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PLANNING FOR CHANGE WHILE CHANGING THE PLAN: A CASE STUDY OF  
STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF AN ELEMENTARY ELL PROGRAM REDESIGN

Joanne Panopoulos

Educational Leadership

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of  
Doctor of Education  
in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National Louis University

April 2014

PLANNING FOR CHANGE WHILE CHANGING THE PLAN: A CASE STUDY OF  
STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF AN ELEMENTARY ELL PROGRAM REDESIGN

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## ABSTRACT

This study shows how I, the leader, conceptualized and implemented a program redesign over the course of two years (2009-11). At the time of this study I was faced with multiple factors which led to the inspiration for change: (a) the relatively rapid increase in the number of students needing ELL services, (b) a growing teacher concern for ELLs performing in the core academic areas, and (c) greater emphasis on improving level of English proficiency and overall academic performance for placement purposes in the ELL program and in the regular education class, and (d) the change of exit criteria in January 2010 by the state for ELL students. The purpose of this research study was to assess how administrators and teachers in an elementary school perceived the first two years of a new ELL program at Wiley from conceptualization to implementation. In order to answer the exact questions of inquiry identified in the following chapters, I gathered a team of five staff members who would review and assist with this complex change process. I chose to use a case study methodology approach that focused on the change process experienced by the district while conceptualizing and implementing a program redesign for ELLs. I gathered data through the use of surveys, interviews, and artifacts to draw my conclusions. Overall, staff appreciated the awareness and identification of the issue of the changing ELL population and setting a plan to address the concerns. However, because this study was based on a two year process, the findings indicated a need for more time to address the entire process. More time would be used to create a culture of collaboration for staff and schedule additional time to fully implement a three- to five-year redesign plan.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Explanation of the Problem**

#### **ELL History at Wiley**

The English Language Learner (ELL) program at Wiley Elementary School<sup>1</sup> has evolved since it began in 1974. No data were found with regard to the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) being served in 1974, but feedback from staff members who were employed in the district at the time reported that few students received ELL services. Since 1974, services for ELL students in the district have varied based on students' language needs. ELL services were provided by one ELL teacher using a flexible service delivery model. Students were pulled from general instruction and provided direct instruction using reading strategies that included reteaching and preteaching. Over the course of the past 10 years, the program was expanded to meet an increase of ELL students and the increasing expectations of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). NCLB required that all children, including ELLs, reach high academic standards by demonstrating proficiency in English language arts and mathematics by 2014 (Abedi & DietaI, 2004). Schools and districts must help ELL students, among other subgroups, make continuous progress toward this goal, as measured by performance on state tests, or risk serious consequences. An additional ELL teacher was added, and services were increased to include bilingual support, sheltered instruction, push-in services, and consultative services.

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<sup>1</sup> A pseudonym. All names and identifying characteristics have been changed to protect participants.

During the 2008-09 school year, the ELL staff at Wiley served 92 ELL students out of a total of 540 students in kindergarten through fifth-grade. Due to District 300<sup>2</sup> procedures for sectioning students, ELL students were placed in multiple classrooms for an even distribution, without much emphasis put on students' English language proficiency. Because of this equal distribution of students and the varying levels of English language proficiency, the ELL teachers struggled to schedule the ELL services for students. The students were spread amongst many teachers and had different classroom schedules. As the researcher, I saw this predicament as an advantage for the ELL students. They were integrated with English-speaking students and had more opportunities to participate at higher levels of learning in flexible groups with other ELL students inside of the regular classroom; there were small groups of ELLs in any single classroom. A disadvantage to having the ELLs equally distributed among classrooms without attention to their academic and language acquisition levels involved instructional strategies and tools. These resources were not maximized for ELLs because the ELL students in each class had various English language acquisition levels and academic abilities.

ELL services offered to students in 2009-10 averaged from anywhere between 25 to 40 minutes of ELL services daily, depending on scheduling opportunities. The ELL teachers worked hard to offer more time for students with lower English proficiency levels but were restricted by the master schedule and classroom schedules. As a result of the master schedule and individual classroom schedules, the most time the ELL teachers could offer each student was a standard 25 to 40 minutes daily. A student's level of

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<sup>2</sup> A pseudonym. All names and identifying characteristics have been changed to protect participants.

English proficiency is defined as one of six categories: (a) entering, (b) beginning, (c) developing, (d) expanding, (e) bridging, and (f) reaching (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment [WIDA] Consortium, n.d.). The protocol for sectioning during the 2009-10 school year placed no great emphasis on ELL students' academic performance or English proficiency levels. I saw the need to change that by having educational teams place a greater emphasis on these two particular areas to assist in making instructional decisions about ELL services students were receiving. The following vignette illustrates that the types of ELL services offered at Wiley varied from "pull-out" services to "push-in" services, and consultation with general education teachers. These types of services had been in place since the inception of the ELL program in 1974; at the time of the redesign conceptualization, these services were out of compliance with state mandates. The vignette below provides an inside look at the discussions that typically occurred among the ELL teachers who worked hard to use the available data to make instructional decisions for students. The ELL teachers were striving to support their ELL students with a program model that did not exactly exist in District 300. The model the ELL teachers were using consisted of using the ELL students' annual standardized ACCESS Test scores and then scheduling pullout services based on the standard amount of minutes District 300 offered per the language level of each student. Furthermore, there was very little collaboration with the general education teams when it came time for placing ELL students in homerooms for the following school year. If teams were to move to a process that included a review of ELL student data and collaborative discussions focused on instruction, the model of services offered at District 300 would look different. My intent was to learn about and explore program

models for ELLs that would better suit the needs of the students and staff at Wiley. This study focused on the two-year journey from the recognition of the need for program redesign, the collaborative redesign of the program, and the implementation of the redesign.

**Teacher meeting on placement of ELL students prior to program redesign.**

Regularly attending staff at teacher meetings included Janis, the first-year director of student services at District 300; Karen, an ELL teacher of eight years, four of which were at Wiley; Amy, an ELL teacher of five years at Wiley; and Diane, the bilingual Korean teacher for one year at Wiley who had previously worked three years at Wiley as a general ELL teacher.

Regularly scheduled meetings were conducted once a month on Friday mornings. Janis, Karen, Amy, and Diane met one Friday morning to review scheduling for new students eligible for ELL services at Wiley. This monthly meeting time was typically set aside for the ELL staff to collaborate, share instructional decisions based on data, and problem-solve any other issues that might arise. At the September monthly meeting, it was common for most of the meeting time to be used for scheduling students who had recently registered in the district and needed to be placed in a homeroom. Another topic typically included in the September meeting was identifying when the students would have their ELL minutes scheduled with the ELL teacher. Homeroom determinations—the sectioning of students—were ordinarily planned during the spring of the prior school year. The school had used an established protocol for sectioning all students to create an equal distribution of students among the homerooms/classrooms. The protocol for sectioning included looking closely at the numbers of boys and girls, the students with

individual education plans (IEPs), and ELLs. This particular meeting had only one agenda item: to review new students eligible for ELL services based on the results of the Model Screener.

(Vignette)

September 3, 2009, 7:50 a.m.

Karen: Our agenda today includes the two new enrollments. That means we need to place these students in homerooms and identify who will provide and when they will receive ELL services. Just yesterday, Thursday, I finished testing two new students with the Model Screener. I tested a first-grade boy whose first language was Russian and a fourth-grade boy whose first language was Korean.

The first-grade boy scored a 4.2 on literacy and 4.5 as his composite score. The fourth-grade Korean-speaking child scored a 1.9 on literacy and a 2.5 as his composite score. Amy, since you work with first- and third-grades, we will help plan for the first-grade student with you. Now, let's talk about what homeroom teacher and class would be the ideal place for the first-grade boy and then what his ELL services would look like.

Diane: Well, if you don't mind, let me start with the fourth-grader, since I have the Korean bilingual program, and identifying his bilingual services requires my schedule and me. I still need to think about whose homeroom he can be assigned, since there are already two of my students (Korean-speaking fourth-graders) in one homeroom together. I know our practice is to not place more than two bilingual students in one homeroom, so teachers can manage the needs of these students along with students identified with IEPs with special needs. However, if I place him in Mrs. Johnson's class, he won't have any peer models who speak Korean. Looking closely at his literacy score, a 1.9, and his composite score, a 2.5, I am afraid to place him in a homeroom on his own without any other Korean-speaking peers. I guess I will have to put him in Mrs. Johnson's class, since our sectioning process uses an equal distribution of student needs and the other sections (homerooms) are full. As far as his bilingual programming, again, based on his English proficiency scores, I will be able to support him for his reading, writing, math, and social studies. Because of the other students' schedules on my caseload, he will be in my class with kindergarteners and first-graders, making that difficult for me to host three levels of instruction at the same time. I guess I will have to do it, since I have 12 students receiving bilingual Korean services in kindergarten through fifth-grade, and I have to work around all the grade-level schedules.

Amy: Alright, it's nearing 8:20 and I didn't even get a chance to talk about the first-grade boy!

8:20 a.m.

Karen: Sounds like we have a plan for our fourth-grader. However, Amy, perhaps you can figure out what the recommendation of homeroom and services would be for her, since you work with first-grade students; then let all of us know through an e-mail. Before you check on the homeroom teacher, be sure you run it by all of us so we understand how you arrived at the decision. As for the fourth-grader, he will be in Mrs. Johnson's homeroom and receive bilingual support from Diane. The disadvantage to this schedule is that, when he's in Diane's class, he will be with first- and second-graders, since that is the only time the master schedule allows for Diane to work with the first- and second-grade students. Let's hope we don't have any more move-ins in fourth-grade this year, since all four sections (homerooms) have the maximum number of bilingual and ELL students per section.

The vignette illustrates the decisions made by the ELL teachers as they tried to create schedules for ELL students based on student needs. It was clear from the vignette that decisions for students' instruction was not always based on students' needs, but rather on the master schedule and space available in general education classes. This scenario provides a lens for the reader that demonstrates the barriers the ELL teachers experienced during a typical ELL team meeting. This example is one reason that led me to pursue options for an ELL program redesign for Wiley.

District 300 began collecting data on its student populations in 1991. These data indicated that 22 students in kindergarten through fifth-grade received ELL services at Wiley during the 1991-1992 school year. ELL services have evolved over time to include an increase in ELL staff members and face-to-face time with ELL students. An obstacle the ELL staff at Wiley had encountered was the sectioning practices for each grade-level; this sectioning occurred every year in preparation for the new school year. Because all of the classrooms were equally apportioned by several factors such as gender, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, special education need, ELL, and gifted or talented, all ELL students were scattered throughout the grade-level classrooms. This



distribution of students among different classrooms created a challenge for ELL teachers when they needed to “pull out” students for instruction. Not only did the ELL teachers have to pull students from one or two classrooms, but they also experienced difficulty with scheduling that time because the master schedule did not require regular education teachers to teach subjects during the same blocks of time. The only block of time that regular education teachers were required to follow was a 90-minute block of reading and writing. There was considerable variance in time spent on subject matter during the reading and writing among teachers within a grade-level.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Wiley had experienced a gradual but large (86%) increase in the number of ELL students enrolled over the past five years. Planning for any ELL program requires careful consideration, but four factors have made planning for ELL students a challenge: (a) the relatively rapid increase in the number of students needing ELL services, (b) growing teacher concern for ELLs performing in the core academic areas, (c) greater emphasis on improving level of English proficiency and overall academic performance for placement purposes in the ELL program and in the regular education class, and (d) the change of exit criteria in January 2010 by the state for ELL students. Following is a detailed explanation of each factor that was considered in the redesign of the Wiley ELL program. The vignette demonstrates a need for some type of change or redesign to ELL services delivery at Wiley. As the researcher, I needed to learn about the program models for ELL students as well as consider what District 300 already had in place. I also had to consider what revisions needed to occur so that the state-mandated ELL services were provided and were in accordance with best practice.

