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**FACTORS WHICH AFFECT THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS
OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS ENROLLED
IN MAINSTREAM CLASSROOMS**

GAIL INGRID HIRSCHFIELD

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to the Faculty of the Ross College of Education
and Human Services of Lynn University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership
With a Global Perspective**

Dissertation Committee Chair: Frederick Dembowski, Ph.D.

December 2004

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CLASSROOMS

Hirschfield, Gail I., Ph.D.

Lynn University, 2004

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ABSTRACT

Increased immigration to the United States over the past fifty years has led to a dramatic increase in enrollment of language minority students in schools throughout the United States. Federal and state laws mandate that public schools accommodate the unique needs of these linguistically and culturally diverse students. English language learners (ELLs) require academic and affective support from their teachers when they are included in mainstream classrooms.

Teachers' attitudes toward their students have been shown to be a predictor of student success. Teachers with positive attitudes are more likely to have received training and are also able to modify their instructional strategies when teaching a diverse student population. The fundamental importance of teacher attitude in predicting student success motivated the researcher to investigate the factors that contribute to teacher attitude.

To determine these factors the researcher utilized a quantitative research design, employing a survey and multiple regression analysis. The self designed two-part survey was distributed to six hundred South Florida elementary public school teachers who had ELL students in their mainstream classrooms. The first part of the survey contained demographic and background questions which were used to obtain the independent variables of the study. The second part consisted of thirty statements, the responses which enabled the researcher to determine the attitude of participants (dependent variable). The relationships between the variables were studied using multiple regression analysis.

The major factors contributing to teacher attitude that emerged from the multiple regression study were (in decreasing order of importance): previous cross cultural

experience, ethnicity, administrative support and specific training in working with English language learners.

The results of the study emphasize the importance of participation of all teachers in cultural and linguistic diversity training as part of their teacher preparation programs and ongoing professional development. This training should include cross cultural field experiences. The significant contribution of ethnicity to teacher attitude underlines the importance of recruiting a diverse faculty of teachers to schools and teacher education programs in institutions of higher education. The study also indicates that administrative support is of importance to the success of teachers working with a diverse student population.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

"If we are to attain real peace in this world, we will have to begin with the children."

(Mahatma Gandhi)

This research study investigates the factors that affect the attitudes of elementary school teachers toward the English language learners (ELLs) in their mainstream classrooms. English language learners are those students who begin their schooling in the United States with varying degrees of proficiency in the English language. In addition to being linguistically diverse these students have diverse cultural traditions and values that are different to that of the majority mainstream American society. The population of English language learners has consistently and significantly increased over the past decade, transforming the demographics of United States schools (Antunez, 2002). With the continuous wave of immigration to the United States, limited English proficient students continue to enroll in public schools throughout the nation on a daily basis (McKay & Wong, 2000). Their limited English language skills affect their ability to participate and succeed academically in English only mainstream classrooms.

Based on state reported data it is estimated that over 5 million students identified as English language learners are currently enrolled in public schools across the United States in Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade (National Clearing House For English Language Acquisition, 2003). The ELL population represents 10.2% of the total public school enrollment nationwide. Approximately 67% of these students are enrolled at the

elementary school level. Between 1990 and 2001, the enrollment of English language learners in United States schools has increased at a dramatic rate of 105% whilst the general population of students increased by only 12%. This growth rate of ELL students is five times greater than that of the total enrollment of all students in public schools across the United States.

One in five students throughout the nation comes from a home in which a language other than English is spoken; more than one third of them are of limited English proficiency (National Center for Educational Statistics 2000; Crawford, 2000). The most common language spoken by ELLs in schools across the nation is Spanish. The other top five diverse languages spoken include Vietnamese, Hmong, Haitian, Creole and Korean (USDE, 2002). If current demographic trends continue, school-aged children whose first language is not English will increase to an estimated 40% of the Pre- Kindergarten through 12 th grade population in the United States by the year 2030 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Additional terms that have been used to identify these students who are limited in their ability to speak English include ‘Language Minority’ (LM), ‘Limited English Proficient’ (LEP) and ‘English Speakers of Other Languages’ (ESOL). These terms have also been used to refer to children from homes in which English is not the predominant language of communication between parents, children and other family members (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). English language learner (ELL) appears to be the most preferred and widely accepted term found in the review of literature and therefore, will be used in this research study. The United States Department of Education and federal legislation use the term “LEP” as a descriptor for limited English proficient students (Lessow-Hurley,

1991). In this study the terms English language learner (ELL) and limited English proficient (LEP) will be used interchangeably to indicate a student whose native language is not English and who has limited proficiency in the English language. These children enroll in schools and are required to learn the English language in order to succeed academically and adapt into the American mainstream culture and student population.

While some students identified as ELLs are enrolled in a variety of specialized assisted language programs in schools across the United States, the majority of English language learners are being integrated into mainstream classrooms where instruction is only in English (Berube, 2000). English language learners are often placed in mainstream classrooms long they have developed the degree of English language proficiency that is needed to compete on an equal level with their native-English speaking peers. Many of these students who are placed in mainstream classrooms do not receive additional specialized language services or support, despite their limitations and difficulties in understanding curriculum content taught in English (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Linguistically diverse students include two main groups. One group of students are those who are immigrants or refugees who have adopted the United States as their new home, and the other group are students born in the United States to immigrant parents, and subsequently raised in non-English speaking environments (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). In addition, some ELL students enrolled in schools are children of diplomats and business executives who are on short term assignments in the United States.

The largest and most rapidly growing culturally and linguistically diverse student population continues to settle in California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois and Arizona. Over the past two decades Midwestern states such as Kansas, Indiana, Iowa and Nebraska have also experienced dramatic growth in diverse student enrollment (National Clearing House for English Language Acquisition, NCELA, 2002).

As a result of these rapidly changing demographics in school populations across the United States, teachers are increasingly expected to instruct a classroom of students from a variety of racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, economic backgrounds and diverse family types who have varying customs, traditions and histories (Hill, Carjuzaa, Aramburo & Baca, 1993)

At the same time that academic standards are becoming more demanding in educational facilities across the United States, the sociocultural, economic and political contexts influencing education continue to become more complex (Neisler, 2000). According to federal and state laws, language assistance service programs must be provided to students in public schools whose English language proficiency limits their access to education opportunities (Berube, 2000).

As a cornerstone of education reform, the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” was signed into law under the Bush administration in 2001. This legislative reform requires that there be a qualified teacher in every classroom by the 2005-2006 fiscal year. There is a demand for increased accountability from schools and teachers for the successful achievement of all students, including those that are limited English proficient. “Teachers and teacher educators are faced with an urgent responsibility to transform curriculum, teaching and assessment practices to support the population of cultural and

linguistic students who arrive in school with a range of background, experiences and abilities” (Rosaen, 2003, p.2).

A variety of instructional services are provided by some school districts to assist in guiding and transitioning ELL students into classrooms. The type and amount of services provided are dependent on the needs of the diverse student population in a particular school as well as resources that are available in that school district (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002).

The ELL population of students continues to be a linguistically and culturally heterogeneous group. School officials reported that approximately 460 languages are collectively spoken by these students in schools across the United States (Kindler, 2002). Despite ELLs common thread of English not being their native language, diversity is one of their most salient features. (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). In addition to individual differences, such as interests, motivation and personal characteristics, ELLs differ in age, country of origin, ethnicity, language, culture, family social economic status, prior formal school experiences and levels of proficiency in their first language and ability to speak English (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). Educators should therefore, not stereotype all students from the same ethnic linguistic group as many differences can exist within the same group or culture (Garcia, 1993; Carrasquillo, 1991). The challenges of educating English language learners are magnified by the fact that these students are enrolling in United States schools at various times and at every grade level throughout the school year.

ELL students are entering schools not only with different proficiency levels and capabilities to speak the English language, but also have a wide range of school and cognitive background experiences. Despite knowledge of these facts, these students are

expected to perform and achieve at the same level as the mainstream population of students often with any modifications. (Quintanar-Sarellara, 1990). These students cling onto their cultural and linguistic heritage as comfort and security (Carasquillo, 2000; Heath, 1986).

As the population in United States schools continues to become more diverse in the 21st century, it has been described as “a multicultural experiment unique in the history of the world: a democratic society attempting to forge peaceful and productive communities with shared interests while at the same time honoring particular ethnic, racial and cultural characteristics, traditions, histories and languages” (Hill, Crajuzaa, Arambura & Baca, 1993, p. 260). “Diversity is an important concern because of the challenge it offers to teacher preparation programs and their education candidates who are interacting in a society of many races, cultures, values and norms” (Echols & Stader, 2002, p.1).

These changing demographics suggest that an increasing number of mainstream teachers will be working with LEP students in schools across the United States. Richard Riley, Former Secretary of Education (2000) reported that “Fifty four percent of all teachers have limited English proficient students in their classrooms, yet only one-fifth feel prepared to serve them”. The increasing diversity in our schools, the ongoing demographic changes across the nation and the movement towards globalization indicate that it has become necessary for educators to gain more knowledge and understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity and second language acquisition.

This study investigated the factors in a teacher’s background which contribute to the reasons why some teachers demonstrate more favorable attitudes than others toward

the ELL students in their mainstream classrooms. The researcher's motivation to conduct this study was due to her experiences and observations as an elementary school administrator of mainstream teachers, whose dichotomy of attitudes toward English language learners ranged from being enthusiastic and flexible to being negative and hostile, thereby affecting their teaching behavior as well as their students' achievement and self-esteem.

The research study is based on the assumption that in addition to the skills, training and multicultural competencies that are required to provide quality instruction for an increasing diversified population of students enrolled in mainstream classrooms (Dilg, 1999; Liston & Zeicher, 1996), teachers' attitudes are equally as important for student achievement (Brisk, 1998), and play a critical role in the learning process (Diaz, Rico & Weed, 2002; Garcia, 1999; Krashen, 1981). "Teachers' attitudes toward students significantly shape the expectations they hold for student learning, their treatment of students and what students ultimately learn" (Villegas & Lucas 2002, p. 24).

Factors such as motivation, willingness to learn a second language, positive social interaction in the classrooms, the relationships between teachers and students and teachers' attitudes and expectations all contribute to students' success in the mainstream classroom (Krashen, 1998). Teachers who appear to be respectful of cultural differences appear more able and willing to expect that their students from non-dominant groups are capable of achieving success despite their differences in cultural languages, racial and ethnic backgrounds (Nieto, 1996). Teachers' attitudes can improve or hinder the process of mainstream ELL students (Byrnes, Kiger & Manning, 1994). There are many mainstream teachers who have prior stereotypic perceptions and assumptions regarding

bilingual or language minority students and believe they are limited in their potential to achieve high levels of academic success (Cabello & Burstein, 1995). Many teachers have a tendency to correlate ELL's limited English language ability with their cognitive potential (Claire, 1995; Harklau, 2000; Walqui, 2000).

Teachers in mainstream classrooms need to become more culturally aware and develop sensitivity toward the linguistic and cultural differences that exist among their students. They need to be more open to multiplicity of perceptions. Cultural understanding and sensitivity will enable teachers to provide appropriate learning experiences that are required for a multi-level population in a mainstream classroom. These teachers have the responsibility to respect, understand and recognize the value of cultural and linguistic differences among their students, while simultaneously helping them acculturate while they learn the English language and American culture.

Teachers play a key role in promoting positive cultural and linguistic awareness in their classrooms and school communities. To accomplish this goal they must have an understanding and awareness of their own personal and cultural values and identities, in order to guide students from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural groups to work together to create a harmonious cooperative learning environment. Teachers must be aware that their own cultural perspectives can strongly influence the beliefs, behavior and responses of their students. Assumptions, stereotypic perceptions and preconceived notions about diverse cultures, are based on an individual's socialization process and prior background experiences. They in turn influence the development of individual attitudes and beliefs. The difficulties that teachers encounter when teaching a diverse group of students may occur because of these previously developed attitudes and beliefs. For all students to

experience success, teachers regardless of their own cultural or linguistic backgrounds, must be willing to demonstrate positive attitudes and acceptance toward all members of their classroom population (Irvine, 1995).

Linguistically diverse students in American classrooms represent a rich cross section of cultural and ethnic groups. Achieving quality education for all students requires teachers to be adequately prepared with the necessary knowledge, attitudes, skills and dispositions to teach students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. An increasing number of mainstream teachers are finding themselves responsible for teaching second language learners whose linguistic and cultural backgrounds are different from their own (Taylor & Sobel, 2001; Youngs & Youngs, 2001).

Darling-Hammond (1995) noted “If all children are to be effectively taught, teachers must be prepared to address the substantial diversity students bring with them to school. This includes a wide range of languages, cultures, home conditions, learning styles, exceptionalities, abilities and intelligence” (p2). Additionally, teachers need to have a background in second language development, in order to know how to successfully modify instruction and use appropriate strategies for students with different levels of English proficiency.

Currently in United States schools there is an imbalance between the cultural diversity among teachers versus the rich diversity found among the student population (Urban Teacher Collaborative, 2000). Research on the nation’s teaching force reveals that the make-up of the teacher population remains primarily white, female and monolingual despite the growth of student diversity in the schools (Banks, 1991; Hodgkinson, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Neito, 2000). The majority of mainstream teachers are

monolingual and limited in their exposure to diverse cultures and cross-cultural experiences (Banks, 2000; Grant & Secado, 1999; Sleeter, 1994; Zimpher, 1992).

While changes are being made to promote and ensure successful and equitable educational experiences for all ELL students, the pool of teachers most qualified to meet their specific needs have been unable to match their rapid growth in mainstream classrooms (Menken, 2000). The majority of limited English proficient students in mainstream classrooms are still being taught by teachers who have had limited or no specific training in the area of cultural and linguistic diversity, and are not adequately prepared to face the challenges of a diverse student population. Yasin (2000) states, “Despite the growing population of students whose primary language is not English, there are not enough teachers trained to work with them and not enough programs in place to prepare more” (p. 1). The Urban Teacher Collaborative (2000) collected data from large city school districts across the nation and found that there was a 72.5% shortage of bilingual teachers and a 67.5% shortage of teachers specifically trained to teach language minority students.

Despite the changing trends in student demographics over the past decade, which predict that half of all teachers may anticipate educating “an English Language Learner” during their career, out of 3 million public teachers surveyed, only 12.5% have received eight or more hours of training in specific instruction of students with limited English proficiency. While there is a shortage of qualified teachers across all grade levels, the greatest demand for both bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) teacher is at the elementary school level (NCELA, 2002). Some of the additional reasons for the teacher shortage include teachers’ concern of large class sizes, early retirement benefits,

increased new teacher turnover, changing student demographics, rezoning, lower salaries and an increase in school violence.

In order to meet the specific needs of ELLs, teachers have to understand the basic constructs of bilingualism and second language acquisition, the role of one's first language and the role of culture in learning that mainstream education places on linguistically and culturally diverse students (Clair, 1998). This knowledge enables teachers to create a harmonious classroom environment that benefits all students, regardless of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Teachers have a powerful influence on students' behavior and academic achievement. Their attitudes, expectations, behavior and actions in the classroom affect a student's motivation to succeed both academically and socially. Teachers are a critical link in assisting ELL students with their adjustment to the culture of the school and the mainstream classroom, as well as with social interactions with native English-speaking peers. To be an effective teacher in a diverse student classroom, the teacher needs to be aware and sensitive to the differences in unique learning styles among students who are culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse.

Educational program models developed to meet the needs of language minority students need to have three principal goals in order to be successful. The first is to assist language minority students to become proficient in the use of English language. The second is to empower the students to actively participate and achieve in the core mainstream curriculum. The third is to promote the students' self-esteem and cross-cultural understanding. Considerable research has been conducted on mainstream

teachers' failure to appreciate the funds of knowledge that ELL students bring from their homes and communities (Moll, 1992).

Language is critical to understanding the culture and experience of others, as it is through language that cultural concepts and ideas are conveyed and understood. Byrnes and Cortez (1992) wrote that an intimate relationship exists between language and culture and that language is acquired at an early age when an individual begins to socialize and integrate into a culture. Banks and Banks (1994) defined culture as the ideas, symbols, behaviors, values, and beliefs that are shared by a group of people. Culture can also be defined as a group program for survival and adaptation to both the natural and social environment. (p.357). This two part definition, defining culture can include, but is not limited to the following: ethnicity/ race, religion, socio-economic class, geographic region, gender, age or background experience.

Additionally Nieto (1996) defined culture as “the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships that are worldview created, shared and transformed by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that can include a common history, geographic location, language, social class and religion” (p. 30). “Culture is a way of life. Culture is the context within which we exist, think, feel, and relate to others. It is the ‘glue’ that binds a group of people together” (Brown, 1987, p. 73). John Donne wrote: “No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main (Devotions, XVII). Culture is our continent, the collective identity of which each of us is a part.” Larson and Smalley (1972) described culture as a blueprint that is rooted in family life and guides the behavior of people in a community. Culture includes an ingrained set of behaviors and modes of perception

which become highly important in the learning and acquisition of a second language. “A language is a part of a culture and culture is part of language; the two are intricately interwoven such that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language is also the acquisition of a second culture” (Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992, p.73)

The researcher employed a quantitative method for this study to investigate the factors which affect the attitudes of teachers toward the linguistically diverse students in their mainstream classrooms. The researcher distributed 500 surveys to mainstream teachers in elementary schools in the Palm Beach County school district situated in South Florida. The criterion for participation was mainstream teachers who had ELL students in their classrooms. They were invited to participate in the research study by completing a two-part survey.

One out of every five students in Florida’s Pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade public school population is classified as an English language learner. The approximate number of ELL students in Florida’s public schools as of October, 2003 was 288,413. Florida is the fourth largest public school district population of ELL students – following California, Texas and New York (Kindler, 2002). The state of Florida is expected to provide equal educational opportunities annually to the almost 300,000 non-native speaking students who have been identified as Limited English Proficient through the process of surveys and assessments. Florida offers economic and pleasant living conditions that continue to attract people from all over the United States and the rest of the world. The southeastern state of Florida continues to inherit a large population of English language learners, which include Creole-speaking Haitians, Hispanic students

from the Caribbean Islands, South and Central America, Asian and Eastern European students. Students in Florida schools represent 257 countries and collectively speak over 200 different languages.

Since the 1960's a series of federal laws, court decisions and guidelines- including Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the 1968 Bilingual Education Act; the Supreme Court Decision *Lau v Nichols* (1974); the office of Civil Rights' *Lau Remedies*; and the Equal Education Act of 1974 has mandated the rights of English language learners to have equal access to public schools to receive an education that will successfully meet their individual needs. The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) is mandated to abide by the 1990 Consent Decree also known as META (Multicultural Education Training Advocacy) that outlines the compliance of all school districts in Florida to ensure "equal and comprehensive instruction" for all students. The Consent Decree stipulates that each child is to receive "equal access to programming which is appropriate to his or her level of English proficiency, academic achievement and special needs". Currently there is still a wide disparity in the achievement scores of the ELL student population as compared to their native- English speaking peers. This is reflected in the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) reading results of 2000-2001 which indicate that mainstream ELLs are not as yet performing at expected levels.

The research study was conducted in public elementary schools in the Palm Beach County School which is situated in South Florida. This school district, like other school districts across the United States, is experiencing an increase in the enrollment of ELL students who are being included in mainstream classrooms. The total student population in this school district as of the Department of Florida Education 2003 census is 164,827

which includes approximately 19,000 ELL students. The total teacher population in the same district is 18,342. The racial/ethnic demographic breakdown of the teachers is as follows: White, Non-Hispanic 63%, Black, Non-Hispanic 23%, Hispanic 12% and the Other 2% which includes American Indian/Alaskan Native and Asian/Pacific Islander.

“In order to ensure that no child lags behind, the educational plight of immigrant students and U.S. born children of immigrants can no longer be neglected” (Avila-Rubenstein, 2003, p. 122). Teachers with the support of school administrators need to provide the best educational resources and support services that they have available to successfully educate the increasingly diverse student population. It is essential for ELL students to be encouraged to interact socially with their monolingual mainstream English speaking students so as to not feel isolated or inferior (Brisk, 1998).

Educators in colleges and universities are continually being challenged to plan and provide the most effective teacher training programs that will prepare teachers to successfully meet the needs of all students in mainstream classrooms. It is essential for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to attain the necessary academic knowledge, workplace skills and positive attitudes to be able to function effectively in the workplace of the 21st century. ELL students bring cultural diversity into the mainstream classrooms to match their linguistic differences.

These changes in the school population creates what Banks (1995) refers to as the ‘demographic imperative’, which requires all teachers to be more responsive to the increasingly diverse population enrolling in schools. Futrell, Gomes and Bedden (2003) stated that “America’s cultural diversity is one of its national treasures, providing for democratic communities of learners not available in many nations” (p. 382). The

responsibility for English language learning, academic progress and integration of bilingual and English language learners into the school community, should be assumed by all faculty members employed in a school, college or university community.

Language is a manifestation of culture. Language and culture are inseparable. Language intimately connects one with one's loved ones and community, while at the same time establishes one's personal identity (Delpritt, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

The United States has become one of the most culturally, ethnically, racially and linguistically diverse countries in the world. Over the past fifty years there has been a dramatic change in the demographics of students in schools throughout the United States. As the United States endures its largest influx of immigrants, along with the increasing number of American born ethnic minorities, the nation must be prepared to make the necessary adjustments to face the changing "ethnic texture of its citizens" (Banks, 2001).

The Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade population in public schools across America is rapidly becoming increasingly diverse and the changing student demographics is now one of the most critical challenges to be considered in American education today. The majority of English language learners at this time are immigrants or the children of immigrants and are part of the fastest growing segment of the United States public school population (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2000). Immigration to the United States at the end of the 20th century rose at a dramatic rate. This has been the catalyst for the rapid increase in public school students across the nation that is in need of additional English language instruction and academic support. These changes are also due to the increased

access to international communication, continued contact with family members in home countries, technology use and easier access to worldwide travel (Neito, 2000).

The teaching force continues to be homogenous despite the student population becoming more diverse. Teachers entering the profession continue to reflect the majority culture (Villegas, 1991). Despite the student body becoming increasingly diverse in race, ethnicity, language and social class; current data reveals the majority of teachers in the United States are white, monolingual females (Banks, 2000; Sleeter, 1994). Only 42 % of teachers of ELL students share a second language with their students (National Center of Education Statistics, 2000). If diversity is to gain positive status in schools today, it is the responsibility of school leaders to recruit a more diverse faculty who have specific training and experience in multicultural education and second language acquisition. “Today’s monoculture and monolingual teachers are becoming increasingly less competent in a culturally, racially and linguistically diverse classroom setting” (Oleusegun, 2001, p. 2).

The rising enrollment of linguistically and culturally diverse immigrant and refugee students are presenting school district administrators and teachers with the insurmountable challenges to deliver quality instruction, the attainment of acceptable levels of progress in academic and English language achievement and the “No Child Left Behind Act” (2002) mandatory federal documentation of adequate yearly progress across all student populations (Karabenick & Noda, 2004, p. 55). Over the past decade government educational reforms have continued in their attempt to raise the educational bar and expect that all children in the United States including “newcomers” complete school successfully, equipped with the necessary skills to ultimately survive in the

demanding economic and social world of the 21st century. Planning educational programs and curricula to meet the needs of all students is a vital concern of all educators, as well as state and national legislators.

