing deficiencies in writing and reading, she emerged as a solid student, close to the top of the U.S. History class. The academic support she received contributed to her success. For years, her quiet nature had allowed teachers to miss her in a room filled with others clamoring for attention. Today, she remains quiet, yet she shows marked improvement in her academic functioning.

Building Relationships: Pierre

In his classes, **Pierre** enjoyed relationships with everyone. He talked with me and Mr. Casino equally. He was the alpha male in the class, teasing the others, making jokes, but responsibly doing the work. He had mixed feelings about U.S. History. “I thought the class would be pretty challenging because we were learning about a new topic. … It’s very complex to learn about history. Then, when we started the Gettysburg Address... The ways you guys taught it … we could see that you guys were really passionate about that … really serious … I still remember the Gettysburg Address, the work that you guys did. That's something that I can still remember, the Gettysburg Address.”

Pierre became active in student organizations and found himself in the Governor's office for a seminar. He remembers: "There were a lot of people. I was the only ELL student, the only black person. … Someone from the Governor's office… asked about the government and how the Congress was set up. And I was the only one to answer the question. That was surprising to me. … All people that seemed to be from here [U.S. citizens] and I wasn't afraid of answering the question. Having that knowledge [from the Socratic Seminar] helped me get out of my comfort zone" (personal communication, 9 June 2016).

Ongoing Effort: Subhas

A student who failed in his first attempt to take U.S. History, **Subhas** joined fourteen other students in the 2015-16 cohort with a higher degree of willingness and commitment to his education. A smart boy, with strong reading and writing skills, he thinks on his feet and comes up with answers fairly easily. But he had become trapped in the need to work and pursue a more American lifestyle. That attitude changed when he realized he needed a diploma. While never a strong student, in his second attempt at U.S. History he completed most of his work and attended class regularly. He asked for time to make a presentation after missing the original deadline, although his anger and frustration emerged in an email:

> *Greetings Mr. Casino:*
> *I did my newsletter about 2 weeks + ago and I put in the black bin where students were putting their newsletter, I was late and I asked for permission to present my late presentation you guys never granted me a chance, totally persecution but even though you guys didn't give me chance to presentation, I was present on the Soc Seminar and I did do well in it but never get graded on it. I should at least get 30/100 because 100 point is worth for 3 projects and I did the essay perfect. Just*

Perfect
Thanks (Subhas, personal communication, 3 June 2016)

In spite of his lack of subtlety in self-expression, his determination to succeed "the second time around" improved his performance significantly, and he passed the class. He missed school because of several suspensions. He made up most of his work and we graded him on effort rather than academic quality.

The Struggling Reader: Fibril

While socially proficient and linguistically competent, our assessments placed **Fibril** at the kindergarten level for reading abilities after four years of high school education. During the course of this research study—in his senior year—a long-ignored developmental disorder prompted his family to seek a special education placement. The thought of two more years in high school frustrated him, however, and he took advantage of an alternative technical program where he could work with his friends at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year. Given his skill level and abilities, such a placement seemed eminently more appropriate than a college preparation course that includes U.S. History. At the same time, I wonder what would have happened if he had received special education support earlier in his academic life.

Legal Requirements and Precedents

Immigrants integrate into the community primarily through the schools. When they enroll, most immigrant students take a home language survey (HLS) to determine if they

require second language support. As outlined in a "Dear Colleague" letter from the U.S. Department of Education and Justice Department (2015): "The HLS identifies those students who should be referred for an English language proficiency ("ELP") assessment to determine whether they should be classified as EL [English Learner] students, who are entitled to language assistance services" (Lhamon and Gupta, p. 8).

Qualifying ELL students. The U.S. Supreme Court established the legal underpinnings for second language learner instruction in multiple decisions. Case law outlines the "linguistic and educational needs of ELL students" from which developed "federal and state policy for ELL students, their families, and their communities" (Wright, 2012). Court proceedings have highlighted individuals' rights defined under the Fourteenth Amendment (U.S. Const. amend XIV), as well as due process and equal protection under the law. *Lau v. Nichols* (1974)[19] established equal education opportunities for second language learners and led to the federal Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA). Rulings that modified language instruction included *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* (1973); *Flores v. Arizona* (2000); *Williams v. California* (2004); and *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981). In addition, *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) confirmed that immigration status was no bar to a free public education (American Immigration Council).

In its rulings, the Supreme Court influenced federal and state policies for second language learners, and "made it clear that schools may not ignore the unique needs of ELL

[19] Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563 (1974); 42 U.S.C. § 2000d to d-7 (prohibiting race, color, and national origin discrimination in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance). Cited in Lhamon and Gupta, p. 1.

students" (Wright, 2012). Schools must teach English and academic content, with the aim to create English fluency and allow second language learners to successfully learn in mainstream classes. Instruction for language learners must match that of native English speakers across the curriculum (Wright, 2012).

Developing educational policy. The *Castañeda* decision redefined the need for bilingual education (which had been established under *Lau*) and broke new ground by establishing standards for meeting the educational needs of language learners: Sound educational theory, implementation with sufficient resources and personnel, and evaluation systems to determine the effectiveness of instruction (Wright, 2012). Under this mandate, schools could offer a variety of perspicacious educational programs, including English as a Second Language (taught primarily in English,[20] which is the child's second language (L2); Structured English Immersion (SEI), in which students receive all instruction in English; Transitional Bilingual Education or TBE, which uses the child's primary language for academic instruction and introduces/develops English skills; and Dual Language Program, in which children receive instruction in two languages, with classes that usually contain English speakers and speakers of another language (Lhamon, C. E. & Gupta, V., 2015, p. 12).

Second language instruction ultimately aims to provide a path to graduation. English language learners must have equal access to instruction and facilities, and participate

[20] A child's primary language (L1) is the first language they learned, their so-called "mother tongue." Any language learned after the first is termed L2. Some confusion exists because of the socio-cultural implications of these terms. L1 and L2 refer to the order in which a child learns a language (and effectively minimizes those with bilingual abilities). See https://linguistics.stackexchange.com/questions/6670/what-is-the-difference-between-native-language-first-language-mother-tongue-an.

meaningfully in the educational programs, which allows them to meet grade-level standards "within a reasonable period of time (Lhamon, C. E. & Gupta, V., 2015, p. 18).

Because of difficulties in their home countries, which either delayed entry to the United States or interrupted their schooling, some immigrants fall into the category of students with interrupted formal education (SIFE). Usually older children or adults, these students must receive age-appropriate instruction that allows them to meet graduation requirements "within a reasonable amount of time" (Lhamon, C. E. & Gupta, V., 2015, p. 18). Although they may possess the limited English skills of an elementary-level child, the law requires that schools instruct them in an environment close to their age-based grade level. Many schools with SIFE students offer remedial instruction at the high school level. According to established policy, second language learners at the beginner level entering high school in ninth grade can expect to receive a high school diploma within four years (Lhamon and Gupta, 2015, p. 19). In actuality, even with a four-year graduation expectation, most second language learners require more time to achieve proficient standards in content area classes.

West Ackerly focuses on the English as a Second Language format. Aides speak the child's home language and act as translators for the parents during conferences. For SIFE students, the district offers instruction to "fifth- and sixth-year seniors" in order to help them achieve proficiency, become college and career ready, and meet college requirements, if that is their goal.

Although inclusion in the general education population represents the normative placement for language learners, a school may opt for some degree of necessary segregation

in order to achieve the goals of an educationally sound and effective English learner program (Lhamon and Gupta, 2015, p. 22). West Ackerly's Foundations of U.S. History class, for example, contains only English learners because the curriculum must introduce democratic concepts and details absent from these students' prior education. Successful completion of the Foundations of U.S. History course serves as a prerequisite to integrated general education classes in American studies, government, psychology, and research. These classes, as well as the Foundations class, meet graduation requirements.

In their letter, the departments of Education and Justice admit that "the data need not demonstrate that current EL students perform at a level equal to their never-EL peers," but that the school should confirm that language learners meet "exit criteria and are being exited from the program within a reasonable period of time, and that former EL students are participating meaningfully in classes without EL services and are performing comparably to their never-EL peers in the standard instructional program" (Lhamon and Gupta, 2015, p. 36).

The Immigration Debate

Since the beginning of the Republic, the immigration debate has roiled American waters (Davis, 2007; Harota, 2013; Hutchinson, 2009). The 4.6 million immigrant students in the United States, among them the 1,442 students in Vermont and the several hundred immigrant students at West Ackerly, display considerable concern about their status. See Appendix G for the response from West Ackerly and New York City to immigration restrictions proposed in 2017.

In 2015, according to a Pew Research report, the total foreign-born population stood at 13.4% or 43.2 million of the U.S. population, lower than the "historic high of 14.8% in 1890, when 9.2 million immigrants lived in the U.S." (Cohn, 2017).

The increasing numbers of immigrants concern both demographers and politicians. According to a press release from the University of Michigan, William Frey projects that nonwhites will outnumber whites in the U.S. by 2050 (University of Michigan, 2015). The release explains that Frey, a researcher at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, anticipates that the country's "aging white population" will see immigrants "help maintain the nation's birth rate, pay taxes… and keep the country relevant" (University of Michigan). The release also predicts a doubling of new minorities within forty years; increases in multiracial marriages; the elimination of a racial majority after 2040; and the need for accommodating immigrants with "schools, social services, employment assistance and civic engagement" (University of Michigan). In a letter, Frey further describes the country's diversity, stating that "… in the 21st century being an American doesn't mean that you have to be white" (*New York Times*, 2017: May 22).

Yet, the complexity of demographics confounds even those charged with collecting the data. Alba (2016) questions "… the disappearance of a white majority in the United States by the middle of this century…" (p. 67). In evaluating Census Bureau policies, Alba maintains that some discrepancy results from counting ethnicity and race, then defining members who belong to a minority class. This statistical shorthand becomes ambiguous when demographers count children from mixed families:

> In the Census Bureau's projections, children with one Hispanic, Asian, or black parent are counted as minority (that is, as Hispanic or nonwhite). The United States has historically followed a "one-drop" rule in classifying people with any black ancestry as black. The census projections, in effect, extend the one-drop rule to the descendants of other mixed families. A great deal of evidence shows, however, that many children growing up today in mixed families are integrating into a still largely white mainstream society and likely to think of themselves as part of that mainstream rather than as minorities excluded from it (Alba, 2016, p. 67).

This policy effectively extends the “one-drop” designation that historically (and unfairly) condemned anyone with black ancestry to a lesser social and economic status. Although demographic assumptions almost inevitably diverge from reality, Alba sees flaws in the Census Bureau’s and the Pew Research Center’s attempts to project the year when whites will lose majority. He asks that the Census Bureau “present a more nuanced view of the nation’s demographic future and acknowledge the alternative ways in which Americans may come to think about themselves” (Alba, 2016, p. 71).

In a similar vein, Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) discuss the “Pan-ethnic categories such as Asian American and Latino… [which are] largely arbitrary constructions created by demographers and social scientists for data development and analysis” (pp. 63-64). Demographers actually created the term “Hispanic” in order to categorize anyone speaking Spanish, but the word lacks precision to define race or national affiliation. While more accepted, the word “Latino” applies to individuals who are “white, black, indigenous

and every possible combination of these. They also originate in over twenty countries as varied as Mexico, Argentina, and the Dominican Republic" (pp. 63-64).

In the current nativist (that is, anti-immigrant) environment, my colleagues and I find ourselves relaying information about immigration policy and trying to allay the fears of our students. And we have the historical record on which to rely. We mention previous waves of anti-immigrant feeling, against Catholics (1830s to 1850s), Asians (1870s until the 1930s), and the "anti-*all* immigrants," from the 1880s to the 1960s: "There was never a time when nativist attitudes were not present in American society. They existed in the colonial period and are enjoying a revival today" (Daniels, 2002, p. 265). Unasked, students volunteer that they have green cards, indicating their lawful permanent resident status, or explain an absence from school by announcing they just received citizenship papers. The school passes on announcements about immigration limits and provides suggestions for teachers to use in counseling students about government policies. Cities with immigrant populations carry out similar outreach (Appendix G).

Pedagogy around immigrant students requires more than the ability to teach an academic subject. Working with second language learners involves supporting and counseling them as well as affirming their legitimate place in the hierarchy of the country and the school system. For ELL students, the structure begins with a focus on the interrelated domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Domains: Structured Language Learning

Over time and with practice, immigrants' lifetime questions find answers in the struggle to enter the academic world. The self-assurance that adolescents practice in order to

survive—struggles in a refugee camp, moving to the U.S., adapting to a new school, the challenges of American education—becomes leavened by their classroom experiences, peer support, hope, and tears. Experience enters as they weave their ways through the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Listening. Of the four domains that form the basis of instruction, listening provides accessibility, one simpler than speaking, reading, or writing. In the words of Krista Tippett (2016), "Listening is about being present, not just about being quiet." In reality, listening as an entry point creates an "intimate familiarity with some margins that are in fact the heartbeat of a society and access to places where power is exercised—the power of idea, and the power of action" (p. 5).

The experience of listening mirrors a new American's life and trying to figure out a new society into which the immigrant child and his family have plunged. Many ELL students remain quiet for a year or more (Peregoy and Boyle, 2005 referencing Krashen, 1981) and then suddenly burst into fully formed English speech. They have listened to other children and adults talking; watched video recordings and heard songs; avidly enjoyed cartoons and children's programs, such as *Sesame Street*. Listening along the edges of conversation afforded them, as Tippett (2016) writes, "a sense of long arcs of history that infuse what we perceive to be crises of the moment—where we came from, and how we got here from there" (p. 5). Students in transition require subtlety in instruction. With sufficient time to process information, to hear it repeated several times, ELL students suddenly surprise their teachers by answering a question for the first time.

Speaking. Unlike the other domains, speaking a second language carries with it the potential for embarrassment, frustration, and negative feedback (Sousa, 2011, p. 59). Adolescent pressures and fear of failure often handicap second language learners in speaking. A safe, supportive environment, stressing vocabulary acquisition, goes a long way towards helping learners speak a new language (Sousa, p. 59).

As they begin English instruction, some second language learners enter a "silent period" during which they "are unwilling or unable to communicate orally, even though they understand much of what is going on around them," according to Cunningham and Shagoury (2017). During this quiet time, they can listen and process the immediate experience of teachers speaking and peers working together. Learning happens as they hear new words and entertain the thought of speaking when they become comfortable. After patiently waiting weeks and sometimes months, I find myself excited when a student becomes ready to speak.

West Ackerly teachers favor pull-out language arts instruction (in which second language learners receive exclusive English instruction in a homogeneous group) because students can function at relatively similar levels of linguistic ability and content knowledge—newcomer, beginner, intermediate, advanced. At the earlier stages of their transition, ELL students must make up considerable ground to approach the language facility of their general education peers. The academic schedules for second language learners, however, include classes with general education students, such as physical education, health, music, art, math, and science. A push-in ELL teacher provides support where needed in these classes. Working with the content teacher, the ELL specialist

introduces vocabulary and explanatory terms to assist ELL students develop linguistic facility.

Bleakley and Chin (2010) note that development of "English-language skills [plays] an important role in the process of social assimilation…" (pp. 13-14), because immersion in general education classes contributes to language facility and fluency for second language learners.

Reading. While reading contributes to writing proficiency, both develop later in the acquisition process, principally because of "… limitations in second language proficiency [that] affect second language reading comprehension, causing it to be slower and more arduous" (Peregoy and Boyle, 2005, p. 267). The lack of prior knowledge about a subject area also affects comprehension. Although principles of ELL instruction call for familiar reading material and "building background prior to reading a text" (p. 268), the level of new material in a content-area history course requires more of an immersion strategy, with suitable scaffolding around vocabulary acquisition, repetition, and content. In our class, we often ask students to define an unfamiliar word based on their prior knowledge. In this process, we poll the class to determine how to define the word, then provide the correct definition, often asking them to record it in their notebooks. Rather than simply explaining the meaning of *secession* or *abolitionist*, we ask them to deconstruct a word into fragments and try to develop an understanding. These initial answers range from humorous to nonsensical, and seldom explain the true meaning, but allow students to experience a mandate-free environment that encourages exploration and develops a sense of learning through mistakes. In this way, students acquire an awareness of the *process* in which readers

work with a text because their background knowledge works with decoding (breaking a word into parts), vocabulary knowledge, and inference (assembling clues to meaning) to develop an interpretation of the text (pp. 270-271).

Purpose. This action research project offers practices to help teachers better understand ELL students' transition to content-area classes. Using the structure of a U.S. History class over two nine-month school years, this research shows transitional methods and strategies that can help ELL students adjust to and learn from content-area classes. In my classroom, typical strategies include: A Do Now exercise (Lemov, 2010, pp. 152-153) at the beginning of class to assess prior learning and begin the next lesson; emphasis on four-way thinking (B. Rich, personal communication, 4 January 2013), in which students summarize, interpret, analyze, and evaluate a subject using a gridded template; and formative assessments that stress *effective oral and written communications* or *critical thinking and problem-solving* based on the school's graduate expectations (Appendix A).

In our U.S. History classroom, readalouds and teacher-supported notetaking, using photocopied texts and the document camera, help scaffold the instruction. Because second language learners often lack the ability to comprehend the text, we favor an exercise to stimulate reflection. Table 3 uses the children's book *Cheyenne Again* (Bunting, 2002) to illustrate the summary, interpretation, analysis, and evaluation exercise. Using this exemplar, students defined a reading for U.S. History.

Table 3

Four-Way Thinking

Summarize	***Interpretation***
Assume the reader has not read the text.	State the *idea or message that connects*

<u>*Tell what happens*</u> in the order it happens, (beginning to ending). In one sentence, give an overview of the text, with only a few details. _____ *An American Indian boy goes to the "white man's school" to learn English, math, and carpentry. At age ten, Young Bull feels lonely and tries to run away. Life is not easy and he loses all connections to his Cheyenne heritage. He dreams about the plains and ancient Indian warriors. He tries to adapt to a new world but he remains unhappy.*	*the text to the rest of the world.* Say "The author is trying to convey…" Or, "The _____ of _____" (plus verb) _____ *"The <u>pain</u> of <u>changing cultures</u> makes Young Bull sad."* *"The <u>story</u> of <u>loss</u> remains with the American Indian."* *"The <u>loneliness</u> of <u>abandoning</u> a lifestyle produces anxiety."*
Analysis Break it down or "unpack" it. What is the most important part of the text? Use a quotation and say Why it is important. Ask "So what? Who cares?" to clarify your insight. _____ *The pain of changing cultures confronts Young Bull when he arrives: "They take away my buckskins and my shirt… They cut my braids, give me a uniform of scratchy wool ... 'No more Cheyenne,' they say. 'You will be like us.'" This young boy gave up what he loved to attend the white man's school—and he hated it.*	***Evaluation*** Give your opinion of the text. Judge it. Give reasons to support your evaluation. You can have mixed feelings. Explain what you liked or didn't like. Be specific and detailed. _____ *The story of loss has been part of the Native American culture since the Europeans arrived. In this story, the losses a young boy endures make him run away physically and emotionally. His mental running away gives him some peace.*
Four-Way Thinking model. Adapted from Rich, B., personal communication, April 2009. Bunting, E. (2002). *Cheyenne Again*.	

Writing. Considered the most challenging skill in the learning domains (Sousa, 2011, p. 92) writing traditionally builds on prior knowledge gained in listening, speaking, and reading. For second language learners, however, the process requires almost

simultaneous accomplishment of this learning. (In normal development of a primary language, a child listens, then speaks, then reads, then writes. The domains build one on the other.)

As a social studies teacher, I look for writing fluency that aligns with general English proficiency and provides "the ability to generate ideas with ease while writing them down on paper" (Peregoy and Boyle, 2005, p. 257). Mr. Casino and I pay less attention to form (sentence styles, paragraphing, and text structures), grammar, punctuation, and spelling because we want to generate students' ideas and reactions to a historical text. Honesty of reflective practice and working with new ideas remain our primary goal, with grammar, usage, and mechanics (GUM) a necessary but secondary objective. We incorporate English language structures through mini-lessons and references about research and writing while maintaining our social studies priorities, especially around critical thinking.

"If we provide good activities, content, and classes," said Mr. Casino in one of planning sessions, "Who knows what's going to stick?" He noted that Esias "… came alive in the second half of the year. Is that because she's becoming a confident young woman or because of something we did? … I'd like to think we had something to do with it." Allowing students to react to the "story" part of U.S. History, frames the content in ways they can understand. "There's only so much content we're going to get. As long as we're making good choices. … they don't have to know everything about everything, that's not the expectation. The textbooks are for foundation. We deal with some issues, and they can do some cool projects (Mr. Casino, personal conversation, 5 June 2015).

Kibler (2010) documents second language acquisition through writing that uses L1 (the student's primary language) to acquire proficiency in the L2 language (English). A peer—especially one speaking the same language—can guide another student strategically as they tackle a writing assignment:

> When assessments and observations indicate that students are in fact lacking the rhetorical, linguistic, or academic information they need to complete a content-area writing task, building new knowledge requires that teachers (1) provide students with multiple, meaningful opportunities to engage with the academic content and analyze existing models of successful writing and (2) teach students how to recognize the key features of these texts (Kibler, 2010, p. 138).

Students produced research papers, which formed the basis for their PowerPoint or similar presentations. This structure required them to work in each of the four domains: They began by listening to the lecture or other teacher-directed lesson. They moved on to reading a research document and writing an essay. The final step in the process involved editing the essay into a conversational form that they could present to the class. Although not every student worked with a partner, every student heard the finished presentation, closing the learning loop on the topic. We assessed students' writing and speaking skills as part of the same overall rubric (Appendix F).