### **Factor A: Increased Enrollment Limited Scheduling Opportunities**

The increased number of ELL students at Wiley in kindergarten through fifth-grade was the first challenge to delivering needed ELL services. Total student population of Wiley was approximately 500 per year. As indicated in Table 1, since the 2005-06 school year, Wiley had experienced a 133% increase in the number of second languages spoken and the number of students eligible for ELL services (see Appendix A).

Table 1

*Wiley 5-Year ELL Population Data Trends*

School year	Students eligible for ELL services ( <i>N</i> )	Different languages spoken ( <i>N</i> )
2005-06	57	9
2006-07	66	12
2007-08	88	15
2008-09	92	15
2009-10	106	21

As indicated in Table 1, Wiley experienced an 86% increase in students eligible for ELL services over the course of five years. The number of students eligible for ELL services nearly doubled, from 57 to 106. At the same time, the number of different languages spoken nearly tripled, beginning with nine different languages spoken in 2005 to 21 spoken in 2010, a 133% increase. Although no specific data are included in this study to demonstrate the changes in demographics for the district, most of the new students who moved into the district during the years of this study resided in apartment complexes.

The increase of student enrollment that included more students from homes where another language was spoken had an impact on the scheduling opportunities for all Wiley students. As illustrated in the vignette, there were limited scheduling opportunities for ELL teachers to address their students' needs. Due to the general configurations of ELLs in the regular education classes, scheduling ELL students for services by academic ability was a challenge. For these reasons, the program was redesigned to address the needs of the ever-growing ELL population at Wiley. This research study documents an investigation of the former program and the process for developing the redesigned program. In addition to examining the program redesign, I was interested in capturing the perceptions of the staff, stakeholders, and administrators as this redesign unfolded.

#### **Factor B: Teacher Concern within the Response to Intervention Framework**

The second challenge to delivering ELL services was the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework used at Wiley. The implementation of RtI, specifically the problem-solving process, was still evolving at Wiley. A system was set up, and the staff was following a general model of problem solving. Wiley teams were learning the RtI problem-solving process, specifically how to access and use student data. It was evident that the educational teams had faced a steep learning curve associated with using student data more regularly at team meetings. The challenge was also figuring out how to differentiate instruction and provide interventions for ELL students using the team problem-solving process. Other administrators and I observed many grade-level team meetings and monthly problem-solving meetings attended by regular education teachers who were concerned about how best to meet the academic needs of their ELL students. These observations led us to conclude that most classroom teachers were not adequately

trained to address the complex placement and instructional demands of ELLs. ELLs are more likely than any other group of students to be taught by a teacher who lacks appropriate teaching credentials (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Rumberger, 2008).

### **Factor C: Student Placement in ELL Program**

Determining student placement in the ELL program was a component of the problem-solving process that Wiley used as part of the Response to Intervention (RtI), and the problem-solving team decisions regarding ELL students were e another factor that impacted this study. At the onset of this study in 2009, staff had been minimally using students' English proficiency levels and overall academic performance as criteria for placement in both the ELL program and in regular education classes. The reason for this minimal use was that there had not been a standard communication or plan from the ELL teachers. It simply had not been that great of a concern with the fewer numbers of ELL students receiving services in prior years. The need for this plan of communication was simply not needed until this time. By being an observer of the problem-solving meetings, it was clear to me that this step of the problem-solving process posed concerns for the attending team. The examination of students' English proficiency levels and overall academic performance data were used as part of the problem-solving process within the RtI framework. Staff were experiencing difficulties discerning between ELL students' true abilities or whether the delay in their performance was attributed to their English proficiency levels and educational histories. Since the staff had not been formally trained in using these criteria to place students, this factor had an impact on staff's practices and was an additional consideration in the problem-solving process for ELL students.

## **Factor D: Change in ELL Exit Criteria**

In order to contextualize the challenging factors facing the staff at Wiley, the reader must understand the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) mandates for ELL teaching. In 2010, the ISBE (2009) implemented a new definition of English language proficiency for students in the state:

Effective January 1, 2010, a student must obtain an overall composite proficiency level of 4.8 as well as a literacy (reading/writing) composite proficiency level of 4.2 on the ACCESS for ELLs (*only* Tier B or C) to be considered English language proficient. (ISBE, 2009, para. 1)

This study documents the process by which Wiley proceeded to satisfy this mandate.

### **Research Question**

To address the various issues associated with an ever-increasing number of ELL students enrolling in Wiley, I led a team in conceptualizing and implementing a program redesign over the course of two years (2009-11). I wanted to study this process through the following inquiry question: (1) What was the nature of the complex change process staff and I observed and experienced as I led a two year program redesign for ELLs at the elementary level? To answer this question, I gathered a team of five staff members to review and assist with this complex change process. That team and the process are described in the following sections.

### **Process for Reviewing and Analyzing Data for Program Redesign**

A series of six, full-day Perfect Match workshops designed by Barbara Marler, an education specialist from the Illinois Resource Center, was offered in the fall and winter

of the 2009-10 school year. The workshops focused on program design, specifically in the areas of program delivery and services, curriculum, and assessment. In addition to the historical and legislative foundations relating to ELLs, each of these topics was addressed in a two-day workshop. The intent was for the district to revise its then-current program by applying the knowledge and work completed during the workshops.

Although the term used for workshop purposes was program design, I chose to use the term "program redesign" throughout this study based on the application of the information learned and applied to Wiley at the time of this study.

The six workshops were spread throughout the course of the academic year to allow team members to absorb and share with the faculty the knowledge they had gained, so that the larger community could benefit from the workshop. The larger community in this research study was the certified staff at Wiley. Although this plan was not the original mission of the stakeholder team that attended the workshops, it was the only way the district could initiate and support this professional development opportunity. Without an awareness and understanding of how the district was currently addressing ELLs, and the impact the new mandate would have on Wiley, restructuring or redesigning the ELL program would have been an insurmountable challenge.

### **Perfect Match Stakeholder Team**

A team of six staff members, including three ELL teachers, a literacy specialist, a school psychologist, and an administrator (me), participated in a professional development series hosted by the Illinois Resource Center called "The Perfect Match." The six-person team was chosen based on original parameters of roles of staff members provided by Marler (2009a, 2009b), which required these particular members to be

mentors and leaders for sustainable program change. These identified members are referred to as the ELL stakeholder team in this study. Districts attending the workshop were instructed to not exceed a seven-person team because teams larger than seven persons reduce team effectiveness.

When the director of student services (with input from the ELL staff and Wiley principal) established the ELL stakeholder team, it seemed as though a well-rounded team had been chosen to fulfill the expectations of both Perfect Match and the needs of the elementary school for program redesign. The school psychologist was chosen to fulfill the requirement of a team member who could interpret and analyze data critically and could bring an analytical perspective to the team. The three ELL teachers were chosen because they were the core of ELL services implementation. Another of Marler's (2009a, 2009b) requirements was that a general education staff member be present on the team. The principal of Wiley and I chose the literacy specialist, thinking she could serve a dual role. Because literacy is such a strong basis for language instruction, this staff member was intended to act as the general education voice as well as provide her area of expertise in literacy instruction. I chose to be the administrator on the team because I was responsible for district-wide ELL services and was integrally involved with the program prior to the formal involvement of Perfect Match. It is important to note that my background and experience had only been in the field of special education. I saw the need to learn more about ELLs and saw the opportunity from a leadership perspective as a positive endeavor for students, staff, and me. It was at this time that my role as director of student services and researcher of this study existed simultaneously. During the course of this two year study, I shared these two roles equally.

## **Research Methodology**

I used a case study methodology approach that focused on the change process experienced by the district while conceptualizing and implementing a program redesign for ELLs. As Stake (1995) explained, “in qualitative case study, we seek greater understanding of the case” (p. 16). This study captures the perceptions of the elementary teachers, ELL stakeholders, school principal, and from me (as self-participant and researcher) gathered through surveys and interviews after the first year of ELL program redesign implementation. I reveal the trials and tribulations as a self-participant and researcher. I describe my experiences during this process, and how I learned with my colleagues on the ELL stakeholder team. I then detail how the ELL stakeholder team provided professional development opportunities as part of the overall plan of implementation. The research questions sought to determine how planning for change was perceived and implemented for the staff at Wiley.

The purpose of this research study was to assess how administrators and teachers in an elementary school perceived the first two years of a new ELL program at Wiley from conceptualization to implementation. The first year of this study, described more as the conceptualization period during the course of the 2009-2010 school year, consisted of a stakeholder team attending a series of six workshops that focused on program reform. The second year of implementation followed with recommendations for the 2010-11 school year. Recommendations included some restructuring of staff resources and professional development opportunities for all staff to support delivery of a comprehensive program of services for the K-5 ELLs based on students’ academic development and English proficiency levels.



## **Conclusion**

Based on the four factors outlined in Chapter One, I saw a real need to research the ELL service delivery at Wiley through a leadership lens. After learning about the professional development opportunity, Perfect Match, I led the core group, the ELL stakeholder team, through a two-year process to improve ELL services for students. I wanted to learn and assess how administrators and teachers in an elementary school perceived the first two years of implementation of the ELL program redesign. The recommendations included some restructuring of staff resources and professional development opportunities for all staff to ensure a comprehensive program of services for kindergarten through fifth-grade ELLs.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The number of limited English proficient (LEP) children in the United States has soared in recent years. By 2015, it has been projected that 30% of the school-aged population in the United States will be ELLs (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006). Because NCLB (2002) mandated that these students become proficient in English and meet state standards for adequate yearly progress, educators and other school administrators have focused their attention on how to accomplish this daunting task. Of particular concern has been the requirement embedded in NCLB that any language instruction curriculum used to teach LEP children be tied to scientifically based research and be demonstrated to be effective (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). As stipulated in NCLB (2002), “all children will have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to receive a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments” (Section 1001). NCLB intended to support the needs of ELL populations and put pressure on teachers, schools, districts, and states to increase the number of ELL students who met state standards. Instruction that provides substantial coverage in the key components of reading—identified by the National Reading Panel (2000) as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension—has clear benefits for language-minority students (August & Shanahan, 2006). Since I had been in my role as student services director, every district in my township where I collaborated with other ELL administrators four times a year commented that their district was faced with finding ways to improve ELL literacy instruction.

In addition to the response by state and federal government agencies to meet the needs of language-minority students, educational institutions have been facing the reality of attempting to secure effective, formal schooling for all graduates to compete in the marketplace. Thomas and Collier (1997), in discussing the importance of schooling, remarked that “just to put food on the table for one’s family, formal schooling is crucial, and successful high school completion is the minimum necessary for a good job and a rewarding career” (p. 13). Their research findings demonstrated that long-term academic improvement should be made for language-minority students (Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Teaching language-minority students to read and write well in English has been an urgent challenge in K-12 schools. Literacy in English is essential to achievement in every academic subject, and to educational and economic opportunities beyond the classroom (August & Shanahan, 2006). According to NCLB (2002), all students in the United States are expected to have college and career readiness skills by the time they graduate high school. This sense of urgency is the same for language-minority students as it is for English-speaking students, but ELL students may face greater challenges to accomplish that objective because they have to learn the curriculum while also learning English.