The expectations for all teachers include a greater awareness of accepting responsibility for the education of ELL students who are transitioned into mainstream classrooms upon entry into school. Extra academic and effective support should be provided to children who may have had interrupted schooling in their native countries and to children whose families have had little exposure to the culture, language tradition and customs found in United States schools. Until fairly recently, many schools had placed language minority students with bilingual and non-bilingual ESL teachers in specialized isolated pull-out ESOL programs. However, many ELL students are now being included in mainstream classrooms from the onset of their arrival in school. It has therefore become necessary for all teachers to have appropriate background training in linguistic and cultural diversity. Additionally, mainstream teachers need administrative support and guidance with the successful inclusion of ELL students in their mainstream classrooms.

Research continues to show that mainstream attitudes toward ELL students affect what they learn and what they achieve. “Teachers attitudes and expectations with their students often lead to the expected behavior even when they are unaware they are communicating different expectations for different students” (Youngs & Youngs, 2001). In many mainstream classrooms, teachers’ perceptions regarding their students’ behavior often interferes with their ability to successfully teach a group of diverse students. This is

often due to the teachers' misrepresentation of the students' cultural behavior and verbal and non-verbal communication.

The change in ethnic demographics in the United States has made diversity one of the most significant educational and social challenges present in schools today. The growing cultural and linguistic diversity of the student population in our nation's schools continues to be well documented (Waggoner, 1999; NCES, 2000). Due to these changes, all individuals entering the teaching profession must now be prepared to teach a racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse student population (Villegas & Young, 1997).

The current shortage of teachers, particularly teachers trained to teach English language learners, places new demands and challenges on teacher preparation programs, to prepare a pool of teachers who have the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to teach students from diverse backgrounds (Menken, 2000). Currently 41% of teachers in the United States have taught ELLs, while less than 13% of these teachers have received any specialized training in teaching English language learners (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

The classroom teaching strategies and management techniques that have been used successfully in the past with the majority of mainstream students need to be adapted and modified. The difficulties that have been documented between teachers and ELL students include stereotypic conflicts of cultural beliefs, miscommunication, the use of ineffective strategies and behavior modification (Nieto, 1996).

In addition to facing the challenges associated with becoming proficient in the English language, ELL students are expected to master the academic curriculum at the same time and at the same level of their mainstream peers (Wong-Fillmore, 1991). High

dropout rates have been reported for many ELL students (Valdez, 2001). This concern is illustrated in the state of Florida, where the graduation rates of ELL students are especially low. The graduation rate for high school seniors enrolled in ESOL programs is only at 36.2%. The risk for ELLs is even greater when students are not receiving extra support, with graduation rates as low as 20% reported (OMSLE, 2001). These low achievement rates have also been reported in the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Out of 9,897 10 th grade ESOL students who had been mainstreamed for over 2 years, only 1629 (16.5%) passed the FCAT 10 th grade reading component.

The underachievement of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds continues to pose a challenge for educators today. It has been recommended that teacher education programs address the challenge of closing the gap between the achievement of ELLs and the rest of the mainstream students by providing all teachers with stronger preparation in teaching students of diverse backgrounds and by recruiting prospective teachers from diverse backgrounds (Freeman & Freeman, 2000; Sleeter, 2001).

Pre-service training has not yet successfully equipped mainstream teachers with the required diversified strategies, skills, understanding and awareness of the different cultures and ethnic groups that they may encounter in their classrooms. As a result, many teachers are being forced to learn on the job. As a diverse student body now redefines normative learning, new teaching skills and strategies are required for the teaching force of today's diversified mainstream classrooms.

An understanding of first language and second acquisition theory, the effects of learning and speaking two languages on the developing child and the cultural

manifestation related to these language systems will help prospective teachers understand the children they will teach. Teacher preparation programs should challenge teachers' beliefs and attitudes that may have developed as a result of the limited exposure to diverse cultures and their unique background traditions.

“Placing the blame for student failure primarily on students and their families has freed schools of education from considering how their own policies and practices in teaching education have collided to perpetuate academic failure for those students who differ from the majority” (Nieto, 2000, p. 181). Educators have suggested that the goals of teachers' education in the 21st century include acquiring the knowledge (of cultural diversity), skills for effectively interacting and communicating, developing the disposition (attitudes, beliefs) and the transformation needed to interact effectively with students from diverse racial, linguistic, cultural, gender and socioeconomic backgrounds (Ukpokodu, 2000, p. 25).

According to a report and survey from the U.S. Department of Education, “addressing the needs of limited English proficient students” is the professional development area in which teachers are least likely to choose to participate (NCES, 2001). The same survey reported that only 27% of teachers of ELL students felt adequately prepared to teach students with limited English proficiency, while the majority (60%) felt only “somewhat” or “moderately” well prepared, and 12% reported feeling “not prepared at all” (NCES, 2001). Mainstream teachers perceive ELL students as having limited ability and therefore have lowered expectations for their level of academic achievement (Clair, 1995; Harklau, 2000; Walqui, 2000). This is one of the reasons that motivated the researcher to conduct this study and explore which factors

contribute to the attitudes of teachers toward the ELL students included in their mainstream classrooms.

The Holmes Group (1995) noted that understanding and respecting difference across socioeconomic status, values, communication styles, norms, languages and dialects are critical to a student's positive and successful development in school. Educators in a pluralistic society cannot go forward without having this knowledge. Many mainstream teachers have expressed frustration with the lack of time, training and support given to them while working with ELL students. It is imperative that administrators and educational leaders seek a variety of successful ways of teaching the diverse student population in our schools today. Given the 21st century's changing demographic composition of students, greater attention and planning needs to be directed toward the professional preparation of teachers. A cooperative team of teachers, specialists and administrators are needed to continuously support the ongoing achievement of ELL students. "Substantive changes in attitudes, behavior and achievement occur only when the entire school environment changes to demonstrate a multicultural atmosphere" (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2000, p. 214).

Research Questions

To ensure that all children will be prepared to face the challenges of a rapidly changing society, United States schools should be required to be better informed of how to successfully teach culturally and linguistically diverse students. Teachers must be willing to modify methods, strategies and techniques in order to include the variety of learning styles of ELL students. Their attitudes and beliefs should remain constant and

positive toward their students regardless of their linguistic or cultural background differences. Irvine and York (1995) highlighted a number of factors that he believed influence the extent to which a teacher exhibits the instructional style, belief or attitudes associated with his or her culture:

- a) The degree of identification with one's culture
- b) Gender
- c) Ethnic subculture
- d) Educational training
- e) Cross-cultural experiences
- f) Country of birth
- g) Experience in teaching
- h) Socioeconomic status

The researcher included some of the above factors in this study as independent variables to determine if they had an effect on the dependent variable (attitude).

The questions addressed in this research study were:

1. Does age affect the attitude of mainstream teachers towards the ELL students in their classrooms?
2. Does gender affect the attitude of mainstream teachers towards the ELL students in their classrooms?
3. Does ethnic background contribute to the teachers' attitudes and perceptions about the cognitive abilities of ELL students in the mainstream?
4. Does being born outside the United States affect the attitude of teachers towards their mainstream ELL students?

5. Does prior teaching experience contribute to the attitude of mainstream teachers?
6. Does the proportion of ELL students in the classroom contribute to the attitude of mainstream teachers?
7. Does having English as one's native language affect the attitude of teachers towards their mainstream ELL students?
8. Does specific linguistic minority training of teachers affect their attitude towards the ELL students in their mainstream classrooms?
9. Does a teacher's cross-cultural experience influence their attitude in instructional settings with ELL students in their mainstream classroom?
10. Does amount of administrative support contribute towards the attitude of mainstream teachers of ELL students?
- 11a. What is the combined effect of the above independent variables on the dependent variable (teacher attitude)?
- 11b. What is the unique effect of each of these independent variables on attitude?

The population that the researcher included in this study was limited to teachers who had English language learners in their mainstream elementary school classrooms. The teachers were randomly selected from a public elementary school district in South Florida. The demographic make up of these teachers' echoes that of teachers in other schools in counties across the State of Florida.

The researcher hopes that by identifying the factors that contribute to the attitudes of mainstream teachers towards ELL students, there will be an improved understanding regarding:

- Ways to improve education and training for teachers in the areas of cultural and linguistic diversity and adequately preparing them with the needed strategies to be able to successfully respond to student's unique individual needs.
- Gaining knowledge of the realities of the diversity of the public school classroom population and learning skills to adapt to these new demographic realities.
- Developing the future teacher's sensitivity, awareness and understanding of the social and cultural factors that affect the educational development of students.
- Improving teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of ELL's in the mainstream classroom.
- Efforts to recruit a more diversified faculty of teachers in schools and colleges.

The Theoretical Frame of Reference

Attitudes are usually defined within the framework of social psychology as a disposition or tendency to respond positively or negatively toward a certain idea, object, person, or situation. They encompass or are closely related to one's opinions and beliefs and are based upon an individual's experiences. Attitudes "form a whole constellation of working rules about the world and reactions to it" (Sapiford, 1999, p. 141). Attitudes are related in some way to interaction with others and therefore represent an important link between cognitive and social psychology. Fishbein (1975) wrote an attitude is characterized as a learned implicit response that varies in intensity and tends to guide (mediate) an individual's overt responses to an object. In Fishbein's conceptualization, attitude refers only to the evaluation of a concept which has a mediating evaluative response to every stimulus.

Attitude is a mental and neutral state of readiness organized through experience which exerts a directive or dynamic influence upon an individual's response (behaviors) to all objects and situations with which it is related. Attitude stems from information individuals have obtained about someone or something that they form an opinion or predisposition about (Littlejohn, 2002). In 1980, Fishbein defined attitude as an accumulation of information about an object, person, situation or experience. Attitudes define outward and visible behavior of human beliefs and determine what an individual sees, hears, thinks and does. It is believed that individuals are not born with predisposed attitudes; instead attitudes are acquired through the socialization process. Individuals therefore create their own reality based on personal knowledge and experiences.

Attitudes, like all aspects of the development of cognition and affect in individuals, develop early in childhood and are the results of parents and peer influences, as well as interaction with others through life experiences. Aronson (1999) proposed that attitudes cannot be free from bias due to their early development and influence from life experiences, cultural roots and social interactions.

In this study the researcher investigated which factors contribute to the development of attitudes of mainstream teachers toward English language learners enrolled in their classrooms. Attitude has also been defined by Brown (1987) as the set of beliefs that learners hold toward members of the target language group and toward their own culture. Teachers' attitude toward their students has always been considered one of the most important teacher competencies that influence student's success in school (Ukpokodu, 2002). A positive attitude has been considered an essential prerequisite to the success of a teacher's performance in the classroom. Additionally, research has

indicated that effective teaching is associated with a teacher's perception of their own professional competence and attitudes toward their educational philosophy and personal self-worth.

According to Krashen (1981) teachers' attitudes influence students' motivation, achievement, and self-esteem and anxiety level. Teachers' attitudes and instructional styles mold the learning patterns and behaviors of their students. This is evident especially in the elementary grades where the influence of the teacher is greater than that of peers. Goals for the pre-service teachers should include gaining knowledge of strategies to use with a diverse population of students, as well as developing positive attitudes to ensure successful instruction of all students, including those who are culturally and linguistically diverse (Banks, 1997; Bennett, 1995; Gay, 1993; Nieto, 2000).

Fishbein (1967) defined attitude as a "learned implicit response that varies in intensity and tends to guide (mediate) an individual's overt response to an object or situation." Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) proposed that attitudes are necessary precursors to changing behaviors and also indicated that "attitude can be seen as a major determinant of an individual's intention to perform a behavior in question" (p. 16). This theoretical frame of reference assumes a casual chain, linking beliefs formed on the basis of an individual's attitude. These beliefs and attitudes are then linked to intentions which result in a variety of behaviors.

Fishbein's attitude theories and definitions give a basis to help understand attitude and predict behavior while also suggesting that attitude can be divided into the affective, cognitive and behavioral components. The affective component relates to the

emotional feelings an individual has toward an individual or situation. The cognitive component of an attitude involves the beliefs, perceptions and knowledge one develops about an individual. The behavioral component is the overt behavior which results from an internal attitude that has been previously formed.

The attitude of teachers is critical in encouraging all students to develop positive motivation that will prepare them for a harmonious existence in a society that is culturally diverse. In 1990 Larke recorded through his research that a significant correlation exists among an educator's sensitivity, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors toward students of diverse cultures and their subsequent successful performance in the classroom. Teachers can build a foundation of understanding, trust and respect between themselves and their language minority students by acquiring the ability to self-reflect on their attitudes and teaching behavior.

Aronson (1999) wrote the more accessible attitude is in one's memory, the stronger and the more likely that it will be recalled and in turn influence behavior. Ukpokodu (2002) noted "one of the important competencies in preparing pre-service teachers for success is to engage them in cross-cultural experiences that will help develop a clearer understanding of their individual ethnic and cultural identities and culture of others resulting in attitude decolonization and transformation" (p.27).

"Creating, changing or refining attitudes regarding diversity issues involves examination of self-awareness: recognizing discrimination, racism, prejudice and the factors leading to them; challenging basis assumptions of society and gaining understanding and respect for others" (Noel, 1995, p. 269). Teachers' attitudes toward their students have been shown to be a predictor of student success (Rosenthal &

Jacobson, 1989). Their attitudes are important because they determine, along with skills and teachers efficacy, the internal motivation to interact favorably with their students which in turn leads to greater student performance (Brisk, 1998).

Using this theoretical frame of reference defining attitude, the researcher investigated the responses of the mainstream teachers toward the linguistically diverse students enrolled in their classrooms. Attitudes, beliefs and expectation have been found to guide and direct teachers' responses toward their students (Tran, Young & DiLella, 1994). The Concise Encyclopedia of Psychology (1996, p. 74) defined attitude "as an evaluative disposition" which entails 1) past experiences; 2) informational influences; 3) reinforcement; and d) motivational pressure. The researcher explored which factors contribute to the attitudes of the mainstream teachers which in turn lead to their specific behavioral responses toward the ELL students in their classrooms.

If professional development training programs are to be successful, it is important that teachers develop an in-depth understanding of the influence of culture and language on students' academic performance. It is essential that effective diversified teaching skills and strategies be included in course curriculum when training teachers in order to meet the sociocultural cognitive and language needs of the growing population of diverse students in United States schools. ELL students have to struggle not only to master skills and knowledge of the curriculum in a mainstream classroom, but also have to integrate successfully into a new culture while at the same time learn a new language.

A teacher's ability to see potential rather than limitations in ELLs is a crucial factor in influencing the future success of ELLs in a mainstream classroom. Mainstream teachers bring a variety of attitudes to their classrooms which in turn lead to a variety of

teaching behaviors and expectations for students' achievement. Teaching behaviors, attitudes and strategies are overwhelmingly based on a teacher's background experiences (Cabello & Burstein, 1995). Teaching preparation programs often do not challenge these teachers' beliefs and attitudes that have developed as a result of their prior background experiences or limited exposure to a single culture.

The attitudes of teachers will determine their teaching behaviors and instructional strategies that they will use in the classrooms. These attitudes will affect their interactions with their students. Faced with a variety of mounting demands, mainstream teachers vary considerably in their eagerness to incorporate ELL students in the classroom. Many teachers do not believe the challenge of the ELL students is worth their time and efforts while others are enthusiastic and look forward to the valuable contributions that these students might bring to the classroom and school community. Successful teachers are those who are able to provide culturally relevant instruction and remain sensitive to cultural differences as well as having the ability to understand a variety of values and cultural norms beside their own (Ladson - Billings, 1994).

Definition of Key Terms

Accommodation – Adapting language (spoken or written) to make it more understandable for second language learners. In assessment, accommodations may be the presentation, response method, setting or timing/scheduling of assessment or teaching strategies as planned by the teacher.

Attitude – Attitude is essentially information we have obtained about someone or something that we form an opinion or predisposition about. It is an accumulation of information about an object, person, situation or experience and a basis of the predisposition to act in a positive or negative way toward an object or situation.

Acculturation - the process by which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviors that enable them to become functioning participants of a new host culture.

Culture – “Culture is a social system that represents an accumulation of beliefs, attitudes, habits, values and practices that serve as a filter through which a group of people view and respond to the world in which they live” (Shade, Kelly & Oberg, 1997, p. 18).

Peregoy and Boyle (1993) defined culture as “the shared beliefs, values and rule-governed patterns of behavior that define a group and require group membership” (p. 8).

According to Banks and Banks (1989), “Culture is the ideations, symbols, behaviors, values and beliefs that are shared by a human group” p. 357.

Cultural Awareness – Occurs when individuals develop sensitivity and understanding of other ethnic/cultural groups. This usually involves internal changes in terms of attitudes and values (Adams, 1995).

Cultural Diversity – Refers to the differences among ethnic groups.

Cultural Knowledge – Familiarization with selected cultural characteristics, history, values, belief systems and behaviors of the members of other ethnic/cultural groups (Adams, 1995).

Cultural Sensitivity – Knowing that differences as well as similarities exist among cultures and being able to withhold value judgments i.e., better or worse, right or wrong to those cultural differences.

English Language Learners (ELLs) (sometimes referred to as “limited English proficient” LEP) They are non-native English speaking students with limited proficiency in English who currently are in the process of learning English.

Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974 – This civil rights statute prohibits states which receive federal funding from denying equal education opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex or national origin. The statute specifically prohibit states from denying equal education opportunity to limited English proficient students by the failure of an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional program.

ESOL – (English Speakers of Other Languages) is the acronym used to identify immigrant students who have varying levels of English proficiency.

Ethnicity – refers to a social group that shares a sense of group membership, culture, language, political and economic interest, history and ancestral geographical base. The word ethnicity is derived from the Greek word “ethos” which means nation (Wjeyesinghe, Inghe, Griffin & Love, 1997).

Language Minority Student – A language minority student is one whose home language is not from the dominant language group of the mainstream student body. In the U.S. a language minority child may be bilingual or limited English proficient.

Language Proficiency – To be proficient in a second language means to effectively communicate or understand thoughts or ideas through the language's grammatical system vocabulary, sounds and/or written symbols. Language proficiency is composed of oral (listening and speaking) and written (reading and writing) components which include both academic and non-academic language.

Lau v. Nichols – This suit was filed by parents of Chinese students in San Francisco in 1974 and led to a landmark Supreme Court ruling that identical education does not constitute equal education under the Civil Rights Act. School districts are now required to take the responsibility to take “affirmative steps” to overcome the educational barriers faced by non-native English speaking students.

Learning Style – can be defined as the cognitive, affective and physiological characteristics that influence how a person learns (Irvine & York, 1995, p.485).

Limited English Proficient (LEP) – LEP is a term given to students whose English language ability has not reached native-like fluency. The federal government, most state departments and local school districts use the descriptor LEP in identifying these students (Lessow –Hurley, 1991). The term English language learner (ELL) has now become more frequently used in the literature amongst educators.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) – This term has been used to identify individuals from homes and communities where English is not the primary language of communication.

Mainstream – Classes designed for native or fluent speakers of English in which accommodations are not always made for English language learners.

Multiculturalism – The by product of diversity and is the positive interaction among groups in which individuals within each group are made aware of their own cultural heritage and work together to understand the differences of other cultures and civilizations.

Native Language – The language a person acquires first in life or identifies with as a member of a specific ethnic or cultural group (NCELA).

No Child Left Behind Act – “The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” is the most recent authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The act contains the President’s four basic education reform principles which include improved accountability, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents and an emphasis on teaching methods and strategies based on scientific research (NCELA).

Pluralistic Society – refers to the plethora of cultures in the United States with their respective uniqueness.

Primary Language – The language in which bilingual/multilingual speakers are the most fluent and prefer to use. It is not necessarily the first language an individual learned in life (NCELA).

Significance of the Study

It has become essential for schools to assist students who are linguistically and culturally diverse to attain the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes so they can function effectively in the global society of the 21st century. Student populations in classrooms throughout the United States represent a variety of ethnic, racial and cultural groups with diverse languages and dialects of many countries. The “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” requires that there be a highly qualified teacher in every classroom by the year 2005-2006. School districts face the challenge of preparing and hiring a large number of teachers while still retaining a focus on quality. The task of educating language minority students can no longer fall only on those teachers who have been specially trained to provide ESOL or bilingual services. This responsibility needs to be shared by all educators due to the increased enrollment of ELL students in mainstream classrooms across all educational settings.

Accompanying the shift in demographics is the dismal academic performance of a significant number of ELL students along with their overrepresentation in special education, remedial programs and “at risk” programs (Artiles & Trent, 1997; Johnson, 2002). Despite their limited proficiency ELLs are required to pass statewide standardized assessments in order to graduate from grade to grade. The low and failing standardized test scores, lack of alternative assessments and high dropout rates are additional indications that many schools are failing to adequately support the needs of English language learners. Results of state tests show that ELL students’ academic performance is far below that of other students (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2001).

Ball (2000) wrote “American public schools have had relatively little success in educating students who are members of ethnically marginalized groups, and speakers of first languages other than mainstream or academic English” (p. 227). This is perhaps due to the perceptions and assumptions teachers may have regarding bilingual or language minority students’ ability to learn and their potential to achieve success (Cabello & Burstein, 1995). Faulty assumptions and deficit thinking often lead to lower expectations for language minority students. Many teachers also comment that the difficulties ELL students experience in the mainstream classroom occur because of their language deficiencies and their parents’ lack of interest, and that the teachers, school or educational system are not to blame. Banks (2001) noted that equity will only exist for all students “when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial and social class groups” (p 27).

An increasingly diverse population of children from a variety of racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, economic backgrounds and diverse family types with varying customs, traditions and histories are present in United States schools today (Hill, Carjuzaa, Aramburo & Baca, 1993). Since the 1970’s there has been significant growth in population of various ethnic and cultural groups entering United States classrooms from many corners of the world. The growth in the Hispanic student population has been the most rapid. The national educational reform proposal “Goals 2000” envisions a restructured educational system in the United States that is intended to hold all students to higher standards. The idea behind the implementation of these academic reforms is that the results will hopefully bring about appropriate teaching strategies, favorable attitudes and greater levels of accountability from teachers of second language learners.

Important goals for education in the 21st century include assurance that all educators have knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity, that they possess the skills to effectively communicate and that they develop the appropriate dispositions and attitudes needed to work with students from diverse linguistic, racial, ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. (Banks 2001; Bennett, 1999; Delpritt, 1998; Gay, 1999; Manning & Baruth, 2000; Sleeter & Grant, 1997; Zeichner, 1993).

This study investigated the background of mainstream teachers and which factors contribute to their attitudes toward the linguistically and culturally diverse students in their classrooms. Knowledge of these factors will enable teacher educators and school administrators to provide and develop appropriate training and support for all teachers to successfully instruct language minority students. According to Flores (2001), educators have difficulty separating themselves as social beings from their beliefs, which apparently stem from a variety of prior sociocultural experiences. “Beliefs and attitudes are not only reflected in (teachers’) decisions and actions; there is additional evidence that teachers’ beliefs and attitudes direct important classroom decisions” (Renzaglia, Hutchins, & Lee 1997, p. 361).

Teachers’ attitudes toward teaching ELLs are particularly important because they determine, along with skills and teachers efficacy, the motivation to favorably interact with their students which can then lead to increased student motivation and performance (Brisk, 1998). It is necessary to view all students as individuals with unique abilities as well as understand that language has an extremely important role in the “learning and teaching” process in the classroom. “Teachers’ attitudes toward students significantly

shape the expectations they hold for student learning, their treatment of students and what students ultimately learn” (Pang & Sablan, 1998).

Despite the growth of this diversified cultural and linguistic population, the teaching force in the United States is mostly made up of teachers who often have limited knowledge and experiences with individuals or groups from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds than their own (Gandara & Maxwell, 2000; MacDiarmid, 1992). The discrepancy between a teacher’s personal background and lack of awareness of the cultural/ethnic backgrounds of their students may hinder their ability to be effective when instructing a diverse student population (Boyle, Baise & Grant, 1992; Diaz, Moll & Mehan, 1992; Yamauchi & Tharp, 1995).