Ladson-Billings (2009) encourages teachers "to look more broadly and carefully at the causes of the behaviors they see, to develop multiple perspectives, and to make a commitment to working with their students, regardless of parent participation" (p. 145). Her comments particularly apply to children of color, including the Nepali, Iraqi, Thai, and

African students enrolled in diverse school districts, such as West Ackerly. Teachers might not understand the parameters of these different cultures but should "honor and respect" them in order to represent these cultures in an American classroom.

Schools sometimes denigrate or even deny the existence of other cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 151). Adults might define a child's language as "deficient—a corruption of English," with "pathological" family structures, all of which allows adults to ignore or trivialize "… historical, cultural, and scientific contributions" (p. 151). Teachers in multicultural classrooms should pay attention to their students' diverse ethnicities, clothing, language, and customs. These facts make the idea of "color-blind" teaching illogical and invalid. Admitting these differences allows teachers to acknowledge the most distinguishing factors that identify a child and hopefully match those factors with daily instruction. As students from multiple cultures come together, they create a cooperative, collaborative, and equitable spirit, a quilt-like pattern of educational awareness and achievement. We must honor these children as "heirs to a great tradition of art, music, dance, science, invention, [and] oratory…" (Ladson-Billings, p. 152).

In promoting diversity, civil rights activist Ruby Sales describes the human condition as talking

> … with a simultaneous tongue of universality and particularities… we've got to stop speaking about humanity as if it's monolithic. We've got to wrap our consciousness around a world where people bring to the world vastly different histories and experiences … a world where we experience grief and love in some of

the same ways. So how do we develop theologies that weave together the 'I' with the 'We' and the 'We' with the 'I?' (Tippett, *On Being*, 15 September 2016).

The answer to such a question may lie within schools that want to change. As an outlier in a state with a primarily white population, the West Ackerly school district devotes considerable attention to a population that contains over 25 percent second language learners and even more children of color. Because the West Ackerly district encourages cross-cultural cooperation, we see many diversified friendships develop. In spite of language differences, our students come to speak a language of the heart that encourages communication and mutual support in the classroom, on the athletic fields, and in the community. We see similar relationships develop among the liaisons who handle translations and work with our teachers, men and women from different backgrounds and cultures who share an abiding interest in our students. As a teacher and a researcher, I see this spiritual merger of ideas, practice, and cultures as quickening the bonds between people of all cultures. Whether working with diverse children and adults, or meeting parents in their homes to enjoy a meal and conversation, we connect teachers with a world where the child sits at the center surrounded by supportive family and other adults. This ongoing lesson about ELL education naturally goes beyond the last bell of the day.

Creating Scaffolds to Support Second Language Learners

In *Classroom Discourse: The Language of Teaching and Learning*, Cazden (2001) refers to the metaphorical term *scaffold* as an ever-changing support geared to a child's increasing competence (p. 63). With suitable references (Snow, 1977; Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1976; Wertsch, 1984; Wertsch and Stone,1985; and Vygotsky,1962, 1978), Cazden

traces the development of scaffolded discourse, explaining how a mother first engages in a one-sided conversation with a child, in order to scaffold language development. Initially, she uses words and accepts "burps, yawns, and coughs as well as laughs and coos" as fulfilling the child's side of the conversation until such time—around seven months—when she accepts "only speech-sound babbles" (Cazden, p. 61). Language games and readalouds follow, with the adult structuring the discourse so that the child can successfully participate. In these interactions, the scaffold allows the child's competence to "grow over time" (pp. 62-63). At a level more suitable for young adults, we follow these methods with our ELL students.

Power of Story: The Socratic Seminar

In the Socratic Seminar, we bring students through a process that familiarizes them with discourse, gives them tools and ideas with which to work, and allows them to experiment with words and behavior that promote conversation and group dynamics.

The critical lessons encapsulated in the domains and the social aspects of academic instruction merge in our U.S. History class when we emphasize discourse and allow students to practice their developing skills and demonstrate their learning. While the Socratic Seminar exceeds the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1930-34/1978) for everyone in the class, some students perform with more proficiency than others. Fibril, for example, refused to participate in the first Socratic Seminar, and received no grade. He learned to participate in subsequent seminars and performed well enough.

Zwiers, O'Hara, and Pritchard (2014) define the developmental work for a population of "academic English learners or AEL," which exposes students to "interactions

and literacy experiences that provide a 'critical mass' of complex academic language use and background knowledge needed to thrive more independently at grade-level tasks in the average U.S. school" (p. 5). Both language and knowledge instruction fit into my U.S. History class at West Ackerly because my students "(1) … lack background and cultural knowledge that helps them learn new content… (2) they are still learning social and cultural English; and (3) they are learning complex uses of academic English" (p. 5).

Room 202: The Socratic Seminar. On an October day in 2015, fifteen students participated in a Socratic Seminar. Among them is Esias[21], a shy Nepali girl with a love of reading and an endearing smile, who struggles in the rough-and-tumble of interactive, male-dominated discussion and intensive writing. Both she and Thi Ri, a Muslim from Myanmar, busily scan the documents in front of them. Pierre, the much-traveled and urbane student from Africa via a Caribbean island nation, busily prepares meticulous notes for the upcoming discussion. His goal is to attain an A and begin college after his junior year. Loud and vociferous Bidyut, another Nepali girl, sits next to Pierre hoping for some intellectual crumbs that she can use for a presentation she has not prepared on a topic she does not understand, in spite of extensive support from teachers and her classmates. Rihab, a transfer student from upstate New York, finds himself still adjusting to a new school and friends but has worked to understand the articles about *habeas corpus*. Josephine, another much-traveled African, keeps her own counsel but the mound of notes on her desk and the intensity with which she reads speak of long hours of preparation, trying to make sense of the written English and complex thoughts on the topic of immigration. The remaining

[21] In accordance with institutional research protocol, pseudonyms identify students, teachers, and the school.

students include Fabrizio, Nudhar, Bhajan, Subhas, Areebah, Marguerite, Jaabir, Abu, and Lwyn Thant.

Discovering discourse. Words—and the skills applied to using them—matter. In order to develop a level of discourse and bridge the gap between existing knowledge and the need for academic and content-area English, we introduced the Socratic Seminar as a method to develop the capabilities of second language learners and promote a higher level of discourse in U.S. History class. Students learn about a topic through reading and writing about it, then concurrently discuss it with team members and the class.

This level of discourse challenges students to use words from their reading and classroom experience. It pushes them beyond their comfort zone, so that the Socratic Seminar becomes the assessment of their learning. Although words act as containers for content, these students develop symbiotic links between words and meanings. "Words are crafted by human beings, wielded by human beings," writes Tippett (2016) in *Becoming Wise*. "They take on all of our flaws and frailties. They diminish or embolden the truths they arose to carry. We drop and break them sometimes. We renew them, again and again" (p. 16). The Socratic Seminar engages students in investigation and experimentation, which sometimes involves dropping and breaking language in order to learn from the experience.

ELL students can practice "breaking" words because that immersive process helps them learn how best to use those words. We favor an exclusive U.S. History class for ELL students because they interact with peers who, while they might laugh at a mispronunciation or misused word, show few overtones of "you're not doing it right." In addition, second

language learners lack prior content knowledge, unlike the majority of "mainstream students [who] actually learn much of their content outside of school (Zwiers et al., 2014, p. 5).

Language learning through discourse. Language learning—with academic resonance and use of unfamiliar words and structure—seems best served when peers meet without opportunities for criticism. The iterative process of learning the words and semiotic structure necessary for writing demands much from ELL students. Because they lack "academic capital—the valued knowledge and communication skills that get passed on to most mainstream children and are reinforced at school" (Zwiers et al., 2014, p. 7, quoting Bourdieu, 1986), second language learners need to practice their words, skills, and knowledge in an environment where they can hang on to bits of meaning and engage in daily practice. One way to bring the elements of literacy and fluency together—the listening, speaking, reading, and writing of the four domains—involves regular Socratic Seminars, which hinge on the give and take of student-generated questions and answers.

> The Socratic Seminar encourages participation and cooperation. Just as in life, … a question is a powerful thing, a mighty use of words. Questions elicit answers in their likeness. Answers mirror the questions they rise, or fall, to meet. So while a simple question can be precisely what's needed to drive to the heart of the matter … it's hard to resist a generous question. We all have it in us to formulate questions that invite honesty, dignity, and revelation. There is something redemptive and life-giving about asking a better question (Tippett, 2016, pp. 29-30).

And, the Socratic Seminar thrives on questions, provided the student knows how to ask them and maintain the flow of discourse.

In the process of preparing for the Socratic Seminar—reading background information, informally discussing the material, working with peers, and practicing the questions and responses to use—students create, in Cazden's words, a system of interpersonal relationships, based on trust, that engage and support their learning (Cazden, 2001, p. 78). They actually teach themselves and others about the value of the spoken word. Most important, the Socratic Seminar allows a comfortable environment for second language learners, one that requires some effort but which also enables them to experiment with discourse. In line with our curriculum, and as a preview of the material we will cover, we assigned students contemporary readings about *habeas corpus* early in the semester. In this way, we introduced the idea of discourse, group participation, and historical thinking. We assigned one article listed in Table 4 to each of five groups:

Table 4

Articles Assigned for Socratic Seminar

Author	*Title*	*Source*	*Date*
Greenbaum, M.	Abraham Lincoln: War President	*New York Times*	March 11, 2013
Ewers, J.	Revoking Civil Liberties: Lincoln's Constitutional Dilemma	*U.S. News & World Report*	February 10, 2009
Williams, F. J.	Disunion: The Great Writ, North and South	*New York Times*	November 14, 2013
Finkelman, P.	How the Civil War Changed the Constitution	*New York Times*	June 2, 2015
Opinion Pages	A Right Without a Remedy	*New York Times*	February 28, 2011

These articles discussed the topic from a current events perspective and provided students with some background information. In our opinion, using contemporary news

articles and editorials makes history more relevant by combining current events with historical facts and actions.

Socratic Seminar rationale. At this point in the school year, we had taught the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The students had some basic ideas of American history and how the government worked. The Socratic Seminar supplemented those details and (a) examined powers denied Congress, specifically "The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it" (*U.S. Const*. art. I, §9, cl. 2); (b) used newspaper articles and editorials to see how this Article was applied to real-world situations. The Socratic Seminar bridged the basic learning about the government with the upcoming unit on the Civil War, connecting the Constitution to prisoners' rights at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Socratic Seminar feedback. The Socratic Seminar revealed a complicated web of domains and student interactions, many of which appeared unfamiliar or out of context to the students. Zwiers, O'Hara, and Pritchard (2014) suggest connecting new ideas to what came before and understanding the purpose of the conversation (p. 188). Using this mindset, we taught a process and built skills over a period of weeks to meet the needs of the assignment. We also developed skills and understanding through practice during the year.

"True classroom discussion," as Copeland (2005) admits in *Socratic Circles: Fostering Critical and Creative Thinking in Middle and High School*, "should be an opportunity for students to share their own ideas, build knowledge based on prior information being applied to new situations, test out their own hypotheses and perspectives against those of their peers, and arrive at an answer that has been constructed through

personal experience, critical thought, rhetoric, and discourse" (p. 26). The Socratic Seminar in our U.S. History class effectively employed all these elements.

In addition to providing readings that serve to focus the discussion, we pre-taught the skills necessary to create, and move forward with, the discourse using examples from the Constructive Conversation Skills Poster and the "prompt-and-response sentence starters" (see Appendix I and Zwiers, O'Hara, and Pritchard, 2014, pp. 189-190), which helped students develop discursive methods that best fit the discussion. We followed this pattern in each of the Socratic Seminars conducted during the year.

Because the "… physical layout of the room and the emotional climate established by the teacher greatly affect a student's willingness to try something new" (Copeland, 2005, p. 29), we moved to a different classroom for our first Socratic Seminar. We had slightly more space and could record the proceedings. We used the SMART Board® and white board to post reminders about constructive conversations and what prompts to use. We created a special environment for this event, and asked everyone to participate through a pre-work writing assignment, the seminar itself, and an exit ticket to reflect on their experiences.

The exit tickets revealed a great deal about the students' learning. Pierre defined several words so he would know them during the seminar: *habeas corpus*, secession, nullification. He explained how he summarized his strategies and techniques:

> PS: I paraphrased my team's ideas to keep the conversation going. We used facts to support our thinking. We used hand gestures next to our legs to let others know that someone was ready to talk. We underlined the most important thing of the text and

learned them. We asked for other's opinions during the discussion to help each other to participate (Pierre, personal communication, 6 June 2016).

He thought about his experience, admitting that:

I was nervous. I tried to forget about the audience and focus on my group … I decreased my voice. It wasn't a great idea ... the audience couldn't hear me. I tried to engage others in the discussion. My partners were more nervous than I, which made them step back. Instead of stepping back I tried to lead the discussion or paraphrase other's ideas to keep talking. We did a good job because we all participated and said something during the discussion even though we were all nervous (Pierre, personal communication, 9 June 2016).

Pierre reflected on the content, asking himself and his teammates questions that related to *habeas corpus* that would keep the discussion moving: What effect did it have? How did Lincoln reject *habeas corpus*? Why did it change the country in a positive way?

His questions demonstrated an inquiring mind, prompted by the reading and discussion with his group before the seminar. As teachers, we realized that the move toward critical thinking begins *before* the event and emerges spontaneously as the discussion proceeds. Pierre had facts at hand that explained how Lincoln "rejected" *habeas corpus* to keep Maryland in the Union and how Congress supported him after the fact. Then he connected those historical events to the contemporary scene at Guantanamo, Cuba during the Bush, Clinton, and Obama administrations.

In his summary, Pierre admitted the extent of his learning:

> I learned a lot during this Socratic Seminar. It was challenging to connect our questions with the first question. I thought that *habeas corpus* had to do with slavery. But during this discussion I learned that it [… did not]. Lincoln rejected it by putting people in jail because they would vote for Maryland to leave the U.S, so Maryland stayed in the U.S and was not part of the Confederate States … (Pierre, personal communication, 9 June 2016).

Obviously, he had probed deeply into the history, discovered flaws in his thinking, and discovered facts that he had not known before the seminar. Similarly, Rihab made errors of fact in expressing himself but internalized the concept of applying a Constitutional principle to his study of U.S. History.

Several shy and quiet students had more difficulty with the Socratic Seminar, but they learned more about the seminar process, as Lwyn Thant admitted:

> I feel excited about sharing my story and the problem [but it] makes me nervous. There's going to be a lot of students talking. And I might get the answer wrong but it doesn't really matter because I can learn from it (Lwyn Thant, personal communication, 9 June 2016).

Esias felt that the Socratic Seminar tested her English-speaking ability. She explained that she feels a difference between understanding English and speaking it, especially when she does not feel comfortable speaking or if someone else had already mentioned the same idea:

> I hadn't taken any history before. It was my first time. So it was really hard for me… I used to like reading history, like back in time. It's a little different than what I

> thought about it… Everyone might not understand English but they can understand English, not just speak it. That's why we learned English. If we take a class [we learn better English, so] yeah. I want to be here (Esias, personal communication, 9 June 2016).

Teacher Role: Socratic Seminar

During the year, students gained practice in discussing a topic within the Socratic Seminar framework. They understood the importance of reading about the topic, writing an entrance card, knowing questions to ask and how to ask them, and reflecting on their experience in an exit ticket. (See syllabus in Appendix F.)

The Socratic Seminar objectively connects content knowledge and discourse, which reinforces prior lessons and makes students aware of their public speaking and listening skills. As such, the Socratic Seminar strengthens students' expertise the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Socratic Seminars employ a variety of methods to create and maintain student discourse. Although originally a student-centered activity—with teachers acting only as observers—the Socratic Seminar involved extensive pre-teaching and a requirement for students to participate. Later in the year, we modified the plan in order to teach more participatory techniques by having one teacher moderate the seminar within the circle and another teacher observe from outside the circle. By modeling etiquette and methods, the inner teacher could establish norms that students could follow during the seminar and practice in future seminars. As I noted in the lesson plan: "The beauty of the co-teaching

model is that one [teacher] can actively participate in the discussion while the other [teacher] can observe and evaluate."

The Socratic Seminar lessons provide a bridge for transitional students between their prior educational experiences in ELL classes and the content knowledge they must acquire in general education classes.

Big Picture

On a good day in my classroom, I can sense the sweep and scope of the ages, and I think about what lies ahead for the students in that room. They live in a transitional zone between cultures, which requires them to confront massive changes in the world and their lives. In a historical context, our instruction started in the "Axial Age—a handful of centuries midmillennium before the Common Era" (Tippett, 2016, p. 2), a time distinguished by change. The distinguishing characteristics of the Axial Age—the birth of Confucius in China, the Buddha's enlightenment, the philosophical journeys of Plato and Aristotle, the work of the Hebrew prophets "to pen a people of God into being"—bear only a peripheral relationship to events in the United States since 1607. Yet, Tippett recognizes how those long-ago journeys looked "beyond kin and tribe—the stranger, the orphan, the outcast" and forged a bond with the individual (p. 2). Our work with ELL students brings the individual into contact with American society through U.S. History.

In their own "axial age," my students must cultivate their time of transition and develop a sense of themselves. As they confront the changes in their lives, the rearrangements and displacements caused by immigration, and the new language learning so essential to their survival, I encourage them to examine their own humanity: How does their

arrival in the United States compare with those other immigrants who preceded them? The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Chinese Exclusionary Act take on new meaning when a student connects with her own journey. The philosophical underpinnings of U.S. History provide questions about life, death, service, and humanity, especially when we speak of current events.

Yancy (2016) speaks of the need "to push discourse *to do* more" in the examination of "the complex processes of racialization" found in a world dominated by white privilege, which requires "that Black philosophers and philosophers of color understand that there is no safe world within which questions of race are raised and critically discussed" (p. xv). His message implies that the task of the social studies teacher involves more than passing on content knowledge. The broader need involves acquainting students from other cultures with the demands of life in the United States today, providing a background against which they can see the past, and developing an understanding of the challenges immigrants face in growing up in the new world they have discovered.

In speaking to adults born in the United States, Yancy (2016) admits that the truth of contemporary life also involves

> … the death of your narrowness of vision, the death of your white narcissism, the death of your 'innocence,' the death of your neoliberal assumptions, the death of the metanarrative of meritocracy, the death of all those things that underwrite your white gaze as the only way of seeing the world" (pp. xxii-xxiii).

Today's students can benefit greatly from adults who understand the messages from the American experience and convey them in a way to new Americans who lack any

familiarity with what came before their arrival. Those messages—of Black Lives Matter and Emmett Till (Holmberg, 2016); Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman (Blow, 2013); statements opposing racism from military leaders after Charlottesville, Virginia (Associated Press, 2017: August 16); black deaths at the hands of police (Mullainathan, 2015); and horrific killings in Charleston, South Carolina (Corasaniti, Perez-Pena, and Alvarez, 2015)—represent a new way of looking at history through the lens of current events connected to the historical record. This thematic approach to history singles out a few important past events that resonate with today's news headlines. In return, students become accustomed to following the news and become conversant with discussing it in terms of the historical record. But they need adults capable of broad-based thinking and willing to help them connect their broadening linguistic capabilities with reality.

The tools used by ELL teachers—the emphasis on scaffolding, moving from the word to the sentence to the paragraph to the essay level, the emphasis on repetition and practice—bring the student in transition to a point where she becomes nearly ready for content-based instruction. She will struggle with comprehension and new vocabulary; speaking in public will frighten her; the demands of writing papers and presenting them loom as insurmountable barriers. Yet, the ELL student generally succeeds in these tasks over time. Her further development depends on emphasizing discourse while training her to listen, speak, read, and write.

We have found that an emphasis on the Socratic Seminar and promoting scaffolding that brings the student along through the school year serves a motivational and a practical objective. By taking risks, the student improves and gains some fluency in the subject.

While some students must repeat the class or find other academic avenues to support them, the idea of transitioning ELL students into a scaffolded content-area class, then gradually releasing those controls over the course of the year, provides significant instructional benefit. Teachers in such an environment, however, must realize the psychological, emotional, and academic jump students must make from a heavily scaffolded ELL class to a less supported content-area class, during which those familiar supports gradually slip away.

Gearing the academic year around the Socratic Seminar helps remove an almost impenetrable wall within typical textbook-centered instruction for ELL students. They struggle with concepts—such as acquisition of content knowledge and application of higher-level tools (summarization, interpretation, analysis, and evaluation)—and the skills necessary to collect information—such as notetaking, research, presentation, and reading-for-knowledge.

Even an intermediate-level ELL student must translate information received from a teacher into her primary language, and often lacks sufficient background knowledge to ensure complete understanding. Working collaboratively with a peer, however, helps her process the information and share ideas. Each "teaches" the other and synergy drives the educational process. When vocabulary gaps create holes in knowledge acquisition, they can define the word and test each other on its meaning, thus building prior knowledge, making it available for the seminar.

In a perfect world, remedial ELL classes have established content-level vocabulary that applies to U.S. History. In reality, that work must be done as part of the actual class. The task of the ELL teacher—and, if possible, the joint role of a subject matter co-teacher—is to

merge language and content instruction in order to allow the student to leave the class with an appreciation for U.S. History and some awareness of its language. Unfortunately, this dual instruction—language and content—slows down the learning process and requires modification of the curriculum or additional class time.