The purpose of this study is to address the four factors described in Chapter One. Planning for any ELL program requires careful consideration. Four factors have surfaced over the years that have made planning for ELL students a challenge: (a) an increase in the number of students receiving ELL services, (b) teacher concern for ELLs performing in the core academic areas, (c) increased emphasis by the State of Illinois on students’ English proficiency levels and overall academic performance for placement purposes in

the ELL program and in the regular education classes, and (d) the change of exit criteria for ELL students in Illinois as of January 2010. The following research question used for this study helped to address this challenge.

### **Research Question**

1. What was the nature of the complex change process staff and I observed and experienced as I led a two year program redesign for ELLs at the elementary level?

This literature review contains two major sections: literature and the law on ELL education, and literature on change leadership. Both areas of literature contribute directly to this research study. The legal portion addresses the educational rights and instructional guidance required for ELLs and the educational institutions that provide those services the students. The literature on change leadership emphasizes that schools need a shared vision. “At both school and district levels, administrative tasks essential to teachers’ learning and learning communities include building a shared vision and common language about practice” (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006, p.80). This chapter is intended to provide a contextual understanding of the various components affecting ELL instruction today.

The chapter begins with the historical legislation that evolved into current federal legislation to address the rights of ELLs and the requirements of teaching and learning for ELLs. Both historical and federal legislation have had a lasting impact on how educational agencies execute their services and programs for ELLs, and especially so in the program and services for ELLs at Wiley. Once this foundation is established, relevant literature and specific guiding principles for reading instruction are described.

This portion of the chapter concludes with information on the local factors that have influenced change in ELL instruction and the impacts these factors have had on Wiley. The second portion of this chapter describes the leadership framework I used as this study was conducted: *Managing Complex Change* (Knoster, Villa, & Thousand, 2000).

### **Critical Legislation Related to ELLs**

Two federal cases have served as the backbone to the protections and rights of ELLs. The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution served as the foundation for these cases and guaranteed equal protection under the laws of the United States. Title VI, Section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any federally funded program. The Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974 included definitions of what constitutes denial of equal educational opportunity. Among these definitions was “failure of an educational agency to take appropriate actions to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by students in an instructional program” (EEOA, 1974, § 1203[f]). The EEOA required schools to “take affirmative steps” to overcome program barriers, as stipulated in the opinion filed for *Lau v. Nichols* (1974, § 568). These laws have formed the legislative basis for how schools support the educational needs of ELL students.

The core of the plaintiff’s complaint in *Lau* was that non-English-speaking students did not receive a meaningful education when they were taught in a language they did not understand (Sugarman & Widess, 1974). This case was offered to inform the reader of the protections and rights of the ELL student. Comments made by District 300 staff and community members at team meetings, curriculum nights, or parent-teacher conferences led me to provide a historical background to the staff of Wiley during the

process of this research study. It was through this process, specifically through professional development during the 2010-11 school year, that I explained the provisions of ELL services according to the requirements of the state of Illinois and provided resources to staff. My intent was to demonstrate the rights of these students, as compared to their primarily English-language-speaking peers, as well as to provide staff with the tools and resources to be better informed in making instructional decisions.

In *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), the decision made by the U.S. Supreme Court was based on the need for legislative backing of the EEOA of 1974. Providing all students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum was not equality of treatment for students who did not understand English; these students were effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974). Basic English skills were and are the fundamental component of the core curriculum that public schools teach. Starting in 1970, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) made the guidelines more specific, requiring school districts that were federally funded “to rectify the language deficiency in order to open” the instruction to students who had “linguistic deficiencies” (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974, para. 16). *Lau* prohibited schools, even schools that did not receive federal funding, from segregating LEP students from the general population.

The second case, *Casteñeda v. Pickard* (1981), resulted in further compliance standards issued by the Office of Civil Rights. This case addressed the matter of adequacy of district services. According to historical legislation, services for ELLs were originally determined at the federal level, after which each individual state would

determine the adequacy of ELL services by adopting state policy for public educational agencies.

*Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981) served as a precedent for current federal policy on ELL programs (Ragan & Lesaux, 2006). In 1978, Roy Castañeda, the father of two Mexican-American children, filed suit against the Raymondville Independent School District in Texas, claiming that his children were discriminated against because of their ethnicity and were being segregated based on a grouping system in the classroom. He also claimed that the school district failed to establish sufficient bilingual education programs, which would have aided his children in overcoming the language barriers that prevented them from participating equally in the classroom.

According to the ruling in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), school districts were required to take the necessary actions to provide students who did not speak English as their first language the ability to overcome the educational barriers associated with not being able to properly comprehend what was being taught to them. Castañeda argued that there was no way to sufficiently measure the approach of the school district in taking actions to overcome the language barriers for students who did not speak English as their first language (*Castañeda v. Pickard*, 1981). The court system ruled in favor of the school district, and Castañeda filed for an appeal, arguing that the federal court made a mistake.

In 1981, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled in favor of Castañeda (*Castañeda v. Pickard*, 1981). As a result of that decision, a three-part assessment protocol was established for determining how any program for English language learners would be held responsible for meeting the requirements of the EEOA of 1974. The final result of this case was the “Castañeda test,” which was designed to

determine the adequacy of district services. These services included evaluating programs, requiring schools to implement a program based on sound educational theory, designate enough resources and teachers to serve ELLs, and discontinue a program if it was not producing results (Ragan & Lesaux, 2006).

The decision in *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981) further ensured that “meaningful opportunity to participate” included not only the need for ELLs to be given the opportunity to learn English, but also the opportunity to learn grade-level, subject-area content:

In order to be able ultimately to participate equally with students who entered school with an English language background, the limited English speaking students will have to acquire both English language proficiency comparable to that of the average native speaker and to recoup any deficits which they may incur in other areas of the curriculum as a result of this extra expenditure of time on English language development. (*Castañeda v. Pickard*, 1981, p.27)

This federal court case provided guidelines that would require school districts to select educational programs of theoretical value for ELLs, implement them well, and then follow the long-term school progress of these students to assure equal educational opportunity (Thomas & Collier, 1997).

Protections provided by these laws have allowed ELL students the same access to education in public schools as those available to native English speakers. Without these legislative rulings, the United States would not be as advanced in supporting the educational needs of ELL students. In turn, it is this historical legislation that has



provided the foundation and direction for creating fair educational environments for all students.

### **Relevance of the Federal Cases to Wiley**

In response to *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), the guidance issued by the Office of Civil Rights in 1975 included specific procedures for determining appropriate instructional treatments and deciding when students were ready for mainstream education. The factor of limited scheduling opportunities for the large numbers of ELLs at Wiley fit closely with the first case because it addressed the matter of an appropriate amount of instruction for ELLs. The ELLs at Wiley were receiving anywhere between 25 and 40 minutes of services per day, with less regard for their English language needs. These minutes of instruction were heavily based on the master schedule and less on instructional needs of the students.

The case of *Casteñeda v. Pickard* (1981) determined the adequacy of district services to which ELL students must have access to support the full curriculum. A program in English as a second language (ESL) must be based on sound educational theory, be implemented effectively with adequate personnel and resources, and be evaluated for effectiveness. The second factor—the concern expressed by general education teachers of how to address ELLs’ academic needs—and the third factor—taking into account the students’ overall academic performance—made a closer look at the ELL services available at Wiley necessary. Both factors correlated directly with *Casteñeda v. Pickard*; there was a need to look closely at the ELL program and services offered at Wiley, and there was a need to address the concerns of the general education teachers regarding the academic needs of ELL students. Wiley needed to pay close

attention to the “Castañeda test” and its three factors: (a) theory, (b) practice, and (c) results. By using these three factors as a guide, the leadership team was able to demonstrate the need for revision of the ELL program that was in place in 2009.

*Lau v. Nichols* (1974) and *Casteñeda v. Pickard* (1981) have had a direct impact on the ELL services offered at Wiley. Both cases resulted in specific compliance requirements being established for all public schools to provide ELL services. These compliance requirements related directly to the factors identified in Chapter One, which were the basis for this research study.

### **Factors Influencing the Need for Redesign**

#### **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**

The NCLB Act (2002) was the federal reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. NCLB established nine purposes for language assistance programs, all of which were supposed to ensure that LEP children attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment, and meet the same challenging state academic standards as all children are expected to meet (Marler, 2009a, 2009b).

The fundamental principles underlying NCLB (2002) focused on high standards of learning and instruction with the goal of increasing academic achievement, particularly in reading and math, within all identified subgroups in the K-12 population. One such subgroup was the growing population of ELLs. NCLB increased awareness of the academic needs and achievement of ELLs because schools, districts, and states were held accountable for teaching English and content knowledge to this special and heterogeneous group of learners. ELLs presented unique challenges to educators because of the central role played by academic language proficiency in the acquisition and

assessment of content-area knowledge. Educators raised questions about effective practices and programs to support ELLs' academic achievement (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006). ELLs needed to acquire academic language because this skill was central to being successful with instruction and school. Postponing or interrupting academic development was likely to promote academic failure in the long term (Thomas & Collier, 1997). NCLB was the basis for all ELL services offered at Wiley because all ELL students were required to meet the academic standards of Illinois set forth in this legislation.

NCLB (2002) eliminated the Bilingual Education Act and replaced it under Title III with the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act (§ 3101). Under the new law, competitive grants were replaced with formula grants administered by state agencies, distributed on the basis of LEP student and immigrant student populations. The focus of NCLB for ELLs was on English acquisition and academic achievement in English, not bilingualism. Districts that failed to achieve this goal on the basis of criterion-based standardized testing faced financial penalties.

Currently under NCLB (2002), schools must make annual yearly progress (AYP) for all students, as well as student subgroups numbering over 40 at each grade-level tested. Among the student subgroups are ELLs, although ELL scores are exempt from the English language arts assessment for the first 10 months of attendance in a U.S. school. Failure to reach required proficiency levels by any subgroup within a school results in failure for the school. Other subgroups include students with disabilities, students from major racial and ethnic groups, and economically disadvantaged students; LEP students are frequently members of multiple subgroups. AYP also requires 95%

participation rate in testing for all students and within each subgroup in Grades 3 through 8. Individual states established baseline proficiency rates upon passage of the law, with gradually increasing trends established to reach 100% proficiency by 2014.

The requirement to make AYP affected teachers at Wiley due to the growing number of ELL students enrolled each year and the varied academic performance of these students. With an average of 20 to 30 new ELLs enrolling each year, test performance varied based on students' prior academic experiences and level of knowledge at entry. Students that had not had access to the program and curriculum offered at Wiley over a period of time were at a disadvantage when taking the required state assessments; hence, their test performance may have had a negative impact on the overall test results for the school. Wiley had been on the cusp of making AYP during these years and continued to be closely monitored by the state of Illinois.

Aside from the requirements to make AYP (NCLB, 2002), ELLs at Wiley had the right to effective instructional approaches and interventions. Exposure to effective instruction and intervention was expected to benefit ELLs in increased achievement, decreased academic difficulties, and less need for remediation that compromises the learning of ELLs. Research questions helped me to address the points made in NCLB and the two legal cases described earlier.

### **Impact of Federal Legislation at Wiley**

NCLB (2002) required all children, including ELLs, to reach high standards by demonstrating proficiency in English language arts and mathematics by 2014. Schools and districts were required to help ELLs, among other subgroups of students, make

continuous progress toward this goal (as measured by performance on state tests) or risk serious consequences.

As the percentage of proficiency increased each year, more and more school districts found that they were not making AYP for their ELL subgroups. In Illinois, during 2008-2010, the percentage of LEP students in public schools either meeting or exceeding standards in reading on the Illinois State Achievement Test (ISAT) was between 48.4% and 55.1%. The state AYP and Safe Harbor targets are presented in Table 2. Safe Harbor allowed schools an alternate method to meet subgroup minimum targets on achievement (see Appendix B). Table 2 shows the data representing the progress of Wiley toward AYP from 2008 to 2010 (Illinois Interactive Report Card [IIRC], 2008, 2009, 2010).