“Diversity as an educational issue challenges schools of education to prepare teachers, counselors, administrators and university faculty member who can ensure that all students received an education that enables them to reach their maximum academic potential” (Futrell, Gomez & Bedden, 2003, p. 381). Currently, only 5% of all faculty members at universities are identified as members of minority groups.

Teacher education programs are continually being challenged to effectively educate pre-service teachers from culturally isolated backgrounds. Teachers need to become more culturally aware as they often have preconceived ideas and stereotypic assumptions regarding other cultures. These perceptions are often based on their individual socialization process and previous background experiences which in turn influence their attitudes and beliefs toward their students. An increasing number of research studies have revealed that if educators do not validate the cultural and linguistic

background diversity that children bring with them into the classroom, it is likely that they will alienate these students from academic learning experiences (Nieto, 2000).

Teachers who respect their student's native languages and cultures can assist them with the necessary transitions from their homes to the school environment. There is a need to build, develop and maintain the social and cultural bridges between the student's home culture and that of the school community (Ovando, 1989). ELLs require guidance and support in transitioning comfortably into learning a new language and adapting to a new culture while still having the opportunity to retain their own culture and traditions. A culturally competent teacher needs to possess the knowledge and skills that enable him or her to appreciate value and celebrate similarities and differences within, between and among culturally diverse groups of people (Singh, 1996 p. 24). Teachers need to be knowledgeable about the ways culturally and linguistically diverse students perceive the world, as well as process and organize information (Irvine, 1990).

Through the understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity, an entire school community can begin to eliminate stereotyping and prejudice which influences the way all students are perceived, treated and instructed. As more ELL students enroll in the mainstream classrooms, the question continues to be raised as to why some teachers are more competent, effective and enthusiastic about teaching ELL students while others find these students to be overwhelming and disruptive to the regular classroom routine. The cultural and linguistic mismatch between teachers and students is becoming a critical issue for all administrators in schools and colleges to cope with.

There is an ongoing responsibility for schools to ensure that all students, including ELLs have equal access to a quality education in all educational institutions

across the United States. The underachievement of students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in comparison to their mainstream peers continues to be an ongoing concern. According to Thomas and Collier's research (2002) it is crucial for educators to provide a supportive socio-cultural school environment for language minority students to allow for academic and cognitive development in both their first and second languages. They developed the "Prism Model" to help teachers understand the complex process of second language acquisition. The four components of this model that steer language acquisition are the socio-cultural, linguistic, academic and cognitive processes. Prejudice and discrimination towards ELL students can influence their academic achievement, emotional and social development, as well their responses to learning a new language. All students, despite their cultural and linguistic differences need to be adequately equipped with the necessary skills to enable them to be lifelong learners while living productive lives as adults.

According to researchers King and Newmann (2000), teachers have the most control over what is taught and the climate for learning. Improving teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions through professional development is a critical step in improving student achievement. Students are sensitive to the ways in which their teachers perceive and relate to them as unique individuals. Empathy and understanding by teachers toward their ELL students is essential for students who are members of subordinate culturally diverse groups (Garcia, 2002; Katz, 1999; Nieto, 2000; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Valdes, 2001). "Multicultural education and global education share important goals. Global education seeks to help students develop cross-cultural competency in cultures beyond their cultural borders and to inquire the insights needed to recognize that

all people living on earth have interconnected fates” (Diaz, Massialas and Xanthopoulos, 1999).

Jones and Fennimore (1990) wrote: "Too often schools do not legitimize the knowledge or experiences these (minority) children bring to school, instead, schools are more likely to label these students as failures because their backgrounds, language and culture are seen as inadequate preparation for learning” (p. 16). To teach effectively in culturally diverse classrooms means using cultural and language sensitive strategies and curriculum content to ensure equitable opportunities for academic success, personal development and individual fulfillment for all students despite their background diversity. The school should be a cultural environment where successful acculturation takes place. Teachers and students should be open to the viewpoints and perspectives of each other’s backgrounds as they interact. (Banks, 1995).

Teachers play an important role as agents of socialization, the process by which individuals learn the systems of values and belief and ways of communication amongst diverse cultures. When differences are found between the cultures of students in the classroom it is the teacher’s responsibility to assure all students learn to interact harmoniously while understanding one another. Cochran - Smith (1995) noted that in order to learn to teach in a society that is increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse, prospective teachers, as well as experienced teachers need opportunities to examine much of what is usually unexamined in the tightly braided relationships of language, culture and power in school. For an educational environment to be successful, a dialogic exchange should take place between the teacher and students, with both parties learning, questioning, reflecting and participating (Freire, 1995)

Larke reported in her 1990 study of pre-service teachers that, “a high correlation exists among educator’s sensitivity/attitudes, beliefs and behaviors towards students of other cultures and their ability to achieve academic success”. Teachers who are effective in diverse classrooms have been reported to possess high levels of cultural sensitivity which is exhibited by their ability and willingness to modify curriculum and instructional design to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to achieve success.

To date much of the classroom based research on teachers has sought to describe effective teaching behaviors, positive learner outcomes and teacher - student interactions that are believed to lead to successful second language learning (Faltis, 1993; Wong – Fillmore, 1991). The review of literature indicates that classroom teachers remain the students’ primary source of encouragement and support, yet there are still limited research studies investigating the factors or attributes that contribute to the attitudes and beliefs of teachers of ELL students.

Many mainstream teachers have a tendency to misunderstand the learning and communication styles of their ELL students, and instead label students as “learning disabled”, or as “behaviorally disruptive”. The discrepancy between teachers’ knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures and the cultural/ethnic backgrounds of their students may hinder their ability to successfully teach and relate to the ELL students in their mainstream classroom. (Boyle, Baise, & Grant 1992; Diaz, Moll & Mehan 1992). “Language, like culture, is part of who a person is, and ultimately the connection between loved ones, one’s community, and one's personal identity and has deep roots or is not easily lost.” (Delpritt, 1998, p.19).

Teachers often underestimate their ELL students' abilities (Boyle, Baise, & Grant 1992; Diaz, Moll, & Mehan 1992). This results in teachers presenting English language learners with less challenging and demanding curriculum and thus limiting their academic 'opportunities', (Waggoner, 1992) and connecting their cognitive ability with their limited language proficiency. Many teachers and education students are convinced that ELL students are not capable of learning and achieving at a high level of success. An outgrowth of multicultural education "culturally responsive pedagogy" (Cummins, 1996; Gay, 2000; Ladson- Billings 1994) is founded on the notion that rather than deficits students diverse backgrounds need to be seen as assets that bring enrichment to the classrooms. Some educators are of the opinion that the presence of language minority students lowers curriculum standards and places an unnecessary burden on school budgets and resources (Lucas & Katz, 1994).

Of the total number of public school teachers across the nation, only 12% of teachers who have ELL students in their mainstream classrooms have had 8 or more hours of professional development specific to the needs of this student population, and only 20% believe that they are adequately prepared to teach these students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002). According to Short (1999) the lack of familiarity with their students' culture, learning styles and communication patterns, is the reason why many teachers have negative expectations for students and use inappropriate curricula assessments and instructional materials. In order to ensure academic success for all students it is essential for teachers to understand, appreciate and respect the unique differences second language learners bring to mainstream classrooms.

Villegas and Lucas (2002) suggested the following goals be implemented to ensure the development of a successful school community that includes the unique needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

1. The goal and vision of the classroom need to be clearly communicated to all students (regardless of their linguistic or cultural background).
2. Program leaders need to make an active commitment to all ELL students.
3. Professional staff development needs to be ongoing.
4. All parents regardless of their cultural and linguistic background need to feel welcomed and encouraged as active participants in the classroom and school community.

School reform demands that schools become places of equal opportunity and excellence for all students. Educators today face many challenges to maintain the success of instructing a diversified school population. Students need a supportive school-wide environment in which their language and culture are valued. The responsibility for improving schools must be shared among the many stakeholders who include administrators, teachers and parents. They need to plan cooperatively together to ensure a harmonious educational learning environment exists for all students. (Clair & Adger, 1999). "Today's foremost challenge in education is to create learning that maintains the cultural integrity of every child while enhancing their educational success."(Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

Organization of the Study

The report of this study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter includes the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, definitions, assumptions, research questions guiding the study and the study's limitations. Chapter Two reviews the literature that is relevant to the research study. Chapter Three includes the methodology of the research study. Chapter Four discusses the analysis and the findings of the data. Chapter Five concludes the study with a discussion of the results, conclusions, implications and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

"I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any". Mahatma Gandhi (c.f., Gaston, 1984, p.90)

Over the past fifty years there has been a dramatic change in the demographics in public schools across the United States (Nieto, 2000). This change is a result of the growing cultural and linguistic differences in the school age population due to an increase in the ongoing arrival of immigrants and refugees. The enrollment of limited English proficient students in public schools in many states and cities across the nation continues to grow at a rapid rate. The change in the cultural make up of the United States population has made diversity one of the most significant social issues of our current society. These demographic changes continue to create new challenges for educators in public schools throughout the United States. The educational system, including teacher education, must become more responsive to the needs of this growing segment of the student population.

Approximately 5 million students in United States schools have limited English language skills that affect their ability to successfully participate on grade level in educational programs and achieve high academic standards in mainstream classrooms (NCELA, 2002). California has the largest enrollment of English language learner students in its public schools, and is followed by Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois and

Arizona. The students in United States schools come from virtually every corner of the world and bring with them different perspectives, languages, dialects, cultural beliefs, values, behaviors and background experiences. "No longer is the occasion for an intercultural encounter most likely when one leaves one's own country" (Avery, 1992, p. 3). The implication of these ongoing changing demographics has a major impact on the U.S. public school system.

According to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Educational Research (2002) the number of language minority students is expected to rise as the immigration trend in the United States continues to be apparent. Therefore, being prepared to successfully educate a changing student population with qualified teachers continues to be one of the most critical issues facing educators in state and federal departments, colleges, universities and schools. Teacher education programs are being scrutinized, while both policy makers and the public are holding them accountable to ensure that the diverse student population is being successfully educated as well as being prepared to face the challenges and opportunities of today and the future.

The education of LEP students became a major concern in United States public schools following the *Lau v. Nichols* 1974 landmark decision made by the Supreme Court. *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) has served to highlight the protection of language minority groups in the United States. The *Lau v. Nichols* decision was the result of a class action suit representing 1,800 Chinese students who alleged discrimination on the grounds they could not achieve academically because that they did not understand the instruction of their English speaking teachers. The United States Supreme Court based their decision on the 1964 Civil Rights Act and concluded that identical education of English and non-

English speaking students did not necessarily constitute equal educational opportunity and ruled that districts must take affirmative steps to overcome educational barriers faced by non-English speaking students. The Lau verdict abolished the “sink or swim” practices of the past and this led to the creation of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act in August 1974. This was the catalyst for schools being held accountable in taking affirmative steps to assist LEP students overcome the educational barriers that they might encounter because of their limited English language skills. It continues to be apparent from the review of literature that ELL students’ educational and emotional needs are still not being adequately met.

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education’s National Reform on Excellence in Education published a report “A Nation at Risk”, in 1983. This document is cited as the origin of current education reform efforts. Subsequently, in 2001, the “No Child Left Behind Act” was signed into law. It expanded the federal role in education and has demanded greater accountability from educators. At the core of the “No Child Left Behind” legislative act are measures designed to close achievement gaps between all groups of students. In addition it includes the demands for placement of qualified teachers in all classrooms. It is the responsibility of all educators in public schools to continue meeting the challenges of educating and preparing all students to live as productive citizens in an increasingly diverse global society.

This research study was conducted in a public elementary school district in South Florida. The student population of the state of Florida originates from an estimated 241 countries, and approximately 190 languages/dialects are collectively spoken by students in public schools across the state. Each year mainstream teachers in public schools across

the state of Florida and nationwide face classrooms with increasing numbers of language minority students. One out of every five students in Florida's Pre Kindergarten through 12 th grade public school population is classified as an English language learner. In August 1990, Florida legislators signed a Consent Decree, the Multicultural Training Advocacy (META) which outlined the identification, service and necessary compliance of public school districts. The Consent Decree requires that all English language learners receive equal access to educational programming which is appropriate to his or her level of English proficiency, academic achievement and learning style. It also requires that all teachers receive appropriate language minority training for ESOL students.

Given the trend of these changing demographics in the nation, all educators must face the reality that there is an increased chance of linguistically and culturally diverse students enrolling daily in mainstream classrooms. A greater number of mainstream teachers are finding themselves responsible to meet the challenges of a diverse student population. (Youngs & Youngs, 2001). These school reform efforts place an enormous burden on many mainstream teachers who have not as yet received specific training or preparation to teach second language learners that are being included in their classrooms. Darling-Hammond (2000) reported that teachers who "are able to use a range of teaching strategies" and " a range of interaction styles, rather than a single rigid approach" and who can "adjust their teaching to fit the needs of different students and the demands of different instructional goals, topics and methods" generally experience success.

Teachers must be willing and able to address the social, communicative and educational needs of both native English speakers and English language learners within the same classroom (Faltis, 1997). Mainstream teachers need to assist linguistically and

culturally diverse students incorporate traditions of the American culture into their everyday lives, while at the same time allowing them to hold onto their cultural, ethnic and linguistic heritage (Sleeter & Grant, 1993). Garcia (1991) emphasized that being able to retain one's cultural heritage is important as "culture and linguistic identity provides a strong and important sense of self and family belonging, which in turn supports a wide range of learning capabilities, not the least of which is learning a second language" (p. 2). Encouraging ELL students to maintain their own language and culture is essential in supporting and sustaining their future academic achievement.

Today's challenge for all educational institutions is to create learning environments that maintain the cultural integrity of every student while at the same time enhancing their educational success. Dalton (1998) wrote "American education is learning from its considerable successes and egregious failures". He identified five standards of effective pedagogy that he proposed be implemented across grade levels. These standards include facilitating learning through joint productive activity among teacher and students, developing competence in language and literacy of instruction, connecting teaching and curriculum to students' home and communities, challenging students toward cognitive complexity and teaching through interactive discussions.

The rapid pace of the change in enrollment of LEP students in schools "outstrips the rate of increase in teachers with skills necessary to serve them" (Leighton, Hightower, & Wrigley, 1995, p. 3). Concerns that have emerged with the change in demographic data of students is the fact that the majority of the teaching force remains homogenous as the student population continues to become more diversified (Ladson – Billing, 2001). Research has found that the majority of teachers entering teacher education programs are

White, monolingual and “culturally encapsulated” and have had limited exposure to cultural diversity. The teaching force is 87% white and these trends show little sign of changing (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001).

The review of literature on teachers’ preparation indicates the unwillingness of student teachers to work in urban and rural schools with large populations of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Zeichner, 1996; Zimpher, 1989). Teachers need appropriate skills, including multicultural competencies (Liston & Zeichner, 1996) to provide quality instruction for all ELL students. Teachers are often described as unprepared, resentful and overwhelmed by the inclusion of ELL students in their mainstream classrooms.

While legislation continues to promote the effective education of ELLs the body of teachers most qualified to meet their needs has been unable to match their growth in the school population. Of the 41% of teachers surveyed nationwide who reported having ELLs in their classrooms, only 27% felt “well prepared to teach” students with limited English proficiency, while the majority (60%) felt only “somewhat prepared” and the remainder reported feeling “not prepared at all” (NCES, 2002). These statistics still show an increasing need for teachers who are specifically trained in understanding second language acquisition and the influence of culture on learning, as well as learning successfully communicate with parents and family members. In order to find success, teachers must be willing to modify traditional approaches and explore new methods and strategies so that they can better educate the diverse student population of future mainstream classrooms.

Many teacher candidates still attend pre-service teacher education programs with “limited directed interracial and intercultural experience, with erroneous assumptions about diverse youngsters and with limited expectations for the success of all learners” (Melnick & Zeichner, 1996; Zeichner & Melnick, 1997; Zeichner, 1993). The background and cultural experiences of teachers shape their beliefs and perceptions and influence their teaching strategies and relationships with their students (Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Sleeter, 1995). Many teachers believe that it is their responsibility to control, limit and discourage the differences they encounter instead of celebrating the unique variations among cultures and traditions of their students (Sleeter & Grant, 1999). Mainstream teachers vary considerably in their eagerness to include the diverse background cultures of their students into their classrooms (Youngs & Youngs, 2001).

The growing numbers of ELL students in schools today are presenting significant challenges for educators who are already stressed by the everyday demands of teaching. This includes teaching in overpopulated classrooms, coping with increased discipline problems, the stress of preparation for standardized testing and learning to cope with inadequate resources and materials (Markham, Green & Ross, 1996). With daily schedules already stretched to the limit, teachers are concerned about the lack of time available to them. This leads to their resentment of ELLs being placed in their mainstream classrooms, as they feel that they will not have adequate time for any additional preparation or modifications that these students may need. There is also the perception that ELL inclusion slows down the progress for the rest of the class.

Many teachers when surveyed by Zimpher and Ashburn (1992) expressed their feelings of inadequacy when asked to teach a diverse group of students and instead

indicated their preference to teach students who had similar backgrounds to their own. Many pre-service teachers hold stereotypic attitudes and prior preconceptions regarding individuals from ethnically, racially, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Schultz, Neyhart and Reck (1996) surveyed 300 pre-service teacher education students enrolled at a university. These student teachers commented that they believed students from other cultures have different attitudes and behaviors unlike their own. They used negative adjectives such as “lackadaisical, unmotivated, rough, violent, more streetwise and emotionally unstable” to describe the culturally and linguistically diverse students they encountered in their experiences as student teachers (p. 4). In a similar study Miller and Endo (2004) reported on a comment that a student teacher had overheard from a member of his cohort during a classroom observation. The student teacher had commented that it felt like he was no longer in America as he reacted to the supervising teacher who had allowed his ELL students to use their native languages during class time.

Sharkey and Layzer (1998) recorded observations of student teachers in a mainstream classroom whose anecdotal evidence described ELL students as appearing marginalized with their language and background experiences being ignored. The student teachers used stereotypic comments such as “culturally and linguistically diverse students appear different or strange; they are usually loners and often remain isolated and secluded from others in the mainstream”. O’Byrne (2001) on the other hand referred to teachers of ELL students as sometimes being as “frightened and frustrated as the students they teach”.

Research has consistently indicated and identified a teacher's expertise as the "single most important factor" in predicting students' achievement (Haycock, 2001; Wright, Horn & Sanders, 1997). Teachers' education, knowledge, attitudes and experiences contribute to their effectiveness in the classroom. The education and training of teachers affect students' successful outcomes as much as the influence of socioeconomic factors (Darling-Hammond & Ball, 1998, p.2). Teachers' attitudes play a critical part in the overall learning process (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002; Garcia, 1991; Krashen, 1981) and have a direct effect on students' self-esteem, motivation and anxiety levels (Garcia, 1999; Krashen, 1981). Classrooms need to be staffed by teachers who believe that all children can learn and who have the autonomy to respond flexibly as well as adapt teaching strategies to meet the unique needs of the children and families they teach (Carrasquillo & London, 1993).

Teachers teach from their background experiences, prior beliefs and assumptions and it has become evident that the "places where teachers teach are not neutral or inconsequential to the activity of teaching" (Johnson, 2002, p. 8). Their attitudes and beliefs are often deep rooted and show resistance to change, even after their participation in teacher training programs. Research has shown that students achieve greater levels of performance in classrooms that include increased student participation and stronger student teacher relationships. An increase in the number of ELL students in United States schools is placing greater demands on pre-service teacher preparation programs and professional development programs. Ongoing educational programs and professional staff development should prepare and train both future and experienced teachers to guide

all students to achieve academically and function successfully in classrooms and communities with diverse populations of students.

The studies of Grottkau and Nickolai-Mays (1989) and Haberman and Post (1990) emphasize the need for prospective teachers to receive effective preparation and training in multicultural education and second language acquisition. They reported that pre-service teachers who were not effectively trained in multicultural education held low expectations for their linguistically and culturally diverse students. It is imperative that teachers learn how to recognize, honor, validate and incorporate the personal abilities of students into their teaching strategies (Gay, 2002). According to Cummins (1996) “teacher student collaboration in the construction of knowledge will operate effectively only in contexts where students’ identities are being affirmed” (p. 62). Irvine in (1990) wrote: “a culturally responsive pedagogy addresses students’ cultural knowledge, history, personal style, language, dialect, cognition and learning styles, as well as those of their parents and community” (p17). To assure a quality education for all students, a teacher’s instructional behaviors should mediate students’ instructional needs.

Regardless of personal background experiences, all teachers need to be prepared to deal with issues of race, ethnicity, socio-economics and language diversity in their mainstream classrooms. Most teacher education programs acknowledge in theory the importance of pluralistic preparation of teachers, but in reality most still represent a monoculture approach (Grant, 1993).

Woodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) noted that the foremost challenge in education is to create a learning environment that will maintain the cultural integrity of every child while at the same time enhance their academic achievements. Shore (2001) noted that

part of the challenge of teaching ELL students is that schools must teach the curriculum content “while at the same time supporting students English language development, and helping them adjust to a new school and new culture” (p. 30). Teachers need to understand basic constructs of bilingualism and second language acquisition, the role of the first language and cultural influence on learning and the demands that mainstream education places on culturally and linguistically diverse students (Clair, 1993; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Teachers have been found to confuse ELL’s language proficiency with their cognitive ability (Harklaus, 1994; Verplaetse, 1998) and see “bilingualism as a potential detriment rather than as a benefit to learning” (Nieto, 1999).

Studies have indicated that learning is encouraged when ELL students’ native languages and cultures are incorporated in the classroom and when teachers understand the importance of the transference of conceptual knowledge and academic skills from the students’ first language to English. If all teachers in educational institutions promote students’ bilingual skills it will help contribute to the creation of a future nation that is culturally and globally aware (Cummins, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 2002). With the consistent changes in the demographic make up of the student population, there is a continued need to modify the content of the mainstream curriculum, as well as the manner in which it is delivered. Garcia (1991) emphasized that preserving cultural heritage is important for the well being of the ELL student. Culture and linguistic diversity provides a strong and important sense of self and family identity. This in turn supports a wide range of learning capabilities, not the least of which is learning a new language.

Attitudes, beliefs and expectations have been documented to guide and direct teachers' responses toward various students (Good & Brophy, 1987; Pajares, 1992). These attitudes form an important part of one's perception and belief of one's culture and the culture of others. Teachers' attitudes toward their students are an important variable in effective teaching (Carrasquillo & London, 1993; Darling - Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Faltis & Merino, 1992). According to Banks (2001) it is difficult for people to change attitudes that are often complex and deep rooted in nature, are long lasting and have developed over a period of time. Attitudes are developed early in childhood and are the result of ethnicity, culture, background experiences and the influence of parents and peers. Creating, changing or refining attitudes regarding diversity issues involves self reflection of one's perspectives, viewpoints and beliefs. Teachers with more favorable attitudes toward their ELL students have been observed to possess consistently positive beliefs regarding language and culture.

Teacher attitudes determine along with instructional skills and teacher efficacy, their ability to successfully connect with their students. If students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are to achieve academic and social success, the attitude of teachers toward diversity must be favorable. Positive teacher student interactions will in turn lead to increased motivation and performance. Larke (1990) reported that a strong correlation exists among an educator's sensitivity, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors toward students of other cultures and their attainment of academic success and subsequent performance in the classroom. Effective teachers believe all students are capable of achieving success. They see themselves as facilitators and have positive

expectations of their students' achievements as well as being respectful of their background cultures and traditions.