By the end of the school year, these English Language Learners have studied various themes of U.S. History and acquired a degree of background information. Most important, they have practiced discourse and enhanced their abilities in the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They have acquired additional vocabulary and academic skills. In most cases, they have qualified themselves to pursue further content-area instruction in the humanities and science. This U.S. History class helps them transition to the general education classes so necessary for their further development. Although not all of them have broken through language and skill barriers, most are well on their way to developing skills and progressing into more advanced content-area classes.

Article 2: Co-Teaching English Language Learners

Abstract

This chapter examines the pedagogical underpinnings and personal stories of two teachers and twenty-one students participating in a hybrid U.S. History class designed for English language learners. Based on a two-year action research project, this paper summarizes the co-teaching instruction, explains the process that brought the teachers together, and describes the feelings of the students who participated in the work. It examines the principles that apply to diverse classrooms, using the work of Zwiers, O'Hara, and Pritchard (2014), as well as the Socratic Seminar techniques that contributed to the students' learning and discourse development.

Co-Teaching, U.S. History, and English Language Learners

This article explains the academic processes involved in co-teaching English Language Learners (ELL) in a content-area class devoted to U.S. History. Based on a two-year action research project, the article addresses the following questions: What is the value of co-teaching for ELL students? What can two teachers bring to the table that one teacher cannot? Does the complexity of social studies instruction interfere with ELL instruction?

My first co-teaching experience followed a summer professional development seminar. While the relationship developed in a collegial fashion, it also remained at the "forming" and "storming" phase of team development (Friend and Cook, 2013, pp. 141-142). While the principles worked, the personalities clashed. Fortunately for me, that relationship ended after one school year, and then I began the co-teaching relationship that centers this article, one that evolved into the "norming" and "performing" qualities of the team building relationship (pp. 141-142), and lasted five years.

In twenty years teaching history and government, my co-teacher Mr. Casino had seen waves of immigration to the West Ackerly school district[22]: He had attended high school with French-speaking Canadians in the 1980s, then moved to teaching relationships with Vietnamese in the 1990s, Bosnians in the 2000s, and collections of students from the Middle East, Africa, Nepal, and Thailand in the 2010s. Although positioned as the subject matter expert, he really provided continuity for a newly endorsed teacher of English

[22] Pseudonyms protect the privacy of the district, students, and staff.

Language Learners when we first worked together in 2010. My previous experience teaching ELL students in middle school proved insufficient for classes of young adults in high school. I came to depend on Mr. Casino for direction in historical content knowledge and classroom management.

During our first year together, we entered the "forming" part of the team-building life cycle, with a "storming" sequence that principally involved facing difficulties, while "creating social and task-oriented structures" (Friend and Cook, 2013, p. 142) to guide our interactions around adjusting to a newly established curriculum. My ELL training had made me aware of the impenetrability of American idioms, such as "hit one out of the park" or "under the weather." This awareness allowed me to stop Mr. Casino in mid-lecture one day and explain the meaning of certain words and phrases to the ELL students. He took my interruption with good grace and we gradually developed ways to reach non-native students. That first year, we taught a mixed class of general education and ELL students. One memorable unit (for us) involved taking ten weeks to teach the three-day-long Battle of Antietam during the Civil War. We found ourselves bogged down in explaining theory of warfare, causes and conditions, and the elements of Constitutional law that influenced Lincoln's strategies. We required extensive time to explain new historical information to the ELL students, details that the general education students already knew because of their prior learning.

We tried various ways of differentiating the instruction: Separate groups, group projects, and differentiated assessments. Ultimately, however, we accepted the need to rework the curriculum and design a strict ELL-compatible curriculum. This decision aligned

with an administrative decision to create two new classes: A freshman-level Humanities class and an American Studies class, each co-taught by one English teacher and one history teacher. Our Foundations of U.S. History for ELL students joined this constellation, and the history department therefore gained three co-taught Humanities classes in order to meet the evolving needs of a diverse school.

In subsequent years, we modified the curriculum, moved away from the textbook, reduced lecture time, emphasized current events, added student-directed projects, and stressed an instructional style based on skill-building around the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In managing what the ELL students did in the classroom and the direction of their thinking, we followed the definition of learning created by Herbert A. Simon from Carnegie Mellon University: "The teacher can advance learning only by influencing what the student does to learn" (in Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, and Norman, 2010, p. 1). These ELL students knew little about U.S. History, and required extensive scaffolding to develop their understanding of the subject.

During this time, the school itself underwent massive changes, some of which aligned with our classroom alterations. The West Ackerly district had to address a failure to achieve annual yearly progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110). To combat the lack of academic progress, encourage accountability, and avoid sanctions, staff and administrators began conversations with community members and interested parties outside the district, received grant funding, and introduced graduate expectations around which to build the curriculum. In our co-taught U.S. History class, we incorporated expectations about critical thinking, problem solving, and oral and written

communication. (Appendix J contains a working document for graduate expectations. Appendix K contains the published list of graduate expectations and proficiencies applied during the research period.) First annual, then later bi-annual, expositions allowed our students to display their developing proficiencies around hands-on acquisition of social studies content. We stressed a thematic approach, limiting our curriculum to certain main events in U.S. History, centered around the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, as well as other principal themes (immigration, Westward Expansion, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the world wars of the twentieth century).

"We cannot teach it all," Mr. Casino often warned me (Mr. Casino, personal conversation, 2015). I preferred a chronological structure that matched my personal "big picture" instruction, one that favored advanced placement instruction, including "significant events, individuals, developments, and processes in nine historical periods from approximately 1491 to the present" and with emphasis on analysis of "primary and secondary sources"; development of "historical arguments [and] comparisons"; and instruction that incorporated contextualized thinking with causal theories, continuity, and the changes society experienced through the centuries (College Board, 2017, p. 4). Soon, however, I came to realize that advanced placement instruction and the demands of reading and writing at a college level would place impossible demands on English learners. For nineteen students in two cohorts (two of the twenty-one students were not assessed), reading scores fell well below grade level as measured on the FAST scale and Lexile grade levels (Table 5).

Table 5

2016-17 Selected West Ackerly Reading Scores: U.S. History Cohort

Students	Grade Range 9	10	11	12	FAST Scaled Score Range	Lexile Grade
4	1	—	—	3	455-476	1–2
5	2	1	2	—	470-503	3–4
6	—	1	4	1	501-515	5–6
3	1		2	—	516-527	7–8
1	—	—	—	1	542	10

Sources: West Ackerly 2016-17 Reading Scores (internal document);
Lexile-to-Grade Correspondence (2016). MetaMetrics. Lexile.com. Retrieved 16 May 2016.

Our experience taught us that ELL students in U.S. History already experienced difficulty with scaffolded instruction; the reading and writing demands of an advanced placement course would make U.S. History instruction impractical.

Our Experience

We opted to provide value-added instruction within the U.S. History curriculum. We encouraged students to make connections around historical events only after the teachers created prior knowledge about the broad scope of U.S. History. While our year-long course touched on the minutiae of battles, broad theories of colonialism and Westward Expansion, the destruction of Native Americans, and the degrading conditions of slavery, we mostly adopted a controlled and far-reaching perspective, one that informed our students about the larger historical picture and left details for subsequent high school or college classes. In short, our "survey" class looked at U.S. History from a high altitude. With this basic

knowledge, our students could zoom in later on a particular era or event, possibly even during one of our projects.

We also stressed enjoyment in learning, asking students to sing along with "fifty, nifty United States" (Charles, 1961; American Legion Auxiliary, 1970; Anderson, 2015) and watch as Morgan Freeman introduced a group of professional actors reading the Declaration of Independence at Liberty Hall in Philadelphia (Brown & Capra, 2003). Freeman stressed how the document excluded African Americans like him. In a subtle paean to diversity, Graham Greene (an Oneida Indian) read the section about Native Americans; women and persons of color read other sections. We built on these points to emphasize the weaknesses of a male-dominated society as well as the strengths in the formation and development of the United States Government. We stressed that the Founding Fathers anticipated change by allowing succeeding generations to revise the Constitution through the amendment process. Students seriously enjoyed Don Knott's struggles with the Preamble (Hayden, 1963), and underwent their own struggles as they stood in front of the class and recited it.

In the World War I unit, one student explored modern weapons, and built a scale model of an Albatros, the Fokker D.III biplane flown by Baron von Richthofen. Her presentation included details about air warfare and a deeply felt biographical summary. She demonstrated these facts using her red papier mâché model plane. In posters, displays, and presentations, other students examined how imperialism led to a war mentality; how new weapons and munitions created widespread devastation; innovations in battlefield medicine; and technical advancements. Students gained an understanding of colonialism and its influence on the conflict, which further allowed them to make connections to life in their

home countries. Although generations removed from the conflict, they came to understand how European influence *then* created situations in their home countries *now*. These connections helped us create a level of prior knowledge for our ELL students, and did so in a non-threatening, scaffolded way.

We knew that our textbook—*The Americans* (Danzer, de Alva, Krieger, Wilson, Woloch, and Bowes, 2005)—could only provide a framework for our instruction. We supplemented the textbook with articles from the *New York Times* around current events that we then linked back to major historical events. To encourage interaction with the text, promote comprehension, and develop the academic skills necessary for deconstructing text, we projected (using a document camera) photocopied sections of the textbook and encouraged students to annotate their copies of the text. In this way, students acquired academic skills and came to understand the value of headings, captions, boldface type, and marginal notes while learning facts about the history.

In many ways, our instruction took on a flavor from another age, where primitive conditions provided few texts and oral recitation was a tested method of imparting instruction. Mr. Casino employed his ancient green chalkboard to adeptly illustrate topics such as the Battle of Gettysburg and how to outline a research paper. We watched as our ELL students copied these notes into binders and underlined pages of text. Students developed skills as they acquired content knowledge.

An Equal Partnership

The co-teaching aspects of this U.S. History class stressed equality and partnership. Over the five years of our co-teaching relationship, we learned to collaborate on planning

and the details that went into our curriculum. Occasionally, events passed us by and we needed to re-group in front of the class, which we did with good humor. The students seemed to appreciate the lightness with which we introduced a key pause—"We're going to do some planning right in front of you now"—and how our humanity entered into the lesson. We knew in advance that each 90-minute class would include an introductory period for writing, questions, discussion or recap of the previous lesson, followed by some instruction or lecture, and concluding with student work time or a video excerpt. We modified this outline as necessary. Sometimes, for example, we needed to lecture more than usual in order to cover material we deemed important or to introduce a summative project. The key elements in each day's instruction, however, remained consistent: Discussion and review, reading, and writing.

In a January 2015 reflection, I noted the need to "make the instruction personal by relating Asian immigrants' stories and allowing these ELL students to connect with stories from different cultures that reflect their own personal experiences." My notes also questioned what students remembered from the lessons "because assessments show a lack of their ability to process and retain information." As a result of this reflection, Mr. Casino and I reassessed our lesson plans. We recommitted to starting class with a Do Now or other form of "bell ringer" exercise in which we would review the previous lesson. Then, we would discuss the day's topic, introduce new material, and review what we taught during a period of student research, group work, or one-on-one conferences.

Without the ability to test our thinking and receive support for change—all part of the co-teaching instructional model—we could have missed the opportunity to adjust our curriculum.

Cooperative Teaching and Learning

Murawski and Lochner (2011) outlined essential principles in a co-teaching checklist, including parity and collaboration; evident co-planning and communication; differentiated strategies to meet a range of learning needs; a variety of instructional approaches; consistent approach to behavior management; and implementing multiple levels of questioning, from basic recall to higher-order thinking (Appendix L).

In applying these principles, Mr. Casino and I operated cooperatively in the same shared space, with a degree of parity. Each assignment contained both our names, and we used the "we" and "our" language to describe any ideas behind the lesson. Both of us remained in the room for the length of the class, although occasionally a behavioral management situation would arise that required one of us to engage in a hallway discussion or other activity with a student. We accommodated such rare incidents smoothly so as not to disturb the instruction. My proficiency with technology allowed me to handle SMART Board® presentations while Mr. Casino effectively supplemented the electronic lessons with hand-drawn illustrations (his technological expertise increased over the years; my drawing ability did not). As one of us lectured, the other would search and find appropriate online graphics to supplement the lesson. Although we tried to plan our lesson with granularity and in advance, we most often responded to each other's spoken words, which demonstrated our collaboration to the students. In a Civil War lecture on weapons, for example, one of us

answered a student's question about naval warfare and mentioned how the introduction of steam and iron cladding had changed warfare. As the discussion progressed, the supportive teacher searched for and then displayed pictures of the *Monitor* and *Merrimack*, a battering ram, and destroyed wooden ships. This example illustrates how the direction of our lectures often changed to address questions and sometimes deviated from our plan. Our cooperative attitude, however, enabled us to address these tangents and provide suitably targeted instruction.

In a rather instinctive adaptation of co-teaching strategies (Conderman, Bresnahan, and Pedersen, 2009; Friend and Cook, 2013), we employed the one teaching/one observing model, which sometimes morphed into the teaming or one teaching/one assisting alternative, depending on the lesson. For an end-of-year summative assessment, for example, we opted to use the station teaching model, creating a Gallery Walk so we could review and critique students' work. In preparation for Socratic Seminars, we sometimes opted for parallel teaching during which we separated the class and worked individually with each group to cover the same material. Over the course of the year, we employed a variety of co-teaching approaches (Table 6), most frequently emphasizing aspects of teaming and one teaching/one observing or assisting.

In our planning conversations, we examined student feedback and developed strategies around student-centered instruction. Although the lecture format conveyed information, we realized that a more interactive approach would reach the students more effectively. It would also fit into the West Ackerly system of graduate expectations. In this

way, we created a feedback loop by observing each other teaching, discussing that practice, and making modifications where necessary to improve our work.

Table 6

Co-Teaching Approaches

One teaching, one observing	One teacher designs and delivers instruction to the entire class.
Station teaching	Instruction is divided, with each teacher responsible for portion. Students move from one station to another. Each teacher has separate responsibility for instruction delivery.
Parallel teaching	Class is divided and each portion receives instruction from a single teacher.
Alternative teaching	Small group receives instruction that differs from instruction received by entire class. Effective approach for students who require preaching or repetition, e.g., highly intensive instruction.
Teaming	Both teachers are responsible for a lesson. One may instruct while the other demonstrates or one may interview the other to model interview techniques.
One teaching, one assisting	One teacher assumes the primary role for the entire class while the other supports the process (e.g., walking around the room to answer questions). Effective when joint planning time is lacking and each teacher takes a turn teaching and then assisting.
Adapted from Friend & Cook (2013). *Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals*, pp. 168-176.	

My involvement in action research connected theoretical approaches with my practical classroom instruction. During a graduate course called Collaborative Consultation, I examined my co-teaching relationship and my teaching style as it evolved in a planning session discussion for a lesson on imperialism:

Casino: They liked being active. They like Socratic Seminar, they like the speeches.

BC: I'm getting comments they don't like the lectures so much.

Casino: Yeah, we need to shorten it. Smaller like this. Smaller chunks. Do something active with Hawaii.

BC: Several of them mentioned they liked the imperialism unit but it was not a unit that we taught a lot. We said "Here are the handouts, do it." I don't know how much they're learning from that but they enjoy the process more.

Casino: The learning was up to them. That's good feedback for us to hear. Active, independent. That's the way the school wants us to move. Now, with their lack of English it's harder but we could be more conscious of the balance (personal communication, 6 June 2016).

In this Teaming approach, we maintained joint ownership while evaluating different facets of the lesson. We discussed the feedback that we had received and modified our instruction accordingly. Without the co-teaching model in place, we would probably have missed the opportunity to change because we would not have had the conversation.

Fortunately, our schedules allowed us several planning periods during the week: A formal session immediately following the U.S. History class and several “hallway conversations” during the day. The ability to debrief on the class just concluded and to begin our planning for the subsequent class helped us maintain a freshness to the instruction. Early in the year, we created a rough outline for the units we needed to cover, recognizing that we later would make adjustments. During the year, we incorporated new material and student feedback to modify our original plans.

Most important, we met the needs of English learners by creating an inclusive classroom designed as a bridge between exclusive pull-out ELL instruction and the ELL push-in instruction.[23] Our hybrid model—a unique innovation in ELL-centered pedagogy—differed from pull-out/push-in instruction because it proved effective in (a) maximizing interactions (whole class as well as one-on-one conferences) between teachers and students; (b) incorporating varying perspectives on U.S. History, which synergistically connected perspectives and built on each other's ideas; (c) encouraging students to listen to different voices and see diversity in the instruction; and (d) allowing each teacher to teach to his strengths while learning different techniques supported by a high level of collegiality.

Because of our interest in providing second language learners with social, behavioral, and academic benefits, we adopted a co-teaching methodology that involved bringing "varying areas of expertise and frames of reference" with teachers "… able to come together and collaborate on a daily basis in the same classroom" (Murawski & Lochner, 2011, pp. 174-175). In our experience, we discovered that lack of prior knowledge created impediments for second language learners in working with U.S. History themes and content. By creating a scaffolded class around social studies education principles, we provided the intensive background necessary to build conceptual knowledge. In our opinion, we created the "least restrictive environment" within the

[23] According to the Colorín Colorado website, "pull-out" instruction occurs when students receive most of their instruction in a mainstream classroom then leave that classroom ("pulled out") to receive explicit instruction in English as a second language. In a "push-in" setting, an ESL teacher joins the mainstream classroom to support ELL students (http://www.colorincolorado.org/ell-basics/ell-glossary#glossary-p).

mandate established by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004).

A key factor in our instruction encouraged ELL students to practice "breaking" words. This immersive process helped them begin to learn how best to use content-area discourse. In an exclusive U.S. History class for ELL students, they could truly sit with peers who, while they might laugh at a mispronunciation or misused word, minimized any overtones of "you're not doing it right." Learning a language—especially one that requires academic resonance, with its accompanying use of unfamiliar words and structure—seems best served when peers meet without opportunities for criticism. The iterative process of learning words and semiotic structure for writing demands much from ELL students. Our co-teaching situation merged my background in English Language Arts, with an emphasis on reading and writing, with Mr. Casino's extensive content knowledge, and provided a structure that allowed students to relate to us and to the instruction.

Selected Student Stories

In reviewing the interactions between the teachers and two student cohorts during 2015-16 and 2016-17, everyone's flaws—including our own—became clear. Mr. Casino and I could point to our grade books, which indicated one or two "superstars." Most students struggled to learn the content and to meet proficiency standards. Students in both cohorts needed extensive writing support. Some students had to repeat the class and gain additional practice. Others became frustrated with education and left school.

Student Profiles 2015-16. In the 2015-16 cohort, several students presented us with challenges. We recognized the truth of Murawski and Lochner's (2011) statement

that "… behavioral or social skill challenges are frequently concomitant with learning challenges," which required us to plan how to help students meet behavioral and academic expectations (p. 178). Mr. Casino and I took turns handling behavioral management issues with several students in this cohort, and we became grateful for our co-teaching relationship that allowed one of us to take time from class and work with a specific student. Our effectiveness as co-teachers hinged on our sense that some students experienced difficulties with learning because of their behavioral and social skills levels (Murawski and Lochner, 2011, p. 178). By proactively planning our working relationship, we could work together to help students with a range of behavioral and academic challenges.

- *Pierre* related well with everyone in the class and talked with both teachers equally. He was the alpha male, teasing the others and making jokes. One day he told a student that a memorized piece was due. She became quite upset. We had to address her distress while reminding Pierre about negative consequences of lying to another student. He remained committed to a strong academic performance, and ended the year with the highest grade.
- *Bidyut* displayed anger and a poor work ethic. We gave her extra attention and her outside counselor provided support. We learned to ignore (or minimize) her outbursts. She realized midway through the year that she could not succeed and stopped doing the work. Her relationships? She was angry with me, neutral towards Mr. Casino. She continually sat between Pierre and a female student named Lwyn, both of whom helped Bidyut with her work. An unlikely couple joined by a common cultural heritage, she and Lwyn would hold hands, walk together, and partner on their assignments.

- *Areebah* arrived angry on the first day of class and stormed out. Mr. Casino followed her to the office while I continued to teach. When she came back the next day, she appeared calm and willing, although she participated at her own level, often disaffected and passively aggressive. If excited by the subject matter—civil rights, women's rights, Ferguson—she would respond at length, usually with an insightful question that required a thoughtful answer. Intelligent and well-spoken, Areebah suffered academically and failed the class because of her anger-dominated, disruptive, and aggressive behavior. In spite of her better qualities, and strong Socratic Seminar performance, her poor work habits resulted in a failing grade.
- A quiet, smart young woman, and the youngest of three children in the same family who took my class over several years, *Lwyn* avoided any demonstrations of her intelligence, possibly a result of the male-dominated culture in which she lived. She struggled with writing, and spoke thoughtfully and carefully about serious topics, but only when called on. Like a hidden lake, seen only when leaving the woods, Lwyn hid her brilliance. With a grade of 84 in both semesters, her work showed even and steady progress.
- During an interview, *Fabrizio* spoke highly of how much the class meant to him, yet he failed for the year. Although he attended every class, he avoided schoolwork and demonstrated lower-than-average reading and writing skills. In a school-wide presentation, he displayed career-worthy hairstyling skills but his failing grades made him ineligible for a technical training program. At the end of the year, he transferred to another school.