Table 2

*Wiley Safe Harbor Scores, 2008-2010*

Year	Minimum Safe Harbor (%)	Target (%)
2008	62.5	48.4
2009	70.0	53.6
2010	77.5	55.1

Failure to achieve target or minimum Safe Harbor scores was not a matter of the ELL students not making growth; it was a matter of the increase in proficiency being too aggressive for a population of learners whose native language was not English.

However, flexibility was afforded to students (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). To succeed in school, ELLs needed to master academic knowledge and skills at the same time that they were acquiring a second language. This was neither an easy task nor an

easy matter to monitor. Assessment tools that measured ELLs' progress were generally unable to separate language errors from academic errors (Hakuta, 2001).

Since LEP students exit the LEP subgroup once they attain English language proficiency, states may have difficulty demonstrating improvements on state assessments for these students. Accordingly, the other new flexibility would, for AYP calculations, allow states for up to two years to include in the LEP subgroup students who have attained English proficiency. This is an option for states and would give states the flexibility to allow schools and local education agencies (LEAs) to get credit for improving English language proficiency from year to year. (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, para. 2)

Besides a school district attempting to attain a proficiency level expected by the federal government, the challenge weighed heavily on individual staff members' attempts to have their students reach an aggressive target.

The steady increase in proficiency levels caused stress among the staff at Wiley; the staff felt the need to "decrease the gap" for these ELL students. The staff ultimately felt responsible not only to instruct and assess these students, but also to increase their academic performance according to the expectations of AYP (NCLB, 2002). Satisfying these simultaneous and intertwined goals was a daunting task for staff when students had varying levels of English proficiency and were working toward achieving high levels of academic language.

Standardized tests given to ELLs in English that measured student achievement across the curriculum were compared with those given to native English speakers. These tests were inappropriate measures in the first two to three years of ELLs' schooling

because, when tested in English, the tests underestimated what these students actually knew and could have demonstrated when tested in their primary language (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Only after several years of schooling in the second language could these standardized tests in English across the curriculum have been considered more appropriate measures to examine (Thomas & Collier, 1997). The level of educational programming for ELLs had a direct impact on their achievement. Thomas and Collier's (2002) research, conducted from 1985 to 2001, focused on the analysis of education services (programs) for language-minority students in U.S. public schools and the long-term academic achievement of these students. The research represented the most recent overview of the types of U.S. school programs provided for these linguistically and culturally diverse students and their long-term academic achievement in kindergarten through twelfth-grade (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Focusing first on program comparisons, Thomas and Collier's (2002) research:

Conducted from 1985 to 2001, summarized measures used for ELLs. Long-term achievement on nationally standardized tests (e.g., Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, Stanford 9, Terra Nova) in English total reading (the subtest measuring academic problem-solving across the curriculum, math, science, social studies, and literature) were used for students who entered the U.S. school district with little or no proficiency in English in kindergarten through twelfth-grade. Those data of ELLs had followed them to the highest grade-level reached by the program to date. When English as a Second Language (ESL) content classes were provided for two to three years and followed by immersion in the English mainstream, ELL graduates ranged from the 31<sup>st</sup> to the

40<sup>th</sup> normal curve equivalent with a median of the 34<sup>th</sup> normal curve equivalent (23<sup>rd</sup> percentile) by the end of their high school years. (Thomas & Collier, 2002)

In the case of Wiley, it would have been advantageous for the school district to support its general education teachers by providing the research-based educational resources and professional development opportunities with a systematic approach. In actuality, ELL students were receiving direct services by the ELL teacher with the use of research-based resources. However, Wiley had not taken the next step by providing a systemic application of the research-based instruction into the general education classrooms where ELL students were spending a majority of their day. In turn, ELL students would have benefited from the scientifically based research instruction and educational resources provided by their teachers.

### **Scientifically Based Research in ELL Instruction**

As stated earlier, “any language instruction curriculum used to teach limited English proficient children is to be tied to scientifically based research and must be demonstrated to be effective” (U.S. Department of Education, 2000, § 1001, p. 15). According to NCLB, as incorporated from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, “all children will have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to receive a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments” (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965, § 6301). Two documents (August & Shanahan, 2006; Francis et al., 2006) described the scientifically based research instruction and interventions, as referenced in the language of NCLB. These documents existed for policymakers, administrators, and teachers in kindergarten through twelfth-grade settings



who sought to make informed decisions about instruction and academic interventions for ELLs. The recommendations noted applied to individual instruction, class-wide instruction, and targeted interventions.

Francis et al. (2006) explained ELLs' biggest challenge in learning was being able to master academic language to achieve academic success. The authors described evidence-based recommendations<sup>3</sup> in the area of reading, which was the subject area of focus for this research study. The term "evidence-based" used in this document is synonymous with the scientifically based research language in NCLB. Program factors and instructional characteristics that promoted the academic success of ELLs shared the following characteristics (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005):

- Offered a positive school environment (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997; Berman, Minicucci, McLaughlin, Nelson, & Woodworth, 1995; Montecel & Cortez, 2002);
- Hosted a curriculum that was meaningful and academically challenging, incorporating higher order thinking (Berman et al., 1995; Doherty, Hilberg, Pinal, & Tharp, 2003; Montecel & Cortez, 2002);
- Established a clear alignment with standards and assessment (Doherty et al., 2003; Montecel & Cortez, 2002), and was consistent and sustained over time (Ramírez, 1992);

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<sup>3</sup> The term "evidence-based" reflects a commitment to providing recommendations on the basis of direct evidence from research conducted with ELLs, evidence from research with mixed samples of ELLs and native English speakers, as well as evidence from studies of instructional approaches validated with native English speakers that are theoretically sound for application to ELLs (Francis et al., p.2, 2006).

- Built a program model that was grounded in sound theory and best practices associated with an enriched, not remedial, instructional model (e.g., Montecel & Cortez, 2002);
- Employed teachers in bilingual programs who understood theories about bilingualism and second language development, as well as the goals and rationale for the model in which they were teaching (Berman et al., 1995; Montecel & Cortez, 2002); and
- Incorporated the use of cooperative learning and high-quality exchanges between teachers and pupils (e.g., Berman et al., 1995; Calderón, Hertz-Lazarowitz, & Slavin, 1998; Doherty et al., 2003; Montecel & Cortez, 2002; Tikunoff, 1985).

“Most researchers have relied on a definition of academic achievement that is limited to outcomes of standardized achievement tests, although some studies have used general measures of school attainment, such as grade point average, high school dropout rates, or attitudes toward school and school-related topics” (Genesee et al., 2005, p.374).

### **Guiding Principles for Reading Instruction and ELL Interventions**

The recommendations collected and synthesized by many researchers of the National Reading Panel Report (2000) on reading instruction and interventions for ELLs were presented in a conceptual framework based on a developmental perspective of reading. The developmental perspective of reading was guided by five principles that related to planning effective instruction and intervention for ELLs. The ELL stakeholder team based its work and the knowledge it shared with the Wiley staff on these five principles.

The developmental perspective recognized that many components and skills contributed to successful reading comprehension, and there were many factors—individual, instructional, and contextual—that influenced reading outcomes (Francis et al., 2006). To become good readers, students needed to begin to master these skills early and continue to develop them over time (Francis et al., 2006). By the upper elementary years, students should be able to read in order to learn because the text forms the basis for much of the delivery of the curriculum (Francis et al., 2006).

The first guiding principle was the crucial application of reading skills to learn new concepts and develop new knowledge across a range of content areas (Francis et al., 2006). Students attained these skills early in the primary grades by beginning to acquire concepts and knowledge through reading. Reading was especially important for ELLs because it was a gateway for vocabulary development and knowledge acquisition (Francis et al., 2006).

The second guiding principle was about planning for effective instruction; educators needed a clear understanding of the specific sources of difficulty or weakness for individual students and groups of students (Francis et al., 2006). Reading comprehension could be affected by a number of factors, including the accuracy and speed of word-reading, vocabulary, understanding of text structure, the ability to use language to formulate and shape ideas, and the ability to make inferences from text. Comprehension difficulties could be exacerbated for ELLs, especially when higher-order thinking skills were required, as in dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary or understanding complex linguistic structures.

The third guiding principle related to effective assessment and instruction for struggling ELLs was the need for academic language necessary for comprehending and analyzing text. Performance on national assessments has demonstrated that ELLs struggle to achieve academically at the same levels as their native English-speaking peers. More importantly, ELLs have scored below their native English-speaking peers both when they are participating in specialized language support programs and *after* they have been reclassified as having enough English proficiency to access the curriculum without specialized language support (Francis et al., 2006).

Based on the review of several studies, Francis et al. (2006) noted which vocabulary levels of ELLs were often below average. Given the importance of vocabulary to oral and written language comprehension (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000), the paucity of quasiexperimental or experimental studies focused on English vocabulary teaching among elementary-school language-minority children in the past 25 years was disconcerting (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005). On the 2007 National Assessment of Education Progress, fourth-grade ELLs scored 36 points below non-ELLs in reading (Goldenberg, 2008). Cross-sectional data collected on fourth-grade Spanish-speaking and English-only students in four schools in Virginia, Massachusetts, and California corroborated that ELLs have limited breadth of vocabulary, also indicating that they lack depth of vocabulary knowledge (August et al., 1999). Such low vocabulary levels would be insufficient to support effective reading comprehension and writing, and, in turn, have had a negative impact on overall academic success (Francis et al., 2006). The report by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) indicated that

many ELLs who struggled academically had developed conversational English skills, but, by the middle school years, their instructional needs had changed. By middle school, ELLs rarely needed instruction in basic conversational English; instead, they lacked the academic English vocabulary to support learning from texts (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).

The fourth principle reflected the multidimensional nature of reading comprehension and the multiple factors that have had an impact on the process of reading. That is, the great majority of ELLs experiencing reading difficulties struggled with skills related to fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Five core areas of instruction have promoted reading development of native English speakers: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; these same areas should apply to reading instruction for ELLs (Francis et al., 2006). The report by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) supported the notion that, when the emphasis shifts from learning to read to reading to learn, and the text becomes central to the delivery of the curriculum and to overall academic success, ELL students were unable to demonstrate reading comprehension at their grade-level. The developing research of Thomas & Collier suggested a possible correlation between the four essential areas of reading instruction as identified in the prism model. Because research was still emerging in this area, it was not entirely clear what caused these comprehension difficulties when word-reading skills were so well developed. I suggested the need for a developmental model of language acquisition known as the prism model (Thomas & Collier, 1997). This model is explained in depth in the theoretical framework section of this chapter, but the prism model had four major components that informed language

acquisition for school: sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive processes (Thomas & Collier, 1997). I believed that, by addressing all four areas during reading instruction, students would be allotted a richer and deep understanding for language acquisition.

The fifth and final guiding principle was that, when planning instruction and intervention, the function of the instruction (such as preventive, augmentative, or remedial) should be considered. Reading research conducted since the 1980s taught us that many learners lacked sufficient opportunities to learn; they lacked exposure to appropriate instruction tailored to their own needs. For ELLs, differences in opportunities to learn have had an impact on their reading outcomes, and, in many cases, a stronger effect than that of second language learning (Francis et al., 2006, p.16).

For example, academic language has been an area of weakness for many ELLs, and their difficulties have been known to persist over time. Native English speakers from all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds have benefited from explicit instruction to develop academic language. Therefore, targeted, class-wide instruction in this area has been warranted to augment the skills of learners in the overall population, and possibly prevent some of the difficulties ELLs have had in this area. In contrast, there have been other areas in which students may have been having difficulty but shared those difficulties with only a few, if any, of their peers. In those cases, intervention was best delivered in a small-group or one-on-one setting and was considered supplemental for the purposes of this document (Francis et al., 2006).