Teachers need to be consciously aware of their own personal attitudes and behaviors, as they are the basic foundation on which understanding and respect for each student is based. They bring their personal critical perspectives, backgrounds, experiences, cultural values, traditions and motivational beliefs to their individual classrooms. Bidwell (1987) believed that "what is taught and how it is taught entails teachers' moral judgments and commitments" (p208). Schools are responsible for more than the overt transmission of knowledge, as norms, values and beliefs are also transferred to students through "the hidden curriculum" in educational practices and curriculum content. Schools should be an example of social change rather than of entrenched rigid beliefs. Critical theorists of education seek to make the "hidden curriculum" apparent in order to eliminate bias and ensure equity for all. Students should be encouraged to be active participants and critical thinkers in the educational process. (Diaz, Massialas & Xanthopoulos, 1999).

The discrepancy between a teacher's knowledge of diverse cultures and the ethnic background of the students they teach may stifle the teacher's ability to reach all students. "Learning to teach diverse students requires that teachers examine their beliefs about teaching and explore the effectiveness of their practices in accommodating the various cultures, lifestyles and learning styles of their students" (Cabello & Burstein, 1995, p. 285). Teachers' beliefs are a major factor in predicting their responses to the diversity of the student population. Positive attitudes and realistic expectations of teachers are vital to creating a safe and beneficial classroom environment in which all

students can succeed (Irvine, 1995). The social reality created in the classroom often has lifelong outcomes for minority students (Rist, 1970).

Teachers' awareness of their own cultural identities is reflected in their teaching performance, teaching styles, interpretation of the curriculum, daily planning and in their relationships with their students. Flores' (2000) study investigated the influence of teachers' beliefs on self-reported practices in the classroom. Her study included a survey that was distributed to bilingual education teachers. She found that a significant relationship exists between the personal background experiences of teachers and their beliefs. She further explained that the basis of an individual's ideas, beliefs and conceptualizations develop from prior experiences that are passed on through familiar and sociocultural experiences. These experiences become the foundation on which an individual bases his further behavior in society.

Teachers' knowledge regarding their own cultural heritage can help them better understand how personal background factors influence their attitudes, values, beliefs, teaching styles and interactions with their students in the classroom. In 1995 Delpritt wrote, "We all interpret behaviors, information and situations through our own cultural lenses; these lenses operate involuntarily below the level of conscious awareness making it seem that our own way is simply the way it is" (p.151). Teacher education programs need to encourage teachers to look beyond their personal perspectives and boundaries to avoid a "communicentric bias" (Gordon, 1990).

In Youngs and Youngs' (2001) quantitative research study, teachers' attitudes toward ESL (English as a Second Language) students were significantly linked to specific predictor variables. Youngs and Youngs found the following variables to be

significantly correlated to the attitudes of teachers: ELL training, personal experiences with other cultures, contact with ELL students and gender. Youngs and Youngs' study revealed that teachers, who participated in ELL training and had personal experiences with diversity, appeared to have the most positive attitudes towards the inclusion of English language learners in their mainstream classrooms.

Byrnes, Kiger and Manning's (1997) study explored teachers' attitudes regarding language diversity and also found specific variables that are associated with establishing positive teacher attitudes. Their study included 191 mainstream teachers from the States of Arizona, Utah and Virginia. A survey was used in this study to examine teacher attitudes in relation to their experiences with language minority students. The variables in the study included the effect of geographical region, the amount and type of formal training, experiences with LEP students, grades and levels taught. The "Language Attitudes of Teachers' Scales" (LATS) developed by Byrnes and Kiger in 1994, was the survey Byrnes et al., chose to use in this 1997 study. These researchers noted that the differences in regions, amount of experience working with language minority children, a completed language degree and formal training correlated with positive teacher attitudes. Byrnes, Kiger and Manning's 1997 research study findings were consistent with Clair's 1995 study of mainstream classroom teachers where it was observed that teachers who had limited training used teaching strategies "based on naïve notions of language proficiency" (p. 189).

Teachers who respect cultural differences are more apt to believe that students from non-dominant groups are capable learners despite these children entering schools with ways of thinking, learning, behaving and communicating that are different from the

dominant cultural norms (Delpritt, 1995). If teachers are to promote equal opportunities for all students, expectations for their students' success must be positive and equitable regardless of their cultural and linguistic diversity.

Banks (1994) and Clark and Perez (1995) identified four categories of knowledge that they believed are required for teachers to develop favorable attitudes, positive perceptions and the successful instructional behavior needed for instruction in mainstream classrooms with diverse student populations. The categories included:

- Knowledge of major models of multicultural education
- Historical knowledge of diverse cultures
- Cultural knowledge of diverse ethnic groups
- Pedagogical knowledge of ways to modify curriculum and instruction in order to meet the unique needs of student's cultural, social and linguistic diversity.

Teacher's pedagogy can be influenced by their individual lack of knowledge of the diverse background cultures of their students, or how this diversity can affect learning and second language acquisition (Nieto, 1996). Most teacher education programs still function within a framework that is exclusively Eurocentric. Few teachers appeared prepared for the variety of cultures, languages, lifestyles and methods of communication present in their classroom communities. As a result, many teachers still attempt to teach all students in the same manner, thus reinforcing the unchallenged assumption that "equal means the same". Gandara's (1999) review of the research on the education of English language learners demonstrated that programs that incorporate the native languages and background cultures of students as teaching resources motivate and enable students from

various cultural and linguistic backgrounds to achieve academic success at a faster and more successful rate.

The role of the mainstream classroom teacher is not only to teach the English language to second language learners, but also to act as a mediating agent in the socialization and acculturation of the students into the mainstream school community. Students who originate from cultural backgrounds that are different from that of their mainstream peers need guidance to develop and maintain the social and cultural bridge between their homes and school cultures (Ovando, 1989).

All educators need to be culturally conscious and aware of their own worldview, while at the same time understand that their personal view of the world might be profoundly different from the views of the students they teach (Bennett, 1985). With so few teachers from diverse backgrounds represented in schools today, there are fewer role models and cultural advocates for linguistically and culturally diverse students than there are for the mainstream majority students.

Research has demonstrated that many teachers from mainstream backgrounds view student diversity as an obstacle to overcome rather than as a resource to build upon (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Teachers may misinterpret and forbid certain culturally bound behaviors that might enhance rather than hinder the learning opportunities of the mainstream class (Slade, 1998). It is necessary for all prospective teachers to develop “critical cultural consciousness” (Gay, 2000) and “sociocultural consciousness” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). “When a significant difference exists between the students' culture and the schools' culture, teachers can easily misread student aptitudes which stem from

differences in the styles of language use, social and emotional patterns" (Delpritt, 1995 p.167).

The problems that stem from the lack of cultural understanding and cultural sensitivity between teachers and ELL students have been documented to include differences in cultural values, verbal and non-verbal miscommunication, the use of ineffective teaching strategies and lowered teaching expectations, combined with negative racial/ethnic attitudes. Research has suggested that mainstream teachers often possess misinformation about the cultural heritage of LEP students and expect less of students who use nonstandard English (Clair, 1995). Nieto (1999) contended that in many instances teachers use a student's identity and home environment to justify low expectations from ELL students. Mainstream teachers often convey to the students that the only appropriate acceptable culture of the class should reflect the culture of the majority of the students (Ball, 2000).

Sleeter's research in 2000 noted that candidates from diverse ethnic backgrounds enter teacher education programs and bring with them perspectives and experiences different from those of their mainstream cohorts. In Sleeter's study pre-service teachers were noted to bring greater diversified knowledge and commitment to issues of social justice. Research has also shown that teachers who share the linguistic and cultural background of their students are better able to identify and accommodate their needs (Menken, 2000). Studies have indicated that teachers from diverse backgrounds can play an important role in improving the education for all students. Drawing from their own personal background experiences these teachers are also better able to assist their ELL students in overcoming the cultural barriers that might hinder their classroom

performance, both in the academic and social areas. They are able to find connections between the academic curriculum and students' prior knowledge thereby making the classroom curriculum content more meaningful (Ladson-Billings, 1990).

Su (1997) studied a group of pre-service teachers who were of African-American, Asian- American and Latino descent, and compared their views with those of their mainstream Caucasian cohort. Su noted that the candidates from diverse backgrounds were more aware of the inequity of student conditions because of similar negative prior background experiences, either as students or as interns. As a result, these pre-service teachers were determined to set their goals at creating positive learning environments for the culturally and linguistically diverse students they encountered during their student teaching experiences. This is in contrast to the mainstream students who did not display the same degree of social consciousness.

In Goodwin's 1993 study, 83 pre-service mainstream teachers were asked to describe their concerns regarding the cultural and linguistic differences of their ELL students. Their concerns involved nine specific variables which included: race, language difficulties, gender, sexuality, religion, socioeconomic status, curriculum, exceptionality and equity. In this study, race was found to be the primary issue of relevance and concern discussed by all teachers. However, in contrast, a variety of other studies have indicated that just because the teacher may share some common linguistic or cultural experiences with their students, their attitudes may not necessarily be congruent (Delgado - Gaitan & Trueba, 1991).

If pre-service teaching training programs are to be successful, it is essential that teachers "develop an in-depth understanding of the influence of culture and language on

student's academic performance to distinguish between actual learning problems and cultural differences" (Utley, Delquadric, Obiakor & Mims, 2000). Research has shown that ELL students are not succeeding in schools at rates comparable to those of their English speaking peers. The disregard for the potential influence of language on a student's school performance can increase the incidence of a "false positive diagnosis", incorrect assessments and placement of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education and remedial programs (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Ochoa, Rivera, & Powell, 1997). It is has been difficult for some teachers to determine if ELLs lack of achievement in the mainstream classroom are a result of exceptionalities, or issues related to second language acquisition. Many minority students are being mistakenly identified with learning disabilities (Oswald, Coutinho & Best, 2002).

There have been consistent concerns that ELL students are often misplaced in special education categories which include programs for specific learning difficulties, mental retardation, emotional disturbances and yet are underrepresented in programs for gifted and talented students (Agbenyega & Jiggets, 1999; Artiles, Trent & Palmer, in press; Smith-Deutsch, 2001; Webb, Johnson, Artiles & Trent, 1998). Standardized tests, which are culturally biased, underestimate the abilities of culturally and linguistically diverse students, but schools are still required to use these tests as the primary or sole criterion for placement in gifted programs. With the increasing number of second language learners in United States schools during the past decade, bilingual and special education students have been mistakenly placed together with the pretense that their unique individual needs are being met. Researchers have indicated that it is critical to identify and distinguish the possible factors and sources that cause second language

learners difficulties in school, in order to justify referrals to special education, or to seek any additional support that might be needed (Garcia & Ortiz, 1998; Collier, 1990).

Students are often placed in lower track classes because of the belief that the reduced linguistic challenges will benefit them. This type of thinking restricts ELLs' language development and hinders their further all-round academic development. A teacher's ability to see the positive potential of ELL students, rather than their limitations, is a critical factor in motivating students to reach their academic potential. The value that can be placed on being bilingual and having access to two languages can set the tone for the entire school climate. "Learning another language opens up access to other value systems and ways of interpreting the world, encouraging intercultural understanding and helping reduce xenophobia (UNESCO, 2003).

Sharkey and Layzer conducted a qualitative research case study in 2000 that investigated the role of teachers' attitudes and the beliefs and practices that facilitated or hindered ELL students' access to academic challenges in mainstream classrooms. The researchers used a combination of surveys, open-ended interviews and observations to obtain their data. They found that teachers' attitudes, beliefs and practices affected ELLs' access to academic success in three ways. First, most ELL students were placed in lower track and special education classes because the teachers believed they would feel more secure and the language challenge would be easier. However, the teachers in the lower track classes instead focused more on the students with learning problems and had a tendency to overlook the ELL students who were observed to be despondent and excluded. Secondly, these teachers lowered their expectations and believed trying, as opposed to actually succeeding, were a primary indicator of success. Access to limited

opportunities for English language interaction was the third way in which ELL students' academic success was limited due to the lack of collaborative learning as well as fewer opportunities being made available for the completion of challenging tasks.

Sharkey and Layzer also commented that if ELL students' cognitive academic language proficiency is to develop, they need to interact with both English speaking and non-native English peers regarding knowledge and curriculum content. These researchers concluded through their study that despite the teachers' attempts to address the affective needs of their ELLs', focusing "on the affective needs of students to the exclusion of cognitive needs have negative consequences" (p.136). Hatch (1992) defines this practice as the "benevolent conspiracy" (p. 67). She noted that by teachers merely providing a comfortable learning environment without attending to the development of academic content and knowledge, second language learners are prevented from achieving at a more advanced pace. Garcia (1997) cites an earlier study by Tikunoff (1983) who reported that effective teachers hold high expectations for the achievement of their ELL students by challenging their abilities and creating successful learning environments.

Ochoa, Rivera and Powell (1997) surveyed 859 school psychologists who had conducted psycho-educational assessments on bilingual students. They found that only 6% of these psychologists considered asking about the students' native language or assessed the amount of English language instruction that the students had received. Many administrators, teachers and guidance counselors still remain unaware of the best alternate or appropriate way to assess or track the progress of ELL students. Alternative assessments such as portfolios should be implemented to help track the progress and development of ELL students.

Research has suggested that mainstream teachers possess little knowledge and insights regarding the background cultures of their students and often expect and demand less from those students who are second language learners. (Byrnes, Kiger & Manning, 1997). As a result, the disparity that occurs between teaching strategies and culturally diverse learning styles, can cause emotional stress in students and create much of the misbehavior about which teachers complain. (McIntyre 1992a, McIntyre 1996a). Clair (1995) conducted an ethnographic study of mainstream teachers of linguistically diverse students and found that teachers' beliefs about these students were based on "hearsay and misinformation" (p. 189).

In the context of the classroom, the teacher is the primary source of encouragement and support. The teachers' perceptions and expectations of minority students affect their academic performance. "Teachers, who value students as individuals with unique capabilities are aware that language, be it spoken, written or nonverbal is a form of transaction that has a tremendous power in the learning-teaching process" (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002). Teachers need a "vision of students as capable individuals for whom limited English proficiency does not signify deficiency and for whom limited academic skills do not represent an incurable situation" (Walqui, 1999). Being sensitive to ELL students needs should not entail sympathy, lowering expectations or "watering down" the curriculum.

Vygotsky (1978) noted that language and culture are "symbiotic tools" used in mediation of knowledge. This "interaction of knowledge acquisition" is defined as the teacher's beliefs regarding the interactive processes of language, culture and thought. Teachers should remain cognizant of the fact that students are not merely receivers of

cognitive language skills, but have a variety of emotions, background experiences, prior knowledge, cultural differences and other individual characteristics that play a critical role in their acquisition of language.

Educators need to be aware of their own beliefs about the role of school, the value of cultural diversity and the nature of knowledge and teaching (Cochran-Smith 1995). This requires self reflection and critical examination of one's individual educational philosophy and social principles. Mainstream teachers may show insensitivity to the cultural differences that culturally and linguistically diverse students exhibit in the mainstream because of their prior background bias, stereotypic perceptions, assumptions and lack of cultural awareness. Teachers need to recognize the critical link between their own beliefs and must come to "grips with their own personal and cultural values and identities in order for them to assist students from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural groups" (Banks, 1991). This self examination should begin with being able to reflect on one's own personal history, attitudes, background, and experiences as a member of a particular race, class and gender. Hollins (1996) noted that by critically examining specific aspects of one's culture as well as the cultures of others, teachers can "systematically construct a working definition of culture that will help their decision making in planning instruction and curriculum for a diverse populations of students" (p.33). Ongoing self reflection is necessary if a teacher wants to consistently improve on their teaching skills. Teachers form their beliefs about teaching early in their careers and often are resistant to change (Kagan, 1992). These prior beliefs serve as filters for new information in a way that culturally held beliefs are frequently confirmed (Hollingsworth, 1989; Kagan, 1992).

Prejudice and cultural stereotyping influence a mainstream teacher's perceptions and attitudes toward their ELL students (Rist, 1970; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1992). Obidah and Teels' (2001) study researched a teacher's ability to confront their own bias, prejudices and misconceptions regarding the diversity that existed among their student population. Their research revealed that "the beliefs, intentions and personalities of teachers appear to play a more significant role in the success or failure of classroom achievement than the role of class size. Teachers need to make a conscious effort to recognize the 'subtle unintentional biases' that may exist in their behavior or attitudes (p. 108). Biased attitudes are based on insufficient knowledge, misinformed stereotyping and extreme ethnocentric thinking. Researchers Pang and Park (2000) found that teachers who do not appear to be prejudiced are able to develop self regulation skills, and have the ability to self monitor their responses when they realize a discrepancy exists between their egalitarian beliefs and their responses to cultural diversity.

School conditions and climate in conjunction with the attitudes and beliefs of educators can either foster or hinder learning. If schools are to better serve the cognitive and emotional needs of all students, particularly students from cultural groups that have not been successful in the U.S. educational system, then low expectations, negative stereotypes, biases/prejudices and cultural misconceptions held by teachers need to be identified, challenged and reconstructed. Mainstream teachers' attitudes toward ELL students are likely to affect what these students learn. No matter how capable, motivated or individually talented a student is, the influence of the external environment of the school and teachers' attitude play a critical part in his/her academic and emotional success (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Greene (1989) proposed that individuals have implicit theories of intelligence and knowledge. What individuals believe about the nature or origin of knowledge may influence their view of themselves and others as learners. Hollins (1996) points out that by critically examining specific aspects of one's own culture as well as the cultures of others, prospective teachers can systematically construct a working definition of culture that will guide their decision making in planning daily instruction. "Learning to interpret across culture demands reflecting on one's own experiences, analyzing our own culture, examining and comparing varying perspectives" (Delpritt, 1995, p33).

Researchers have defined teachers who reject second language learners' language and culture as being "culturally unaware" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1987; Quintanar - Sarellana, 1990). Teachers who are overtly "culturally unaware" openly express their assumptions that ELL students have little to contribute and instead perceive their students' language and culture as areas of deficiency. On the other hand, teachers who are "covertly culturally unaware", while having the same impressions; do not openly express their viewpoints. Teachers that fall under the "culturally unaware" category show their less than favorable attitudes by believing it is not their responsibility to modify the curriculum or their teaching strategies to assist cultural and linguistic minority students to succeed.

Culture and gender influence not only one's values, beliefs and social interactions, but what we pay attention to, and how we learn and interpret information (Banks, 1991). According to studies by Hall Colville, MacDonald and Smolen (1995) female pre-service teachers appear to be more understanding and empathetic toward their second language learner students. This may be partly due to their innate increased sensitivity based on their background experiences with gender bias (Sleeter, 1993). In his

2000 study, Chen observed that female instructors had the tendency to emphasize a nurturing environment which encouraged a cooperative working environment, rather than a competitive atmosphere among students in the classroom. Male instructors were more in favor of a one on one students' approach to classroom activities. A cooperative working strategy among students has been known to be more successful in improving the academic achievement of ELL students (Kagan, 1990). Taylor (1997) suggested that females appear to be more astute in understanding verbal and non-verbal communication cues than men. Ottavi, Pope-Davis and Dings (1994) found evidence that "women reported greater comfort with racial interactions and issues than did males" (p. 149).

In 1999 Meier, Wrinkle and Polinards' study revealed that the presence of an increased number of teachers in a school faculty from diverse backgrounds had a positive effect on the achievement rate of all students in those schools studied. Zirkel's (2002) longitudinal study of young adolescents revealed that students who have at least one race and gender matched role model as a teacher performed better academically, reported more achievement oriented goals, had more plans for the future and looked up to adults rather than peers more often than did students without a race and gender role model.

The research of Echols and Stader (2002) addressed the attitudes of undergraduate education college students regarding the inclusion of required diversity classes in teacher preparation programs. The findings from their research revealed that both Caucasian and black females had a tendency to hold more favorable attitudes than their male counterparts toward issues of race, diversity and multiculturalism. Their results were consistent with other studies that explored gender and teachers' attitudes toward diversity (Springer, et al, 1995). From the review of literature it would appear that one might be

able to predict that gender may be one of the factors that affect the attitudes of mainstream teachers of ELL students.

Teachers who are linguistically and culturally diverse have reported on their ability to self reflect on the feelings of inequality and alienation they experienced in their own personal lives. Due to these background experiences they appear to be better equipped than their white monocultural, monolingual colleagues to understand their ELL students. "Teachers from diverse backgrounds are usually familiar with the linguistic and cultural codes used by their students" (Neito, 1999). Because of this, they share an instant connection with their students from diverse cultural backgrounds. In contrast, Delprit's (1995) research found that many monocultural classroom teachers had a tendency to stereotype ELLs due to their limited knowledge and lack of experiences with cultures that differed from their own.

In 1991 Quintanar-Sarellana administered a questionnaire to 71 teachers involved in bilingual programs as well as to 56 mainstream teachers. In this study, the effects of ethnicity, work experience and Spanish proficiency on teachers' attitudes were explored. They determined that all three of these independent variables had an effect on teachers' attitude, but ethnicity had the most significant influence. The findings suggested that teachers who share the same culture and language as their students could be viewed as linguistic and cultural bridges between school and home.

An empathetic disposition has been associated with cultural sensitivity and awareness and has been observed to be a necessary and desirable trait for teachers who teach culturally and linguistically diverse students (Francois, 2003; Germain, 1998). Individuals who have an understanding and empathy of their own cultures are more

equipped to function successfully and effectively in a global society, display acceptance and understanding when interacting in diverse cultural environments (Banks, 2001).

Empathy between a teacher and student has been known to foster stronger communication, flexibility, openness, attentiveness and positive relationships which ultimately improves the classroom climate for all (Delpritt, 1995). Although all students are sensitive to the way that their teachers relate to them in the classroom, research has stressed this even more so for students who are members of minority groups. Second language learners in the mainstream classroom need to feel included and valued, and should never experience attitudes of hostility, frustrations or resentment from their teachers or peers. Acknowledgement and respect for immigrant/ELL students, their families, their experiences, the language and culture they use at home and in their communities should be encouraged (Rubenstein-Avila, 2003, p.6).

McAllister and Irvine's study, in 2000, provided a description of thirty four teachers recording of empathy as a necessary attribute to the effectiveness of teaching ELL students in a mainstream classroom. All of the participating teachers had previously participated in a multicultural professional development program focused toward fostering culturally responsive practices. The result of the study revealed that teachers with empathetic dispositions were more successful than their colleagues in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students in their mainstream classrooms. This study was based on the theoretical framework that empathetic individuals are able to take on diverse perspectives and viewpoints and respond appropriately. Studies have shown that empathetic teachers have the ability to display sensitivity and understanding toward their students' individual needs, sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds (Carrasquillo, 1994;

Manning & Baruth, 2000). Francois (2003), in a qualitative study of mainstream teachers of ELL students, identified five indicators that contributed to teacher attitude. They included the areas of personal motivation, reflective practices, innovative cultural exchanges, dedication to continuing professional development and background knowledge.

Researchers (Gay, 2000; Irvine, 1990) recorded that the students, who had in the past, developed caring relationships with their teachers appeared more motivated and performed better academically than students who had not. Additionally, they observed those teachers who were open-minded and flexible, adjusted more successfully when placed in a mainstream classroom with a diverse student population. Teachers with these characteristics were also able to modify teaching strategies and curricula to fit the unique needs and diverse learning styles of their students.

Nieto (1999) reinforced the argument that high standards should be set for all students to achieve and contested that many times teachers use their students' backgrounds and home environments to justify setting low expectations. Many teachers blame a student's academic difficulties on parents' disinterest, lack of support for education, dysfunctional family and community life while overlooking the role that inequalities in society and schools play in the construction of academic failure. (Paine, 1989; Villegas, 2002). Teachers and administrators lack of preparedness is often the stumbling block in their abilities to work successfully with culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Garcia (1999) described the intricate relationship that exists between language, cognition, culture, human development, teaching and learning. "Socio-culture theory acknowledges how all of the elements relating to culturally and linguistically

diverse communities throughout history and current society influence how schools respond to students because school is part of society” (p. 16).