- *Jabber* represented the elephant in the room for this class. Faithfully present, he avoided all work and failed for the year. Subsequent testing documented his kindergarten reading level. Toward the end of the year, his papers became easier to read and we suspected that someone else had written them. A solid athlete who played soccer and basketball for four years, he did not receive an academic evaluation until the end of his senior year, when he accepted special education services. His plan called for at least two more years in order to graduate. After struggling academically for four years, he decided to pursue a technical education and left school.
- *Rehab* displayed deep emotional problems, which could have resulted from his life in war-torn Somalia and Yemen. Aggressive in presenting himself, seldom shy, and extremely likeable, he usually provided incorrect answers to questions. Still he kept trying. A transfer from upstate New York, he entered with a street-wise attitude, and became angry when asked to remove his hat. The ensuing discussion about headgear through the ages, classroom expectations, and respect set a standard for his subsequent participation. He made an effort and passed one of the two semesters. He struggled with reading and writing skills at the primary school level, and transferred to another school at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year.
- *Thi Ri* maintained a reputation as the quietest student in the class. Boys intimidated her and as a result she hid her intelligence to the point where she almost failed the class. A lovely, friendly young Burmese/Thai woman, she remained faithfully devoted to her friend, Esias, from Nepal. In their interactions, they kept to themselves and supported

each other through their joint academic struggles. She maintained a good relationship with me, ignored Mr. Casino, and passed the class.

- *Esias*, another smart girl who hid her light under a bushel, represented the second half of the quiet duo with Thi Ri. Talented in terms of her reading skills, full of smiles and politeness, she showed less proficiency in her content writing and speaking. During the year, she became less quiet and started participating more. The Socratic Seminars pushed her to get out of her comfort zone and take risks with her public speaking. She and her family moved out of state during the 2017-18 school year.
- *Marguerite* represents my biggest disappointment in this class. She struggled with reading and writing, and we could barely understand her French accent. Teaming with Esias and Thi Ri for the group work, Marguerite showed skill and desire, although the others did most of the work. An adult student, with few local connections, she wanted to visit her family in the Congo. In early spring, she turned in her computer and left school with no explanation. I missed her spirit but appreciated her academic struggle. Months later, she was happy to see me as she pumped gas at a local station.
- *Bhajan* challenged me to remain aware of the circumstances around a child with a disability. Through meetings with her hearing specialist and observations of her in class, I gained knowledge about hearing loss and discovered ways to help her.[24] Bhajan worked diligently and wrote well. Her hearing loss, however, set her back academically. After receiving hearing aids, and faced with new learning circumstances late in her high

[24] The action research component of this project led to a deeper understanding of the prevalence of hearing loss in Asia as documented in the work of Clarke, Richmond, Worth, and Wagle (2015). The authors demonstrate that the lack of medical care for minor childhood ear infections in poor countries often results in long-term disability.

school career, she submitted her missing assignments, while improving her reading, writing, and speaking skills. By June, Bhajan ranked near the top of this cohort. Fortunately, our co-teaching relationship allowed us to provide sufficient support to help her complete her work. Our awareness of Bhajan's needs allowed us to see past the quiet personality and focus on helping her, even as others in the room clamored for attention.

- *Abu* dropped out at the end of fall semester. He represents the classic immigrant conflict between attending school and working, gaining material success now versus higher education later. His new car, combined with the need to work and take his family to medical appointments, resulted in spotty attendance. He received partial credit for U.S. History and began attending classes at Vermont Adult Learning to earn his high school diploma. A personable young man, greatly devoted to his Middle Eastern culture, he survived the conflict in Iraq and gained many practical skills. This vastly different and violent culture may have led to his diffidence toward any school-related activities, making academic pursuits less important than pursuing monetary success.
- *Subhas* could think on his feet and came up with answers easily. He studied—or at least read—the history textbook. He repeated this class after receiving several suspensions and failing it the previous year. Some of that negative behavior returned but he made up the missing work and we gave him a passing grade. He expects to graduate in 2018.
- *Nudhar* came from Somalia and attended other schools before West Ackerly. A childhood traumatic brain injury (TBI) affected her learning ability, then a sports injury in 2016 compounded the problem. She fell behind during the fall semester and never really came back during the spring. We gave her partial credit for the class, she returned

in 2016-17 to complete one semester, and then dropped out to attend Vermont Adult Learning. She visits us from time to time, displaying new clothes and a wide smile.

Student Profiles 2016-17. Students in the 2016-17 cohort presented a set of challenges different than any previous group. Scheduling conflicts required us to add five freshmen to a sophomore-level class. Although we waived the prerequisite for proficiency in reading and writing, we noted that four of the five freshmen students struggled more than the norm. Of the twelve ELL students in the cohort, three achieved a score between 83 and 93, five achieved scores in the 70s, three failed and one dropped out.

From the beginning of my research, I intended to use the 2015-16 cohort as the primary focus of this study. Data from the 2016-17 cohort would supplement what I had already learned. For these reasons, I selected a subset of the 2016-17 students to include in the following narrative, which simplified the evaluation, data gathering, and writing process.

- *Mahmud*, an eleventh grader, conveyed a strong sense of dissatisfaction with school. Polite, intelligent, and calm, he carried an edge that separated him from his teachers and his peers. A loner, he preferred to sit in a far corner of the room. Independent, he seldom asked for help or agreed to work with others. Reluctantly, he defined his own projects and accepted suggestions. Yet, his work arrived on time and within the established proficiency constraints. His story began with entering the U.S. in 2014 from Somalia, but we knew little more about him.
- *Uthman* seldom talked about his life and the violent episodes he saw in Iraq. In his twenties, scarred both physically and emotionally, he often came to me for mentoring advice. He relates how he and his brother care for his widowed mother, and his sleepy

arrival at school after driving a taxi overnight. He completed history assignments while waiting in a taxi line, and showed incredible persistence in his academic work. He, more than the other students, connected with the reality of our Civil War and understood how Americans' journeys compare to his own search for sanctuary in the Middle East. He passed U.S. History with high grades, now takes Early College classes, and expects his high school diploma in June 2018. His story could be the subject of a book, which I hope he will one day write.

- As the third and youngest son from his family, *Nabendu* demonstrated the symptoms of cognitive impairment. His older brothers came to school with their own problems. One brother dropped out after trying to persuade his teachers to give him better grades. The other brother succeeded well enough to pass his classes. We thought Nabendu's grades and test scores would allow him to fit well in high school. After seeing his lack of performance, and interviewing his middle school teachers, I learned that he suffered from tantrums in middle school and that his teachers provided extensive academic support to compensate for his failing grades. Obviously, he could not meet the performance goals in high school. In a valiant attempt to pass U.S. History, he met with me one hour before his summative assessment. The resulting presentation left much to be desired, and he failed the class. In the 2017-18 school year, he repeated the class, received reading support and faculty monitoring, and has shown some improvement.
- Another freshman member of the 2016-17 cohort, *Safal* struggled with U.S. History content. His reading comprehension and writing skills left him on the outer edges of proficiency, and he showed little progress. Through a common cultural background,

Safal and Nabendu supported each other during the year but they lacked the background knowledge and skillset necessary to help each other thrive in a content-area environment. Safal joined Nabendu in retaking the class during the 2017-18 school year.

Mr. Casino and I maintained our co-teaching relationship throughout our work with the 2016-17 cohort. Teaching fewer students than in past years, we could provide greater attention to this group, while adjusting our curriculum to accommodate lower-than-expected reading levels and history knowledge. My work with this cohort led to my teaching an ELL newcomer's history class in 2017-18 and a beginner's history class in 2018-19. The ELL and social studies teachers agreed that second language learners needed basic history instruction, with emphasis on geography, current events, civics, and historical stories, before entering the content-heavy U.S. History class.

Skillsets, Expectations, and Proficiencies

The co-taught U.S. History class encouraged advanced thinking, asked students to assess their own processes (metacognition), and allowed them to develop communication skills that helped them learning new information. Wagner (2008) summarizes these abilities in the Seven Survival Skills that lead to success in the 21st century: (1) Critical thinking and problem solving; (2) Collaboration across networks and leading by influence; (3) Agility and adaptability; (4) Initiative and entrepreneurialism; (5) Effective oral and written communication; (6) Accessing and analyzing information; and (7) Curiosity and imagination. The West Ackerly graduate expectations and proficiencies (Appendix K) mirror some of Wagner's skillset, with the aim of moving students forward to graduation. The school developed and published these standards in the 2014-15 school

year, and revises them yearly. Our co-teaching practice encourages us to incorporate these skillsets into our instruction. We assign projects, for example, with a strong effective oral and written communications component. Students write an essay and then use it to develop a speech. They see their project from a research and reading perspective. They then demonstrate their writing ability in an essay. Finally, they make a presentation so we can evaluate their discourse skills. Both teachers can support students during this communication process: We design the original assignment, convey instructions through lectures, develop a list of research sources, assess the essays and presentations, handle one-on-one work sessions, and manage feedback after each presentation, ensuring that all students receive written and oral comments on their work.

For U.S. History, Socratic Seminars served as summative assessments for a unit, where group assessments hinged on student-generated questions and answers. As Tippett (2016) explains: "… a question is a powerful thing, a mighty use of words. Questions elicit answers in their likeness. Answers mirror the questions they rise, or fall, to meet" (pp. 29-30). We evaluated students on their ability to formulate honest and revealing questions, ones that contributed to the dignity of the subject and their personal exploration into American history. To demonstrate discourse, and methods of questioning, we explained "constructive conversation skills" (Zwiers, O'Hara, and Pritchard, 2014), which involved building and creating ideas, clarifying them, evaluating and comparing them, and fortifying and supporting them (see Appendix I). Before beginning the Socratic Seminar, we asked students to write their own prompt and response starters to help them manage discussions. They entered the seminar prepared to ask questions and respond to questions from others,

thus developing their personal discourse abilities. One student might ask another "Can you give me an example from the text?" and the other student looks at her annotated copy of the article and says "In the text, it said that …." This interaction keeps the discussion going, even when the students feel they have little to say. In this sense, we are teaching them to respond to each other by giving them tools they can use in any situation.

In *How We Learn*, Carey (2015), describes learning as storytelling that helps students create "meaning, narrative, cause and effect" (p. 19). In this process, the brain can "absorb information," while assimilating "perceptions, facts, and thoughts [in] slightly different combinations" (pp. 19-20). By having formal question and response starters written on a card before the Seminar begins, students can raise questions and make conversational points. Table 7 contains several prompt and response starters:

Table 7

Selected Prompts and Responses

Prompt Starter	Response Starter
What is another point of view?	My hypothesis is ….
What is a real-world example?	I think it means…
How does the evidence from your example compare to mine?	One case that illustrates this point is …
What do we need to do?	In other words …

Examples from Zwiers, O'Hara, & Pritchard (2014). *Common Core Standards in diverse classrooms: Essential practices for developing academic language and disciplinary literacy*. Stenhouse Publishers.

Having prompt and response starters in place allows students to move through the Socratic Seminar with a safety net that protects them during the discussion. They can copy big ideas from lectures or articles, modify them using their own thoughts and experiences,

and actively participate in the discussion because they have a card with a few key questions on it.

In many cases, students related to slavery in the antebellum South, Asian immigration in the 1870s, or civil rights in the 1960s because of their own experience in leaving violent environments, lacking sufficient food, or adjusting to absent parents who must work. Time after time, students wrote about their journey from a warm homeland, their first airplane trip, inability to eat unfamiliar food, and arriving in the middle of a snowy Vermont landscape populated by individuals wearing puffy coats, hats, and gloves. Both their "sandals and shorts" mindset and their immediate immersion in an English-only classroom in which they could not understand the instruction needed a rapid overhaul. By remembering their own recent experiences, they found themselves able to connect with historical events about which they knew little. Our tasks as co-teachers involve helping students make connections between historical events and their own stories. We model the discussion by telling them our own experiences: To honor veterans, we teach a unit in May that describes Memorial Day. Mr. Casino's father fought in the Korean War, my father served in Europe during World War II. We talk about our fathers in the context of honoring veterans. We show pictures of Arlington National Cemetery. A local cemetery invites us to place flags on veterans' graves. We discuss the mourning process and the sacrifices our veterans have made. We explain the dates on a tombstone and tell the story of why the monument to a famous Civil War general shows him without his arm. During the course of a sunny afternoon, the discourse continues as we travel through history, telling stories about

those who have protected our country and fought in our wars. This conversation opens the door for our students to share their own stories about their countries and their lives.

Culturally responsive teaching. As teachers, we try to understand the journey that brought second language students to their American classroom in order to be able to teach them. Gary Howard (2006) calls this attitude "culturally responsive teaching" in describing "transformations pedagogy" as a place "where our passion for equity intersects with our cultural competence" (p. 133). Moreover, when we work with students "we are called to be gracious, competent, courageous, and worthy. If we offer ourselves in this way, we earn the right to expect from our students their respect, engagement, honesty, and effort (p. 139). In telling their stories, immigrant students often describe the kindness of a teacher or peer in the initial days of their arrival in school.

Given the diversity of the primary and secondary school populations, and the lack of diversity among teachers and administrators nationwide, Gary Howard (2006) describes a "creative tension" that relates to student performance, specifically "the personal transformation of White educators and the social transformation of the arrangements of White dominance. Each of these themes is a critical factor in any authentic movement toward the elimination of the achievement gap" (p. 7). And, perhaps culture can play a role in minimizing that gap.

An axiomatic concept around culture posits that it must belong to someone else, that the "American culture" establishes the standard and other cultures—no matter how diverse or full of meaning—fail to measure up. The need for two-way learning involves minimizing differences. "Often [teachers] believe that 'culture is what other people have; what we have

is just truth'" (Ladson-Billings, p. 144). Personal research and professional development should allow teachers to examine our own cultural backgrounds, write about and discuss them, and confront the assumptions we have held since birth about "others." On our spring cemetery trip, the supervisor led us to a separate Muslims internment area. Mr. Casino and I listened as our students explained the burial process, how women could not step into the burial ground, how a shroud wrapped the corpse. In this student-led discourse, we became the learners and the students became teachers. We gained information that we could convey to the next year's class before our visit to encourage their discussion.

Immigrant students bring a wealth of intelligence, awareness, and knowledge with them. They may know how to use a solar cooker, care for animals, play soccer, or write in their own language. Their depth of experience and awareness of other cultures gained through their travels makes them valuable additions to American culture. They simply need time to adapt to a new language and vastly different living circumstances.

Teachers who bring a passion for students' well-being to the classroom may understand the difference between equality and equity, as described in a blog post entitled "Equity and Equality Are Not Equal" (Mann, 2014): The article asks whether every student should receive the same level of financial support, which translates into a solution of equality? Or, "should students who come from less get more in order to ensure that they can catch up," a question of equity (Mann, 2014)? The graphic accompanying the post shows three children looking over a fence to observe a baseball game. The first panel shows a scene of *equality*: Each child stands on a box of the same height, allowing the two tallest to see the game but blocking the smallest child. The second panel shows a scene of *equity*:

Each child stands on a box of different height so that each one can see over the fence. That is the image I wish to inculcate within every member of the West Ackerly community: We stand on different boxes in order to see as much of the world as possible, and that view belongs to all of us, no matter when we arrived in the United States.

During our years teaching in a diverse community, Mr. Casino and I have learned to rely on our prior experiences with multiple cultures. Today's African and Nepali students mirror the Vietnamese, Bosnian, and African traits experienced in past generations. Most left their homes because of war, violence, or forced relocation. Their multiple paths led through similar refugee camps. Religious differences often played a role in their personal *hegira*. The trauma they experienced affects them in many ways, some subtle and some overt. We need to remain aware that a behavioral incident in our classroom might have begun thousands of miles away and years in the past.

The technology of instant news feeds and video highlights helps us with the curriculum, yet we must heed Barack Obama's warning to "… 'harness this technology in a way that allows a multiplicity of voices, allows a diversity of views, but doesn't lead to a Balkanization of society and allows ways of finding common ground'" (Yeginsu, 2017). When beginning a project, I select diverse primary and secondary sources for students to use in their research. Mr. Casino prefers visual sources, such as CNN. I opt for traditional print sources, such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. We aim for objectivity, even when the project involves medicine during the Civil War. The object of each project is to make students think and to assemble a product that shows the effort that

went into it and demonstrates learning. We often suggest that students "put on that 1865 hat," so they can feel what it was like in a different time, without the technology of today.

Teachers who work in a diverse community—or with islands of diverse students in a homogeneous school—need strategies to understand and work with families otherwise unfamiliar with a school, its educational policies, and its staff. In our district, parents generally face barriers that limit their involvement in school organizations or its daily life. Their socio-economic status requires them to work long hours, often at multiple jobs. They assign schooling issues to professionals, focus on food and shelter for their families, and often allow students to fend for themselves. In such an environment, teachers assume the role of supporter, social worker, and advisor both inside and outside the classroom. One of the many advantages of co-teaching is the parent conference that resembles a community meeting: Two or more teachers, a translator, parents, and assorted siblings. Both teachers take the lead in explaining the child's strengths and areas for growth. One teacher might enjoy a better relationship with the student or the parent than his colleague. These meetings tend to proceed smoothly because of the mutual support the teachers have for each other, and both are committed to the welfare of the child. We can show parents how much we care for their children and at the same time we gain support from each other as we discuss multiple facets of the child's education. As teachers, we enter the world of advisors to both parents and students when it comes to grades, homework issues, college placements, or adjusting to life in America.

In light of these factors, Ladson-Billings (2009) encourages teachers "to look more broadly and carefully at the causes of the behaviors they see, to develop multiple

perspectives, and to make a commitment to working with their students, regardless of parent participation" (p. 145). The home culture that teachers do not understand requires some measure of "honor and respect" as an "accurate and fair representation of African American culture in the school curriculum" (p. 145)—and her comments equally apply to all children of color, including the Nepali, Iraqi, Thai, and African students enrolled in diverse school districts.

Teachers must learn to participate in this emerging "dance of diversity … in which everyone shares the lead," even though race and ethnicity have separated cultures for generations, contributing to our awkwardness (Howard, 1993, p. 36). The warning cry that Ladson-Billings (2009) sounds for teachers reminds us of the underlying hegemonic attitude that deprecates or even dismisses African American (or another) culture. A student's language might seem different but it contains a power and definition all its own. It can no more be "a corruption of English" than a child's family can contain pathological elements. We cannot ignore or trivialize "…the historical, cultural, and scientific contributions of African Americans," or other ethnicities (p. 151). The immigrant child requires no fixing because she is broken. Instead, we as teachers must encourage that diversity and incorporate it into the lessons we teach. In our U.S. History class, we give second language learners an opportunity to find commonality in their experience with American culture by answering their questions and continuing the dialogue.

Mr. Casino and I notice the diversity of ethnicities, clothing, language, and customs that our students freely display in our multicultural classroom. That daily experience makes the idea of "color-blind" teaching illogical, invalid, and possibly "detrimental to … students'

academic, social, emotional, and psychological development" (Cooper, He, and Levin, 2011, p. 158). We admit differences among our students, and thereby acknowledge those distinguishing factors that identify a child. Hopefully, we can match those factors with daily instruction. As students from multiple cultures come together, they create a cooperative, collaborative, and equitable spirit, a quilt-like pattern of educational awareness and achievement. We honor these children as "heirs to a great tradition of art, music, dance, science, invention, [and] oratory…" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 152). At West Ackerly, many of our Nepali students practice dances from their cultures. Wearing silk skirts and gold jewelry, they dance barefoot on the stage during school meetings or show us the video of their latest production. They bring to our school a unique look at Asian cultural roots and their enthusiasm makes it clear how important this activity is to them.

Because our school encourages cross-cultural cooperation, we see friendships develop across many cultures. In spite of language differences, our students come to speak a language of the heart that encourages communication and mutual support in the classroom, on the athletic fields, and in the community. A true community encourages differences and incorporates them, creating an inclusive sense of participation. In similar ways, two teachers from different generations and experiences come together and dedicate themselves to working with a minority population. "It's the best class of my day," Mr. Casino often reminds me.

In *Developing Critical Cultural Competence*, Cooper, He, and Levin (2011) stress that educators should "see students for who they are and who they could become"; consider different cultural backgrounds, including students' identification as an ethnic minority, with

a different class ideation, and how their developing language skills create learning difficulty; avoid presenting the "myth of meritocracy"—the idea that hard work results in achieving goals—in favor of inculcating students' belief in themselves, no matter how difficult the task. (pp. 158-159).

Cooper, He, and Levin (2011) believe that sheltered English instruction—also known as Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English or SDAIE—can successfully allow second language learners to navigate "content-area classes taught in English" (p. 103) through a "challenging academic program" that remains "accessible and understandable" because of its student orientation. In a SDAIE-focused classroom, "teachers extend practices of good teaching to incorporate techniques that teach language as well as content" (p. 104). In this format, content-area instruction becomes the vehicle through which second language learners gain familiarity with vocabulary and grammar, academic English syntax and semantics, and learning strategies (p. 103). Such an instructional approach requires modifications to address the students' non-native background; support through aides and translators in their primary language; and "appropriate grade-level content learning objectives" (p. 104). Such instruction offers more scaffolding than a typical mainstream class and may require reductions in the objectives of a mainstream curriculum. At the same time, the core content remains similar, if not the same.

The Future of Multicultural Education

Ladson-Billings (2009) maintains that equity-as-sameness serves as an impossible ethnic composition because even "… within the nuclear family children born from the same parents are not exactly the same. Different children have different needs and addressing

those different needs is the best way to deal with them equitably" (p. 36). By remaining aware of ethnic and cultural differences, we gain an improved perception of the whole child, better allowing us to meet the needs of all children in the classroom.

In an equitably more perfect world, teachers enter an "ideological home" that normalizes high expectations, links student learning to community service, and emphasizes "understanding of students' culture as a valuable and integral aspect of … teaching" with "the entire school community" benefiting from shared learning (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 156). This successful, ethnically diverse environment promotes the values inherent in a multicultural institution, creates a focal point in the community, offers a "rigorous and exciting" curriculum that demands student academic success within a "caring supportive environment" that makes children feel special, and considers grades as only one type of accomplishment (pp. 153-155). Admittedly, this vision is one of a utopian school setting, one to which I might aspire but never quite reach—yet the West Ackerly environment does provide some basis for understanding for the 21st century.