These five principles that related to planning effective instruction and intervention were all supported and used in some capacity for ELL instruction by the ELL teachers at Wiley. The ELL teachers at Wiley determined the application of these principles for effective instruction based on their formal training in both undergraduate and graduate coursework. These strategies and interventions were used and shared throughout the content of the professional development modules created by the ELL stakeholder team for regular education staff.

### **State ELL Requirements and Their Impact on Wiley**

The ISBE adopted a new definition of English language proficiency for students in Illinois schools. According to the Division of English Language Learning, Effective January 1, 2010, a student must obtain an overall **composite proficiency level of 4.8 as well as a literacy (reading/writing) composite proficiency level of 4.2** on the ACCESS for ELLs (*only Tier B or C*) to be considered English language proficient. (ISBE, 2009, para. 1)

World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) is a nonprofit cooperative, the mission of which has been to “advance academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional development for educators” (WIDA Consortium, n.d., para. 1). When this study began in 2009, twenty-three states were collaborating to meet the requirements of NCLB for ELLs using the ACCESS test for ELLs (WIDA Consortium, n.d.). ACCESS stands for Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State. This large-scale test addressed the academic English language proficiency standards at the core of the WIDA approach to instructing and evaluating the

progress of ELLs. These standards incorporated a set of model performance indicators (PIs) that described educators' expectations of ELLs at four different grade-level clusters and in five different content areas.

The grade-level clusters included PreK–K, 1–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12. There were five content areas of the standards. The first was called social and instructional language, which incorporated proficiencies needed to manage the general language of the classroom and the school. The others were English language arts, math, science, and social studies. For each grade-level cluster, the standards specified one or more PIs for each content area within each of the four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The WIDA framework recognized the continuum of language development within the four domains with six ELP levels. NCLB (2002) and corresponding state statutes mandated that states annually administer a standards-based ELP test to all ELLs in kindergarten through twelfth-grade in public schools. State educational agencies were responsible for reporting student ELP levels to the U.S. Department of Education and, in some states, state educational agencies were to report the results of their ELP tests to their respective governors, legislatures, and school districts, with data presented for each school and the district as a whole (NCLB, 2002).

ACCESS for ELLs® ELP test was based on the five WIDA English language proficiency standards and aligned to the academic standards of member states. ACCESS for ELLs® was developed by Dr. Margo Gottlieb of the Illinois Resource Center and the Center for Applied Linguistics. It met all requirements of NCLB for testing and reporting of English proficiency. WIDA revised its operational form of ACCESS for



ELLs® annually, with a complete item turnover every three years (33% change per year). ACCESS for ELLs® was available in five grade-level clusters (PreK–K, 1–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12) and three tiers (A, B, and C). Tiering the test allowed students to avoid responding to questions that were inappropriately difficult or easy. WIDA followed Wisconsin state procurement regulations in seeking a commercial vendor to print, distribute, score, and report the ACCESS for ELLs.

A screener test known as the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test, based on the ACCESS for ELLs®, was used to identify students in need of English as a Second Language (ESL) program support and place them in tiers for the ACCESS for ELLs® assessment. WIDA and the Center for Applied Linguistics also developed an alternative placement test for Kindergarten called the WIDA MODEL™, which became available in October 2008 (see Table 3).

Table 3

*WIDA Level*

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Entering	Beginning	Developing	Expanding	Bridging	Reaching

The levels of WIDA described the spectrum of a learner’s progression from knowing little to no English to acquiring the English skills necessary to be successful in an English-only mainstream classroom without extra support. This final exit stage for ELL status was designated Level 6. Within each combination of grade-level, content area, and language domain, there was a PI at each of the five points on the proficiency ladder, and the sequence of these five PIs together described a logical progression and accumulation of skills on the path to full proficiency. Drawn from the PIs, the ACCESS

for ELLs® incorporated all five standards and ELP levels in sections that corresponded to the four domains (WIDA Consortium, n.d.).

State requirements presented challenges for the ELL staff at Wiley, but also proved to be beneficial. The biggest challenge was based on the continual enrollment of ELL students throughout the school year. The ELL staff at Wiley was often tasked to schedule students who had been identified to receive ELL services after the school year had begun and incorporate these new students after schedules for students had been set. On the other hand, the assessments used for screening, ACCESS Screener and annual measures such as the ACCESS Test, had provided valuable data for instructional planning. For the ELL staff at Wiley, ELL instruction was a delicate balance between the state and local forces. The ELL staff saw the value in using the state assessments and using the data to make instructional decisions, but faced barriers within the infrastructure of the master schedule at school. These combined factors affected the services provided to ELLs at Wiley.

Administering the ACCESS Screener for new students not only took away instruction from other students, but also inhibited support for general education teachers. In addition, ELL teachers had to find time within their already filled schedules to test these students. During any month of school, it was typical to have an average of two to four student “move-ins.” These students’ grade-levels varied anywhere between kindergarten through fifth-grade, compounding the challenge to create a schedule for ELL services for each student. Although the ELL staff worked closely with the general education staff to create a schedule for each ELL student that suited everyone’s instructional needs, the challenges still persisted. All efforts and attempts on behalf of

the ELL teacher had been exercised when taking into consideration the student's English language needs coupled with the ELL teacher's schedule, and lastly, the master schedule.

On the other hand, data gathered by administering ACCESS Screener or ACCESS Test were useful pieces of data that assisted the ELL teachers and general education teachers when planning instruction for the ELL student. Access Screener results indicated general English proficiency, while ACCESS Tests provided specific information for teachers based on the WIDA standards, and allowed teachers to know where the student's abilities were in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Using both assessment instruments allowed for effective planning and instruction to take place and benefited an ELL's learning.

### **Local Challenges**

The results of ELL student performance on the ACCESS assessment determined the number of students eligible for ELL services, but the general education staff at Wiley reported difficulties in meeting the academic needs of the ELL students placed in their classrooms. These difficulties referred to general education teachers not having a clear understanding of the oral and written language skills of the ELL students in their classrooms. More importantly, the classroom teachers would have benefited from having the technical skills and resources to differentiate instruction so students could have fully accessed the lesson presented. Prior to this study, general education teachers had not been presented with a common understanding of the WIDA standards or the various levels of proficiency an ELL student could possess. The general education teachers asked for tools and strategies that could be used to address their students' language proficiency levels.

The ELL teachers worked collaboratively with general education staff to best meet the instructional needs of these students; however, with the increasing demands of NCLB (2002), all students needed to make AYP, including subgroups numbering over 30 at each grade-level tested. This included ELLs, the only difference being that ELL scores were exempt from the English language arts assessments for the first 10 months of attendance in a U.S. school. Failure to reach required proficiency levels by any subgroup within a school resulted in failure for the school. AYP also required 95% participation rate in testing for all students and within each subgroup in Grades 3 through 8. States established baseline proficiency rates upon passage of the law, with gradually increasing trends established to reach 100% proficiency by 2014 (NCLB, 2002).

Compounding this challenge was increasing numbers and the growing diversity of language-minority students. These indicators illuminated the challenge:

- A large and growing number of students came from homes where English was not the primary language. In 1979, there were six million language-minority students; by 1999, this number had more than doubled to 14 million students (August & Shanahan, 2006).
- Some language-minority students were not faring well in U.S. schools. For the 41 states reporting, only 18.7% of ELLs scored above the state-established norm for reading comprehension (August & Shanahan, 2006).
- Whereas 10% of students who spoke English at home failed to complete high school, the percentage was 3 times as high (31%) for language-minority students who spoke English well and 5 times as high (51%) for language-

minority students who spoke English with difficulty (August & Shanahan, 2006).

- As a group, ELLs represented one of the fastest-growing groups among the school-aged population in the United States (Francis et al., 2006).
- It was projected that, by 2015, 30% of the school-aged population in the United States will be ELLs, the largest and fastest growing population consisting of students who immigrated before kindergarten and U.S.-born children of immigrants (Francis et al., 2006).

These statistics have all had a direct connection with effective instructional approaches and interventions to support ELLs. Language-minority students who cannot read and write proficiently in English cannot participate fully in U.S. schools, workplaces, or society. They will face limited job opportunities and earning power, and the consequences of low literacy attainment in English will not be limited to individual impoverishment. U.S. economic competitiveness has depended on workforce quality. Inadequate reading and writing proficiency in English has relegated rapidly increasing language-minority populations to the sidelines, limiting the potential for national economic competitiveness, innovation, productivity growth, and quality of life (August & Shanahan, 2006). The percentage of public elementary and secondary school students in the United States who were identified as ELLs rose from 5.1% in the 1993-94 school year to 6.7% of the total school population in the 1999-2000 school year—an increase of more than 920,000 ELLs in public schools in a six-year period (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). This growing school population has had an impact on the instructional environment across U.S. schools (Kamps et al., 2007).

For ELLs and other students whose primary language was one other than English and who had been learning English as a second language in U.S. schools, learning to read and write in English was critical to success throughout their school years and beyond (National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth, 2006). According to Collier and Thomas's (1997) study on school effectiveness for ELLs, one important variable was students' level of proficiency in the language of instruction. ELLs often experienced particular difficulty in developing reading skills in the early grades. Disproportionate numbers of ELLs who fell behind their English-speaking peers in reaching reading benchmarks were referred to as "special education" for assessment purposes and placement in learning-disability programs (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005). The ELL stakeholder team used the research from (Collier and Thomas, 2002) and analyzed student data by examining students' English proficiency scores coupled with ACCESS results, and then used that information as a guideline for redesigning the ELL program in the school.

### **Literature**

The big question in many educators' minds has been, "How long does it take for an ELL to 'catch up'?" The answer to this question has been complex and has included many variables such as age, years of exposure to first language (L1) and second language (L2), years of formal schooling, cognitive ability, and social influences (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Researchers, including Thomas and Collier (1997, 2002), Genesee et al. (2005), and Slavin and Cheung (2005), strove to answer this question within the larger context of how can schools improve the long-term academic achievement of language minority students. Cummins (2001) distinguished between conversational (context-

embedded) language and academic (content-reduced, cognitively demanding) language, stating that a level of fluency in conversational L2 can be achieved in two to three years, whereas academic L2 requires five to seven years, or more, to develop to the level of a native speaker. Similarities exist between the work of Cummins (2001) and the work of Thomas and Collier (1997) with regard to the five- to seven-year pattern of acquiring academic language. At Wiley, we found that students who arrived between ages 8 and 11 years, and who had received at least two to five years of schooling taught through their L1 in their home country, were the lucky ones who took only five to seven years to achieve academic language fluency. Those who arrived before age 8 required seven to 10 years, or more, to become proficient (Thomas & Collier, 1997).

### **Theoretical Framework of Language Acquisition**

Thomas and Collier (1997) summarized ongoing collaborative research, national in scope, which has been practical for immediate, local decision-making in schools. This body of research, along with other longitudinal studies, has provided the theoretical framework for instructional practices of ELLs. Thomas and Collier's work included findings from five large urban and suburban school districts in various regions of the United States. The research group included more than 700,000 language-minority students during 1982-1996. One outcome of this research included a developmental model of language acquisition as a resource for schools; this conceptual model became known as the prism model (Thomas & Collier, 1997). The prism model had four major components that informed language acquisition for school: sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive processes (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Various instructional

practices and predictions about long-term student achievement were the results of the findings and model of this study.