Research has identified that a strong link exists between the active participation of parents in their children’s education and sustained gains in academic achievement. (Adger, 2000; Carrasquillo & London, 1993; Delago-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991). A review of several studies of parent involvement programs in schools, reported benefits for students which included higher grades and test scores, long term academic achievement, positive attitudes and behavior, successful programming and more effectively run schools (Chavez, 2003; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Schools should view linguistically diverse parents as concerned individuals who are willing and able to contribute to the improvement of their children’s’ progress.

Parents of ELL students are concerned about the future of their children, but are often unfamiliar with the educational system in United States schools and do not understand how they are expected to be involved or how or where to find assistance. Research has indicated that parents of culturally and linguistically diverse students need specific guidance to learn to cope with the cultural, linguistic and educational issues they might encounter. Teachers need to develop an improved understanding of diverse cultural expectations so that they can plan effective strategies which ultimately encourage improved communications between the school and home. ELL parents may have difficulty in helping their children with homework if they themselves lack proficiency with the English language, and have little knowledge regarding the curriculum and/or expectations of the United States school system. “The process of adjustment of ELL students is contingent on their motivation level and the preparation (social and cultural

knowledge) possessed by the family, as well as on the institutional responsiveness to the needs of the children and their families” (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991, p. 11).

Brilliant’s 2001 study compared school related attitudes of Spanish speaking parents who participated in a Parent Resource Group with those that did not. The study showed that the parent group that received parent liaison training appeared more confident and participated more frequently in school related activities. ELL parents are sensitive to the teachers’ attitudes of frustration, or hostility with the difficulties they experience in communicating due to language or cultural differences. School administrators need to guide teachers and other faculty members with the skills necessary for communication with parents of ELLs. These interactions should be based on understanding, respect and trust. The “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” includes the requirement that equal opportunities must be provided for all parents to be involved despite their lack of English proficiency.

Wheeler (1992) noted several obstacles to ELLs’ parent involvement in schools. These included teachers’ negative attitudes toward parents due to stereotypic cultural beliefs, the unwillingness of many teachers to accept parents’ assessments of their own children, the unmatched expectations between the teacher and parents and lack of encouragement from school administration to willingly involve these parents in school activities. Despite incorrect assumptions on the part of teachers, many parents of language minority students set high standards for their children and desire to be actively involved in their children’s education (Carrasquillo & London, 1993). The public school educational system needs to continue to encourage the involvement of non-native speaking parents who often face a wide range of cultural and language barriers.

Activities that will assist in encouraging ELL parents to participate in school affairs are parent education workshops, after school homework help, technology assistance, support groups for newcomers, a multicultural curriculum and frequent parent-teacher conferences (Adger, 2000). When successful parent and school partnerships are formed, parents feel more secure, and this in turn promotes a cooperative classroom community. ELL parents are more likely to become involved in their children's education if the use of their native language is valued by the school faculty. The school's administration needs to make a continuous effort to assist parents who may not speak English by having interpreters available. Parents of culturally and linguistically diverse students need to be encouraged to take a collaborative role in their children's education (Carrasquillo & London, 1993).

Moll and Greenberg (1992) observed that teachers who incorporated their students' families and community resources in their curriculum and lesson plans were more successful in motivating their students' academic all around achievement. Despite differences in cultures and language, students need to feel that their academic and home lives are intertwined. Involving parents and families in their child's educational process results in greater scholastic achievement. When families are encouraged to share their "funds of knowledge" with the school community, the teachers have a better understanding of their student's background, knowledge, abilities and learning style. Capella-Santana (1998) noted that parents of linguistically and culturally diverse students are able to enrich the curriculum by sharing their cultural knowledge, values, traditions and experiences by actively participating in the classroom and school community.

The review of literature has indicated that teacher training contributes significantly to the effectiveness of teaching ELL students, but in order for it to be successful the training should be performed over a period of time through professional development workshops and in-service training. Researchers Melnick and Zeichner (1998) reported that “Teacher candidates, for the most part, come to teacher education with limited direct interracial and intercultural experience, with erroneous assumptions about diverse youngsters and with limited expectations for the success of all learners”. A strong component of teacher education should be directed at assessing a candidate’s level of multicultural functioning with specific strategies for developing respectful and caring attitudes toward all students (Diaz, 2001). Teacher preparation and professional development should include an understanding of culturally and linguistically mediated instruction in all areas. Teachers must be specifically trained to differentiate curriculum instruction and assessment to accommodate differences in learning styles and levels of English proficiency of all students.

Scott and Pinto (2001) noted in their research study that teachers reported they do not have adequate opportunities in their pre-service and in-service training to gain sufficient knowledge regarding the expectations of different cultures. Banks (2001), Bennice and Strang (1995) and Larke (1990) studied the effectiveness of a single stand alone diversity course on student teachers’ attitudes. They reported that the single course had no significant effect on pre-service teachers’ feelings of apprehension regarding students and parents whose cultures differed from their own. The research on pre-service and in-service teachers reveals that one overview or short-term courses do not necessarily influence the attitudes and skills necessary for teachers to work successfully with a

diverse population of students. In fact the stereotypic perceptions of others are often perpetuated by these single courses. Grottkau and Nickolai-Mays (1989) noted that exposure over time to multicultural education experiences contributes to a statistically significant improvement in attitude towards individuals from minority populations. For these reasons, intervention geared toward the enhancement of intergroup relationships must not be contrived or arbitrary, but rather controlled and sustained if positive attitudes of teachers towards minority students are to be developed.

Colleges and universities need to be held more accountable for improving teacher education as they are now more than ever expected to respond to the needs of a diversified student population in the new global world of the 21st century. A current shortage of teachers, particularly teachers for English language learners, has placed new demands on teacher preparation and professional development programs, which need to cultivate a team of teachers who will effectively teach a diverse population of students. At this time only 5% of all university faculty members are identified from minority backgrounds. It has been difficult to recruit faculty to colleges of education due to the fact that corporations and other businesses are offering higher salaries and better benefit packages. Educational institutions need to find ways to recruit and encourage more applicants from diverse background and experiences.

Preparing teachers to be change agents begins with an understanding of one's beliefs that are the basis of the decisions that teachers make in their classrooms (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). These beliefs and attitudes are not only reflected in teachers' decisions and actions but also are at the helm of their strategies and philosophy in their classrooms (Renzaglia et al 1997, p. 361). Researchers Brousseau, Book and Byers

(1998) noted that teaching experience has a considerable effect on teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward their future students. Teacher preparation programs are therefore important in assisting pre-service teachers in understanding how a child's first language and culture play a significant role in their acquisition of knowledge and second language development (Freeman & Freeman, 1994). Despite an increasing number of ELL students entering mainstream classes, many teachers continue to feel unprepared, overwhelmed and often unwilling to understand and cope with students that have different background experiences than those from the mainstream culture. However, there are some teachers that appear more competent than others and are able to achieve success with their second language learners.

Second language researchers (Mora, 2000; Meyer, 2000) identified four major areas that are important for the preparation of future teachers. They are: the development of empathy toward second learners' language difficulties and cultural differences, the development of greater understanding of the process of second language acquisition, the ability to modify curriculum to meet students cultural and language needs and the ability to integrate specific language and literacy skills into all areas of curriculum. Teachers who have had adequate preparation for teaching linguistic minority students have been observed to be more sensitive and possess more favorable attitudes toward their English language learners (Mora, 2000; Meyer, 2000). On the other hand, mainstream teachers who have not received effective training to meet the challenges of a diverse student population often feel frustrated and resentful and have difficulty making modifications in their classrooms (Byrnes et al, 1998; Harklau, 1998; Verplaetse, 1998).

The results of Capella-Santana's (2003) study reinforce the fact that teacher candidates' multicultural attitudes and knowledge show positive change after their participation in pre-service programs and cross-cultural field experiences. Professional education for all teachers should include instructional methodology that:

- Develops the relationship between culture, languages, and learning
- Provides culturally responsive teaching experiences
- Allows opportunities for field experiences
- Provides appropriate training to develop successful interpersonal skills to meet the diverse needs of all students (Manning & Baruth, 2000)

All teachers need to be aware of the relationship that exists between culture and education, as continuing to teach with strategies and methods appropriate for one level and culture of students, fails to meet the individual needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Research has indicated that ongoing professional staff development is essential to promoting effective teaching and positive attitudes which help to maintain a harmonious school culture. (Rubenstein - Avila, 2002). Darling-Hammond (2000) noted that teachers who are "able to use a range of teaching strategies" and "a range of interaction styles, rather than a single rigid approach" and who can "adjust their teaching to fit the needs of different students and the demands of different instructional goals, topics and methods", are more likely to experience success in their classroom environments (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teacher education programs must be comprehensive and provide opportunities for discussion and debate regarding multicultural issues. Racial

stereotyping should be identified and incorrect assumptions should be discussed during teacher training education classes (Henze, 2001).

Chiang's study (1994), examined prospective teacher's attitudes toward social diversity. The study included a group of teachers from two different universities. Only one group received instruction in multicultural education. Pre and post questionnaire data were collected to see if different attitudes occurred between the two groups. The data was analyzed using a t-test which showed significant differences between the two groups. The results of the post test revealed that the multicultural course influenced the attitudes of the one group of pre-service teachers in a positive direction.

Nieto (1999) stated "we can no longer afford to teach only specialized teachers about students from diverse backgrounds and therefore, all educational training courses need to be infused with content related to diversity" (p.182). A growing number of educational researchers have shifted their focus from examining instructional strategies and teaching behaviors to the beliefs and perspectives that drive teachers' important decisions and practices in their classrooms. Teacher education programs should include the development of positive attitudes and awareness that can ultimately lead to effective instruction of culturally and linguistically diverse students. In many teacher education training programs multicultural classes are optional and students often graduate from teacher education programs without receiving any specific preparation in issues regarding diversity and second language learners (Villegas, 2002). Zeichner and Hoft in 1996 suggested that all teacher education programs take a position on four issues: infusion verses segregation of related diverse issues in the curriculum, culture specific verses

culture general study, field experiences and opportunities for interaction and simulated activities versus solely studying theoretical knowledge related to diversity.

According to Sleeter (1992) pre-service teachers' worldviews guide them as they make decisions about how and what to teach and in their planning and interpretation of knowledge and curriculum for a diverse student population. Pre-service teachers often have simplistic beliefs about what is needed to be a successful teacher and often teaching is viewed as simply a process of transmitting knowledge and of solely dispensing information (Freire, 1975).

Teachers who draw connections between academic content and students' prior knowledge are able to make the curriculum content more meaningful (Ladson-Billing, 1990). Teachers need time and experience to reflect on education in a pluralistic society, on the relationships between teachers and students as well as on social attitudes about language and culture that affect their students (Clair, 1998; Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 1997). Gender, ethnicity and socio-economic class influence an individual's tendency to hold parochial attitudes especially when they are linked to limited travel opportunities and the inability to communicate in any language besides English (Kagan, 1992; Zimpher, 1989).

Field experiences and direct personal contact with cultures other than one's own leads to "greater self awareness and awareness of cultural differences" (Risku, 1996). Field experiences can assist prospective teacher to acquire insights into the unique language and culture differences of the children they may encounter in their future classrooms. In 1996 Risku noted that there were positive correlations between teachers' experiences traveling abroad and their understanding and awareness of global diversity.

In a study of 125 pre-service teachers, Hadaway (1998) observed that teachers who participated in cross-cultural experiences appeared to be more culturally aware. These teachers were successful in bringing authentic experiences to the classroom to help integrate their own classroom communities. Teachers who enter the teaching profession with limited or no cross-cultural and pre-service training in their background often demonstrate levels of antagonism and bias toward students who differ from the mainstream majority (Law & Lane, 1987). Research has shown that a significant amount of students' acquisition of knowledge about others stems from the experiences and interactions with individuals from backgrounds and cultures that differ from their own (Kang & Dutton, 1997). When pre-service teachers participate in cross-cultural field experiences, their prior knowledge is integrated with emerging experiences and theoretical instruction is transformed into reality. While participating in cross-cultural field work, pre-service teachers are able to experience being a minority, thus affording them the opportunities to empathize the feelings of being in an environment where the culture and language are different from their own.

According to the research study of Ross and Smith (1992), six prospective teachers participated in a pre-service course that emphasized ethical issues related to educational equity and at the same time also participated in their first fieldwork experience instructing a diverse group of students. Their experiences were described as positive and helped in changing their prior assumptions of the underestimation of an ELL student's language ability and consequently their cognitive ability. At the beginning of the study the pre-service teachers participating, blamed the students' lack of ability to achieve on assumed limitations, however by the end of their experiences, instead

indicated the influence of other factors on student achievement. These factors included teaching teachers' attitudes, behavioral style, strategies and development of curriculum.

Wilson (1993) noted that student teachers who had prior exposure to students of diverse cultures through their background, campus experiences and/or personal international travel and or study, displayed positive attitudes in their understanding and cultural awareness in teaching ELL students. Ukpokodu (2000) observed the differences in attitudes of pre-service teachers enrolled in her multicultural college courses. Their background experiences with diversity contributed to their favorable attitudes and positive contributions. The students who had prior experiences with diverse cultures appeared more open-minded and receptive than those students who had no previous or limited experiences with cultures that differed from their own.

Youngs and Youngs' 1999 study "Predictors of Mainstream Teachers' Attitudes toward ESL Students" revealed that a teacher's exposure to cultural diversity in their prior background experiences contributed positively to their attitudes towards the second language learners in their classroom. Capella-Santana (2003) investigated the changes in student teachers' multicultural attitudes and knowledge after they had completed multicultural workshops which had incorporated fieldwork experience. Teacher candidates were observed during their teacher preparation program and the data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The variables that contributed to the positive change in teachers' attitudes and knowledge were the successful individual participation in multicultural workshops and the involvement in a variety of field work experiences where the students had numerous opportunities to teach diverse learners as well as successfully interact with their parents. Often, the assumptions are that teacher

preparation courses have a tendency to focus on introducing teachers to new ideas and information with the premise that beliefs and attitudes of teachers will automatically change. However research studies have indicated that the theoretical delivery of knowledge during teaching training has not been sufficient enough to change beliefs or attitudes of teachers' developed from past background experiences or cultural heritage.

Mohan (1992), Pinar and Grumet (1996) and Young (1993) documented the positive influence cross-cultural learning experiences had on pre-service teachers. They observed and reported that authentic experiences raised students' consciousness regarding global dynamics. Flournoy (1994) described in his study how the internship of Ohio University education students in Swaziland helped motivate them to become "globally competent" in their classroom strategies, in planning of curriculum as well as in daily instruction. The researchers consistently observed pre-service teachers when placed in a cultural setting unlike their own were able to self-reflect and appreciate the feeling of being a minority while simultaneously not understanding the language spoken. They also noted that through field experiences student teachers had the opportunities to experience the subtle behavioral and communication differences associated with diverse cultures and ethnic groups.

Faculty from a university in Virginia provided resources for 40 preservice teachers to participate in a cross-cultural internship during a final semester of their teacher preparation program. Researchers from the university interviewed 10 students who had participated in overseas internships. Eight students were female and 2 were male. One of the teachers commented that the experience affected her outlook on life, assisting her to respect and celebrate each child's uniqueness while encouraging all

children to do the same (Bryan & Sprague, 1997). In addition to collecting data through interviews and describing the positive short term effect of the field experiences, the researchers did a follow-up study through a second interview process to determine the long term effect. The researchers at this university found that this cross-cultural experience had a favorable long term affect on the students' lives in several areas. These included initial hiring prospects that were successful, long term retention in jobs, positive attitudes toward their students, especially those whom were cultural and linguistically diverse, globally directed curriculum choices and the ability to be flexible with their teaching strategies and classroom management techniques.

Beliefs, changes or modifications are usually made as a result of practical field experiences (Pajares, 1992). In Kagan's research in 1992 he emphasized the importance of cross-cultural fieldwork for student teachers. Kagan described how practical experience encouraged teachers to modify and change their beliefs. Findings from Cabello, Burstein and Davis' study in 1995 suggested that an experientially-based program was extremely successful in preparing teachers to work with a diverse population of students. McAllister and Irvine's (2000) research described the invaluable knowledge 34 pre-service teachers gained while participating in cross-cultural simulations and cultural immersion field trips. These experiences evoked the feeling of empathy as the teachers immersed themselves in the position of being a visitor to a new culture. Intimate first hand interactions are believed to be the most successful method in helping student teachers learn and understand the culture and lifestyles of different groups in society as well as helping in overcoming cultural prejudice and stereotypic perceptions. In their study McAllister and Irvine reported that teachers also described that

their direct contact with individuals from a different culture had a more significant affect than learning through second hand information in a classroom lecture setting.

In order to continuously improve teacher education programs there is a need to address the challenges of closing the achievement gap between mainstream and ELL students. This can be achieved by improving teacher preparation for teaching language minority students as well by recruiting and training more teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds (Sleeter, 2001). The educational needs of second language learners should be integrated throughout teacher training programs, and not only in isolated courses labeled “bilingual, ESL and multicultural”.

Pre-service teachers need opportunities to question and reflect on their own beliefs, possible misconceptions, hidden assumptions and prejudices. Failure to explore these theories could lead to stereotypic perceptions which ultimately influence teaching behavior and attitudes of mainstream teachers towards the ELL students in their classrooms (Hamayan, 1991). In Stuart and Thurlow’s (2000) study of pre-service teachers, it was noted that the participating teachers reflected on their beliefs and were able to recognize “the critical link between their own beliefs and the maximization of their own teaching effectiveness” (p. 118). Beliefs and attitudes are not only reflected in teachers’ decisions and actions but there is evidence that teachers’ beliefs and attitudes drive important decisions and classroom practice (Renzaglia, Hutchins & Lee, 1997).

Teachers who are culturally aware take into consideration their students cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds and develop curricula that motivate the academic success of minority students (Capella-Santana, 1998; Diaz, Moll & Mehan, 1992). Moving teachers toward an engaged pedagogy, a critical learning action and reflective

process provides them with the mechanism for self-actualization or empowerment (Freire, 1995). Culture shapes how individuals perceive, relate to and interpret their environment. Unfortunately, too many teachers attempt to mold their students to fit their own personal cultural systems (Collier & Hoover, 1986).

Wong-Fillmore and Snow (2000) suggested that goals of teacher education in the 21st Century should include the encouragement of teachers to acquire knowledge (of cultural diversity, language and linguistics), skills (for effectively interacting and communicating) and dispositions (attitudes, beliefs) that are needed to work effectively with students from diverse racial, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds. The component of attitude should include teachers having the opportunities to examine their own values, stereotypic beliefs and worldviews. In the area of knowledge, educators need to develop the understanding of cultural and social family dynamics of diverse groups along with a comprehension of the critical sociopolitical, historical and economic contexts in which individuals from diverse multicultural groups are embedded. The component of skill development requires teachers to use culturally sensitive and flexible strategies, as well as appropriate skills for communicating with parents and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Relevant multicultural curricula, the use of culturally sensitive assessment and intervention strategies should be implemented in all schools across all grades (Banks, 2000; Delpritt, 1998; Manning & Barth, 2000; Sleeter & Grant, 1999).

Wong-Fillmore and Meyer (1992) noted that educators often use adaptations and inclusions to the curriculum that are “merely cosmetic” (p. 651). These superficial attempts often perpetuate rather than challenge unidirectional ethnocentric and

assimilation values. Transformation of curriculum needs to take place so the critical issues of diversity and multiculturalism can be integrated into all aspects of students' achievements, social development and relationships with the school community.

Rodriquez and Sjostrom (1995) commented that teachers in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom environment need to develop an attitude of respect for cultural differences as well as possess knowledge of the cultural values of their students and an understanding of their unique learning styles.

According to Byrnes and Cortez (1992) teachers must not only have appropriate training and a positive attitude, but also require strong administrative support in order to successfully work with ELL students. Strong leadership has also remained a crucial factor in accommodating the demographic changes in schools. In today's global society it is necessary for principals and administrators to advocate and support successful inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse students in mainstream classrooms. In Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's study in (2002), teachers' perception of the support of the administration was linked to their teaching self-efficacy. Their study revealed statistically significant correlations between teachers' attitudes toward their ELL students and the support received from the administration in the school building. Extensive research has supported the theory that the principal is of major importance as an instructional leader in a school (Andrews, Basom & Basom, 1991; Hallinger, 1996; Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Stanovich & Jordan, 1998). Administrative preparation programs have traditionally emphasized management skills and have not given adequate attention to mediating the new diversity that now characterizes urban and suburban schools nationwide.

Henze, Katz, Norte, Sather and Walker (1999) conducted a research study regarding the role of school leaders in United States schools. Case studies were conducted at 21 schools and the criteria for inclusion in this study were that the school had to have a diverse population, a prior history of racial or ethnic tension and the administrators known to be proactive in improving racial and ethnic relationships. These schools were all successful in maintaining interethnic relationships. The common thread in this study was that all of the school leaders involved had a vision of creating a school that was inclusive of all students and their families. They believed that all students, despite their ethnic and cultural backgrounds, are capable of achieving high academic standards.

The review of literature stresses the influence of the principal's role in communicating the school's goals and vision to the teachers. The principal's vision affects the school norms that teachers then internalize as subjective attitudes. The value school administrators place on educating ELLs may influence teachers' attitudes and perceptions of their inclusion in mainstream classrooms. At this time administrators in schools are not receiving adequate training in dealing with diverse student and parent populations and are provided with little guidance about instructional leadership in diverse school settings. Schools that do not respond effectively to the changing student population "fail in their responsibility to provide a secure and respectful learning environment and a meaningful challenging education for all students" (Henze, 2001).

Meaningful changes in teaching practices will not take place on a permanent basis unless a support system for change is created within the context of an entire school community and building. The responsibility for the academic progress and successful

integration of ELL learners into the school community should be “assumed by all personnel in a school building”. School leaders should ensure that these students have numerous positive opportunities to integrate both socially and academically with monolingual English speaking students in the mainstream (Brisk, 1998). The school environment should be one that supports respects and values all students regardless of their language and cultural differences.

Research on effective schools (August & Hakuta, 1997; Faltis, 1993; Krashen, 1999) indicates that one of the characteristics of successful schools is autonomy which the school leadership and staff must possess in order to determine ways to successfully address the challenges of educating a diverse student body. By insisting teachers participate in a school’s continuous improvement plan the principal can ensure sustained attention to all students. If separation or hostility exists among the professionals working with culturally and linguistically diverse students, these students will have difficulty competing on equal academic levels with their mainstream peers. (Roache, Shore, Gouleta & Butkwick, 2003, p.121). Staff development needs to steer toward a teacher centered structure in which teachers collaborate with administrators and with each other to plan professional development workshops that will improve instruction for all students.

Administrative support in all educational facilities should include ensuring developing an anti-racist pedagogy curriculum as well as taking the initiative to hire a linguistically diverse faculty also arranging for important documents and forms to be translated into the students’ home languages. Since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, administrators and educators need to be especially sensitive

that English language learners do not encounter racism or anti-immigrant comments in schools, colleges or universities.

Administrators, principals and educational leaders need to be responsible for creating a school-wide vision for the educational success of all students, including English language learners. “As the United States becomes more diverse, and global economies increasingly affect the U.S. economy, language diversity should become increasingly appreciated and bilingualism and biliteracy more widely embraced” (Fitzgerald, 2000, p. 520).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

“Language is one of the fundamental signs of our humanity. It is the palette from which people color their lives and culture” (Allman, 1990).