Such was the intent of Walsh and Burrell (2001), who cited the work of the Advisory Board created by President Bill Clinton's Executive Order 13050 in 1997. The Board's objective was to advise the President "on how to build *One America for the 21st Century*" (p. 210). They emphasize the education of youth as critical step in "bridging the racial divide" (p. 212). They state a belief in achieving changed attitudes through student interaction with diverse races. Yet, they admit the curriculum "… must provide the basis for understanding. Schools can no longer offer a strictly Eurocentric version of world history. American history courses must reflect an accurate account of the African American

experience" (p. 212). They conclude with a statement demanding training for teachers in teaching this new curriculum. Both Mr. Casino and I became aware of the need for praxis training that opens doors beyond our current curriculum. I have taken a course in race and racism, done extensive reading, and developed two courses for the 2017-18 school year: (a) Ethnicity and Difference and (b) Examining Race and Racism. Still, I feel we have only touched the surface in bringing racial and ethnic awareness to our students, faculty, administrators, and community.

In unanticipated ways, my reading has led me to investigate new worlds, and my involvement with second language learners has connected me to new topics in history. Wilkerson (2010) finds great similarity and resonance in the Great Migration of millions of African Americans—including her own family—with the stories of European immigrants, all of whom arrived "with little in their pockets [wanting to make] something of themselves" (p. 542). She describes the similarities between the Great Migration and the migration of more recent immigrants:

> I gravitated to the children of recent immigrants from Argentina, Nepal, Ecuador, El Salvador, with whom I had so much in common as the children of newcomers: the accents and folkways of overprotective parents suspicious of the libertine mores of the New World and our childish embarrassment at their nervous hovering; the exotic, out-of-step delicacies from the Old Country that our mothers lovingly prepared for our lunchboxes; the visits to my parents' fellow "immigrant" friends—all just happening to be from the South and exchanging the latest about the people back home; the gentle attempts at instilling Old World values from our homelands, my

> father going so far as to nudge me away from city boys and toward potential suitors whose parents he knew from back home in Petersburg, Virginia, who were, to him, upstanding boys by definition and would make a fine match in his view, which all but guaranteed that I'd have little interest in them" (p. 542).

These protective patterns and cultural attachments continue, whether the children arrive at the airport from Asia, Africa, or the Middle East, or moved steadily northward in trains and cars from farms in the South. The journey of my ELL students who arrived at West Ackerly mirrors that of African Americans who migrated northward from 1918 to 1970, creating a key connection to my U.S. History instruction. Mr. Casino and I work in rooms filled with immigrants and we observe our students re-enact the migration scenario that African Americans have begun. Wilkerson's stories link to those of my students to my practice, broadening and deepening the history I teach. History is not something happening long ago; it is happening right now, if I can only connect with it through my students.

Recollections: Challenges of Co-Teaching

My reflections about African American migration, the journeys in which my students have engaged, my involvement with ELL students, and my ongoing development as a teacher of history merged in a March 2015 journal entry about the pressures that affected my curriculum and co-teaching.

During the Spring 2015 semester, schedule changes—community meetings, field trips, and standardized testing—nibbled away at the ninety-minute block of class time. Mr. Casino described me as a "silly man" because I expected sufficient time to teach our curriculum. He reminded me that we teach a survey class and that we cannot teach

everything. In a few years, he said, if we ask a student about the Lusitania or the Zimmerman Note, she may only remember a few details about World War I. If so, we should consider that a successful lesson. Yet, I have higher aspirations for my ELL students than they (and Mr. Casino) expect. True, my practical experience with ELL students over a ten-year span confirms their need for small bits of information in order to avoid overwhelming them with content. With this understanding, Mr. Casino and I developed a curriculum around what we consider the main points of U.S. History. Yet, in the back of my mind, I sense a yearning for the eight themes of U.S. History that Connor (1997) listed in *Social Education*:

> (1) The American Character and the American Belief System; (2) Making a New Start: The Immigrant Experience; (3) The Struggle for Equality: Making a Place for All: Women's History, African American History, Native American Studies, Chicano Studies, and Asian American Studies; (4) Boom and Bust: Economic Development; (5) Leadership and the Reform Tradition; (6) American Cultural Traditions: Religion, Education, and the Arts; (7) War and Peace; (8) An Opportunity for Choice: Your Major in American History (p. 204).

Selecting several themes from this master list would serve my purpose of teaching a deeper level of content and hopefully avoid overwhelming the students. This level of thematic teaching fascinates me and it may appear in a future curriculum for U.S. History.

In 2015, Mr. Casino and I decided to measure student progress and provide a study guide for World War I. I created a Do Now assignment with Word Boxes and key vocabulary words (imperialism, nationalism, militarism, and alliances), a section to draw No

Man's Land, and a fill-in-the-blank section that included questions based on the text (Appendix M). We reviewed the assignment with the students as a first step in framing our discussion. We stressed how the assignment addressed several educational levels and that it could serve as a study guide. One student did a spectacular job on this assignment, and we used his work as an exemplar. We discussed different learning styles, how drawing can reinforce learning, the need to take notes, use them to study for a quiz, and review all materials that the teacher passes out. The lesson contained in my journal entry and our subsequent work reflects the participatory nature of action research: I evaluated myself and the pressure I felt as a researcher, then worked with my co-teacher to resolve some of the pressure by modifying the lesson plan, and finally reflected on the process as part of my research. This level of metacognition brought me through a situation that I might have missed as a solo teacher because I would have lacked the twin lenses of action research and co-teaching.

This lesson allowed us to show students the structure of left- and right-brain thinking, addressing the fact that the "left hemisphere was the intellectual, the wordsmith … [and the] right side was the artist, the visual-spatial expert. The two worked together, like copilots" (Carey, 2015, pp. 16-17), just as Mr. Casino and I co-piloted our U.S. History lesson plan to improve our teaching practice. As a result, this U.S. History lesson contained elements of skill building and metacognition (for the students) and a deeper level of metacognition and praxis (for the co-teachers).

Student interest in the class reinforced our belief in the curricular structure we had created. Breaking larger concepts into smaller pieces allowed students to absorb the material

more readily. As Carey (2015) reveals in *How We Learn*, the brain embeds facts, ideas, and experiences, and uses memories to change memories (p. 20). Those smaller pieces of facts really became memories that attached to a larger picture of learning.

During one abbreviated class session, Mr. Casino talked through the Zimmerman Note in only ten minutes. Afterwards, reassured that he could conclude his lecture on Wednesday, we agreed to begin the story of the Fighting 369th, a black American regiment that saw heavy service and recognition during World War I, and whose members suffered on their return to a segregated America. We planned to wrap up the war with the Treaty of Versailles and avoid teaching individual battles. Students could study battles and specifics of the war when preparing their final presentations. We also agreed to extend this unit into Quarter 4, beyond the close of grades on Friday.

In looking back to this lesson, I realize that our level of parity strengthened our teaching. Because neither of us tried to control the action in the class, we could work collaboratively on resolving the issues. We followed an iterative co-planning process by raising questions, discussing them, developing plans, and finalizing the next lesson in a Do Now worksheet. We differentiated our instruction to meet the needs of individual students and the class as a whole: Students could treat the Do Now exercise as an assessment of what they *already* knew or as a way to determine what they *needed* to know. The multiple levels of questioning between the teachers—from basic recall to higher-order thinking—gave us necessary traction to more forward with the lesson. And we had plans in place to handle any behavior situations (Murawski and Lochner, 2011, pp. 181-182). Although this experience

took place several years ago, it reinforces how Mr. Casino and I developed a strong working relationship because of our willingness to work through difficult issues.

Future Direction for Co-Teaching

ELL students entering a U.S. History class encounter challenges associated with their transition into an academically centered world. Immediately, they must incorporate their prior experience in learning English at a more extensive level, quickly develop academic skills, then express themselves through written and oral communication that demonstrates their critical thinking. The various levels of these challenges include notetaking, working with—and comprehending—informational texts, conducting research, and making oral presentations with graphical support. These abilities—whether learned to a proficient level or requiring further development—constrain the secondary educator's curriculum for the content-area class. If students' refined skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing allow them to navigate U.S. History content, they would probably find a suitable fit—and a comfortable academic niche—in a general education Humanities class. More often, ELL students find themselves at an emerging or developing level, and in need of more experience in the listening, speaking, reading, and writing domains. A transitional content course geared to history therefore offers a safe, scaffolded space to pursue remedial work and approach grade-level capability.

Instruction in an ELL history class involves learning how to read an informational text by deconstructing the use and placement of headings, captions, and cross-references, then reading about a topic. Skill-building continues with the creation of a thesis and strong research questions; discovering possible sources for information; and summarizing

information in order to move the thesis forward. Successful completion of the U.S. History class requires skills in notetaking, discourse, analysis, and synthesis of information, which establishes background knowledge for future content-area classes. In the co-taught environment, two educators bring different levels of expertise. Their multiple frames of reference introduce both content and language learning and allow all students to benefit. This inclusive environment "has increasingly become the service delivery approach of choice for many of the nation's inclusive classrooms" (Murawski & Lochner, 2011, pp. 174-175).

Within the mind of a typical ELL student resides a translation mechanism for the teacher's English words, which often leads to a less-than-complete version of the lesson. Vocabulary gaps create vast holes in knowledge acquisition, even when prior ELL classes established content-level vocabulary that applies to U.S. History. By sharing teaching responsibilities, the ELL teacher and the subject matter co-teacher can merge language and content instruction, thereby allowing the student to gain an appreciation for U.S. History as well as experience using technical terms that relate to the democratic process. Admittedly, dual instruction slows down the learning process and requires modification of the curriculum or additional class time. Still, a co-taught classroom increases the amount of individual attention for each student; provides greater access to, and understanding of, the content; reduces behavioral problems; raises student self-esteem and social abilities; and improves academic achievement (Murawski & Lochner, 2011, pp. 175). The teachers serve in a collegial environment, which allows them to learn from each other while sharing responsibility for lesson planning and grading.

At West Ackerly High School, the transitional U.S. History class requires a two-semester school year. The fall semester begins with skills development and awareness of basic government principles. Students engage in an oral reading of the Declaration of Independence and the reasoning behind the document. With this background in place, the curriculum moves to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, with more oral work (memorization of the Preamble) and in-depth discussion of the amendments. Throughout the year, the goal in this co-taught U.S. History class remains one of inclusive education, specifically a general education classroom that provides the least restrictive environment for effective student learning (Murawski and Lochner, 2011, p. 174). Co-teachers share responsibility for planning, instruction, grading, and classroom management. Students experience more social interactions with adults and benefit from a content-area and language focus on the instruction. While sharing the work does not exactly halve the load, co-teaching impacts the teaching praxis by establishing a collaborative relationship, one which students see and can model for themselves in their peer relationships.

Anzaldúa (1987/1999) writes of "borderlands" as places noted for hybridity and the perspective offered those who live there (p. 7). The "borderlands" for English Language Learners exist in their transition into a new culture and language. By scaffolding instruction, teachers help immigrant students learn smaller chunks of key information and establish skills designed to develop their innate intelligence. In many ways, immigrants will always live between two cultures. Teaching content subjects such as U.S. History provides an entryway into their new culture and ensures some level of academic success.

Language instruction begins to build a pedagogical bridge between the ELL student and content knowledge. Crossing that bridge, however, brings serious challenges for ELL students and their teachers. The U.S. History curriculum, for example, introduces students to democratic principles that their native-born peers have accepted all their lives. In the co-taught classroom, ELL students must learn to capitalize on their prior language learning, discover new ideas around the content, and hopefully connect their new and existing cultural influences. In this learning process, feelings of frustration, despair, disappointment, and anger emerge—and it becomes the task of the co-teaching team to introduce enough material to retain interest, offer sufficient support to help students understand content while providing sufficient scaffolded support for students to understand the new aspects of language. While a single teacher with ELL background can teach U.S. History, the interpersonal support and interactional context provided through co-taught instruction simplifies what can amount to complex teaching task. In addition, students seem to appreciate the dual voices and perspectives. As several students mentioned in interviews at the end of the semester, the two teachers' voices kept the material interesting. They also saw a collaboration emerge before their eyes, with all the messiness of human nature, which represents a subtle introduction to their future lives as adults when they must work together with others.

Teachers and administrators should realize that the pedagogical bridge for ELL students is becoming crowded: Currently, we teach 4.6 million ELL students in secondary education in the U.S. (Musu-Gillette, Robinson, McFarland, Kewal Ramani, Zhang, & Wilkinson-Flicker, 2016, p. iii), with projections for a 20 to 25 percent increase in

immigrant K-12 students by 2025 (Elfers & Stritikus, 2013, p. 306). The principles of co-teaching provide a relatively simple answer for both teachers and administrators to help these students learn and share the burden of that instruction with experts in their own subject matter areas. ELL students will need to adapt to a new culture, a new language, and the content-area classroom they will one day enter. They will learn how to learn by applying their ELL-only instruction to the larger world of content classes. By giving teachers experience in ELL instruction through co-teaching relationships, schools provide professional development through one teacher talking to, and observing, the other. They build their pedagogical knowledge and become more effective in the classroom. The co-teachers in this study learned from one another while developing a synergy that combined the best of our respective practices. Most important, the students in our classes benefited from our collaboration.

Chapter 5: Concluding Thoughts

Although heavily involved in both the research process and my day-to-day teaching, I attempted to remain objective by compartmentalizing my roles as teacher and researcher. At the same time, I benefited from incorporating information developed from action research protocols into my active teaching practice. This chapter discusses the limitations and delimitations I encountered as well as an epilogue that connects this study conducted during 2015-17 with my teaching practice in 2017-18.

Limitations and Delimitations

A traditional definition of limitations and delimitations describes surroundings, events, or facts that may constrain research methods and analysis, areas outside the researcher's control. They influence methodology and conclusions (Baltimore County Public Schools [BCPS], 2010).

Limitations. Any form of action research contains an in-built bias because the researcher lives within the process as a teacher or facilitator. An outsider might bring more objectivity to the research but an insider brings a high level of awareness and connection to the individuals and the overall project. In describing inquiry as stance, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) admit that "neither the work of practice nor inquiry about practice is captured by the idea that practice is simply (or even mostly) practical" (p. 134). They equate practice and practitioner learning with the "inventing and reinventing frameworks for imagining, enacting, and assessing daily work in educational settings" (p. 134). In effect, practitioners

"co-construct curriculum with students by investigating experiences, drawing in cultural and linguistic resources, and integrating textual and other knowledge sources" (p. 134).

This philosophy applies to our co-taught U.S. History class: We followed tangents in order to expand student learning while remaining faithful to the selected resources—whether graphic images or textual sources—in order to make up a lesson within a larger unit, and subsequently the unit itself. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) refer to the choices we make as practitioners: "… to be informed by [our] more comprehensive and nuanced sense-making about a whole host of things—learners, language, culture, race, class, gender literacy, disciplinary content, social issues, power, institutions, neighborhoods, histories, communities, materials, texts, technologies, and pedagogies" (p. 134). The ELL-centered classroom contains these elements and more, all of which require the practitioner's awareness and adjustment. In this educational environment, our practice assumes a "deeply contextual, relational, and interdisciplinary" construct, one existing on a "theoretical and interpretive" foundation (p. 134).

Recording my classes, and then reviewing those recordings, provided a measure of objectivity when conducting my analysis. I hold myself to a high standard of truthfulness in my self-reporting, even when such reports may make me look less-than-competent. An embarrassing, true, and often repeated story involves my interaction with Mr. Casino. Often I would express a research-based rationale for some minor point of education. His reaction to such high-level academic opinions often brought me immediately back to earth: "Silly man," he would say, meaning that my idealism and expectations were getting in the way of our day-to-day teaching.

The instruments used for assessment and instruction came from my practice and through consultation with my teaching partner. The idea of daily "Do Now" assignments originated with Lemov's (2010) *Teach Like A Champion* techniques. Aimed at "creating a strong classroom culture" in "a place where students work hard, behave, model strong character, and do their best" (p. 145), this technique helped us focus students' attention, create a means of reflection on a previous lesson or related question, and demonstrate the connectivity of each day's work. Lemov (2010) centers this exercise in his five principles of classroom culture: Discipline, management, control, influence, and engagement. In our experience, this one exercise helped educate students in practical methods of learning, especially around persistence. It demonstrated "what successful learning looks like" (p. 146). In a short (15-20 minute) exercise, students focused on the day's assignment while receiving feedback on what they know. This mini-assessment, whether graded or simply discussed, helped us build a relationship with students and created a management system focused on "doing things right," inspiring and engaging them in working positively (Lemov, p. 147) toward some agreed-upon end. They realized the intrinsic need to leave behind what has happened outside the classroom, focus on the here and now, and achieve (Lemov, p. 149). The immediacy of a "Do Now" exercise obviated the need for student thought by creating an opportunity for "productive, positive work" (Lemov, p. 149). In a short time, students understood what to do and knew the unambiguous procedures in this classroom (Lemov, p. 152). Here, my roles as researcher-practitioner merged, challenging me to develop my teaching practice while intellectually standing at some remove in order to evaluate the emerging process. An outsider with truly objective intent might simply

acknowledge a problem in getting students to focus early in the class. As a researcher-practitioner, I subjectively saw the problem as something I could change in order to improve students' learning. Then, at a more objective level, I acknowledged how important Lemov's suggestion could be to my research and recorded notes to document that practice.

Teaching on a daily basis. Our classes generally consist of five 90-minute meetings every two weeks. We attempt to break down each class into an entry portion (with a Do Now or video "attention getter" assignment), a lecture portion, and a student work time (peer-to-peer review, writing conferences, or reading). Although our goals aim to achieve this breakdown on a daily basis, we do experience interference from time constraints or forces outside the classroom—and we remain open to late-breaking news or current events. Some constraints—such as, sports- or family-related early dismissals, abbreviated class times (community meetings or other school-related activities), and the need for more in-depth review of a prior lesson—require adjustments, ranging from replacing one lesson with another to postponing the lesson until the next class period or working with students on upcoming assignments. Student questions often lead in unanticipated directions, which require revised plans for the day. One constraint in this process involved how much help teachers provide for writing assignments. I tend to err on the side of maximum support, to the point where I will transcribe a student's words, especially if she experiences difficulty at the analysis or synthesis levels. Mr. Casino functions more smoothly, gliding between students, drawing flow charts, and gently encouraging more effort. Here, our personalities and capabilities complement each other, although an outside researcher might not understand the differences. Grounded in language arts practice, with a professional career as

a technical writer and editor, I morph into an updated image of myself as a consultant with the students as clients. I believe my editorial abilities strengthen the class, with an approach that begins with firmness and evolves into gentleness. Grounded in social studies instruction, and a veteran of twenty years teaching, Mr. Casino offers graphic images that students can more easily grasp. He *understands* students at a deep level and develops his practice around that firm but gentle approach. His smoothness in dealing with a difficult situation or an agitated student always impresses me. Some students simply prefer to work with him, and tend to avoid me—and the co-taught class allows students to makes that choice while maintaining their involvement in the lesson. My researcher side finds it easier to analyze that behavior. My teacher side gets hurt when a student chooses one of us over the other. I simply need to acknowledge this limitation and remain objective.

Over the course of six years, our practice changed as we adapted to the curriculum, new technology, different infrastructure within the school, and to a changing student population. In the beginning, Mr. Casino still used the acetate sheets from an overhead projector. The introduction of personal laptops for teachers and students provided a massive technology boost, one that we had to learn how to incorporate into our teaching. Similarly, the introduction of a classroom management software program moved our instruction into a digital format and away from paper-based systems. This system improved our collaboration and simplified regular use of common materials while requiring more involvement from us, especially around grades. One of us might have planned a lesson through the classroom management system and the other modified it either independently or in a pre-lesson conversation. As the school adapted its graduate expectations, our instruction moved to

more student-based evaluation and began to rely less on lecture. In addition, we arbitrarily chose to teach aspects of skill building (notetaking, close reading, and speaking) by embedding them within lessons. Our evaluations involved written essays and requesting students to base their oral presentations on their essays. In this way, students gained a deeper awareness of the subject because they presented it in several ways. Our evaluations included project-based assignments, such as posters and artifact creation, and classroom participation. We graded collaboratively: One of us might review all the students' assignments and develop a grade. Then we met to evaluate that assessment and make changes based on our discussion. Interestingly, one of us preferred to use a grading rubric for most student work; the other did not. The rubric provided solid perspective and a starting point for our grading discussions. It was never "set in stone." Our grading discussions remained frank and objective throughout our collaboration, although administrative expectations that accompanied the new graduate expectations required time and effort for us to adapt and incorporate them into our teaching. We also spent significant time explaining the evolving systems, especially proficiency-based grading, to our students.

To a greater or lesser degree, these constraints apply to most secondary education teachers. We all have a need to remain current in our practice and our use of technology. At the same time, revisions and alterations to an existing system require greater adaptability for teachers with non-native populations. The educational differences of ELL students remain of particular significance in this study. Educational abilities ranged from kindergarten-level to approximately grade-level reading abilities. As a result, students required extensive differentiation. Repetition of facts, extra time for assignment preparation, and in-class,

scaffolded work demanded schedule changes. We often had to shorten a planned lesson or eliminate a unit considered important at the beginning of the year, simply because we ran out of time.