## **Second Language Acquisition**

The four major components of the prism model that informed language acquisition for school were sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive processes (Thomas & Collier, 1997). This model was called a prism because the model had many dimensions, and the four major components were interdependent and complex.

Attempting to create ideal instructional settings and practices for ELLs so that access to content was equal to their native-speaking peers was not an easy task. An in-depth explanation of each component is provided in the subsections that follow.

**Component 1: Sociocultural processes.** Central to a student's acquisition of language were all the surrounding social and cultural processes occurring through everyday life within the student's past, present, and future, in all contexts—home, school, community, and the broader society (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Some examples of how these sociocultural processes affected a student working toward L2 acquisition included variables such as self-esteem or anxiety. These factors had a strong impact on the student's response to the new language and affected the process positively when the student participated in a socioculturally supportive environment. At Wiley, the ELL stakeholder team addressed this component by clustering the ELL students not only by English proficiency level, but also by offering that cultural connection with the other ELL peers.

**Component 2: Linguistic processes.** Linguistic processes consisted of the subconscious aspects of language development (an innate ability all humans possess for



acquisition of oral language), as well as the metalinguistic, conscious, formal teaching of language in school and acquisition of the written system of language (Thomas & Collier, 1997). The ELL stakeholder team strove to help staff understand these processes during monthly problem-solving meetings and through the professional development content. To assure cognitive and academic success in L2, a student's L1 oral and written systems needed to be developed to a high cognitive level comparative to their native-English speaking peers.

**Component 3: Academic development.** Academic development included all schoolwork in language arts, mathematics, the sciences, and social studies for each grade-level, kindergarten through twelfth-grade and beyond (Thomas & Collier, 1997). As a student progressed through each grade-level, the academic work expanded the sociolinguistic, vocabulary, and dimensions of language to higher cognitive levels. Because academic knowledge and conceptual development transferred from L1 to L2, the language acquisition and learning process was most efficient when academic work was developed through students' L1, while teaching L2 during other periods of the school day through meaningful academic content (Thomas & Collier, 1997). As part of the professional development modules offered to Wiley teachers during the second year of implementation for redesign, the ELL stakeholder team provided staff with strategies and tools to support ELL students' development in all classrooms. Information about academic development provided to all staff enhanced the common understanding of ELLs and language acquisition and helped staff look differently at ELLs when monthly problem-solving meetings occurred.

**Component 4: Cognitive development.** Cognitive development was a natural, subconscious process that generated a knowledge base and occurred developmentally from birth to the end of schooling and beyond (Thomas & Collier, 1997). This knowledge base was built by interacting with loved ones in the language of the home. Cognitive development needed to continue through a child's L1, at least through the elementary years (Thomas & Collier, 1997). Based on the growing body of research, we needed to address cognitive, linguistic, and academic development equally in both L1 and L2 to foster academic success in L2. This requirement was fundamental for ELLs to reach full parity with native-English speakers in all curricular areas. Cognitive development was the most nebulous component for the ELL stakeholder team to manage and communicate to the staff at Wiley. Because there were limited measures or assessments that would indicate any levels of cognitive development, the ELL stakeholder team infused the information about cognitive development within the context of various modules of professional development offered.

Based on a majority of the ELL research, particularly the findings of Collier and Thomas (1997, 2002), legislative rulings, and state guidance, the decision was made to use this evidence as the foundation and framework to help guide the program redesign at Wiley for the 2010 school year and beyond. The ELL stakeholder team based its work and recommendations for implementation on this language acquisition model. Professional development activities for staff included providing instructional strategies that focused on incorporating the four components of the prism model into each of the modules presented.

## **Leadership Model**

Considering the need for a systems change to redesign the ELL program, the ELL stakeholder team began by using the framework documented in *Managing Complex Change* (Lippitt, n.d.). Knoster, Villa, & Thousand (2000) created an adaptation of this model, the Managing Complex Change model (see Appendix C). The ELL stakeholder team used Knoster et al.'s model as a structure and guide for program change. According to Knoster et al. (2000), vision, skills, incentives, resources, and action plan are the five factors essential in managing change. The basis of the managing complex change model supported the idea that, if any of these five factors were absent, complex change could not occur.

A school vision needed to be collaboratively owned throughout a school; without a vision, there would be confusion. Skills were essential in the change process; without support, new skills would trigger anxiety. Incentives would help to drive change; otherwise, there would be complacency and no ownership. Resources were an essential element in the change process. Without equitable access to reliable materials, tools, and technology, there would be frustration. An action plan would help drive the change process with definitions of roles, responsibilities, tasks, and timelines. When all elements were addressed, the drivers for change would be in place (ICTPD Strategic Planning, n.d.).

The factors of leadership were applied in the redesign of the ELL program at Wiley. Once the vision was identified, the next step was to make sure that the vision was communicated to all stakeholders involved in working with ELL students. The components necessary for a sound ELL program included the skills and competencies of

the ELL, bilingual, and regular education staff, and of the administration. An example of the types of incentives for this program redesign included providing professional development to staff interested in working with ELLs or offering additional professional development opportunities to earn ELL certification. The resources needed in the ELL program redesign included language native materials, adequate space for instruction, and effective number and use of staff/personnel. Finally, having an action plan—in this case, a three-year plan—was another requirement to create change by including the previous four components.

### **Conclusion**

The data has been clear; the number of ELL students in the United States has been increasing. By 2015, it has been projected that 30% of the school-aged population in the United States will be ELLs (Francis et al., 2006). School districts face the challenge of staying compliant with both federal and state requirements for these students. NCLB (2002) has required that all children, including ELLs, reach high standards by demonstrating proficiency in English language arts and mathematics by 2014 (Abedi & Dietal, 2004). Educators and other stakeholders have been focusing their attention on how to accomplish this daunting task.

This chapter included information that addressed the requirement embedded in NCLB that “state educational agencies and local educational agencies are given the flexibility to implement language instruction educational programs, based on scientifically based research on teaching limited English proficient children, that the agencies believe to be the most effective for teaching English” (NCLB 2002, sec 3012, 9). The chapter described various strategies of instruction that provide substantial

coverage in the key components of reading, identified by the National Reading Panel (2000) as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension, and have clear benefits for language-minority students (August & Shanahan, 2006). Almost every school system in the nation has been demanding more and better information on improving ELL literacy instruction. Two historical and federal legislative cases, *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) and *Casteñeda v Pickard* (1981), provided the staff and community of District 300 with background to better understand the obligation to teach ELL students and how that mandate affected their instructional practices. NCLB (2002) requirements sent a clear message to me that it was necessary to review the ELL program at Wiley and plan for a revision of services.

Multiple factors have played a role in influencing change in ELL reading instruction. This chapter described in depth the various scientifically based research studies on instruction for ELLs. A review of the essential components researchers identified are a positive school environment (Battistich et al., 1997; Berman et al., 1995; Montecel & Cortez, 2002); a curriculum that is meaningful, academically challenging, and incorporating higher-order thinking (Berman et al., 1995; Doherty et al., 2003; Montecel & Cortez, 2002); a clear alignment with standards and assessment (Doherty et al., 2003; Montecel & Cortez, 2002) that is consistent and sustained over time (Ramírez, 1992); and a program model that is grounded in sound theory and best practices associated with an enriched, not remedial, instructional model (e.g., Montecel & Cortez, 2002). Other factors identified in research that were deemed important to influencing change in ELL reading instruction include employing teachers in bilingual programs who understand theories about bilingualism and L2 development, as well as the goals and

rationale for the model in which they are teaching (Berman et al., 1995; Montecel & Cortez, 2002), and the use of cooperative learning and high-quality exchanges between teachers and pupils (e.g., Berman et al., 1995; Calderón et al., 1998; Doherty et al., 2003; Montecel & Cortez, 2002; Tikunoff, 1985). This research-based instruction for ELLs helped guide the staff at Wiley in the area of reading for all students, not just ELLs.

The five guiding principles of effective instruction and intervention played a large role in guiding the work of the ELL stakeholder team for staff professional development. The first guiding principal was the crucial application of reading skills to learn new concepts and develop new knowledge across a range of content areas (Francis et al., 2006). The second guiding principle was that, to plan for effective instruction, educators needed a clear understanding of the specific sources of difficulty or weakness for individual students and groups of students (Francis et al., 2006). The third guiding principle related to effective assessment and instruction for struggling ELLs was their lack of academic language, which would be necessary for comprehending and analyzing text. The fourth principle reflected the multidimensional nature of reading comprehension and the multiple factors that have an impact on the process of reading. The fifth and final guiding principle was that, when planning instruction and intervention, consideration must be given to the function of the instruction, such as preventive, augmentative, or remedial. The ELL stakeholder team ensured that each of these principles was included in all the professional development modules created for the staff.

Other factors, such as state ELL requirements, had an impact on Wiley with regard to local challenges and rapid change in ELL population and demographics. The ISBE (2009) adopted a new definition of English Language Proficiency (ELP) for

students in Illinois schools and, effective January 1, 2010, new ELP cut scores. These new cut scores required the ELL stakeholder team to review the current students and recommend changes to the program based on the number of students and level of English proficiency for those who qualified for ELL services. Wiley staff needed to be better prepared with instructing these ELLs. Wiley was trying to handle increasing numbers of ELLs that paralleled increasing numbers of ELLs nationwide, estimated to be 30% of the school-age population in the United States by 2015. The largest and fastest-growing population of ELLs in the United States was students who immigrated before kindergarten and were U.S.-born children of immigrants (Francis et al., 2006).

The theoretical framework used in this study was a conceptual model of language acquisition as a resource for schools—the prism model (Thomas & Collier, 1997). The four major components that informed language acquisition for school were sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive processes (Thomas & Collier, 1997). The ELL stakeholder team based its work and recommendations for implementation on this language acquisition model. Professional development activities for staff included providing instructional strategies that focused on incorporating the four components of the prism model into each of the modules presented.

The ELL stakeholder team used a leadership model framework, the managing complex change model (Lippitt, n.d.), to address the redesign documented in this study. An adaptation of this model created by Knoster et al. (2000) was used as a structure and guide for program change. The ELL stakeholder team used all five areas of the model for initial planning for the conceptualization of this study and the actual redesign. The five areas of the model included vision, skills, incentives, resources, and an action plan.

According to Knoster et al., the basis of the managing complex change model supported the idea that, if any of these five factors were absent, complex change could not occur.

In the course of program redesign, the ELL stakeholder team addressed the federal and state legislative guidance and mandates, incorporated research-based instructional strategies and principles, and attended to the demographic and population shifts that had been occurring at Wiley. Chapter Three details the process by which the redesign was accomplished.



## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### **Introduction**

This chapter describes the problem the research addressed, the research question posed, and an explanation of the research design, data collection, data analysis, and procedures used in the study. This research study examined the program redesign process that was used to address the needs of the growing ELL population at Wiley. At the time of this study, part of my responsibilities as director of student services at Wiley included the supervision and leadership of the ELL services. From the conceptualization in forming a team of staff to learn about ELL redesign to planning and redesigning the ELL program at Wiley, I was an integral member of the ELL stakeholder team in planning and redesigning the ELL services during this two year study. Therefore, as a researcher, I was able to include personal accounts of my experiences in the data collected for this study.

### **Rationale**

Prior to planning a research design, the research question was considered to select an appropriate methodology. After identifying the question to be researched, a systematic plan was developed for collecting and reporting data while presenting conclusions for the readers. This study was developed around the following research question:

1. What was the nature of the complex change process staff and I observed and experienced as I led a two year program redesign for ELLs at the elementary level?