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that affect attitudes of elementary school teachers who teach English language learners in their mainstream classrooms. It is hypothesized that a teacher’s attitude is determined by the interplay of a set of variables which are related to their background and prior experiences. A review of the literature supports the view that teachers with positive attitudes are more prone to behave appropriately and constructively in teaching situations with students of diverse cultures and diverse languages. This assumption is supported by Larke (1990) who wrote that a high correlation exists among educators’ attitudes, beliefs and behavior toward students of other cultures and minority students’ academic performance. The results of this study will be used to assess the needs of and hopefully further improve “teacher training” for both pre-service and current teachers in the area of instructing culturally and linguistically diverse students.

The questions posed in this research study were:

1. Does age affect the attitude of mainstream teachers towards the ELL students in their classrooms?
2. Does gender affect the attitude of mainstream teachers towards the ELL students in their classrooms?

3. Does ethnic background contribute to the teachers' attitudes and perceptions about the cognitive abilities of ELL students in the mainstream?
4. Does being born outside the United States affect the attitude of teachers towards their mainstream ELL students?
5. Does prior teaching experience contribute to the attitude of mainstream teachers?
6. Does the proportion of ELL students in the classroom contribute to the attitude of mainstream teachers?
7. Does having English as one's native language affect the attitude of teachers towards their mainstream ELL students?
8. Does specific linguistic minority training of teachers affect their attitude towards the ELL students in their mainstream classrooms?
9. Does a teacher's cross-cultural experience influence their attitude in instructional settings with ELL students in their mainstream classroom?
10. Does amount of administrative support contribute towards the attitude of mainstream teachers of ELL students?
- 11a. What is the combined effect of the above independent variables on the dependent variable (teacher attitude)?
- 11b. What is the unique effect of each of these independent variables on attitude?

The researcher utilized a quantitative study employing a multiple regression design. Multiple regression analysis is defined by Babbie (2001) "as a form of statistical analysis that seeks the equation representing the impact of two or more independent variables on a single dependent variable" (p144). The instrument used was a two part survey that was self designed by the researcher. The researcher used the two part survey

to collect the data required for this study. Part one of the survey asked mainstream teachers questions regarding their background information. Part two of the survey asked the mainstream teachers to respond to 30 statements which indirectly evaluated their attitudes toward their ELL students. The teachers responded using a Likert Scale which consists of a ten point range from '1' strongly disagree to '10' strongly agree.

The demographic data in the first part of the survey (independent variables) was evaluated for possible effects on the attitudes (dependent variable) of mainstream teachers towards their ELL students. From the review of literature the researcher has identified variables that have been used in similar studies (Youngs & Youngs, 2001; Byrnes, Kiger & Manning, 1997). At the end of Part two of the survey, space was provided so participants could contribute additional comments regarding the study.

The researcher chose to use multiple regression analysis in this study to determine the effect of a specific set of independent variables (background demographic data of mainstream teachers) on the dependent variable (attitude). From the data collected and analysis of the multiple regression study, the researcher was able to determine which of the independent variables had the greatest effect on the dependent variable and which had the least.

Operational Definition of Variables

There were a total of eleven variables included in this study, ten independent variables and one dependent variable. The definition of the independent variables is as follows:

1. *Age* - present age stated in complete years. Karabenick and Nodas' study (2002)

found the younger teachers were more accepting of diversity than their older colleagues.

2. *Gender* - stated as either male or female.
3. *Racial/Ethnic identification* - stated as, White (Non-Hispanic), Black (Non-Hispanic), Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Haitian or Other. The choice of population subgroups used reflects the demographics of Florida's teaching population. Research suggests that candidates from diverse backgrounds enter teacher education with perspectives and experiences different from those of mainstream candidates. They possess multicultural knowledge, favor multicultural education, and are more committed to issues of social justice and appear motivated to guide culturally and linguistically diverse students (Sleeter, 2001).
4. *Country of Birth* - stated as country of birth. The researcher wished to determine if being born in the United States or outside the United States affected the attitudes of mainstream teachers?
5. *Years of experience in the classroom* - stated as complete years of teaching experience. In Karabenick and Noda's research study (2002) a group of bilingual mainstream teachers was interviewed, and it was noted that the more teaching experience the teachers had, the more competent they were and the more positive attitude they had towards their ELL students.
6. *Number of ELL students in mainstream class out of the total number of students* – does the proportion of ELL students affect a teacher's attitude?
7. *English as native/primary language* - the question asked if English was the participant's native/primary language. The data collected in Shin and Krashen's (1996) multiple regression study regarding teachers' attitudes toward bilingual education revealed that teachers with more favorable attitudes had more specific training in

strategies in teaching ELL students, and were also fluent in a second language. Flores reported in her 2001 study, that mainstream teachers whose native language was not English were able to empathize with their English minority students, as they had similar difficulties learning a second language as students.

8. *Pre-service/professional development and/or specific training in teaching ELL*

students - The question asked if the mainstream teacher had specific training in teaching ELL students, and then asks for a brief description of the training. Teachers who were considered to have had specific linguistic minority training in this study were either ESOL endorsed, or had equivalent professional coursework or developmental workshops in language minority training. Research suggests those student teachers' multicultural attitudes and knowledge change in a positive direction after participating in specific linguistic teacher preparation programs. This change appears to be influenced by fieldwork experiences in culturally diverse environments and college courses in multicultural and bilingual education (Capella-Santana, 2003)

9. *Cross-cultural experiences with linguistically or culturally diverse students* - the

question asked if the participating mainstream teachers had cross-cultural experiences which included: living outside the United States, teaching outside the United States or studying outside the United States. The participants were asked to describe their experiences and also record the duration of those experiences. A participant was considered to have had cross-cultural experience if they had lived, studied or taught in a foreign country for a period equivalent to at least one semester. Ukpokodu's research study in 2002 found that pre-service teachers' previous personal experiences with cultural diversity influenced their attitudes. She noted that students who had prior experience

with diversity and multicultural perspectives were more open minded and flexible than those who had limited exposure.

10. *Amount of classroom support.* Participants were asked to rate on a scale of 0% to 100%, the level of support their administration provided to them with the ELL/LEP students in their mainstream classrooms. The studies by Nagel (1998) and Banister and Maher (1998) found that the lack of administrative support in the area of cultural diversity was the key reason why the teachers in schools interviewed had less favorable attitudes toward teaching their ELL students. Nieto (1996) noted that many school curricula and teachers do not meet the needs of all students learning styles. "Few teachers are prepared for different cultures, languages, life styles and values in their classrooms. The same methods and approaches perceived as appropriate for students from mainstream backgrounds, whether or not they were even effective, are used for all students" (Nieto, 1996, p. 98).

The dependent variable of the study was "attitude". Attitude is defined as information we have obtained about someone or something that we form an opinion or predisposition about. An attitude is an enduring organization of beliefs about an object or situation predisposing one to respond in a positive or negative way toward an object or situation (Rokeach, 1973). The operational definition of attitude in this study was determined by responses of survey participants to thirty questions (part 2 of survey) related to teacher beliefs, perceptions, teaching strategies, relationships with students and their parents. The dependent variable, attitude, is relevant to this study because prior research has indicated that the positive attitudes of teachers toward ELL students is influenced by teachers' background experiences.

All of the independent variables used in this study are also relevant according to the literature review, and in some way have contributed to the attitude development of mainstream teachers toward their ELL students. Teachers' attitudes toward diversity in the classroom have been considered an important teacher competency. Teachers' attitudes and perceptions of ELLs inclusion in the mainstream can have a significant impact on the educational experiences and opportunities of ELLs. Teachers may not acknowledge the influence they have in the classroom but, this influence may be felt by their students (Delpritt, 1995). A positive attitude has been considered an essential prerequisite to teacher success as well as an inspiration and commitment to diversity. "Educating all children will require the will and commitment to understand and respond to cultural differences to the extent that teachers who know and understand how children's past experiences have been organized and explained, are better able to fashion new ones for them" (Bowman & Scott, 1994, p. 131).

Instrumentation

The researcher elected to use a survey to determine the responses of a defined sample of teachers to the statements questioning the teachers' attitudes toward the ELL students in their mainstream classrooms. The survey was self-designed by the researcher, as no appropriate instrument to determine mainstream teacher attitudes toward teaching English language learners was found in a review of the literature. The survey instrument used in this study was developed after a review of the literature on survey design, and a review of sample surveys on cultural and linguistic diversity (Dillman, 1997).

The survey instrument was divided into 2 parts, with an attached cover letter which introduced the researcher and the research study (see Appendix D). Additionally, the cover letter explained the purpose of the study and the procedure to complete the survey, as well as the fact that participants' completion of the survey constituted their informed consent for participation. Part 1 of the survey inquired about demographic and other background data which were used as the independent variables of the study.

The second part of the survey was used to obtain a measure of the participant's attitude. It consisted of 30 statements which the participant was required to respond to using a 1-10 point Likert scale from '1' being strongly disagree to '10' being strongly agree. The survey method allowed the researcher to provide all participants in this study with a standardized stimulus to eliminate unreliability in the study (Anderson & Kanuka, 2003). A 1-10 Likert scale instead of the more frequent 1-3 or 1-5 scale was used in this research study to enhance the likelihood of a wide variation of responses from the participants.

Some of the statements on the survey were based on Larke's (1995) and Powell, Zehn and Garcia's (1996) multicultural questionnaires. The attitude survey consisted of thirty statements, the responses to which determined the teachers' attitudes towards teaching linguistically diverse students included in their mainstream classrooms. The questions were designed to determine teachers' expectations, cultural awareness and teaching behavior. The surveys incorporated the following components:

- Teaching behavior (teacher's willingness and flexibility to modify curriculum for the ELL student).
- Expectations for the achievement of ELL students.

- Cultural awareness.
- Parent communication (is there a feeling of positive acceptance when communicating with the parents of ELL students?)

Population and Sample

The population selected for this research study includes teachers from public elementary schools in a school district in South Florida. Only teachers who had ELL students in their mainstream classrooms were asked to participate and complete the surveys. The surveys were distributed to a random sample of 500 such teachers in schools which had a diverse student population. Due to the demographic data of the teachers and students in this selected school district, this study could be generalized to other school districts in Florida, as well as to school districts in the remainder of the United States which have similar populations.

Pilot Study

Prior to commencing the research study, the researcher completed a pilot study. Fifty teachers were chosen to participate in the pilot study. Participants were teachers at a single representative elementary school in South Florida who had limited English proficient students in their mainstream classrooms. The pilot study was used to ensure clarity and comprehensibility of the questions and statements on the two-part survey. It assisted the researcher in determining whether an appropriate instrument had been developed to answer the research questions that had been posed.

In addition to the two part survey, the participants in the pilot study were asked to complete a questionnaire requesting feedback regarding the survey. Based on the feedback from teachers participating in the pilot study, some of the questions on the survey were revised to ensure clarity of wording. The data from the pilot study was not included in the final data analysis.

Data Collection

The researcher requested permission to conduct the study from the I.R.B. (Institutional Review Board) at Lynn University and the Superintendent of the Palm Beach County school district in South Florida. Once permission was granted, the researcher mailed letters (Appendix C) to the principals of the selected schools, asking permission for their teachers to participate. The letter introduced the researcher, briefly explained the research topic. Enclosed with the letter was a sample of the survey (Appendix E) to be completed.

A week after the letters were mailed, the researcher called each principal to make arrangements for delivery of the surveys. The surveys were subsequently delivered to the participating schools. An administrative secretary was designated to distribute surveys to all mainstream teachers. Attached to each survey was a cover letter (Appendix E). The cover letter introduced the researcher, briefly discussed the purpose of the research study and gave instructions for completion of the survey. It also assured potential participants of the confidentiality of their responses, requesting that they not place their names on the survey instrument. It was also specified that only mainstream teachers with ELL students

in their classrooms could participate in the study. The cover letter further explained that by completing the survey respondents gave permission for inclusion in the study.

Follow up phone calls were made to the principals of each individual school and the researcher subsequently collected all completed surveys. The group of surveys from each school was alphabetically coded, solely for the purpose of cross checking which schools had responded.

Data Analysis

The results of the survey were collected, organized and entered into SPSS statistical software. The use of the software allowed efficiency and accuracy of analysis. In order to answer the research questions in this study five different statistical analyses were performed on the collected data. They included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, independent samples t-test analysis, one-way ANOVA analysis and multiple regression analysis. The level of confidence indicating statistical significance was $p < .05$ in this research study.

Part I of the survey provided demographic data (independent variables) about the respondents. Frequency and percent analysis were run for all demographic responses. In addition, mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance and range for the independent variable were analyzed. Frequency counts were run on the independent variables to confirm that the sample size was sufficient to reach statistically significant conclusions. The total number of independent variables in this study was ten. Prior to running the multiple regression analysis, it was necessary to convert the four discrete codes for Ethnicity (White, Black, Hispanic and Other) into three dummy variables, viz.

White, Black and Hispanic – with other as the default. A minimal sample size of 15 is required per variable, for a total minimal sample size of 195 (12 [independent variables including dummy variables] + 1 [dependant variable] x 15). The survey was distributed to 500 teachers to assure sufficient responses in order to reach a statistically significant sample size. Responses to Part II of the survey were used in the independent samples t-test and multiple regression analysis.

The positive responses to some of the statements in part 2 of the survey were reversed by wording the statement in a negative form (reverse coding). This served to reduce the effect of a response set. The scores were totaled for each individual, a high score denoting a favorable attitude, and a low score an unfavorable attitude. The highest possible attainable score (attitude score) was 300 (30 x 10). The demographic background data (independent variables) in part one of the survey were correlated with the attitude score (dependent variable) using multiple regression analysis.

In this study the multiple regression equation took the following form:

$$Y = f(X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4 + \dots + X_{12}) + e$$

where Y = Teacher attitude quantitated by “attitude score” (dependent variable)

f = is a factor of

X₁ = Age (Independent variable 1)

X₂ = Gender (Independent variable 2)

X₃ = White dummy (Independent variable 3)

X₄ = Black dummy (Independent variable 4)

X₅ = Hispanic dummy (Independent variable 5)

X₆ = Birth in USA (Independent variable 6)

X_7 = Experience (Independent variable 7)

X_8 = Proportion of ELL students (Independent variable 8)

X_9 = English as primary language (Independent variable 9)

X_{10} = Specific ELL training (Independent variable 10)

X_{11} = Cross-cultural experience (Independent variable 11)

X_{12} = Administrative support (Independent variable 12)

e = error term

The data was analyzed using SSPS software. The following is a definition of the statistical terms used:

- A) R^2 : - indicates the relationship between the dependent variables and the set of independent variables. It more specifically indicates the extent of the variance of the dependent variable that is explained by the set of independent variables.
- B) F Statistic: - indicates the statistical probability that the relationship between the set of independent variables and the dependent variable could have occurred by chance.
- C) Beta weight: - shows the unique effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. A Beta weight can be compared to a correlation coefficient. It will demonstrate the direction and strength of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.
- D) t statistic: - displays the level of statistical probability of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

The study identified significant factors that determine the attitudes of teachers towards the ELL students who are in their mainstream classrooms. The unique effect

of each independent variable on the dependent variable attitude was evaluated using the Beta weight. The proposed Beta weight of significance was set at $p = < .05$

Ethics

Prior to conducting the study the researcher obtained permission from the Lynn University Institutional Review Board as well as from the Superintendent of the Palm Beach County school district located in Florida. The pilot study was completed by 50 mainstream teachers at a public elementary school in the South Florida school district. During the pilot study, the researcher looked for any adverse reactions to questions and statements on the pilot survey. There were some minor revisions made to the survey following suggestions made by participants of the pilot study. Responses of participants' in both the pilot study and final study were anonymous and confidential.

The researcher was the only person responsible for collecting and analyzing the data, which will be locked in a safe place for a period of five years following completion of the study. After that period of time the confidential data will be destroyed.

Limitations

The study was limited to teachers in a specific public elementary school district in South Florida and the subject participation was voluntary. The study is further limited by the demographic and background experience of the teachers completing the survey and by the 30 attitudinal statements in part 2 of the survey. The data collected was based on a random sample of participants, and the researcher has no way of verifying the honesty of the participants' responses to the statements in the survey.

Assumptions and Goals of the Study

The following assumptions are important in this study:

1. Teachers who participated accurately reported their demographic data and truthfully responded to the statements on the attitude survey.
2. The researcher assumed that the sample of participants included teachers with varying degrees of experience, who were teaching ELL students in their mainstream classrooms.
3. Teachers' attitudes could be accurately quantified using the attitude related statements in part 2 of the survey.
4. The results of this study will have implications for all school districts and will help improve teacher preparation for ELL students in elementary schools across the United States.
5. The data collected in this research study will assist colleges and schools in the recruitment of a diverse population of students and teachers.
6. The results of this study will hopefully be important in improving teacher's attitudes, teaching strategies and expectations for all students.
7. Positive attitudes of teachers will lead to more successful academic achievement of the culturally and linguistically diverse student populations in mainstream classrooms in United States schools today and in the future.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors which affect the attitudes of mainstream teachers towards the English language learner students in their classrooms. The study focused on the factors which according to the literature review appear to have a major effect on teachers' attitude. The discrete independent variables chosen were teacher gender, ethnicity, prior ESOL/ELL training, cross-cultural experience, birth in the USA and English as native language. The continuous independent variables used were age, teaching experience, amount of administrative support and percentage of ELL students in mainstream classroom. The dependant variable in this study was teacher attitude.

The research design employed a quantitative method approach, using a survey instrument which was developed by the researcher. The survey instrument was divided into two parts. In the first part the respondents were asked to respond to demographic questions which were used to determine the independent variables of the study. In the second part of the questionnaire the respondents were asked to respond to 30 closed ended attitude related statements by rating them on a 10-point Likert scale. These questions were developed after a thorough review of literature and prior survey instruments used to measure attitude in the literature.

Validity of the survey instrument was enhanced through a pilot study. Fifty teachers participated, and their feedback led to improvement in format and clarity of some of the questions. The final surveys were distributed to 500 mainstream teachers of

ELL students in Palm Beach County school district in South Florida. They were distributed in April and May of 2004. A total of 294 responses were received by the given deadline. Fifteen surveys were excluded due to incomplete data, yielding a total of 279 valid responses, a response rate of 56%.

This chapter presents the results analyzed from the data collected. The research questions are addressed in turn, analyzed and finally summarized in aggregate. Research methods of data analysis used include descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, independent-samples t test analysis, one-way ANOVA analysis and multiple regression analysis.

Research Question 1

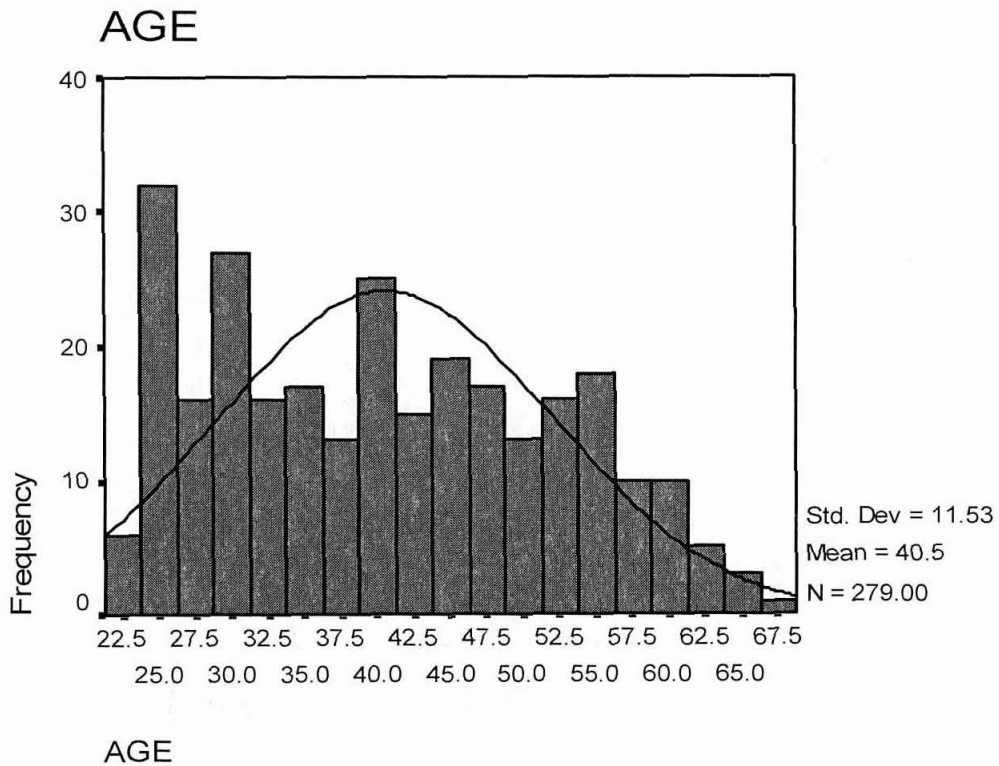
Does age affect the attitude of mainstream teachers towards the ELL students in their classrooms?

Two different statistical analyses were employed to answer this question i.e. descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

The mean age for the respondents in the study was 40.5 years with a standard deviation of 11.5. The median age was 40 and the mode 26 years. The age ranged from 23 to 68 years. The normal curve for age was slightly skewed to the left with a Skewness of .257 and Kurtosis of -1.042. Figure 1 shows the age distribution of random sample population identified in this study.

Figure 1

Age Distribution of Sample Population in Study



Bivariate correlation analysis was conducted using the Pearson product-moment technique for the continuous variables age and attitude. As shown in Table 1, the two tailed t-test failed to reveal significance less than 0.5 ($p < 0.5$), indicating that age is not statistically correlated with teacher attitude.

Table 1

Correlation Analysis Between Teachers' Age, Experience, Percentage of ELL Students in Mainstream Classroom, Amount of Administrative Support and Attitude.

Variables		Age	Experience	% ELL	Support	Attitude
Age	(Pearson Correlation)	1	.798**	.020	-.030	-.004
Experience	(Pearson Correlation)	.798**	1	.000	-.046	.006
% ELL	(Pearson Correlation)	.020	.000	1	.089	.149*
Support	(Pearson Correlation)	-.030	-.046	.089	1	.299**
Attitude	(Pearson Correlation)	-.004	.006	.149*	.299**	1

N = 279

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 2

Does gender affect the attitude of mainstream teachers towards the ELL students in their classrooms? Two statistical analyses were used to answer this question, descriptive statistics and the independent samples t-test.

There were 26 males (9.3 %) in the sample and 253 (90.7 %) females. The gender of respondents is reflective of the teacher population of the Palm Beach school district, with females significantly outnumbering males (Table 2).

The Independent Samples t-test (Table 2) reveals no statistical significance between teacher gender and attitude ($p > .05$).