Delimitations. Mr. Casino repeated several times his belief that "teaching for ELL students is simply good teaching"—although some teachers might find that definition too limiting. Readers should determine for themselves whether these findings could be generalized to other populations. The differences in primary language (L1) might inhibit teachers from applying this research to other ELL populations or to general education classes. The research boundaries in this study encompassed students from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, admittedly a small subset of the 4.6 million ELL students in the United States. We do not include bilingual instruction in this study—although we might have asked a fluent speaker of an L1 language (such as a qualified liaison or a student with greater fluency and literacy skills) to translate portions of an assignment into a student's native language. In reality, most of our students functioned at an intermediate level; several spoke multiple languages. We assumed that they could handle content-area lessons, or have enough awareness to ask for support when necessary.

Some teachers might want direction on best practices or strategies to handle challenges when they see ELL students from one of these smaller populations in their classrooms. The litmus test for effective ELL instruction that I employ returns to one (admittedly succinct and non-pedagogical) core belief: Student-centered teaching lies at the heart of effective ELL instruction. Students need interesting content, broken down into component parts, and time to absorb unfamiliar or critical details. Repetition plays a part in

gaining proficiency. Encouraging students to try and possibly fail moves away from a grade-based proficiency and to an evaluative framework of progress over time. We tend to grade on effort, skills development, and proficiency rather than the number of correctly answered questions on a quiz. The work of Zwiers, O' Hara, and Pritchard (2014) confirms the need to instruct students about understanding and creating complex messages in a discipline (p. 7), emphasizing language development as a non-linear, spiraling, and dynamic social process that proceeds over time "in different ways for different students at different rates" (p. 11).

The literature review for this dissertation (Chapter 2) spans several fields, including educational principles, ELL instruction, social studies, co-teaching, and current events. Because of the concentration on teaching ELL students U.S. History, this study may have omitted pedagogical theories or deeper investigations of linguistics and language development, each of which might require additional research and publication.

The methodological approach in this study features action research in a qualitative context. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as "… a situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (p. 3). This research used methodology that described the activities in one classroom over a period of two school years. The methodology includes profiles of the children taught in a U.S. History classroom, some of their own words as recorded in interviews, and examples of their classwork.

This dissertation attempts to interpret "material practices" in order to "make the world visible" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 3), an evaluation that follows a *representative* style, one subject to interpretation. I followed Denzin and Lincoln's suggestion to study

phenomena in a natural setting while attempting to interpret those phenomena "in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3).

In an attempt to manage an almost-infinite range of research possibilities, this study omitted many sociology-, psychology-, pedagogy-, and linguistics-related resources, although it references a variety of educational resources. The action research lens provides a unique perspective, one that may test accepted beliefs around education. In turn, the "inquiry as stance" put forward by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009)—"a counterhegemonic notion" (p. 3)— may challenge accepted practices of the educational system as we know it.

This research offers a personal perspective about what it means to teach English Language Learners in transition. It describes how my practice evolved over a nine-year period. It references some of the literature that impacted my teaching. It hopefully tells the story behind co-teaching and conveying content knowledge. The snapshot that action research offers might change next year, or next week. For me, ELL education constantly evolves: today's lesson might not work, but the effort put into that lesson imparts some knowledge, and that same lesson (or a revision of it) might work in the future. Students might remember only a few of the many facts imparted in a content-area class yet those well-chosen facts assuredly inform their lives. I believe—and my action research supports the fact—that students generally make their own connections; only a small percentage of factual information sticks. I have seen students mention facts about Thomas Jefferson, the Gettysburg Address, or *habeas corpus* in a discussion long after teaching that material. I recognize that a transfer of knowledge occurred—in either a successful or unsuccessful process—that made some impact on their lives.

This research illustrates “routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives,” although “each practice makes the world visible in a different way” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, pp. 3-4). In true qualitative research fashion, this research brings together empirical materials, a personal perspective of the teachers and students involved, and references to related literature.

Focus on Transition and Learning

This research focused on a narrow population of students in an environment of ongoing transition. The students found themselves working within a pedagogical system that had supported their learning in significant ways at their newcomer and beginner levels. At the intermediate and advanced levels, however, they had to demonstrate greater degrees of independent thought and action. The school system, through its recently emplaced graduate expectations, asked for another degree of transition, one that involved a higher level of oral and written communication as well as an increased emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving. These transitional aspects limited this research to a specific time, place, and population. Attempting to generalize this research and apply it to other populations might prove difficult. As noted previously, we hope that this snapshot conveys a look into one classroom from which other teachers might derive some benefit.

Epilogue: A Forward-Looking Reflection

My teaching at West Ackerly continued as I wrote this dissertation, although my curriculum changed in several ways. (1) The administration re-assigned Mr. Casino, which meant I became a solo practitioner for the Foundations of U.S. History class. (2) I continued to teach the Foundations of English class for intermediate ELL students. (3) I

introduced three new social studies classes: A survey class of ethnicity and differences, including LGBTQ issues, Hispanic life and immigration, and African American culture; a Race and Racism seminar, in which students read contemporary and historical texts and wrote about current issues; and an ELL newcomer class, which incorporated geography, civics, and biographies of historical figures as well as academic skill building around reading and writing.

The decision to re-schedule Mr. Casino significantly changed my teaching approach. Ending our co-teaching arrangement for U.S. History deprived ELL students of the complex, collaborative approach that two teachers provide to a content-area subject. I found myself struggling to offer adequate instruction to needy students: One special education student and four other ELL students (including one adult) who struggle with cognitive issues. Mr. Casino continues to teach social studies classes, with a focus on Government and the U.S. History component of a shared Humanities class. He no longer teaches English Language Learners, although he works with second language learners who have tested out of the ELL curriculum.

Without my teaching partner, I had to re-structure the U.S. History course. During the 2017-18 school year (a period outside the scope of this action research project), I added more instruction in reading and writing informational texts while building academic skills around critical thinking. My practice involved (1) Continuing the thematic approach, with its focus on the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights; (2) Introducing a daily "This Day in History" assessment, as the Do Now assignment; (3) Expanding the Civil Rights unit with a month-long unit about

African American history, including the Montgomery Bus Boycott and instruction about the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments; (4) Creating an assignment that required students to write biographies about notable African Americans, and present them to the class; (5) Concluding the year with the Civil War; (6) Minimizing units about immigration and imperialism; and (7) Retaining instructional activities around four-way thinking, essay writing, and the Socratic Seminar, which represent cornerstones of my U.S. History instruction.

Expanded Course Offerings

My teaching portfolio expanded with the introduction of an ethnicity and difference class—which included lessons on LGBTQ issues, Hispanic cultural contributions to American life, and African American issues—and a Race and Racism seminar—which focused on black literature, history, and contemporary issues through reading texts by Ta-Nehesi Coates, James Baldwin, Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Dubois, and others. I used material from these new classes to supplement my ELL-centered Foundations of U.S. History class.

Planning new curriculum. As my social studies colleagues and I began to plan for the 2018-19 school year, we discussed how to link the various levels of our curriculum: World History, U.S. History, ELL history, and Government. We discovered a great deal of commonality between our various course offerings. Unfortunately, the school ignores the 2017 recommendations from the Vermont Agency of Education that social studies standards address Global Citizenship, using the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts & Literacy (National Governors

Association Center for Best Practices, 2010) and the College, Career & Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards (National Council for the Social Studies, NCSS, 2013). These standards promote a more general expectation for curriculum than the 2004 *Vermont History & Social Science* Grade Expectations, 2004). The C3 Framework states that

> … students need the intellectual power to recognize societal problems; ask good questions and develop robust investigations into them; consider possible solutions and consequences; separate evidence-based claims from parochial opinions; and communicate and act upon what they learn. And most importantly, they must possess the capability and commitment to repeat that process as long as is necessary. Young people need strong tools for, and methods of, clear and disciplined thinking in order to traverse successfully the worlds of college, career, and civic life (C3 Framework, n.d., p. 6).

The C3 Framework also refers to an "Inquiry Arc," or a set of ideas framing social studies content instruction. By focusing on inquiry, the framework emphasizes the disciplinary concepts and practices that support students as they develop the capacity to know, analyze, explain, and argue about interdisciplinary challenges in our social world (NCSS, *C3 Framework*, p. 6). I attempt to bring "clear and disciplined thinking" into my U.S. History class, but I must broaden my approach to investigate social problems and adjust my curriculum to make room for "robust investigations" (p. 6). The *NCSS C3 Framework* (2013) further defines the "experiential" practice of "the arts and habits of civic life," and stipulates a relationship with the Common Core standards or CCSS-ELA

Literacy (p. 7). While the developers of the C3 Framework admit the document provides guidance, the authors state that it "… does not address all of the elements states will need to consider in developing and upgrading standards" (p. 14), including:

- Content necessary for a rigorous social studies program
- Other disciplines beyond civics, economics, geography, and history
- Different abilities children bring to their schooling

The guidance that the framework provides hinges on four "dimensions of informed inquiry in social studies": (1) Developing questions and planning inquiries; (2) Applying disciplinary concepts and tools; (3) Evaluating sources and using evidence; and (4) Communicating conclusions and taking informed action (*NCSS C3 Framework*, p. 17). These standards establish a broad overview for teachers to use in developing a social studies curriculum.

Because Vermont offers individual school districts some autonomy in planning curriculum, West Ackerly opted to develop its own graduate expectations and graduate proficiencies. At the same time, West Ackerly's "go it alone" philosophy eliminates the inquiry arc for social studies and avoids the practical aspects of a standardized scope and sequence offered by other school districts for secondary education. As social studies teachers, we documented the CCSS and C3 standards as part of our professional development but realized that the West Ackerly graduate expectations and proficiencies excluded us from the national standards. This decision may change as the expectations and proficiencies evolve over time.

Seeking (and creating) access for ELL students. At West Ackerly, lack of comprehensive World History instruction illustrates one curricular gap. The school offers AP World History in alternate years but such a class remains inaccessible to second language learners (and some general education students as well) because of its rigor and difficulty of the summative assessment. The problem cascades when I must teach slavery, the Middle Passage, and Civil Rights during my U.S. History class: students lack prior knowledge about events in Africa, the economics of international trade, and events in India during and after British colonialism. In fact, the idea of European colonialism and international aggression bears heavily on the development of the United States, both before and after the American Revolution, and into the twentieth century. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights created by the United Nations in 1948 directly correlates with civil rights abuses, Black Lives Matter, and incarceration rates in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries within the United States, and bears heavily on current events. Yet, West Ackerly students lack this world view and a deep-seated perspective of events that impacted the development of the United States.

On a positive note, my classes around ethnicity and difference and race and racism, as well as my work at the newcomer level, align more with Common Core standards and the C3 Framework. Gaining prior knowledge for newcomers requires a scaffolded inquiry arc. As an ELL teacher, I see the progress of my students along this arc, although the graduate expectations and graduate proficiencies tend to look at this progress differently, from a general education lens rather than the scaffolded ELL perspective.

Unfortunately, an attitude exists at West Ackerly that ELL English Language classes should fall under the "non-native language" graduate proficiency. In my opinion, the ELL curriculum should align with critical reading, speaking, reading, and writing proficiencies, the same content-area proficiencies offered to native students. A second language student who must learn and use English on a daily basis in academic subject areas follows a different path than a student learning French at a word or sentence-based level. The instructional demands and expectations of an English as a Second Language class differ radically from the expectations in a French class. Students in a French class will not be asked to read a novel or write a 500-word essay in that language; ELL students must perform those tasks—and more—on a daily basis.

The broad West Ackerly curriculum emphasizes team-taught general education classes that combine Language Arts and social studies for students in grades nine and ten. Unfortunately, these classes exclude grade-appropriate ELL students because of their lack of prior knowledge and the stringent reading and writing requirements. On the one hand, a broad liberal arts curriculum exists, often with co-teaching component; on the other hand, ELL students find it difficult to access these classes because of their lack of academic development. A more equitable, inclusive arrangement would take steps to broaden the curriculum and better accommodate ELL students in mainstream courses.

Lessons Learned from Teaching U.S. History to ELL Students

In reflecting on my two-year action research program and its connections to my work in teaching U.S. History to ELL students, I see progress in students' reading and writing development around critical thinking. While not an empirical assessment, I have

examined four members of the class of 2020 who took U.S. History in the 2016-17 school year (their ninth-grade year) who repeated the class in 2017-18 (their tenth grade). They write more and with greater fluency than their peers. In discussions, they tend to remember details about the Constitution or the Civil War from the previous year and enhance the instruction with their perspectives. They can place the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments and the Bill of Rights into the framework of a discussion about current events, albeit with some prompting. One student went from an overwhelmed and inconsistent performer in ninth grade to a solid classroom participant who completes all assignments and brings a profound perspective to the discussions in tenth grade. In this case, retention (and possibly other factors) improved performance.

Few students enjoy repeating a class, and delaying academic progress may impact their self-esteem. Jimerson (1999) indicates that grade retention increases achievement in subsequent school years, although "these gains were not shown to be maintained," and no benefits of "grade retention on social and personal adjustment in high school" were demonstrated (p. 246). The age of this data and its focus on a "longitudinal study of children at risk for maladaptive outcomes" as part of the Minnesota Mother-Child Interaction Project (Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 1999, cited in Jimerson) speak of the need to examine a sample of second language learners to determine the effects of retention on their development over time. In my experience, ELL students who re-take a difficult class seem to embrace the instruction and increase their learning ability. Lessons seem more comfortable and accessible the second time around.

With or without retained students, I make every effort to vary the instruction, expand the units covered, and modify the lessons taught. For the fall semester in 2017, I began each class with a This Day In History assignment, which required students to read about past events occurring on that day, then answer questions about their reading through a Google Forms document. In addition to testing their reading and writing abilities, students acquired a perspective about the flow of time and critical events—World War II, Kennedy assassination, Vietnam—that the regular curriculum did not include. A regular routine satisfies the uncertainty that ELL students feel when entering the classroom. They become familiar with instructional methods that include a Do Now to begin, a lecture or other form of instruction, work time, and regularly scheduled Socratic Seminars. This structural familiarity minimizes the fear of new learning and gives them a comfortable starting point for the instruction. Such a structure plays a key role in all my ELL classes.

Present (and Future) Practice

Time remains the enemy of social studies teachers: too much material to fit into too few classes. While I foresee few major changes in the social studies curriculum, I have begun a series of history classes aimed at ELL needs. During 2017-18, I taught a class for newcomers: Semester 1 featured the five themes of geography; Semester 2 introduced students to historical figures. My assignments focused on developmental reading and writing, and gradually introduced more advanced assignments, with sufficient scaffolding to allow entry points at comfortable places. (Reminders of the importance of scaffolding continually affected my teaching at the newcomer level. I

neglected to thoroughly introduce *The Long Walk Home*, a movie about the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and at least one student blithely used the N-word in her discussion. I not-so-calmly explained the taboo nature of that word, its association with slavery, repression, and violence, and how more appropriate and less hurtful words exist. Both the student and I learned our lessons that day.)

The newcomer class focuses on social studies content within an environment of skill building, with the expectation that some students will progress into another year of newcomer social studies classes or U.S. History, based on their proficiency levels. In the class, they acquire (1) awareness of the world; (2) a sense of the past; (3) familiarity with informational texts; and (4) practice in reading and writing in the content areas.

The ELL students who succeed in U.S. History and my other social studies classes bring an attitude of willingness to their lessons. Not all ELL students eagerly join the learning process; this unwillingness often forces me to offer them remedial support or leave them behind until they can accept the parameters of (scaffolded) content-area instruction. The scaffolding remains in place, until students learn how to work within the system and gradually lose the need for additional support. Admittedly, holes exist in my curriculum, especially around giving ELL students a complete picture of social studies that includes broader elements of World History and the related disciplines of psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

In our conversations, Mr. Casino often suggested that I keep my expectations low—advice that I continue to find difficult to accept. I see how one student struggles with research and how another student suddenly shows incredible development. I gain

awareness of those students who have dropped out or pursued alternative programs, such as adult education. Even more important, I recognize those ELL students who passed through my classes and entered college. Remembering details of the American Revolution or World War I seems less important (in retrospect) than knowing how to read and understand an informational text, write an essay or longer paper, and present academic English in a coherent spoken-word format. In a recent conversation, one former student recognized her growth as a writer and reader in my classes, and her advancement in her college nursing program. I find that these indicators of an ELL student's development satisfy my expectations, and I have come to recognize the value across the curriculum of the content that I teach. Still, I must remember that the constantly changing river of learning that flows through my classroom begins long before I meet my students and continues after they leave high school and move forward with their lives. We all change as we step in the river. I see students for moments in their lives, and I can only hope to impact their growth within those moments.

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Appendix A: Graduate Expectations

Graduate Expectation	Explanation
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Ask challenging questions, examine complex problems, identify and propose solutions.
Physical, Social, and Emotional Well-Being	Identify personal strengths and weakness and take intentional steps to grow.
Effective Oral and Written Communication	Demonstrate skills at taking in and expressing ideas in multiple ways.
Creativity	Approach tasks in imaginative and innovative ways in order to produce meaningful products
Persistence	Accept the challenge of difficult or long-term problems, and push to reach goals.
Cross-Cultural Understanding and Community Engagement	Know and appreciate different people, cultures, and perspectives, and participate in the life of the community and the greater world.

Adapted from an internal West Ackerly document.
Original document: Created: June 19, 2013, Revised January 31, 2015

Appendix B: BICS & CALP

Appendix C: WIDA Scores, 2015-16 U.S. History Cohort

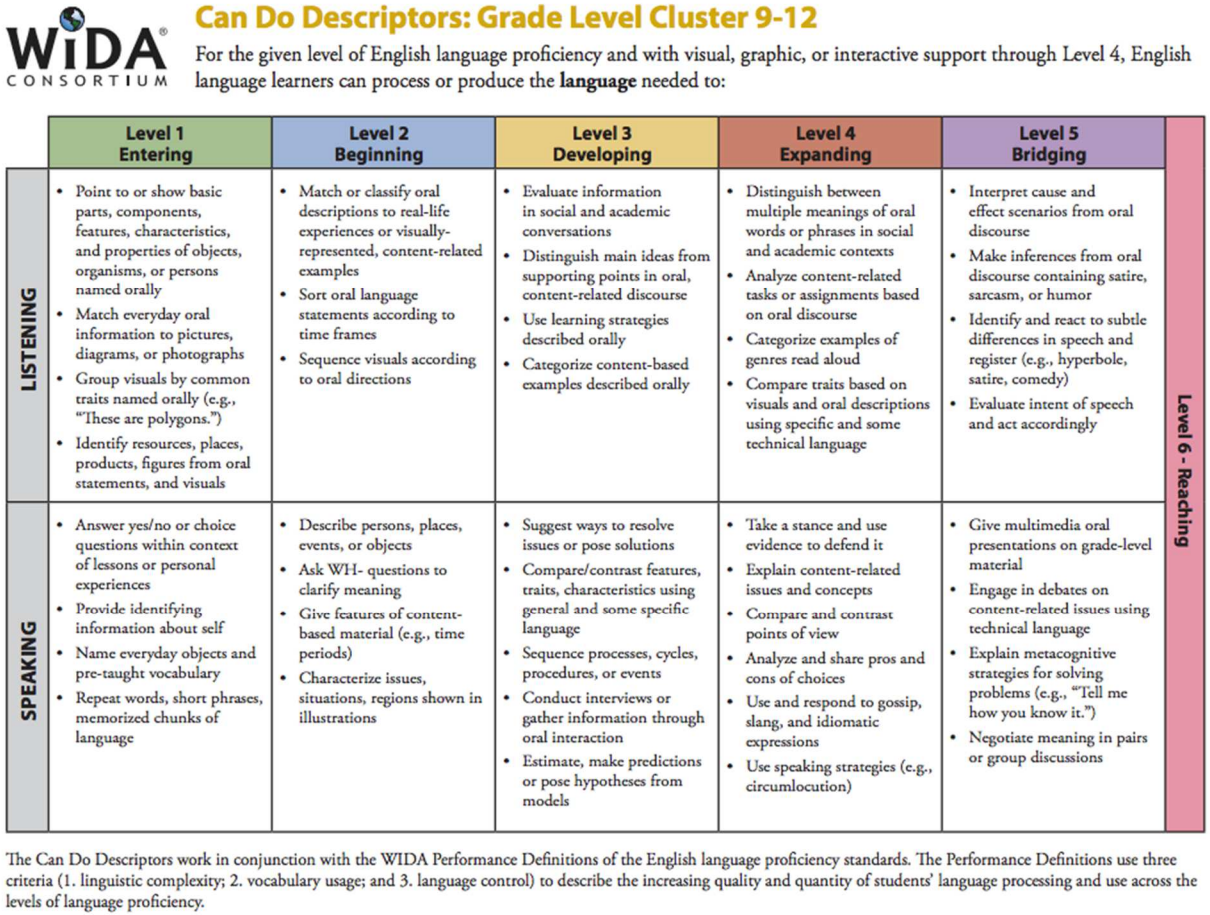
3101 Foundations of U.S. History							
	2014 WIDA	2015 WIDA	2016 WIDA	2015 v. 2016	2014 v. 2016		
						Country of Origin	Graduation Year
Student 1	3.9	3.4	4.9	1.5	1	Tanzania	2017
Student 2	3.4	4.5	3.8	-0.7	0.4	Burma/Thailand	2018
Student 3	3.5	3	3.4	0.4	-0.1	Bhutan/Nepal	2016*
Student 4	3.1	3.9	3.9	0	0.8	Bhutan/Nepal	2018
Student 5	3.3	4.6	4.6	0	1.3	Somalia	2018
Student 6	0	3.9	3.7	-0.2	3.7	Bhutan/Nepal	2017
Student 7	0	0	3.9	3.9	3.9	Somalia	2017
Student 8	3.4	4.2	4.6	0.4	1.2	Bhutan/Nepal	2017
Student 9	0	5.8	0	-5.8	0	Kenya	2018
Student 10	3.4	4.1	3.6	-0.5	0.2	Congo	2017
Student 11	0	3.8	5.9	2.1	5.9	Congo	2016*
Student 12	3	3.7	2.6	-1.1	-0.4	Somalia	2016*
Student 13	3.9	3.9	5.2	1.3	1.3	Iraq	2016*
Student 14	3.1	3.9	4.6	0.7	1.5	Burma/Thailand	2018
Student 15	0	2.4	4.7	2.3	4.7	Congo	2016*

Notes:

- A score of 0 indicates the student did not take the assessment.
- Composite scores based on algorithmic data that assesses speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
- Adminstration of the 2014 and 2015 assessments was conducted as paper-and-pencil tests, with teachers evaluating spoken responses. The 2016 assessment switched to a computer-based system with automatic grading of student responses. The speaking component, taken first, determined student placements for listening, reading, and writing.