Based on these questions, I determined that the most appropriate methodology was a qualitative case study approach. In a qualitative case study, the researcher seeks a greater understanding of the case (Stake, 1995). “We want to appreciate the uniqueness and complexity of the case, its embeddedness and interaction with its contexts” (Stake, 1995, p.16). Hypotheses and goal statements sharpen the focus, minimizing the interest in the situation and circumstance (Stake, 1995). For this research, I used the independent case study, which falls under the umbrella of qualitative research. Qualitative research focuses on the interpretation of a phenomenon. Two situations are typically appropriate for using the case study method, and both situations applied to my question for this study. According to Yin (2003),

The distinctive topics for applying the case study method arise from at least two situations. First and most important (e.g., Shavelson and Townes, 2002), the case study method is pertinent when research addresses either a descriptive question (*what* happened?) or an explanatory question (*how* or *why* did something happen?); in contrast, a well-designed experiment is needed to begin inferring causal relationships (e.g., whether a new education program had improved student performance), and a survey may be better at telling *how often* something has happened. Second, a researcher may want to illuminate a particular situation, to get a close (i.e., in-depth and first-hand) understanding of it. The case study method helps one to make direct observations and collect data in natural settings, compared to relying on “derived” data (Bromley, 1986, p. 23)—e.g., test results, school and other statistics maintained by government agencies, and responses to questionnaires. (Yin, 2003, p. 2)

Yin's (2004) work reflected the need for a deeper level of understanding. This need for deeper understanding pertained to my work because the case I chose to study was the then-current ELL program and services offered in District 300. Examining options for restructuring or redesigning those services triggered the need for deeper understanding. Because my role as a director of student services included the supervision and leadership of the ELL services at Wiley, I was naturally drawn to seeking ways for a restructure or redesign of the ELL program. Yin described the need to illuminate a particular situation. I wanted to understand how administrators and teachers in the elementary school perceived the implementation of the ELL program redesign during the first year of its implementation.

This case study focused on the elementary teachers' perception of change based on an original plan for change devised by the ELL stakeholder team. This case study approach to qualitative research focused on one elementary suburban setting. I had a research question, puzzlement, a need for general understanding, and felt that I might get insight into the question by studying a particular case (Stake, 2009). Stake (2009) wrote that the use of a case study is to understand something else, and that researchers might call the inquiry an instrumental case study.

I saw a strong parallel with Stake's (2009) work and my need for insight into the research questions on which this study was centered. I wanted to gain a deeper level of understanding by studying the then-current ELL program and services offered in District 300 and prod further with examining options for restructuring or redesigning ELL services. I wanted to understand how administrators and teachers in the elementary school perceived the conceptualization of the ELL program redesign during the first and

second years of its implementation. As part of this case study, I also described the barriers and obstacles that had an impact during the first year of ELL program redesign conceptualization. Therefore, my recollections and reflections are incorporated into the data collection for this study.

The original need to implement an ELL program redesign began in the 2008-09 school year. The ELL staff and the director of student services for District 300, whose role involved overseeing the ELL program for District 300 and me, identified the need to look closely at the delivery of ELL services at Wiley. The need to look more closely at the ELL program originated from four factors. One factor included high numbers of students receiving ELL services with limited scheduling opportunities for the ELL teachers to address the needs of their students. The second factor included clear observations during grade-level team meetings and monthly problem-solving meetings of general education teachers expressing their concerns of how to address the academic needs of the ELL students. A third factor included considering ELL students' overall academic performance and English proficiency levels. The fourth and final factor that led the ELL teachers and director of student services to focus on program redesign included the recent change of exit criteria for ELL students in the state of Illinois. The ELL staff and the director of student services for District 300 sought a particular professional development opportunity to assist with a plan of program redesign.

The ELL staff, the director of student services, and two other staff members—a psychologist and a literacy specialist—were referred to as the ELL stakeholder team; this team participated in a six-day workshop that occurred over the course of one academic school year. These six staff members attended the workshop and used data and research

related to ELLs to devise a plan for program redesign. The final step was to develop a plan of implementation for the staff at Wiley.

This research study examined two identifiable processes. The first part focused on the process, or the conceptualization phase, the ELL stakeholder team experienced as it researched and created the ELL program redesign. The second portion of this study focused on the perceptions of the staff during the second year of implementation of this program redesign. I described the events that had an impact on changes due to uncontrollable variables.

### **Research Design**

This research focused on the change process that ensued based on a plan related to program redesign. Perceptions of the elementary teachers, ELL stakeholders, school principal, and myself were noted after the second year of ELL program redesign implementation. I sought to determine how planning for change was received and implemented for the staff at Wiley.

Case study design was chosen over other methods of study because it best suited the research of this work. According to Yin (1984), “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 23). Case study design was applicable for this research study based on the gathering of evidence from many sources. According to Yin (2003), “evidence for case studies may come from six sources: documents, archival, records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts” (p. 85). The evidence gathered in this research was from archival documents, interviews,

and surveys .Individuals from whom data were collected included the general education teachers, the ELL stakeholder team, the school principal, and me.

### **Study Setting**

Wiley consisted of kindergarten through fifth-grade and was located in the northern suburbs of Cook County, Illinois. The school was part of a medium-sized school district that included one other school, a middle school. The total district population averaged 850 students. The total student population of Wiley reached approximately 550 students per year, while the middle school averaged 300 students per year.

According to the 2010 Illinois Interactive Report Card, the general student population for Wiley averaged 60% White, 30% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% Black, and 8% Hispanic. Approximately 8% of the students were considered to be from low-income families, while 19% of the students were considered limited English proficient.

During the 2008-09 school year, 92 ELL students were provided ELL services at Wiley. During the 2009-10 school year, 106 students were identified as needing ELL services. During the 2010-11 school year, 103 students were identified as needing ELL services. Based on the ELL population and languages of its students, Wiley had offered a bilingual Korean program since the 2008-09 school year, and the school added a Spanish bilingual program just two weeks prior to the start of the 2010-2011 school year because of an increase of Spanish-language background students.

## **Data Collection**

This qualitative study included interviews with teachers and administrators, surveys of ELL stakeholder team members, and a review of documents and artifacts. According to Yin (2003), “in collecting case study data, the main idea is to ‘triangulate’ or establish converging lines of evidence to make the findings as robust as possible” (p. 9). A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence; case studies need not be limited to a single source of evidence. In fact, most of the better case studies rely on a wide variety of sources (Yin, 1994).

According to Stake (1995), qualitative case study seldom proceeds as a survey with the same questions asked of each respondent. Instead, each interviewee is expected to have had unique experiences, special stories to tell. The purpose is not to get simple “yes” or “no” answers but to obtain descriptions of an episode, a linkage, an explanation. For this reason, interviews with the ELL stakeholder team members were used as one of the data components collected and analyzed for this case study.

My original intent was to interview the general education staff as a whole; however, staff members’ schedule constraints precluded them from allotting time to interview. If interviews were to occur, they would have had to be conducted during the school day. If time during the school day was used, teachers would miss instruction, substitutes would be an added cost, and, more importantly, students would have experienced a disruption in learning by not having had their own teacher. Ordinarily, this would not seem so extreme; however, at Wiley, this was the common procedure when any district curriculum work occurred. During the course of this study, teachers at Wiley

were already attending to curriculum work for various initiatives, enough so that taking them away from their classrooms for these interviews would have been excessive and would not have been supported by the teachers' union. Therefore, any data originally chosen to be collected through an interview was collected in the format of a post-design survey completed by all staff and interviews with the ELL stakeholder team and principal.

### **Surveys**

Prior to the start of the first year of conceptualization of the program redesign, The ELL stakeholder team administered a survey to the staff in February 2010 to help identify areas of further growth. The results and data from that survey helped the ELL stakeholder team determine the areas on which to focus while creating modules for professional development (see Appendix D). This period of time can be best described as the first of a two-part process: conceptualization.

During the second year, also referred to as the year of implementation of the program redesign, professional development opportunities in the format of modules were presented to all the Wiley certified staff. Teacher surveys, or "exit slips," were administered to the staff at Wiley to gauge their sense of the information presented during each professional development module (see Appendix E). One question was presented in the form of a reflection statement. This reflection was used to serve two purposes: (a) as a time for the staff members to reflect on the content presented during the professional development module, and (b) to quantify the usefulness of the information presented by the ELL stakeholder team.



A Likert scale was used to quantify the staff members' reflective thoughts towards the validity of the content that was presented during the module. A scale of 1 to 5 was used, where 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *very much*. This method of coding information is also known as magnitude coding. Magnitude coding is appropriate for qualitative studies in social science disciplines that also support quantitative measures as evidence of outcomes (Saldaña, 2009). The teacher surveys used both a qualitative and quantitative response (see Appendix E).

I created a final survey and administered it to all staff in the fall of 2011, at the end of the first year of ELL program redesign implementation (see Appendix F). This survey was designed to capture the perceptions of the staff for the first year of implementation of ELL program redesign relative to the professional development modules presented on Monday afternoons, at ELL workshops attended by staff and offered by the Illinois Resource Center, and coteaching opportunities that involved ELL teachers and general education teachers.

The surveys used in this research study addressed the research question of this study. Data from the quantitative standpoint were recorded and summarized, while data from the qualitative standpoint were organized by coding and common themes. I used both magnitude coding (Stake, 2009) and holistic coding (Dey, 1993). Data from the teacher surveys and final surveys were used in conjunction with the other data methods used in this study.

## **Interviews**

The interview questions that I developed were designed to gather feedback and perceptions of the ELL stakeholder team and the school principal. I conducted two

separate types of interviews. A focus group interview was conducted with the ELL stakeholder team to gather insights on members' perceptions of both participating in the professional development of the ELL program redesign and members' perspectives on the outcome of the second year of the plan of implementation. The focus group interview method was appropriate for use with the ELL stakeholder team because of the smaller size in scope of staff. The ELL stakeholder team agreed to meet outside of school hours for the focus group interview (see Appendix G). A focus group interview is an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic. Focus groups typically include six to eight people who participate in the interview for 30 minutes to two hours (Patton, 2002). I conducted a one-on-one interview with the school principal to understand her role and perspective as a principal throughout the process and implementation of the program redesign (see Appendix H), which was performed by following the process of the managing complex change model (see Appendix C).

### **Data Analysis**

Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations. "Analysis essentially means taking something apart" (Stake, 1995, p.71). Qualitative study capitalizes on ordinary ways of making sense (Stake, 1995). In any case study, it is the researcher's responsibility to interpret what he or she observed and provide generalizations for readers of the study.

For this study, I used information from staff surveys and ELL stakeholder team member interviews, and I reviewed documents and artifacts that served as a template for analysis. The search for meaning often is a search for patterns, for consistency, and for consistency within certain conditions, which we call "correspondence" (Stake, 1995, p.

78). “Researchers can look for patterns immediately while reviewing documents, observing, or interviewing; or researchers can code the records, aggregate frequencies, and find the patterns that way. Often, the patterns will be known in advance, drawn from the research questions, serving as a template for the analysis” (Stake, 1995).

Qualitative study capitalizes on ordinary ways of getting acquainted with things. All researchers have great privilege and obligation: the privilege to pay attention to what they consider worthy of attention, and the obligation to make conclusions drawn from those choices meaningful to colleagues and clients (Stake, 1995). In performing this research, I carefully created a system for organizing all information relating to the document and artifact review, the interviews, and the surveys. I used both holistic coding (Dey, 1993) and magnitude coding (Saldaña, 2009), specifically for the interviews and surveys of the ELL stakeholder team and staff at Wiley.