Table 2

Group Statistics and Independent Samples t-test for Gender and Teacher Attitude

Dependent Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attitude	Female	253	259.16	26.504	1.666	
	Male	26	257.42	24.661	4.836	.749

Research Question 3

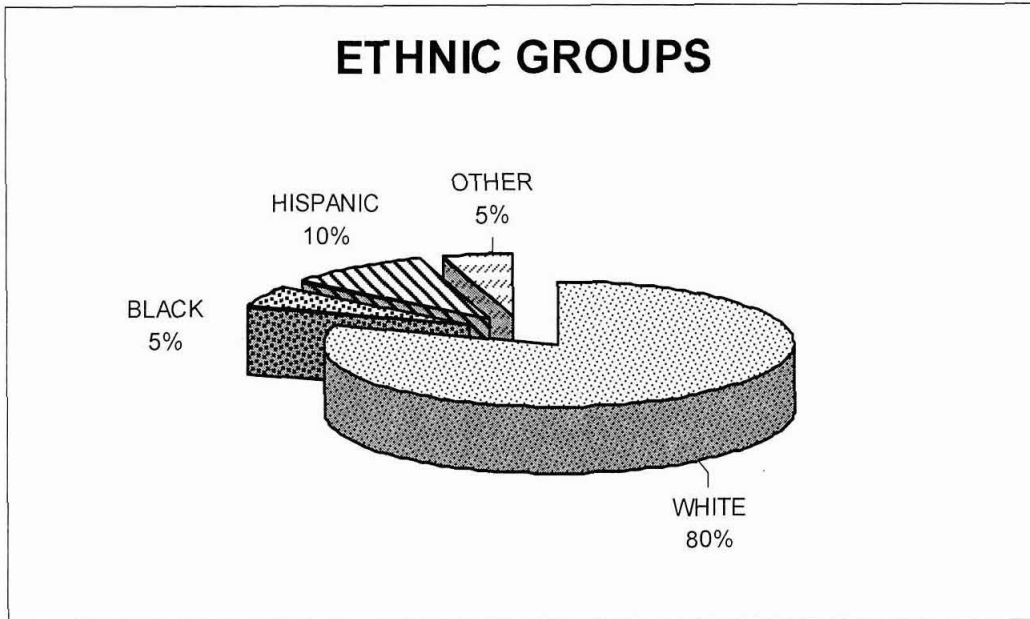
Does ethnic background contribute to the teachers' attitudes and perceptions about the cognitive abilities of ELL students in the mainstream?

Two different statistical analyses were employed to answer this question. They were descriptive analysis and One-way ANOVA analysis.

The group statistics and measures of central tendency are outlined in Table 3 and illustrated in Figure 2. The majority of the respondents were White, 223 (79.9%). There were 15 Blacks (5.4%), 28 Hispanics (10%) and 13 (4%) in the "Other" group. The latter group included mainly Haitians and Asians/Pacific Islanders.

Figure 2

Pie Chart Displaying Frequencies for Ethnic Groups



One way ANOVA Analysis

One-way ANOVA analysis was used to examine whether there are any statistical differences in attitude between the different ethnic groups. Post Hoc tests include the least significant difference (LSD) test to identify which groups differ significantly from each other. Results of the One-Way ANOVA and Post Hoc Tests are detailed in Table 4. The data indicates that the attitudes of White teachers are significantly less favorable than those of their Black, Hispanic and other colleagues. This difference is significant at the 0.05 level using the least significant difference (LSD).

Table 3

Ethnic Group Statistics (for Dependent Variable Attitude)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
White	223	254.15	26.852	1.798	174	300
Black	15	274.13	12.461	3.217	251	294
Hispanic	28	279.00	10.791	2.039	262	300
Other	13	281.54	5.967	1.655	274	293
Total	279	259.00	26.300	1.575	174	300

Table 4

*ANOVA and Post Hoc Comparisons of Significant Difference for Attitude of Four Ethnic**Groups***ANOVA**

ATTITUDE

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	26479.216	3	8826.405	14.638	.000
Within Groups	165813.780	275	602.959		
Total	192292.996	278			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: ATTITUDE

LSD

(I) ETHNICITY	(J) ETHNICITY	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
White	Black	-19.98*	6.550	.003
	Hispanic	-24.85*	4.923	.000
	Other	-27.39*	7.006	.000
Black	White	19.98*	6.550	.003
	Hispanic	-4.87	7.857	.536
	Other	-7.41	9.305	.427
Hispanic	White	24.85*	4.923	.000
	Black	4.87	7.857	.536
	Other	-2.54	8.241	.758
Other	White	27.39*	7.006	.000
	Black	7.41	9.305	.427
	Hispanic	2.54	8.241	.758

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Research Question 4

Does being born outside the United States affect the attitude of teachers towards their mainstream ELL students? Two statistical analyses were used to answer this question, descriptive statistics and the Independent Samples t-test.

Two hundred and forty nine respondents (89.2%) were born in the USA and 30 (10.8%) were not born in the USA (Table 5). The mean attitude score for teachers born in the USA was 256.29 and for those not born in the USA 281.43. This difference was highly significant using the Independent Samples t-test (2-tailed t-test <0.01), indicating that being born outside the USA positively affects the attitude of mainstream teachers towards their ESOL students.

Table 5

Group Statistics and Independent Samples t-test Analysis for Birth in the USA and Teacher Attitude

Dependent Variable	Birth in USA	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attitude	Yes	249	256.29	26.386	1.672	
	No	30	281.43	9.673	1.766	.000

Research Question 5

Does prior teaching experience contribute to the attitude of mainstream teachers?

Two different statistical analyses were employed to answer this question i.e. descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

The mean number of years of experience of respondents was 12.38 years, with a median of 9 years and mode of 1 year.

Bivariate correlation analysis (Table 1) shows that teacher attitude and experience fail to correlate at the < 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 6

Does the proportion of ELL students in the classroom contribute to the attitude of mainstream teachers? Two different statistical analyses were employed to answer this question i.e. descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

The mean number of ELL students as a percentage of the total number of students in the mainstream classrooms was 24.70%, the median 20% and the mode 4%.

Bivariate correlation analysis (Table 1) indicated a Pearson r of .149 between the variables, which was significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). This finding suggests that the proportion of ELL students in mainstream classrooms contributes in a positive manner to the attitude of their teachers.

Research Question 7

Does having English as one's native language affect the attitude of teachers towards their mainstream ELL students? Two statistical analyses were used to answer this question, descriptive statistics and the Independent samples t-test.

The number of teachers who reported English as their native language was 250 (89.6%), and the number of respondents who did not have English as their native language was 29 (10.4%). The Independent samples t-test revealed a difference in the mean attitudes of the two groups which was statistically significant at the 0.01 level (Table 6). This finding

suggests that teachers with English as their native language do not have as favorable attitudes as teachers who do not have English as their native language.

Table 6

Group Statistics and Independent Samples t-test Analysis for English as Native Language and Teacher Attitude

Dependent Variable	English Native Language	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attitude	Yes	250	256.42	26.318	1.665	
	No	29	281.21	11.733	2.179	.000

Research Question 8

Does specific linguistic minority training of teachers affect their attitude towards the ELL students in their mainstream classrooms? Two statistical analyses were used to answer this question, descriptive statistics and the Independent samples t-test.

Most of the respondents reported prior specific ELL training, 227 (81.4%), with 52 (18.6%) reporting no prior specific training in the field (Table 7). The means for the two groups were 260.86 for the group with prior training and 250.85 for the group without prior training. Using the Independent Samples t-test, this difference was statistically significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed t-test).

Table 7

Group Statistics and Independent Samples t-test Analysis for Specific ELL Training and Teacher Attitude

Dependent Variable	Specific ELL Training	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attitude	Yes	227	260.86	25.360	1.683	
	No	52	250.85	28.937	4.013	.013

Research Question 9

Does a teacher's cross-cultural experience influence their attitude in instructional settings with ELL students in their mainstream classroom? Two statistical analyses were used to answer this question, descriptive statistics and the independent samples t-test.

Sixty-one respondents (21.9%) reported that they had previous cross-cultural experience, and 218 (78.1%) reported no such prior experience. Independent samples t-test analysis (Table 8) revealed a significant difference in the mean attitude score between the groups with and without cross-cultural experience. The difference was significant at the 0.01 level, indicating that teacher attitude is significantly improved when there has been prior cross-cultural experience.

Table 8

Group Statistics and Independent Samples t-test Analysis for Cross-cultural Experience and Teacher Attitude:

Dependent Variable	Cultural experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attitude	Yes	61	278.52	13.289	1.701	
	No	218	253.53	26.460	1.792	.000

Research Question 10

Does amount of administrative support contribute toward the attitude of mainstream teachers of ELL students? Two different statistical analyses were employed to answer this question i.e. descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The mean of administrative support provided for the group was 69.66%, with a median of 80% and a mode of 100%.

Bivariate correlation analysis for teacher attitude and administrative support (Table 1) reveals a statistically significant correlation between these variables with a Pearson r of .299, significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 11

a. What is the combined effect of all the independent variables on the dependent variable (teacher attitude)?

b. What is the unique effect of each of these independent variables on attitude?

In order to answer these research questions two different statistical analyses were employed. These were correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment technique for the four continuous independent variables (age, experience, percentage of ELL students and administrative support) and one continuous dependent variable (teacher attitude). As illustrated in Table 1, no correlation coefficient is greater than .85. This implies that the independent variables are independent of each other (no problems with multicollinearity).

Multiple Regression Analysis

Prior to running the multiple regression analysis, it was necessary to convert the four discrete codes for Ethnicity (White, Black, Hispanic and other) into three dummy variables, viz. White, Black and Hispanic – with other as the default.

In this study the multiple regression equation took the following form:

$$Y = f(X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4 + \dots + X_{12}) + e$$

where Y = Teacher attitude quantitated by “attitude score” (dependent variable)

f = is a factor of

X₁ = Age (Independent variable 1)

X₂ = Gender (Independent variable 2)

X₃ = White dummy (Independent variable 3)

X₄ = Black dummy (Independent variable 4)

X₅ = Hispanic dummy (Independent variable 5)

X₆ = Birth in USA (Independent variable 6)

X₇ = Experience (Independent variable 7)

X₈ = Proportion of ELL students (Independent variable 8)

X₉ = English as primary language (Independent variable 9)

X_{10} = Specific ELL training (Independent variable 10)

X_{11} = Cross-cultural experience (Independent variable 11)

X_{12} = Administrative support (Independent variable 12)

e = error term

Multiple regression analysis enabled the researcher to determine the degree of influence the set of independent variables had on the dependent variable, as well as the unique effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable (teacher attitude). Table 9 displays the results of regression analysis for teacher attitude and the twelve independent variables.

Table 9

*Multiple Regression Analysis of Mainstream Teachers' Attitudes Towards ELL Students
on Model Predictors*

R Square **.296** Sig. **.000****

Sub-Variable	Beta weight	Sig.
Age	-.059	.494
Gender	.009	.867
Experience	.099	.250
White dummy	-.265	.021*
Black dummy	.017	.823
Hispanic dummy	-.025	.774
Administrative support	.246	.000**
Cultural experience	.278	.000**
Percentage ELL students	-.006	.912
English native language	.001	.992
Specific ELL training	.133	.013*
Birth in USA	-.002	.978

Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender, Birth in USA, Ethnicity (3 dummy variables),
Administrative support, Cultural experience, Percentage ELL students,
English native language, Specific ELL training, Birth in USA

Dependent Variable: Teacher Attitude

N = 279 * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

As can be seen in Table 9, the R square is .296 with an overall significance at the .01 level. This indicates that the findings are statistically robust, and that this set of independent variables overall explains almost 30% of the variation of the dependent variable (teacher attitude). The correlation is moderately strong and indicates that 70% of the variation in teacher attitude is explained by other variables not included in this study.

The second question addressed the unique singular effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable, teacher attitude. This is determined by the beta weights of the independent variables. As illustrated in Table 9, four of the variables studied had a statistically significant effect on teacher attitude. The predictors of attitude from strongest to weakest were:

1. Cultural experience: Cross-cultural experience had the greatest positive standardized Beta weight with teacher attitude. The score was .278 at the .01 level of significance ($p = .000$). Cross-cultural experience is thus the most significant factor contributing to teacher attitude in this study. This was noted across all ethnic groups. The contribution of cross-cultural experience to teacher attitude is also highlighted in the review of literature. Youngs and Youngs' research in 2001 reported the importance of the contribution of cross-cultural experiences to teachers' attitudes toward their ESL students. Chiang (1994) and Sleeter (1995) noted that the experience gained by pre-service teachers in culturally diverse settings, had a positive impact on their attitudes and teaching strategies. Grant (1994) and Ladson-Billings (1994) suggested that preparation for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students should be infused through the total teaching preparation program, and should include opportunities for field experiences. Dong's (2004) study described the experiences of 265 graduate students who were required to complete 25 hours of fieldwork working directly with LEP students. As part of the study, the students were asked to keep journals and record, compare and contrast their life experiences with the learning experiences of the English language learners they observed. These students were encouraged to self-reflect as they put themselves in the position of a second language learner. They reported that their experiences motivated them to develop

new ways of reaching out to ELL students. Practical or clinical experiences should be an integral part of all training courses to enable students to integrate their knowledge as they complete authentic training (Cabello & Burstein, 1995).

2. Ethnicity: Ethnicity had the second strongest effect on attitude in a negative manner. The beta weight for the white dummy variable was $-.265$ at the 0.05 level of significance ($p = .021$). In both the multiple regression analysis and one way ANOVA, racial/ethnic background significantly contributed to teachers' attitudes toward ELL students in their mainstream classrooms. White teachers had significantly less favorable attitudes than their Hispanic and Black colleagues. This finding is in accordance with the literature, in which it is noted that teachers from diverse background are more accepting of a diverse population of students within the mainstream. Female teachers have more favorable attitudes because of their experiences being members of a minority culture and the empathy that results from this. The majority of elementary teachers in the United States are white, monolingual, middle class females teaching a student body who are increasingly diverse in language, ethnicity and social class. Teacher candidates prefer to teach children who share their same culture and background. Many of these teachers appear to have difficulty accepting diversity among their students and believe that it is their role to control, limit and discourage any differences they encounter (Sleeter & Grant, 1999).

3. Administrative support: Administrative support of teachers had the 3rd strongest effect on attitude, with a beta weight of $.246$ at the $.001$ level of significance ($p = .000$).

Researchers Karabenick and Noda recorded in their 2004 study that more positive teacher attitudes toward ELLs were associated with greater support from teacher colleagues and

building administrators. In Tschannen-Moran and Hoys study in 2002 teacher's perceptions of administrators support was linked to their teaching self-efficacy. This was also backed up by the teacher's recognition of district support. Extensive research supports the findings that the principal is of major importance as an instructional leader in a school (Richardson, Short, & Prickett, 1993; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996).

4. Specific ELL training: Teacher training had the 4th greatest effect on attitude. The positive standardized Beta weight with teacher attitude was .133 at the .01 level of significance ($p = .013$). Multicultural training had a positive affect on teacher's attitude. This was also recorded in Chiang's (1994) and Capella-Santana's (2003) research where it was observed that teachers' attitudes toward culturally and linguistically diverse students changed in a favorable direction after attending multicultural education training courses. Pettus and Allain (1999) administered a pre-test to pre-service students before they participated in a multicultural educator workshop. After completion of the workshop, students were given a post test. Both pre-test and post tests were compared and the results were evaluated. The post test showed that the workshop contributed to a positive influence toward pre-service teachers' multicultural attitudes and knowledge. Specific language minority training motivated teachers to learn new information, accept or reject new ideas, modify existing belief systems and adopt new beliefs (Pajares, 1993). The studies of Krashen (1996); Byrnes, Kiger and Manning (1997); and Youngs and Young's (2001) also substantiated that specific ELL training has a positive effect on teacher attitude. Banks (1991) stated "an effective teacher education policy for the 21st century must incorporate the education of all teachers, including teachers of color, in ways that will help them gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to work

effectively with students from diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic and social class groups” (p. 135 – 136).

The remaining variables, teacher age, gender and experience, as well as proportion of ELL students in mainstream classroom, birth outside the United States and English as native language, do not have a statistically significant effect on teacher attitude in the multiple regression analysis.

5. Age: Teacher age did not have a statistically significant contribution to the affect of teachers’ attitudes toward the ELL students in their mainstream classrooms. This held true for both the Independent samples t-test and the multiple regression analysis. Age as a possible predictor of attitude has been investigated by Brousseau, Book and Byers (1998), and Youngs and Youngs (2001). These researchers also found no significant correlation between a teacher’s age and their attitudes toward their ELL students.

6. Gender: Although the mean attitude score for females was slightly greater than males, gender overall failed to have a statistically significant effect on the attitudes of teachers toward ELLs in the mainstream. This was apparent in both the independent samples t-test and multiple regression analysis. A review of the literature suggests that females are generally more sensitive than males toward the diversity among their students. Ottavi, Pope, Davis and Dings’ (1994) found in their study that females appeared more comfortable with racial interactions than did males. Youngs and Youngs’ (2001) also found that being female contributed significantly to teachers’ positive attitudes toward their ELL students. Sykes and Shulman (1992) suggested that females appear to have greater concern for others and are more likely than males to focus on commonality rather than on differences between individuals. The discrepancy between our findings and that

in the literature might be related to the small sample size of males in relation to females in the current study. This may explain why in spite of a slightly higher mean female attitude in this study, gender did not have a statistical significance in contributing to teachers' attitudes.

7. Experience: In both the bivariate correlation and multiple regression studies the amount of teacher experience did not have a statistically significant affect on attitude of teachers toward the ELL student in the mainstream classroom. The literature regarding the relationships between teacher's experience and attitude is somewhat controversial. Social psychology literature suggests that frequent positive contact with language minority (LM) students will be associated with positive attitudes of teachers (Tajfel, 1982). Byrnes, Kiger and Manning (1997) agreed with this view but as a result of their research findings cautioned that the contact has to be in a supportive context. On the other hand, Youngs and Youngs in their (2001) study failed to identify a correlation between experience and teachers' ELL attitudes. Karabenick and Noda's research in 2004 is at variance with both these studies, suggesting that teachers with less experience have more positive attitudes.

8. Proportion of ELL students: Teachers with a higher population of ELL students in their mainstream population had a small but significantly more favorable attitude toward their ELL students on the correlation analysis (Pearson $r = 0.149$, $p < .05$). The strength of this relationship was however not sufficient to reach a level of significance in the multiple regression study. Two previous studies have examined the relationship between the amount of contact with ELL students and the attitude of teachers toward those students. Karabenick and Noda (2004) noted in their survey of 729 elementary, middle and high

school teachers that more positive attitudes were recorded by teachers when interviewed who had ELL students in their classroom in contrast to those teachers who had taught ELLs in their past teaching experiences. Shin and Krashen (1996) concluded in a multiple regression study of 794 elementary and secondary school teachers that teachers with a great number of LEP students in their classrooms were more supportive of bilingual education.

9. Birth in the USA: On the Independent samples t-test, being born outside the United States showed a statistically significant affect on the attitudes of teachers toward their ELL students. The strength of the relationship was however not sufficient to reach a level of significance on the multiple regression analysis. The review of literature revealed no specific research in this area.

10. English as native language: On the Independent samples t-test there was a significant positive relationship between teachers whose native language was not English, and their attitudes toward the ELL students in their mainstream classrooms i.e. teachers whose native language was not English had more favorable attitudes than those teachers whose native language was English. In her 2001 study, Flores found that teachers who had prior similar negative and difficult experiences as second language learners as students used their prior experiences to self-reflect and were able to encourage their students to achieve success. These teachers were also insistent on demanding equal educational opportunities for their ELLs. These teachers believed that their background experiences helped them in understanding learning styles of their second language learners. On the multiple regression analysis, not having English as a native language did not statistically contribute to attitudes of teachers toward their ELL learners in the mainstream classroom.

This finding is consistent with Krashen's (1996) study in which he found that teachers who spoke a second or third language were empathetic, motivated and demonstrated greater support for the English language learners in their classrooms.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A review of the research is included in Chapter Five. The motivation behind the study, statistical findings, conclusion, implications and recommendations for further research are discussed.

Summary of the Study

Over the past fifty years there has been a dramatic shift in the demographics in schools across the United States. This shift is attributed to increased immigration, easier access to travel and increased international communication via the use of advanced technology. Hodgkinson (1997) stated that the United States is the first world nation in the history of humanity where every nation in the world has a resident in this country (p.3). In schools across the United States, the changing demographics of the student population continues to be apparent as the number of English learners continues to enroll on a daily basis. Federal and state laws mandate that public schools across the United States accommodate the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

These ELL students need support and guidance from school personnel as they are included in mainstream classrooms. This group of students is under pressure to not only catch up with the English language but also with curriculum content. ELLs have the additional pressure of being required to academically meet state standards by passing standardized tests. In order to be successfully integrated into the mainstream curriculum,

English language learners need to adapt to the linguistic, socioculture, discursive and academic norms and practice in content areas.

Everyone involved in the school community needs to be held accountable to assist ELL learners to feel comfortable and secure in their surroundings despite their cultural and linguistic differences (Mohan, Leung & Davidson, 2001). There is an urgent need for teachers to develop cultural awareness and appropriate language instruction so that all students can succeed in school. Educators need to become competent in providing effective instruction to students from diverse, racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

It is apparent from a review of the literature that teachers with positive attitudes and beliefs are more apt to use appropriate strategies and modify their teaching behaviors in teaching situations which include students of diverse cultures, linguistic and ethnic groups. Some teachers appear to hold negative attitudes regarding the inclusion of second language learners in their mainstream classrooms. This is observed in their teaching behavior, the interaction and communication with their ELL students and their parents.

Teachers' attitudes toward their students have been shown to be a predictor of student success (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1989). Their attitudes are important because they determine, along with skills and teachers efficacy, the internal motivation to interact favorably with their students which in turn leads to greater student performance (Brisk, 1998). The fundamental importance of teacher attitude in predicting student success motivated the researcher to study the factors that determine teacher attitude.

The researcher employed a quantitative research design in the study. Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the researcher's university and the superintendent of the relevant school district. The study was conducted in a public elementary school district in South Florida. The instrument that was used to collect the data was a two part survey self-designed by the researcher. Surveys were distributed to a random sample of elementary public school teachers in the school district in South Florida. Criteria for participation were teachers who had English language learners in their mainstream classrooms.

The survey instrument consisted of two parts. The first part contained demographic and background questions. These were used to obtain the independent variables i.e. the factors examined for their effect on attitude. The second contained statements which were used to measure the respondents' attitude (dependent variable). The latter part of the survey was self-designed by the researcher, as no appropriate instrument to determine mainstream teacher attitudes toward teaching English language learners was found in an exhaustive review of the literature. It was developed by reviewing literature on survey design, and combining sample surveys on cultural and linguistic diversity (Dillman, 1997). The attitude questionnaire contained thirty statements. The statements were related to teacher's attitudes, behavior, strategies and perceptions regarding English language learners and parent communication. The teachers were asked to respond to the statements using a 10 point Likert scale. (1 = strongly disagree; 10 = strongly agree). A total of 500 surveys were distributed and two hundred and seventy nine fully completed surveys were returned (response rate of 45%).

Twenty two surveys were excluded because of incomplete data. Surveys were confidential and participation was voluntary.

The data was analyzed using SPSS software. A total of five different statistical analyses were used in the study. These included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, independent samples t- test analysis, one way ANOVA analysis and a multiple regression analysis.

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher focused on ten independent variables. They are identified as: age, gender, experience, ethnic background, and administrative support, cross-cultural experience, proportion of ELL students, English as native language, specific linguistic minority training and being born outside the United States. The dependent variable in the study is attitude.

The questions posed in this research study and a review of the answers provided by the statistical analysis follows:

1. Does age affect the attitude of mainstream teachers towards the ELL students in their classrooms? Teacher age did not have a statistically significant contribution to the affect of teachers' attitudes toward the ELL students in their mainstream classrooms. The researchers chose this variable as she believed that an older teacher may be more experienced in using a variety of teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of all students. Alternately, younger teachers may be more enthusiastic, flexible and tolerant when teaching a diverse population of students. The review of literature had very limited research in this area.
2. Does gender affect the attitude of mainstream teachers towards the ELL students in their classrooms? Although the mean attitude score for females was slightly greater than

males, gender overall failed to have a statistically significant effect on the attitudes of teachers toward ELL in the mainstream. The review of literature has suggested that female teachers are more receptive and competent in working with a diverse student population. The majority of teachers in United States schools are female, a fact reflected in this study in which a far greater number of female than male teachers responded to the survey. The relatively small number of male respondents in this study may account for the lack of a statistically significant effect of gender on attitude.