* Student will not graduate in 2016.

Appendix D: Can Do Descriptors



WIDA CONSORTIUM

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 9-12

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 - Reaching
LISTENING	• Point to or show basic parts, components, features, characteristics, and properties of objects, organisms, or persons named orally • Match everyday oral information to pictures, diagrams, or photographs • Group visuals by common traits named orally (e.g., "These are polygons.") • Identify resources, places, products, figures from oral statements, and visuals	• Match or classify oral descriptions to real-life experiences or visually-represented, content-related examples • Sort oral language statements according to time frames • Sequence visuals according to oral directions	• Evaluate information in social and academic conversations • Distinguish main ideas from supporting points in oral, content-related discourse • Use learning strategies described orally • Categorize content-based examples described orally	• Distinguish between multiple meanings of oral words or phrases in social and academic contexts • Analyze content-related tasks or assignments based on oral discourse • Categorize examples of genres read aloud • Compare traits based on visuals and oral descriptions using specific and some technical language	• Interpret cause and effect scenarios from oral discourse • Make inferences from oral discourse containing satire, sarcasm, or humor • Identify and react to subtle differences in speech and register (e.g., hyperbole, satire, comedy) • Evaluate intent of speech and act accordingly	
SPEAKING	• Answer yes/no or choice questions within context of lessons or personal experiences • Provide identifying information about self • Name everyday objects and pre-taught vocabulary • Repeat words, short phrases, memorized chunks of language	• Describe persons, places, events, or objects • Ask WH- questions to clarify meaning • Give features of content-based material (e.g., time periods) • Characterize issues, situations, regions shown in illustrations	• Suggest ways to resolve issues or pose solutions • Compare/contrast features, traits, characteristics using general and some specific language • Sequence processes, cycles, procedures, or events • Conduct interviews or gather information through oral interaction • Estimate, make predictions or pose hypotheses from models	• Take a stance and use evidence to defend it • Explain content-related issues and concepts • Compare and contrast points of view • Analyze and share pros and cons of choices • Use and respond to gossip, slang, and idiomatic expressions • Use speaking strategies (e.g., circumlocution)	• Give multimedia oral presentations on grade-level material • Engage in debates on content-related issues using technical language • Explain metacognitive strategies for solving problems (e.g., "Tell me how you know it.") • Negotiate meaning in pairs or group discussions	

The Can Do Descriptors work in conjunction with the WIDA Performance Definitions of the English language proficiency standards. The Performance Definitions use three criteria (1. linguistic complexity; 2. vocabulary usage; and 3. language control) to describe the increasing quality and quantity of students' language processing and use across the levels of language proficiency.

Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System (2012). *English Language Learner Can Do Booklet, Grades 9-12* (p. 6). © 2012 Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.

Appendix D: Can Do Descriptors (continued)

WIDA CONSORTIUM

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 9-12

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

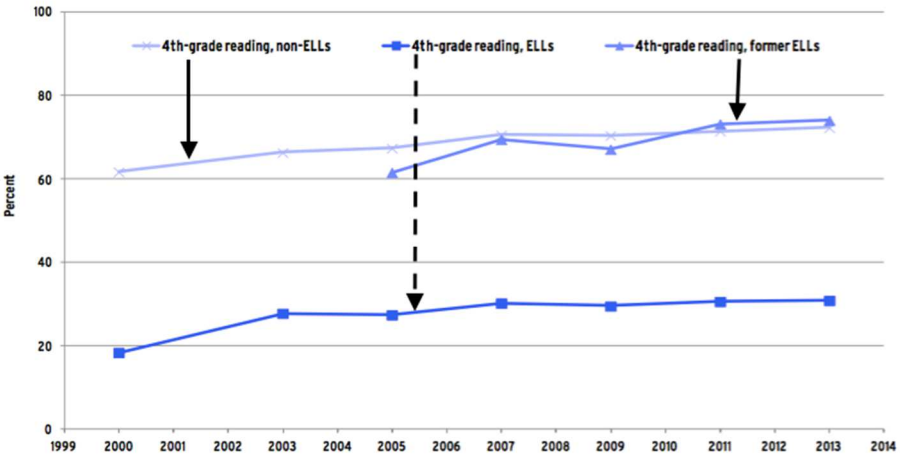
	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 - Reaching
READING	• Match visual representations to words/phrases • Read everyday signs, symbols, schedules, and school-related words/phrases • Respond to WH- questions related to illustrated text • Use references (e.g., picture dictionaries, bilingual glossaries, technology)	• Match data or information with its source or genre (e.g., description of element to its symbol on periodic table) • Classify or organize information presented in visuals or graphs • Follow multi-step instructions supported by visuals or data • Match sentence-level descriptions to visual representations • Compare content-related features in visuals and graphics • Locate main ideas in a series of related sentences	• Apply multiple meanings of words/phrases to social and academic contexts • Identify topic sentences or main ideas and details in paragraphs • Answer questions about explicit information in texts • Differentiate between fact and opinion in text • Order paragraphs or sequence information within paragraphs	• Compare/contrast authors' points of view, characters, information, or events • Interpret visually- or graphically-supported information • Infer meaning from text • Match cause to effect • Evaluate usefulness of data or information supported visually or graphically	• Interpret grade-level literature • Synthesize grade-level expository text • Draw conclusions from different sources of informational text • Infer significance of data or information in grade-level material • Identify evidence of bias and credibility of source	
WRITING	• Label content-related diagrams, pictures from word/phrase banks • Provide personal information on forms read orally • Produce short answer responses to oral questions with visual support • Supply missing words in short sentences	• Make content-related lists of words, phrases, or expressions • Take notes using graphic organizers or models • Formulate yes/no, choice and WH- questions from models • Correspond for social purposes (e.g., memos, e-mails, notes)	• Complete reports from templates • Compose short narrative and expository pieces • Outline ideas and details using graphic organizers • Compare and reflect on performance against criteria (e.g., rubrics)	• Summarize content-related notes from lectures or text • Revise work based on narrative or oral feedback • Compose narrative and expository text for a variety of purposes • Justify or defend ideas and opinions • Produce content-related reports	• Produce research reports from multiple sources • Create original pieces that represent the use of a variety of genres and discourses • Critique, peer-edit and make recommendations on others' writing from rubrics • Explain, with details, phenomena, processes, procedures	

The Can Do Descriptors work in conjunction with the WIDA Performance Definitions of the English language proficiency standards. The Performance Definitions use three criteria (1. linguistic complexity; 2. vocabulary usage; and 3. language control) to describe the increasing quality and quantity of students' language processing and use across the levels of language proficiency.

Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System (2012). *English Language Learner Can Do Booklet, Grades 9-12* (p. 7). © 2012 Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.

Appendix E: Reading & Math Scores, Basic Level and Above

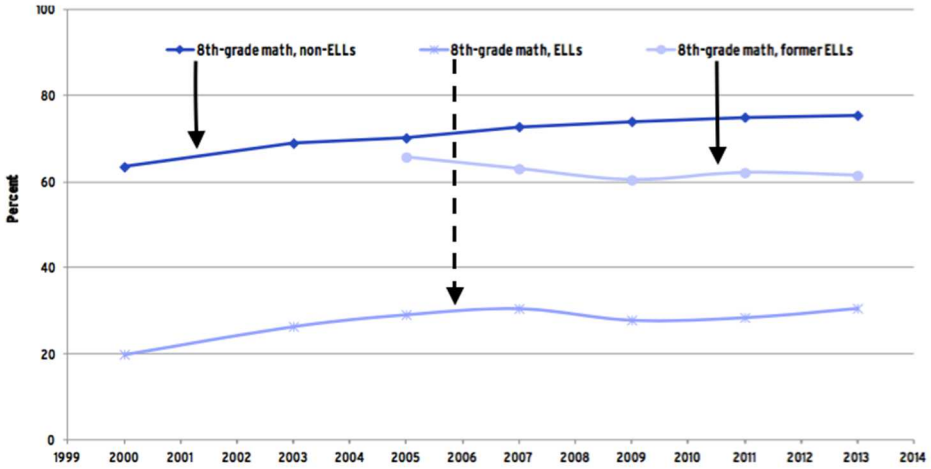
Percent of U.S. public school students scoring at the basic level or above in 4th-grade reading, by English language learner status: selected years, 2000-2013



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. National Assessment of Educational Progress Mathematics Assessments (NAEP), 2000-2013 Reading Assessments. Accessed through the NAEP Data Explorer, at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/

Appendix E: Reading & Math Scores, Basic Level and Above (continued)

Percent of U.S. public school students scoring at the basic level or above in 8th-grade math, by English language learner status: selected years, 2000-2013



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. National Assessment of Educational Progress Mathematics Assessments (NAEP), 2000-2013 Mathematics Assessments. Accessed through the NAEP Data Explorer, at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/

Appendix F: Syllabus 2015-16 & 2016-17

Welcome … to Foundations of U.S History. This survey course will describe events that shaped American life. We will learn about our founding documents, important speeches, government systems, individual rights, race and racism, and U.S. development. This course emphasizes writing and reading, as shown in the following outline:

Quarter 1 (26 August – 30 October, 22 class days)

- **Essential question:** What is the American character and how is it expressed?

Important Documents:

- 1776 Declaration of Independence
- 1789 Constitution
- 1865-1870 13th, 14th, & 15th Amendments

Current Events/ African-American Studies:

- Thomas Jefferson & Slavery
- Emmett Till Murder
- 2014-5 Racial Issues: Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland

VIDEO: Race & Racism: Part II: Genetic Basis
Race: The Power of an Illusion: Part 2-The Story we Tell

Academic Literacy

Lessons: create, clarify ,fortify and support, evaluate & compare

★ Project: Research about race and racism leading to the Socratic Seminar presentation #1.

- What role does race place in America?
- Examine issue of slavery, states rights, segregation in comparison to the language of the Amendments.

Presidential Writing Project: (Handout: USH16-231)

- Write a two-page essay about George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, or James Madison.

Grades close: Progress Report — 9/25/15 Quarter — 10/30/15

Quarter 2 (2 November – 15 January, 20 days)

- **Essential question:** How have conflict, disagreement, prejudice, and new ideas affected American culture?

Important Documents:

- 1863 Gettysburg Address
- 1863 Emancipation Proclamation
- 1865-1870 13th, 14th, & 15th Amendments

Events & Instruction

- 1861-65 Civil War
- 1896 Plessey v. Ferguson & Jim Crow Laws
- 1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka
- Civil Rights Movement

Immigration:

- 1860 - 1924 Burlingame Treaty
- Chinese laborers, Chinese Exclusion Act
- Japanese picture brides
- National Origins Act
- 1942-1968 Japanese Internment, China-U.S. alliance, Immigration Act, Reagan apology for internment

Academic Literacy

- Lessons: create, clarify ,fortify and support, evaluate & compare

VIDEO: Race & Racism: Part I: The Difference Between Us
Race: The Power of an Illusion

★ Project: Research about pre- and post-Civil War leading to the Socratic Seminar presentation #2.

- Where is the balance between the rule of law and segregation in America?
- Examine contributions and results of the Civil War and immigration issues.

Presidential Writing Project: (Handout: USH16-231)

- Essay about Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, Ulysses S. Grant.

Parent Teacher Conferences: 11/23/15
Grades close: Progress Report — 12/11/15 Quarter — 01/15/16
Expo/Exam Week: January 19-21 2016

Appendix F: Syllabus 2016-17

Fall Semester: U.S. History 2016-17		
Tier 1: Weeks 1-9	Notetaking & writing exercise	Video history of the U.S.
	Skills training: Google docs	Expectations & work assignments
	Review, Identify, Write, Present, Record, Think exercise	
	Declaration of Independence Reading	Frederick Douglass Reading: Fourth of July and Slavery
	Declaration for Kids (reading)	Lecture/discussion: Events of 9-11-01
	QuickWrite: Declaration	Video: Reading the Declaration (Morgan Freeman, actors)
	Constitution: Preamble	Video: Don Knotts and Preamble
	Three Branches of Government	Articles of the Constitution
	United Nations & Human Rights (cooperative learning with another school)	Global citizenship, discussion of immigrants
	Six big ideas of the Constitution	Video: We the People (Sandy Wilbur song)
	Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists	Bill of Rights Video: Liberty's Kids
	Socratic Seminar: *habeas corpus* Quiz: Constitution & Bill of Rights	Bill of Rights: Court Cases (discussion)
Tier 2: Weeks 10-18	Civil War	Video: 13th Amendment
	Election Day	Video: Journey Through Slavery
	Plantations: Photo interpretation: Writing Exercise Notetaking Guide	Pre-Civil War Events • Dred Scott Decision • Election of 1860 • Origins of the Civil War • Bleeding Kansas, John Brown • Compromises
	Summative Assessment: Civil War Project 1) Essay 1) Slide Presentation	

Appendix F: Syllabus 2016-17 (continued)

Spring Semester: U.S. History 2016-17		
Tier 3: Weeks 1-9	Video: *Selma*	Black History Month Civil War Notes & Review
	Socratic Seminar Civil War: Battles, Antietam, Emancipation Proclamation	Massachusetts 54th Regiment
	Research paper • OWL at Purdue (MLA formatting) • Outline methodology & models • Research details (Army organization, Joshua Chamberlain story)	Ta-Nehisi Coates: In Defense of a Loaded Word Video: *Glory*
	Reconstruction • Protocol: Four Corners Reflection Socratic Seminar	Eric Foner: *Give Me Liberty* (text reading)
	Video: *Race: The Power of Illusion*	Reading: Albert Einstein: The Negro Question
Tier 4: Weeks 10-18	Notetaking: Cornell Notes Template	Reading: *Jubilee* (excerpt), Alice Walker • Writing response/reflection
	Reconstruction Final Project	Overview of Research Paper Expectations
	Outline & Drafts	Summative assessment • Essay • Slide presentation Socratic Seminar

Appendix G: Rubrics

Model United Nations::Week of 25 April 2016

You've already rated students with this rubric. Any major changes could affect their assessment results.

Criteria	Ratings			Pts
Write 4-Way Thinking Sheet for Sustainable Goal	Contains complete and accurate summary, interpretation, analysis, and evaluation 15.0 pts	Partially complete summary, interpretation, analysis, and evaluation 9.0 pts	Attempted summary, interpretation, analysis, and evaluation 5.0 pts	15.0 pts
Demonstrates understanding of UN through reading assignment materials	Complete understanding 10.0 pts	Approaches understanding 8.0 pts	Attempted understanding 4.0 pts	10.0 pts
Demonstrates understanding of Syrian refugee crisis	Complete understanding 10.0 pts	Approaches understanding 8.0 pts	Attempted understanding 4.0 pts	10.0 pts
Level of involvement in group work	Fully involved, strong participation 15.0 pts	Involved, with some participation 9.0 pts	Attempted involvement 5.0 pts	15.0 pts
Completion of readings and assignments	Superior achievement 10.0 pts	Approaches strong achievement 8.0 pts	Attempted 4.0 pts	10.0 pts
Collaboration with other students	Strong 15.0 pts	Medium 9.0 pts	Weak 4.0 pts	15.0 pts
				Total Points: 75.0

Presenter: _____ **Reviewer:** _____

USH Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: Imperialism: Gallery Walk: 060616

Introduction	Definitely	Attempted	Incomplete
States a problem	☐	☐	☐
Presents a solution	☐	☐	☐
Compares the past with today	☐	☐	☐
Uses a thesis statement and hook	☐	☐	☐
Body	Definitely	Attempted	Incomplete
Describes the problem & solution	☐	☐	☐
Contains at least 10 slides or sufficient text (trifold) to summarize the problem	☐	☐	☐
Accurate grammar, usage, mechanics (GUM)	☐	☐	☐
Three main points	☐	☐	☐
Presentation	Definitely	Attempted	Incomplete
Thorough and clear explanation	☐	☐	☐
Knowledge & Conviction	☐	☐	☐

Appendix H: Letters About Refugees

February 15, 2017

Dear [redacted] Parents and Guardians,

As leaders of the [redacted] School District [redacted] we know that there has been a lot of stress in the [redacted] New American community because of the recent executive order. Although the executive order has currently been halted by the courts, we wanted to provide you with some information about it and how it affects our community.

The executive order on refugee resettlement **does** the following:

1. The order bars the entry of any refugee who is awaiting resettlement in the U.S. for the next 120 days
2. It prohibits all Syrian refugees from entering the U.S. until further notice.
3. It bans the citizens of seven majority-Muslim countries—Iraq, Iran, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, and Yemen —from entering the U.S. on any visa category.
4. Caps refugee admissions at 50,000 per year

The order **doesn't** apply to legal permanent residents of the U.S. including green-card holders. Resettled refugees already living in the U.S. are considered "legal permanent residents". The only risk is if a resettled refugee were to leave the U.S. and attempt to return they could be detained and or denied re-entry.

We want to reassure all families that you are welcome here and that the [redacted] School District [redacted] is a safe and welcoming community that supports all of our students and families. The image above was created by students at Burlington High School and symbolizes that all people are welcome. It is hanging throughout the school and the [redacted] community as a symbol of inclusion. We encourage you to contact our school administrators, guidance counselors or your community liaison if you have any questions or concerns.

Appendix H (continued):

أهلاً بكم স্বাগতম 歡迎 Welcome Bienvenue Byenveni 환영합니다 Добро пожаловать Bienvenidos خوش آمدید

Select Language ▼

search:

Parents and Families Students Employees Community and Partners

DOE Home Page > About Us > Our Schools

Our Schools

Chancellor Letter on Immigration

January 30, 2017

Dear Students and Families,

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) and the Mayor's Office are committed to protecting the right of every student in New York City to attend public school, regardless of immigration status. The United States Supreme Court has also recognized the importance of public education for all students, including undocumented students. Your child is our top priority, and we will do everything in our power to protect that right and ensure all students get a quality education.

We take pride in our diversity. Immigrant parents, students, principals, teachers and other staff are a part of what makes our schools, and New York City, the amazing, strong, vibrant places they are. Whether you or your family arrived 100 years or 100 days ago —you are New Yorkers— and we stand with you.

To help ensure that all children continue to learn in safe, nurturing environments, we are providing the following direction to the staff members at our schools:

As in the past, DOE staff will not ask about or keep a record of the immigration status of a student or family member. If you do share confidential information, including immigration status, about yourself or your family, it will be protected under the City's confidentiality policy and the Chancellor's Regulations.

DOE staff will not grant unlimited access to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Like all other law enforcement agencies, ICE is not permitted access to schools without proper legal authority. If ICE officers go to a school for immigration enforcement purposes, they will be referred to the principal who will take appropriate action.

DOE staff will not release student information unless required to by law.

Anyone in our schools seeking immigration legal services will be referred to ActionNYC. ActionNYC is a program that offers free, safe immigration legal help from trusted community organizations, in your communities and in your language.

All New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, can continue to access City services. Call 311 or visit nyc.gov/immigrants for more information from the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. Additionally, resources are available on the DOE website at http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/SupportingAllStudents.htm. This area of our website will be expanded in the coming weeks.

School staff will ensure all students are in safe and supportive learning environments. The DOE's policy is to maintain safe and inclusive schools that are free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination on account of actual or perceived race, color, religion, age, creed, ethnicity, national origin, alienage, citizenship status, disability, sexual orientation, gender (sex), or weight. Any incidents or concerns should be immediately reported to school staff, who will investigate and take swift action.

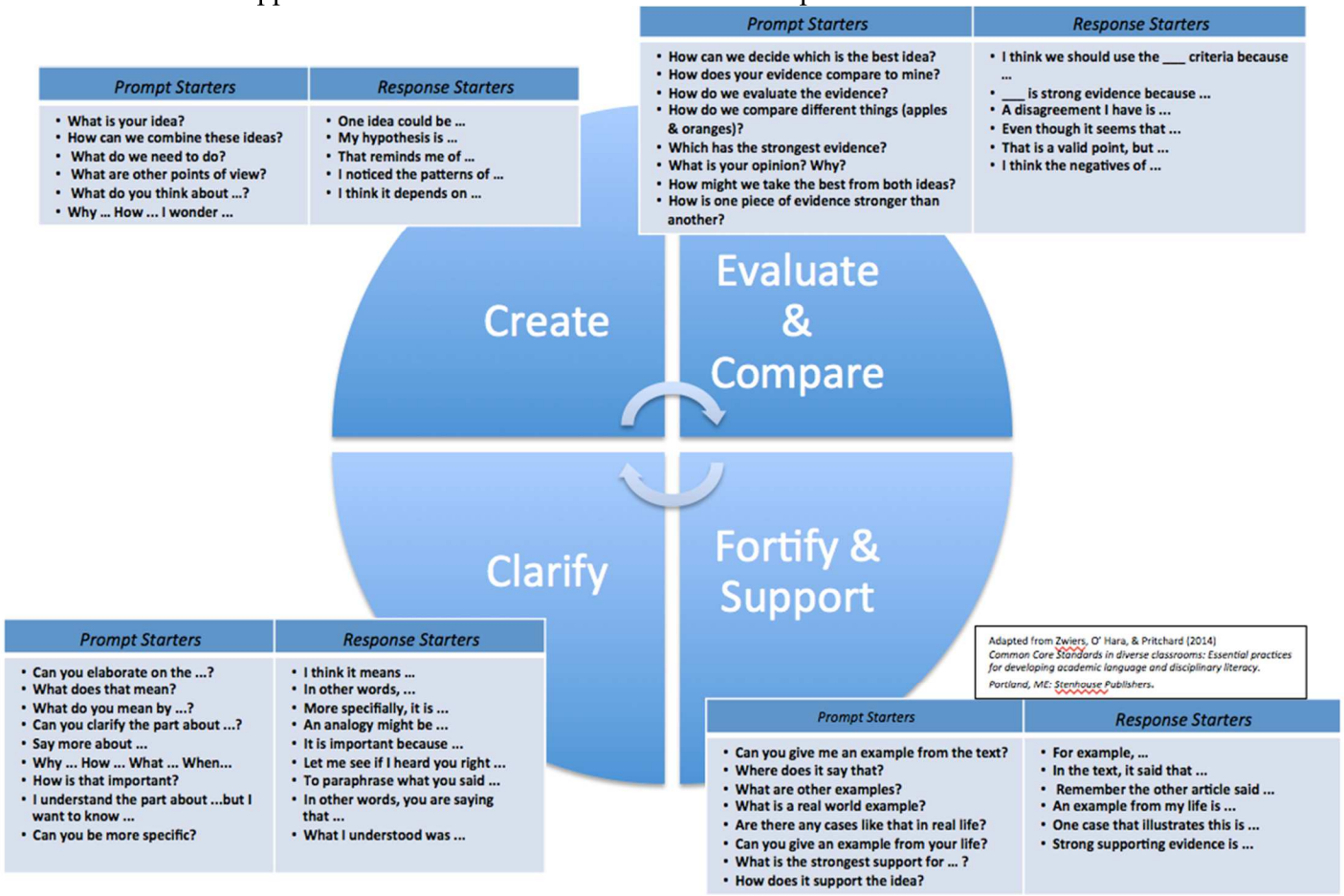
Thank you for entrusting your child's education to us. Nothing is more important than putting our 1.1 million students on the path to success.

Sincerely,

Carmen Fariña
Chancellor
NYC Department of Education

Nisha Agarwal
Commissioner
Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

Appendix I: Conversation Skills Poster & Response Starters



Appendix I: (continued)

Response Starters

To do this …	*Say this …*
Create	One idea could be … That reminds me of … I noticed the pattern of … I think it depends on …
Evaluate & Compare…	A point of disagreement that I have is… That is very strong evidence because … That is a valid point, but … Even though it seems that …
Clarify	I think it means … In other words … It is important because … Let me see if I heard you right… To paraphrase what you just said … In other words, you are saying that … It sounds like you think that …
Fortify / Support	For example, … In the text, it said that … An example from my life is … One case that illustrates this is …

Appendix J: Graduate Expectations: Planning Document

West Ackerly Middle and High School (2013-14 edition)

Note: This working document marks the thought process and development of the graduate expectations. It changed slightly in subsequent years. Editing of selected verbiage aimed to make it consistent with grammatical rules and structure.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

I ask challenging questions, examine complex problems, and identify and propose solutions.

Student:

- Uses inquiry and research to acquire, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and ideas.
- Applies a broad knowledge base to develop models and explanations, with subsequent testing of these explanations against real world.
- Employs the tools of [the subject area] to explain observable phenomena, and distinguish between evidence and random observations;
- Identifies problems, then proposes, tests, and revises solutions; and
- Communicates critical thinking and problem solving clearly.

Physical, Social, and Emotional Well-Being

I identify my strengths and weakness and take intentional steps to grow.

Student:

- Demonstrates an understanding of personal wellness.
- Engages in setting personal goals.
- Follows through on personal action for growth in relationship to body, mind, and the natural environment.
- Assesses strengths and weaknesses honestly.
- Pursues goals in physical health, diet and nutrition, emotional wellness, collaboration, and stewardship.

Effective Oral and Written Communication

I am skillful at taking in and expressing ideas in multiple ways.

Student:

- Communicates effectively with diverse audiences.
    - Demonstrates multiple purposes and modes of communication (as required by the topic).
- Demonstrates effective reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.
- Employs quantitative and technical communication.
- Shows artistic expression.

Appendix J (continued)

Creativity

I am creative, curious, and committed in my learning.

Student:

- Takes ownership of, and regulates the personal learning process, while demonstrating initiative and commitment to learning.
- Defines personal learning goals.
- Advocates for personal learning needs.
- Evaluates personal achievement.
- Exercises curiosity, creativity, and resourcefulness.
- Displays passion for problem-solving, which includes
  - Achieving a depth of understanding, and
  - Moving forward towards the next step in the thought process.
- Understands how to learn and transfers knowledge in ways that result in creative problem-solving.
- Values and possesses the skills to work with others in the shared learning experience.

Persistence

I accept the challenge of difficult or long-term problems, and I push myself to reach my goals.

Student:

- Continues to work through adversity over time to achieve a goal
- Shows initiative driven by interest.
- Accepts mistakes and encouragement equally, while remaining engaged.
- Practices self-reflection.
- Embraces challenges and obstacles as a part of the learning cycle.
- Recognizes "failure" as a learning experience.
- Practices metacognition ("thinking about thinking")
- Pursues goals in physical health, diet and nutrition, emotional wellness, collaboration, and stewardship.

Cross-Cultural Understanding and Community Engagement

I know and appreciate different people, cultures, and perspectives, and participate in the life of my community and the greater world.

Student:

- Develops and demonstrates understanding and communication among diverse people, cultures, and perspectives.
- Applies this trait through academic learning and direct personal engagement with a diverse community.
- Participates in the community in active ways, at personal, local, state, national, and global levels.

June 19, 2013

Appendix K: Published Graduate Expectations (GX) & Proficiencies (GP)

Essential skills and knowledge necessary to achieve a meaningful academic experience

Graduate Expectations	*Creativity*	*Critical Thinking*	*Culture and Community*	*Communication*	*Persistence*	*Well-Being*
Descriptor	Expression through various media and application of new learning.	Identify and propose solutions to challenging questions & complex problems.	Different people, cultures, and perspectives are part of my life.	Participate & express ideas in speech and writing.	Experience & meet difficult or long-term problems; set & achieve goals.	Promote growth of physical, social, and emotional strengths.
Graduate Proficiency	Visual & Performing arts STEM design	Using evidence Math reasoning Historical inquiry	Diverse communities Cultural understanding Applied civics Natural world	Critical reading Academic language Democratic participation Writing Speaking	Non-native language Goal-setting Revision	Financial literacy Physical activity Human body Social-emotional health

Note: The school district formed committees to develop the graduate expectations (GX). This table was adapted from original documents created in June 2013 (rev. 2015 and 2017). Primarily focus on GX 1 and GX 3, with GX2 applied to physical education and health classes.

Appendix L: Co-Teaching Checklist

- ❒ Two or more professionals working together in the same physical space
- ❒ Class environment of parity and collaboration (both names on board, sharing materials, space)
- ❒ Both teachers begin and end class together and remain in the room the entire time
- ❒ During instruction, both teachers assist students with and without disabilities
- ❒ Class moves smoothly with evidence of co-planning and communication between co-teachers
- ❒ Differentiated strategies, including technology, to meet a range of learning needs
- ❒ Variety of instructional approaches (five co-teaching approaches), including regrouping students
- ❒ Both teachers engage in appropriate behavior management strategies, with consistent approach to behavior management
    - o It is difficult to tell the special educator from the general educator
    - o It is difficult to tell the special education from the general education students
    - o Language ("we" and "our") shows true collaboration and responsibility
    - o Phrase questions and statements to make it obvious that all students are included
    - o Students' conversations make clear as sense of community
- ❒ Co-teachers ask questions at a variety of levels to meet all students' needs (basic recall to higher order thinking)

Adapted from Murawski and Lochner (2011). Observing Co-Teaching: What to ask for, look for, and listen for. *Intervention in School and Clinic 46*(3) (pp. 181-182)

Appendix M: Do Now

Do Now: USH15-066 World War I Check-in[25] ***Casino & Clark March 2015***

I. World War I. Fill in the blanks with a word from the Word Bank.

Word Bank	alliance	imperialism	empire	militarism	nationalism

1. _____ Having pride in your country, willing to defend it.
2. _____ Building up armed forces, getting ready for war.
3. __Empire____ Where a powerful country controls several less powerful countries.
4. _____ Trying to build up an Empire.
5. _____ An agreement or promise to help another country.
6. World War I began in (month)_____ (year) _____.
7. Germany wished to build up her Empire, which is known as _____, and build up her armed forces, which is known as _____.
8. Britain had the most powerful navy. Other countries were building up their armed forces. These issues equaled what cause of World War I? _____.
9. Countries in Europe were very proud of themselves, and would defend their countries. They believed in _____.
10. The Triple Entente included _____, _____, and _____.
11. The Triple Alliance included _____, _____, and _____.
12. Europe was divided into two ____, called the Triple ____ and the Triple _____.

II. There are four main causes of World War I. Write these four causes in the correct space in the following table. The table includes the first letter of each cause.

M	
A	
I	
N	

[25] Handout adapted for size and spacing.

III. Draw a picture showing No Man's Land and the trenches. Add details such as artillery, barbed Wire, and roads.

III. World War I. Fill in the blanks with a word from the Word Bank. You will not know all these answers!!!

Triple Entente	Imperialism	Henry Johnson	Woodrow Wilson	Militarism	U-Boat
Lusitania	Archduke Franz Ferdinand	Wilhelm II	Nationalism	Treaty of Versailles	Triple Alliance
Refugee	Jeannette Rankin	Blockade	Schlieffen Plan	August 3, 1914	colony

1. _____ Build up of armies and weapons to protect interests in a country and around the world.

2. _____ A British ship sunk by German U-boat off the coat of Ireland. The 1,198 dead included 128 Americans. As a result, American opinion turned against Germany and the Central Powers.

3. _____ Heir to the Austrian throne. His assassination in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo triggered tensions in Serbia and aggression by Austria-Hungary, which led to World War I

4. _____ Germany invades Belgium to attack Paris, France. World War I begins.

5. _____ First woman elected to Congress and the only vote against the U.S. entry into World War I

6. _____ A person who flees in search of protection or shelter during a war or time of religious persecution.

7. _____ An alliance that included the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy with the Ottoman Empire.

8. _____ Devotion to interests and culture of one's nation. Ethnic groups banded together to promote their own nation and culture.

9. _____ A defensive alliance in Europe that included France, Britain, Russia and later the U.S.

10. _____ Emperor of Germany during World War I

11. _____ U.S. President elected in 1912 and re-elected in 1916. He kept the U.S. out of the European war but the German insistence on sinking shipping eventually led to the U.S. declaring war.

12. _____ Using ships to close another country's ports.

13. _____ Tendency for European countries to build empires in other parts of the world. These colonies supplied raw materials and markets for manufactured goods.

14. _____ Peace treaty signed in 1919 that ended World War I.

15. _____ A plan by Germany to quickly defeat France by attacking through Belgium. After the expected victory, Germany would attack Russia.

16. _____ German: *Unterseeboot*. A submarine that travels under the water to attack surface ships.

17. _____ a country or area under the political control of another country, typically a distant one, and occupied by settlers from that country.

18. _____ African American assigned to the all-black 369th Infantry Regiment who received France's highest military honor, the Croix de Guerre ("cross of war").

IV. What does World War I mean to you? Write a short essay with some details and at least ten (10) sentences.

Appendix N: Comparison and Evaluation of Literature Relating to Students in Transition

Authors	Subjects	Design/Analysis	Major Findings	Limitations
Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (2009). *Inquiry as Stance: Practitioner Research for the Next Generation*.	"Practitioner research" calls for a teacher to assume a parallel role of researcher to better understand a problem, culture, or practice. Researchers culturally removed from schools and classrooms have less knowledge about teaching well and enhancing students' learning opportunities (p. vii). The term "inquiry as stance" places the teacher-researcher in a position to understand the equities and inequities contained in and promoted by the educational system.	Action research forms the foundation of this dissertation and relies on Cochran-Smith and Lytle's perspective about how a practitioner can consider and evaluate the structure of an educational system, with the aim of enhancing students' educational experiences. The authors encourage the practitioner-researcher to critique inequities within the educational and cultural frameworks, which brings a degree of empowerment to the research process.	This text moves away from the dichotomy between research, teaching practice, and knowledge of education. "With practitioner research, the borders between inquiry and practice are crossed, and the boundaries between being a researcher and being a practitioner are blurred…" (p. 94). The combination of inquiry and practice result in natural tensions, which in turn create a sense of productivity and generate understanding and innovation.	The idea of an objective evaluator entering the situation to assess behavior and practice carries some weight in the academic world. That formal research mindset may create an onus of inferiority toward practitioner-based research. Alternatively, the practitioner might fall victim to biased views from a position within the research construct. Rigor and unbiased perspectives seem essential for the practitioner to accurately portray the research site.

Appendix N: Comparison and Evaluation of Literature Relating to Students in Transition (continued)

Authors	Subjects	Design/Analysis	Major Findings	Limitations
Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (1993). *Inside/Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press	Teacher-based research focuses on the learning that occurs from it, long-term and lifelong inquiry, and the communities where the research takes place. School systems contain complex, situation-specific problems. A practitioner-researcher must therefore question assumptions and common practices in order to take action individually and collectively (p. 82).	Based on research and writing before 1993, this text details the role of teacher as agent in collecting and evaluating data. The authors stress the need for communities of discourse that both participate in and critique the research, that a dialogue develops from those "inside" and "outside" the action research process in order to make it effective. Insider knowledge develops in collaboration, not in isolation.	The teacher-researcher acts as an agent of the instruction and is able to see events that would remain unseen by the typical outside visitor to the classroom. The teacher is a "knower," someone who develops nonlinear relationships with the subject and the subjects, combining the practitioner and the researcher skills into two equal roles to create a "dialectic of experience" (p. xi).	Participatory research works bottom-up, which may create conflicts in a standard school system, which operates top-down. Administrators may doubt the results that teacher-researchers present because of a perceived lack of objectivity. Participatory research leads to an epistemology that credits teachers themselves with unique and valuable knowledge about teaching, which may challenge long-held beliefs about those who know and what is known.

Appendix N: Comparison and Evaluation of Literature Relating to Students in Transition (continued)

Authors	Subjects	Design/Analysis	Major Findings	Limitations
Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (1993). *Inside/Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press (continued)	Greater diversity in schools and students as well as increasingly complex tasks faced by educators combine to make "global solutions to problems and monolithic strategies for effective teaching impossible" (p. 63).		The practitioner researcher disturbs traditional assumptions about teaching, and helps to redefine that knowledge through the unique perspective participatory research allows.	

Appendix N: Comparison and Evaluation of Literature Relating to Students in Transition (continued)

Authors	Subjects	Design/Analysis	Major Findings	Limitations
Herr, K. & Anderson, G. (2005). *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.	Action research beginning and ending points can remain unclear. Systematic inquiry brings perspective. Complexity chal-lenges teachers: Assumptions based on role, privilege, or other tendencies? Trust the process and rely on critical friends? The insider's role "provides a rare emic[26] perspective on classroom life, incor-porating rigorous ethnographic methods and data analysis: (p. 35).	Traditional action research focuses on individual or group level problem analysis, which aims for efficiency and improvement of practice. Participatory research stresses emancipation, leads to a broad social analysis, aims for "equity, self-reliance, and oppression problems on the other" (p. 16). a "crisis of confidence," during action research may force movement from standardization and problem solving to problem framing, with scientific knowledge valued over personal knowledge.	Participatory educational re-search involves professional development and assumes a "collaborative route to professional and institutional change" (p. 17). Assumption: Results will change the research setting only; presenting "epistemic claims beyond the practice setting" (p. 52) makes traditional theory-driven researchers uncomfortable.	Reviewers may question findings because of movement to divergence rather than convergence. Findings may deepen under-standing of the question. What is the best representation for what has been found? Is critical reflectivity built into the research process? Does the researcher demonstrate distance from the understandings of the practice?

[26] Emic refers to personal or collective "stories"; etic refers to representations from an objective observer based on empirical evidence. Defined by Beverly, J. "*Testimonio*, subalternity, and narrative authority" (pp. 547-557) in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., 2005). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Appendix N: Comparison and Evaluation of Literature Relating to Students in Transition (continued)

Authors	Subjects	Design/Analysis	Major Findings	Limitations
Howard, G. (2006). *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.	Evaluates diversity education and ethnic populations with data derived from national surveys. The total environment and culture of the school must also be transformed so that students from diverse groups will experience equal status in the culture and life of the school (p. x-xi). Howard suggests that White Americans need to become partners in the dance of diversity, a dance in which everyone shares the lead, so that everyone will choose "… to dance again, as we once did among the great stone circles of ancient Europe" (p. 13).	Contains descriptive data based on White identity and cultural shifts within the population. The nation's deepening ethnic texture, interracial tension and conflict, and the increasing percentage of students who speak a first language other than English make multicultural education imperative in the 21st century. Movement toward social justice and educational reform requires changes in White beliefs, attitudes, and actions. "We can't teach what we don't know, and we can't lead where we won't go" (quoting Malcolm X, p. 6).	Educational systems must prepare for a shift in demographics so that all children can receive an equitable education. Multicultural education contains five dimensions: Content integration The knowledge construction process Prejudice reduction Equity pedagogy Empowering school culture and social structure U.S. Census Bureau (2000) and El Nasser (2004) estimated people of color at 28% of the U.S. population in 2000, up 38% in 2015, and 50% in 2050 (p. ix).	Howard's background in cultural anthropology, social psychol-ogy, and ethics brings a different perspective to pedagogical studies. Although research-based, his work reflects an unknown internal validity because of its qualitative nature. As a white male, Howard might seem less capable of addressing racial issues. Educators might object to his request for equity and self-evaluation in order to provide multicultural education.

Appendix N: Comparison and Evaluation of Literature Relating to Students in Transition (continu

Authors	Subjects	Design/Analysis	Major Findings	Limitations
Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The Dream-Keepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Wiley.	Provides best practices and stories about teaching African American children, as well as suggestions for multicultural instruction and methodology. Teachers must maintain and foster a personal sense of awareness for all cultures, and to thereby develop a methodology of culturally relevant teaching.	This competence manifests itself in understanding of the students' "culture of origin" within the curriculum (African American history, literature, art, music, dance, and perspectives, p. xi) so that students could determine for themselves the various perspectives within their worlds.	Teachers devoted themselves to: • Student learning • Inculcating a cultural competence • Cultivation of sociopolitical awareness in students. Teachers encouraged students to demonstrate learning through writing, speaking, and presentations.	Primary focus on African Americans, although the "dreamkeepers'" stories resonate with anyone teaching children of color, including immigrants. The West Ackerly story—with its Asian, African, and Middle Eastern populations—parallels the stories of the eight teachers in the Pinewood City Schools.

Appendix N: Comparison and Evaluation of Literature Relating to Students in Transition (continued)

Authors	Subjects	Design/Analysis	Major Findings	Limitations
Zwiers, J., O' Hara, S. & Pritchard, R. (2014). *Common Core Standards in diverse classrooms: Essential practices for developing academic language and disciplinary literacy*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.	"Students need accelerated growth in using complex language in grade-level tasks in mainstream classrooms" (p. 5). Teaching constructive conversation skills involves creating ideas, clarifying ideas, fortifying ideas, and negotiating ideas, which are included in the constructive conversation skills poster (Appendix H).	Using facts, rules, and word meanings to understand and communicate whole ideas in meaningful ways across disciplines (p. 1). Teachers stress whole ideas, not necessarily perfect English.	Rigorous academic language preparation for diverse learners requires guides, suggestions, resources, and frames to promote effective instruction.	Although included in ELL teacher training programs, some academic controversy revolves around the SIOP model. The standard approach to sheltered instruction begins with the *SIOP® Model* (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2017)[27]; other authors have questioned its viability (Crawford & Reyes, 2015).[28]

[27] Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. (2017). *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP® Model.* Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

[28] Crawford, J. & Reyes, S. A. *The Trouble with SIOP®: How a behaviorist framework, flawed research, and clever marketing have come to define—and diminish—sheltered instruction for English Language Learners.* Portland, OR: ILEP (pubs@elladvocates.org).

Appendix N: Comparison and Evaluation of Literature Relating to Students in Transition (continued)

Authors	Subjects	Design/Analysis	Major Findings	Limitations
Zwiers, J., O' Hara, S. & Pritchard, R. (2014). *Common Core Standards in diverse classrooms: Essential practices for developing academic language and disciplinary literacy*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers. (continued)			ELL teaching often involves "sheltered instruction," or a system of visual aids, modified teacher talk, gestures, and background-building activities for texts (p. 10). Although most ELL teachers follow these guidelines, Zwiers, et al. believe such instruction only allows access, without creating ownership of the language, watering down language in order to simplify access.	