3. Does teaching experience contribute to the attitude of mainstream teachers?

The bivariate correlation study revealed that the amount of teacher experience did not have a statistically significant affect on attitude of teachers toward the ELL student in the mainstream classroom. The researcher used experience as an independent variable with the assumption that the more experience a teacher has, the more exposure they may have had to students requiring diversified teaching strategies. This impression was not borne out by the study.

4. Does racial/ethnic background contribute to the teachers' attitudes and perceptions about the cognitive abilities of ELL students in the mainstream? In the one way ANOVA analysis racial/ethnic background significantly contributed to teachers' attitudes toward ELL students in their mainstream classrooms. White teachers had significantly less favorable attitudes than their Hispanic and Black colleagues.

5. Does amount of administrative support contribute towards the attitude of mainstream teachers of ELL students? Bivariate correlation analysis for teacher attitude and administrative support revealed a statistically significant correlation between these variables.

6. Does a teacher's cross-cultural experience influence their attitude in instructional settings with ELL students in their mainstream classroom? Independent samples t-test analysis revealed that teacher attitude is significantly improved when there has been prior cross-cultural experience.
7. Does the proportion of ELL students in the classroom contribute to the attitude of mainstream teachers? Bivariate correlation analysis indicated that having a greater proportion of ELL students in mainstream classrooms contributes in a positive manner to the attitudes of their teachers.
8. Does having English as one's native language affect the attitude of teachers towards their mainstream ELL students? Independent samples t-test analysis suggests that teachers whose native language is English do not have as favorable attitudes toward their ELL students as those whose native language is not English.
9. Does specific linguistic minority training of teachers affect their attitude towards the ELL students in their mainstream classrooms? Independent samples t-test analysis indicated that teachers with specific language minority training had significantly more favorable attitudes than teachers without such training.
10. Does being born outside the United States affect the attitude of teachers towards their mainstream ELL students? Being born outside the USA positively affects the attitude of mainstream teachers towards their ELL students using Independent samples t-test analysis. Being born outside the United States gives individuals an immediate exposure to a different culture, different language and dialect. People born outside the United States are automatically connected to a diverse culture, ethnicity and language. The

“lived experiences” of culturally and ethnically diverse teachers is a solid foundation from which they can begin to self reflect.

11a. What is the combined effect of the above independent variables on the dependent variable (teacher attitude)? The set of independent variables in aggregate explained almost 30% of teacher attitude (R Square .296). The correlation is statistically significant and moderately strong, indicating that some 70% of the variation in teacher attitude is explained by other variables not included in this study.

11b. What is the unique effect of each of these independent variables on attitude?

Cross-cultural experience had the greatest positive standardized Beta weight with teacher attitude. The score was .278 at the .01 level of significance ($p = .000$). Cross-cultural experience is thus the most significant factor contributing to teacher attitude in this study. Teachers with cross-cultural experience expressed more favorable attitudes toward the linguistic minority students in their mainstream classrooms. This was seen across all ethnic groups. This finding is relevant for colleges and universities in the development of their teacher training programs. The research suggests that teacher preparation programs should require all students to participate in cross-cultural field experiences. Field experiences should provide future teachers the opportunity to study and teach in a variety of communities with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Students cannot develop sensitivity to cultural pluralism merely through memorization of facts, attending lectures and reading from text-books. Cross-cultural experiences allow teachers to learn through authentic opportunities and not only through knowledge gained in lecture rooms. Through these experiences pre-service teachers are able to learn what it feels like to be unable to communicate with the language of the mainstream culture. These field

experiences give teachers the opportunity to self-reflect and often challenge their beliefs and stereotypic attitudes. Field experiences encourage teachers to step outside their boundaries of “communicentric bias” as they immerse themselves in a variety of cultural experiences.

Ethnicity had the second strongest effect on attitude in a negative manner. The beta weight for the white dummy variable was -.265 at the 0.05 level of significance ($p = .021$). This finding implies that White teachers have significantly less favorable attitudes than their Hispanic and Black colleagues.

Administrative support of teachers had the 3rd strongest effect on attitude, with a beta weight of .246 at the .001 level of significance ($p = .000$). Those teachers who had less favorable attitudes reported that they had little support from their administrators. The findings of this study support previous research among school personnel which emphasizes the importance of collaboration among staff in order to serve the needs of ELL students. This research also emphasizes the importance of support from administrators in guiding and encouraging mainstream teachers who have a diverse population of students in their classrooms. Some teachers commented that administrators at the school where they teach take little interest in the achievement of the English language learners enrolled in their schools. School leadership needs to remain optimistic and supportive despite staff transfers and or budget cuts. According to Clair and Adger (1999) “In order to make teaching and learning a priority, principals must safeguard teacher and student time, engage the entire staff in taking responsibility for the education of English language learners, model collegial relationships with teachers and students and participate actively in the learning community of the school” (p.2).

Specific ELL training had the 4th greatest effect on attitude. The positive standardized Beta weight with teacher attitude was .133 at the .01 level of significance ($p = .013$). The number of teachers that had linguistic minority training according to the definition of this study was 80%. This impressive statistic contrasts with the relatively small number of teachers reporting that they had training in the teaching of ELL students in the US Department of Education Statistics Survey 2002. According to these statistics only 34.9% of Florida teachers reported that they had eight or more hours of training on preparation to teach ELL students. The large number of teachers with linguistic minority training in the present study may be a reflection of the population studied, but is no doubt at least partially due to the fact that such training has recently become mandatory. In spite of this, it is evident that the methodology of this type of training needs improvement. Perhaps with an improvement in methodology and better integration of linguistic minority training in teacher training programs, and across the curriculum, teachers will be more effectively prepared. This will lead to an improvement in both knowledge and attitude of teachers of an increasingly diversified student population.

Age, gender, teaching experience, proportion of ELL students, birth in the USA and English as native language did not have a statistically significant affect on teacher attitude in the multiple regression analysis.

Conclusion and Implications

The major objective of this research was to determine the factors that affect the attitudes of teachers towards the ELL students in their mainstream classrooms. The major factors that emerged from the multiple regression study were (in decreasing order of

importance): Cross-cultural experience, Ethnicity, Administrative support and Specific ELL training. Three other factors studied (greater proportion of ELL students in mainstream classroom, English not teacher's native language and Birth outside the USA) had an influence on teacher attitude when studied individually, but failed to reach a level of significance when evaluated along with the other variables in the multiple regression study. This finding suggests that these three factors have at least some effect on teacher attitude, despite them not being major factors according to this study.

The major contribution of cross-cultural experience and ethnicity to teacher attitude, underlines the importance of recruiting a more diverse faculty in both schools and colleges of education. This diversity should relate not only to factors such as gender and ethnicity, but should also include a background with cross-cultural experience. A staff from diverse ethnicity and cultural backgrounds can provide role models for the diverse student population. This would also assist with successful communication with both students and their families who need guidance learning a new language and culture. Diversified staff members are able to learn from one another's differences in heritage, while also having the opportunities to role model interethnic collaboration for their students.

The importance of cross-cultural experience in affecting teacher attitude also necessitates that this component be a mandatory requirement in teacher preparation programs. Ideally this should be obtained by travel and study abroad and/or by field experiences with linguistically and culturally diverse students. Additionally, during their practicum period, all student teachers should be required to spend time observing and instructing culturally and linguistically diverse students. When studying the demographic

profile of teachers across the United States, it is recommended that a greater effort be placed on encouraging all high school students, especially those of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, to choose teaching as a future career.

The impressive contribution of administrative support to teacher attitude in this study emphasizes the importance of administrators being held accountable for supporting teachers who instruct linguistic minority students. This support should take the form of additional guidance, additional funding and the provision of additional resources. This could best be achieved by improved communication between colleges, universities, the State Department of Education and school administration. This collaborative effort is necessary to determine the unique needs and challenges involved in the ongoing successful education of ELL students.

In spite of the dramatic increase in enrollment of ELL students, and the introduction of legislation in an attempt to accommodate them, the preparation of teachers to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students has not kept pace with this need. Cross cultural sensitivity professional development training programs are equally important to college educators as they are to teachers in schools. The teacher of the future must be prepared for tomorrow's students by teacher educators in colleges and universities. The U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics Survey in 2002 indicated that 42% of teachers nationwide taught students with limited English proficiency. In spite of this, only 19% of these teachers had 8 or more hours of training in the past 3 years on how to best instruct these students. The statistics in Florida at 34% was slightly better, perhaps due to the 1990 Consent Decree, which requires Florida teachers to complete courses in specific training to teach culturally and

linguistically diverse students. Since that time there has clearly been an improvement in linguistic minority training of teachers, at least in the group of teachers sampled in this study, in which 81% had prior ELL training.

The major contribution of specific ELL training to teacher attitude in this study implies that training programs should provide pre-service and current teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully meet the needs of a diverse student population. Multicultural and linguistic diversity training should be integrated into all teacher education classes and not simply offered as separate isolated courses as is still often the norm. Florida has taken the lead in this regard. A number of Florida's institutions of higher education are infusing ESOL training successfully into teacher preparation programs. Additionally, professional development for current teachers should emphasize the importance of the influence of teachers' attitudes on students' motivation and achievement.

It is interesting to note that in this study specific ELL training only ranked 4th in importance in its effect on teacher attitude, following cross-cultural experience, ethnicity and administrative support. This suggests that although specific ELL training is important in its effect on teacher attitude, improvement in the presentation, content and methodology of this training may be required for it to have a truly significant effect. The data collected from this research study emphasizes the need for colleges to reexamine their programs to ensure that all new teachers will be prepared to understand the cultural, social, political and emotional aspects of teaching English language learners in a mainstream classroom. It is no longer practical for teachers to adopt a single teaching strategy, especially in situations where the students' composition is diverse and

educational needs are different. It is also necessary for educators to review the “one size fits all curriculum”. Curriculum reforms should move toward an “ethnocentric” curriculum to an “egalitarian” curriculum which would incorporate the diverse needs of the student population. It is essential to develop in future teachers a sensitivity and understanding of the cultural, ethnic, social and linguistic factors that will have an impact on the academic and emotional development of each child.

It is important for teacher training programs to expose future teachers to the realities of the classroom in the early stages of their teaching preparation programs so that they can make a realistic commitment to teaching. This can be accomplished with field experiences and student teaching in a variety of diverse settings in the early stages of pre-service teacher training. Teachers need to develop the skills that are necessary to be well equipped to respond to students’ individual needs and differences such as first language, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic class, personalities and parent beliefs.

One of the loopholes in the Florida Consent Decree is that it allowed grandfathered teachers to be exempt from ESOL training if they had demonstrated “effective teaching” of ELL students. This policy was intended to ease the initial hardship of teachers to pursue additional coursework, and leaves a significant number of ELL educators without documented evidence of adequate ESOL training. In view of the importance of ELL training as implied in this study, these ‘grandfathered teachers’ together with administrators should be required to attend workshops regarding effective instruction of ELL students.

Teachers and teacher educators need ongoing federal, state, university and district support and collaboration to help meet the needs of English language learners in schools.

Limitations of Study

Two of the variables evaluated for their effect on teacher attitude (English not teacher's native language and birth outside the USA) had an influence on teacher attitude when studied individually using the Independent samples t-test, but failed to reach a level of significance when evaluated along with the other variables in the multiple regression study. It is possible that these variables may have attained a level of significance in the multiple regression study if the sample size had been greater. The sample size for teachers who did not have English as their native language was only 29 and the number of teachers not born in the United States only 30. An additional limitation is that the study was confined to a teacher population in a specific school district in South Florida and may not be representative of the nation as a whole.

Recommendations for Further Research

To further our understanding of methods to improve the education of ELL students, future studies of both a qualitative and quantitative nature should be conducted. This study provides a basis for such future research and the recommendations are as follows:

Further research should be done evaluating pre-service teacher programs and professional development workshops. What type of training is most effective in enhancing teacher attitude? Which specific field experiences in multicultural settings have the greatest positive effect on teacher attitude? Which specific academic programs abroad, and which school settings in other countries contribute most to the enhancement

of teacher attitude? How much training is actually needed to have a significant positive impact on teacher attitude?

This study explored mainstream teachers' attitudes towards their ELL students. Future qualitative research should be conducted to evaluate the feelings and impressions of ELL students regarding their mainstream teachers. This can be achieved through both interviews and observations. Additionally, quantitative research should be considered to investigate the effect of teachers' attitudes on English language learners' achievements in the mainstream classroom. Hopefully both types of research can provide further insight into the emotional and cognitive needs of non-native English speaking students.

Obtaining a larger sample size for the variables that were statistically significant individually and not in the multiple regression analysis may provide further insights into the true importance of these variables.

Expanding the study into other school districts in Florida and the rest of the nation will permit a broader understanding of the issue over a larger and more varied population.

The goal of this research study was to determine which factors contribute most to the attitudes of teachers of ELL students enrolled in mainstream classrooms. The goal was met from the point of view that a number of factors were found that significantly contribute towards teacher attitude. However, only one third of the contributing factors were elucidated in this study. Additional research will be necessary to determine other factors involved in the development of teacher attitude.

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Appendix A
Institutional Review Board Approval

LYNN UNIVERSITY
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA

May 5, 2004

Gail Ingrid Hirschfield


Re: IRB Review 2004-011


Dear Ms. Hirschfield:

Thank you for submitting the documentation of Palm Beach County School District approval of your proposal entitled "Factors Which Affect the Attitudes of Teachers of English Language Learners Enrolled in Mainstream Classroom".

The Institutional Review Board has given final approval of your proposal.

Best of luck in conducting your research!

Sincerely,


Farideh Farazmand, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board, Chair

Cc: Dissertation Chair, Dr. Dembowski

Appendix B

**Letter from School District's Superintendent's Research Review Committee
granting approval to conduct research study**



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY
3370 FOREST HILL BOULEVARD, B-202
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33406-5871

ARTHUR C. JOHNSON, Ph.D.
SUPERINTENDENT

██████████ FAX: ██████████

April 29, 2004

Ms. Gail Ingrid Hirschfield
██████████
██████████

Dear Ms. Hirschfield:

The Superintendent's Research Review Committee has approved your request to conduct research about Factors Which Affect the Attitudes of Teachers of English Language Learners Enrolled in Mainstream Classrooms at the following 49 elementary schools:

Acreage Pines Elementary	Freedom Shores Elementary	Morikami Park Elementary
Addison Mizner Elementary	Galaxy Elementary	New Horizons Elementary
Allamanda Elementary	Hagen Road Elementary	North Grade Elementary
Banyan Creek Elementary	Hammock Pointe Elementary	Orchard View Elementary
Berkshire Elementary	H. L. Johnson Elementary	Palmetto Elementary
Boca Raton Elementary	Heritage Elementary	Panther Run Elementary
Calusa Elementary	Indian Pines Elementary	Plumosa Elementary
Citrus Cove Elementary	J.C. Mitchell Elementary	Poinciana Elementary
Coral Reef Elementary	Jupiter Elementary	Sandpiper Shores Elementary
Coral Sunset Elementary	Jupiter Farms Elementary	S.D. Spady Elementary
Crosspointe Elementary	Lantana Elementary	Starlight Cove Elementary
Cypress Trails Elementary	Liberty Park Elementary	Sunrise Park Elementary
Crystal Lake Elementary	Lighthouse Elementary	Waters Edge Elementary
Del Prado Elementary	Limestone Creek Elementary	Whispering Pines Elementary
Discovery Key Elementary	Loxahatchee Groves Elementary	Wellington Elementary
D. D. Eisenhower Elementary	Manatee Elementary	
Forest Hill Elementary	Melaleuca Elementary	

The purpose of your study is to improve the academic achievement of linguistically diverse students. To perform your research, you will invite all teachers who have LEP students in their mainstream classrooms to complete a survey requiring about 15 minutes of their time. You will ask the principal to collect the completed surveys and return them to you in pre-addressed, stamped envelopes. At no time will your study involve students, other school staff, school facilities, or resources.

As you conduct your research, please use the following guidelines:

- Submit to this office, a signed Affidavit of Good Moral Character for any additional researchers before they begin. (A blank affidavit form is enclosed.)
- Obtain permission from the principal before beginning.
- If your research requires the use of additional resources in the future, you must first submit a written request to this office and then wait for a response before proceeding.

Gail Ingrid Hirschfield

April 29, 2004

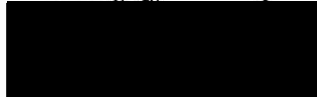
Page 2

- One copy of the study results with an executive summary must be submitted to the Department of Research, Evaluation and Accountability no later than one month after completion of the research.

According to our District's procedures, participation is voluntary.

Thank you for your interest in our school district.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Marc Baron.

Marc Baron, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Research, Evaluation, and Accountability

MB:bls

Enclosure

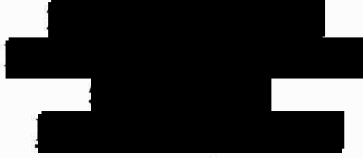
c: Ann Killels, Chief Academic Officer
Dr. Mary Ann DuPont, Assistant Superintendent
Carole Shetler, South Area Superintendent
Marisol Ferrer, North Area Superintendent
Janis Andrews, West Area Superintendent
Rodney Montgomery, Central Area Superintendent
Selected Elementary School Principals

Appendix C

Sample letter to School Principals requesting permission for their teachers to complete surveys



GAIL I. HIRSCHFIELD



Sample Letter

May 5, 2004

Dear Principal,

My name is Gail Hirschfield and I am a doctoral candidate at Lynn University. I am in the process of completing a research study titled "Factors Which Affect the Attitudes of Teachers of English Language Learners Enrolled in Mainstream Classrooms". I have received approval from the Palm Beach County School Superintendent and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Lynn University to conduct a research study with teachers in Palm Beach County Elementary Schools. Copies of these documents of permission are attached. I am requesting your assistance and approval to please allow as many teachers in your school to participate in completing a survey. The **criteria** for participation in this study are teachers who have **Limited English Proficient (LEP) / English Language Learners (ELLs)** students in their **mainstream classrooms**.

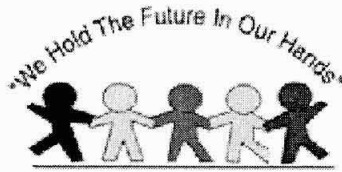
In follow-up to this letter, I will be contacting you to determine a convenient time to drop off the surveys at your school. At that time I would appreciate your help in distributing the survey instruments which should be completed by your teachers who meet the above criteria, and returned to you as soon as possible. It is important that the survey be **completed** before the end of this **current school year**. Letters of explanation for participating teachers will be attached to the survey instruments. The survey should take no more than fifteen minutes for participants to complete. I would be more than willing to personally come to the school to administer the survey at one of your faculty meetings if need be. After dropping off the surveys, I will be giving you a follow-up call to arrange a convenient time for their collection. If you have any questions, or would like me to visit the school, please contact me by e-mail or at one of the above numbers. Thank you again for your assistance. I appreciate you taking time from your busy schedule to help me complete this important research study, which will hopefully benefit both teachers and students in the school community.

Yours Sincerely,

Gail Hirschfield

Appendix D

Cover letter attached to Survey Instrument



Control Number _____

Dear Colleague,

You have been selected to participate in a research study by Gail Hirschfield in the Ph.D. program at Lynn University, Boca Raton, Florida, under the supervision of Dr. Frederick Dembowski.

This survey is to be completed by teachers who have students with Limited English Proficiency in their mainstream classrooms (ELL-English Language Learner / LEP-Limited English Proficient / ESOL-English Speakers Of Other Languages).

Participants involved in this study should complete the attached two part survey. The first part is a demographic characteristics survey, which also consists of questions regarding your background experiences. The second part will involve responding to statements regarding the ELL/LEP/ESOL students in your mainstream classrooms. Your total participation time in this activity should be approximately ten to fifteen minutes.

Please respond to all of the questions in this two part survey. All information will be held in the strictest confidence (anonymous) and will be used for research purposes only. Your name/signature should therefore not be placed on the survey. In addition to answering the questions, please feel free to include any comments in the space provided.

The goal of this research study is to better understand the educational issues regarding the teaching of ELL/LEP/ESOL students in mainstream classrooms. Upon request, a copy of the analysis and final research will be provided to you. Thank you in advance for your participation. I appreciate you taking time from your busy schedule to complete this survey.

Completion of the questionnaire will indicate your consent to participate in the study. Please do not include your name on the survey. Return the survey to your school principal as soon as possible. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at [REDACTED] or e-mail me at [REDACTED]. Thank you for your assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

Gail Hirschfield

Appendix E
Survey Instrument

Part 1Demographic and Background Information

Instructions: Please respond to each of the following questions by placing a check, circling or printing in the appropriate space. Please answer **all** questions and only provide one answer for each question.

1. What is your present age?
 _____ Years

2. Please indicate your gender
 _____ Female
 _____ Male

3. Ethnic Background
 _____ White (Non-Hispanic)
 _____ Black (Non-Hispanic)
 _____ Hispanic
 _____ American Indian/Alaskan Native
 _____ Asian/Pacific Islander
 _____ Haitian
 _____ Other
 Specify: _____

4. Country of Birth

5. What is your total number of years experience as a teacher? (include this year)
 _____ Years

6. What are the number of ELL/LEP/ESOL students and total number of students in your current mainstream classroom?
 _____ number of ELL/LEP/ESOL students in my mainstream classroom
 _____ total number of students in my mainstream classroom

7. Is English your native / primary language?
 _____ Yes
 _____ No

8. Have you received specific training in teaching Limited English Proficient (LEP) students?
 _____ Yes
 _____ No
 If yes, please explain _____

9. Cross-cultural experience

a. Have you lived outside the United States?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If yes, briefly describe including duration _____

b. Have you studied outside the United States?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If yes, briefly describe including duration _____

c. Have you taught outside the United States?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If yes, briefly describe including duration _____

10. What is the amount of classroom support with ELL/LEP/ESOL students provided by your school administration? (for example, does administration offer help and guidance with these students and are resources and professional development available?) On a scale of 0% to 100%, with 0% representing minimum support and 100% maximum support.

_____ %

Example: *Strongly disagree* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 *Strongly agree* 9 10

7. I discourage my ELL students from using their native language in my class.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. Effort is as important to me as achievement when grading the work of my ELL students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. It is acceptable to lessen the quantity of coursework for ELL students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. Mainstream teachers should be required to attend pre-service/
in-service training to meet the needs of Limited English Proficient students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. Teachers should not modify assignments for the ELL students in the mainstream class.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12. I believe that ELL students are capable of performing at the same or higher level than that of their mainstream peers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

13. I understand how cultural factors in a student's home environment may influence his/her social interaction and academic achievement.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

14. I welcome the inclusion of ELL students in my mainstream classroom.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

15. Modifications should not be made in standardized assessments for ELL students to eliminate cultural and linguistic biases.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Example: *Strongly disagree* *Strongly agree*
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

25. Having Limited English Proficient students in my classroom is detrimental to the progress of my other students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

26. I make an active effort to communicate and work with the parents of my ELL students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

27. I experience frustration in conferences with parents of my culturally and linguistically diverse students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

28. I am uncomfortable with people whose cultures and values are different than mine.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

29. Parents of ELL students have unrealistic expectations for their children.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

30. I believe that additional funds and programs should be provided to assist in the education of Limited English Proficient students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments:

Appendix F
Pilot Study Feedback Questionnaire

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