Magnitude coding consists of and adds a supplemental alphanumeric or symbolic code or subcode to an existing coded datum or category to indicate its intensity, frequency, direction, presence, or evaluative content (Saldaña, 2009). Magnitude codes can be qualitative, quantitative, and/or nominal indicators to enhance description (Saldaña, 2009). Holistic coding is an attempt “to grasp basic themes or issues in the data by absorbing them as a whole [the coder as ‘lumper’] rather than by analyzing them line by line [the coder as ‘splitter’]” (Dey, 1993, p. 104). Holistic coding is appropriate for beginning qualitative researchers learning how to code data, and studies with a wide variety of data forms (e.g., interview transcripts, field notes, journals, documents, diaries, correspondence, artifacts, and video; Saldaña, 2009).

## **Review of Documents and Artifacts**

Documents reviewed for this research included any and all documents the ELL stakeholder team used, created, and gathered to support the three-year plan of implementation for program redesign. Additional documents included guidelines from ISBE (2009), such as the Administrative School Code, and Wiley ELL population data (see Appendix A).

Data analysis was both a two-part process and an ongoing process. The research questions used for this research study were acknowledged and addressed by analyzing data. Documents and artifacts to address the research questions were collected between 2009 and 2011. The first part of data collection involved gathering information, research, and work of the ELL stakeholder team as they participated in the six-day professional development series during the 2009-10 school year. These data included student performance on state tests, the research resources used for participation in the six-day workshop, and ISBE (n.d., 2009) guidance. These data were collected during the beginning and conceptualization portion of this study and were used to guide both the redesign of the program and the first year of its implementation.

The second part of data collection involved gathering artifacts and data that were created as a result of the first-year plan for ELL redesign implementation (see Appendices A, I, J, and K). These data included interviews with the ELL stakeholder team members, interviews with the school principal, and an online survey that the staff completed at the end of the first year of implementation. A majority of the coding used was holistic coding. Holistic coding is applicable when the researcher already has a general idea of what to investigate in the data, or “to chunk the text into broad topic areas

as a first step to seeing what is there” (Bazeley, 2007, p. 67). A portion of the staff survey required magnitude coding because some questions were written to help me understand the intensity of the matter being asked. Based on the data from the interviews and survey, I was able to pull themes and commonalities discovered with respect to staff perceptions.

My goal with regard to data analyses and interpretations was to provide high-quality input for the readers of this study.

### **Limitations**

This study had the following limitations:

- The study was limited to one elementary school in a medium-sized school district located in the northern suburbs of Cook County, Illinois.
- The results of the study may not be applicable to the middle school in the same school district because the population of ELL students and the staff teaching experience was different at each school.
- The results of the study may not be applicable to other school districts.
- The results of the study were limited to the ELL stakeholder team members’ recommendations rather than including a larger committee of Wiley staff members, as originally intended in the recommendations of the designers of Perfect Match (see Appendix I).
- Participants’ responses may have been influenced by personal bias.

### **Ethics**

The school district and participants were asked permission to participate in this research study. IRRB approval was obtained in October of 2011. Participants were

notified of the nature and scope of the study, the sponsor, the activity intended, the primary reasons for the research, the time frame intended, and the burden to all parties. All participants were protected by being given a written right to privacy, which included both confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were given opportunities to ask clarifying questions about the study in an informational setting, during which the informed consent forms were signed. Participants were provided a guarantee that no identifying information would be shared with other parties or would be used for any reasons other than this research study. Finally, participants were assured that the information used in this research study would be kept in a secure, locked location.

### **Summary**

This research study focused on the implementation of a program redesign for the ELL program used in the elementary school of one school district. A qualitative design of a case study was used to conduct this research study because that method best matched the research questions. The question for this study revolved around how one elementary school could address the needs of its ELL students by offering a program redesign, and the perceptions of staff during the redesign phase and implementation of the redesigned program. The study looked closely at the recommendations of the ELL stakeholder team for a three-year district implementation plan and the perceptions of staff during the second year of implementation.

Chapter Four presents my findings, as a direct member of the ELL stakeholder team leading the implementation of the ELL program redesign, and reviews the data collected. Chapter Five contains an analysis of the data findings, conclusions, implications, and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS**

### **Introduction**

There were two parts to this study: conceptualizing the need for redesigning the ELL program and implementing the program redesign. This chapter analyzes data to support the conceptualization and planning for the program redesign, analyzes data that supports the implementation of the program redesign, and includes the experiences of the staff through surveys and interviews. The conceptualization stage of this study is addressed in my first research question, while the implementation stage of this study is addressed in my second research question. As indicated in Chapter Three, the qualitative measurement for this study included document review, surveys, and interviews. I gained perspective by extracting information from existing academic data and documents, surveying a whole group, interviewing a small group, and interviewing an individual. I reviewed student data and documents related to ELL services during the first year of the study and used interviews and surveys during the second year of the study. In addition to interviewing the ELL stakeholder team and principal, I administered a concluding survey to all certified staff that provided perspective at the end of the two-year study. Two interview sessions occurred with the ELL stakeholder team and the principal of Wiley. In order to form a context for understanding this data, I will review the research question for this study.

### **Research Question**

1. What was the nature of the complex change process staff and I observed and experienced as I led a two year program redesign for ELLs at the elementary level?

### **The Conceptualization Stage: 2009 to 2010**

As illustrated in Chapter One, since 2005-06 Wiley had been experiencing a steadily growing population of ELLs, and within five years, the number of students eligible to receive ELL services nearly doubled (see Table 1). This was the first factor that led to this research study. In addition, the number of different languages spoken increased from nine in 2005 to 21 in 2010. This rapid increase in ELL-eligible students and different languages spoken presented quite a challenge for the staff at Wiley when it came to best practices in instruction.

The staff at Wiley and leaders in District 300 saw these changes in the data as an opportunity to examine and consider the future of the ELL program at Wiley. The rapid increase in students eligible for ELL services was the initial reason to examine ELL services; however, three other factors also contributed to a need for program redesign—professional development of the entire staff at Wiley with regard to ELLs, the clustering of ELL students based on their English proficiency levels and academic achievement performance, and the change in state exit criteria. After analyzing these data and circumstances, it was clear to me that services with regard to ELLs at Wiley were inadequate. In a quest for guidance and assistance during this multi-dimensional change process, I received the approval and support of the superintendent of District 300 and the principal of Wiley to gather a team of staff to attend the Perfect Match workshop offered by the Illinois Resource Center beginning in October, 2009. I will refer to this team as the ELL stakeholder team. The Perfect Match workshop focused on program design, specifically in the areas of program delivery and services, curriculum, and assessment. The ELL stakeholder team intended to revise its then-current program by applying the



knowledge and work completed during the workshop. The outcome of the team's attendance at the workshop was to learn why and how to redesign an ELL program.

### **Process Used During Perfect Match Workshop**

As stated in Chapter One, a team of six staff members comprised the ELL stakeholder team for Wiley: three ELL teachers, a literacy specialist, a school psychologist, and an administrator (me). The team participated in Perfect Match, a professional development series hosted by the Illinois Resource Center (IRC). The process used during the course of the six-day series included a Professional Learning Community (PLC) framework. "A PLC is composed of collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals for which members are mutually accountable" (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010, p.11). A nine-step model, using the PLC process, was introduced during the Perfect Match program as a way for all participants to develop common goals for their school district's ELL program (see Appendix J). Over the course of six days, the workshop was broken up into three parts:

- Part 1 (Days 1 and 2) addressed standards and assessment;
- Part 2 (Days 3 and 4) addressed application of data to program design and configurations; and
- Part 3 (Days 5 and 6) addressed curricular and instructional implications.

These three parts resulted in a nine-step process, which is described in more detail later in this chapter.

At the conclusion of the nine-step process, all teams participating at Perfect Match were expected to have a three- to five-year plan for program redesign. During the

course of this study, Wiley's ELL stakeholder team made only minimal progress with the nine-step process and was only able to create a two-year implementation plan. The team was not able to adhere to a critical recommendation of the Perfect Match facilitators—having a larger ELL committee to share its planning and work. Having a larger committee assist with the planning and implementation of redesign would have increased the likelihood of the ELL stakeholder team creating the suggested three- to five-year plan.

At the time of the study, Wiley's school improvement plan was focused on staff learning about ELL program redesign, so the expectation for that first year (2009) was that the ELL stakeholder team would attend the workshops. After two days at the workshop, the ELL stakeholder team knew that it would be responsible for making recommendations for revision, but would not necessarily be the team to drive the change directly. The ELL stakeholder team was aware that it would require a larger committee at some point, or the assistance of the principal, to make greater change. This led to smaller, incremental changes as recommended by the ELL stakeholder team and a plan for only a two-year implementation rather than a three- to five-year implementation. A general overview of the process follows, and a subsequent section details the ELL stakeholder team's findings.

**Program design for ELLs: A nine-step process.** The nine-step process is best understood when it is presented in three parts, as described in the previous section, due to the comprehensive nature of the development of a school district's plan for redesign. The ELL stakeholder team found this process to be very systematic and clear. The three parts provided essential legislative, theoretical, and systems change information, which were

beneficial for building consensus with staff and for eventual implementation of a redesigned ELL program (see Appendix J). Each step of the process included a goal that articulated a clear vision and enhanced understanding of each step.

***Part 1 (Days 1 and 2: Steps 1 and 2): addressing standards and assessment.*** Step 1 involved gathering data and Step 2 involved analyzing data. The ELL stakeholder team began Step 1 by gathering the Illinois Standards used for ELLs at Wiley and organizing students' scores from the state's annual ELL assessment, ACCESS. The goal of this first step was to obtain an accurate picture of the academic proficiency of the population of ELLs at Wiley. This data provided a general overview of the extent of ELL services the students needed. The team reviewed student data and other components related to ELLs, such as historical and current legislation, instructional practices, and Illinois state law. Data included district assessments, demographics, legislation, judicial precedent, research, and Illinois' English language proficiency levels as described by the WIDA Consortium (see Appendix B). Step 2 of the process involved reviewing data; the goal was to establish a philosophical foundation for the program redesign and to garner widespread stakeholder ownership (Marler, 2009a, 2009b). Once the data was gathered, the format for review was by an advisory group or leadership team with stakeholder representation and a larger district committee (Marler, 2009a, 2009b). However, in Wiley's instance, only the advisory group—the ELL stakeholder team—reviewed the data.

***Part 2 (Days 3 and 4: Steps 3 through 7): addressing the application of data to program redesign and configurations of ELL services.*** Steps 3 through 7 included detailing teaching responsibilities, allocating language for bilingual programs,

determining instructional emphasis, selecting configurations of educational settings, and crafting the redesign. Steps 3 through 7 are described in more detail below.

Step 3 in the process involved detailing teaching responsibilities with a goal of articulating and communicating responsibilities for instruction. This included planning time for ELL teachers to differentiate for proficiency levels of ELLs, and for determining roles and responsibilities of general education teachers and ELL teachers.

Step 4 involved making decisions about language use in bilingual programs, Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE; see Appendix B). The goal of this step was to make programmatic, structured, and deliberate decisions about language use in instruction. The review and analysis of student data allowed the ELL stakeholder team to create a consistent program, which was coordinated and comprehensive. For example, a deliberate decision was to prescribe a specific amount of time that students should be instructed in the native language (L1) and the non-native language (L2), as well as to what extent of time the students should receive ELL services in the general education setting with peers and in pull-out situations when only with other ELLs. During the 2009-2010 school year, Wiley did have a bilingual program for students who spoke Korean. Since Wiley had at least 20 ELL, Korean-speaking students, it was required to have a bilingual program:

Within an attendance center of a school district not including children who are enrolled in existing private school systems, 20 or more children of limited English-speaking ability in any such language classification, the school district shall establish, for each classification, a program in transitional bilingual education for the children therein. (Transitional Bilingual Education, n.d.)

Wiley's Korean bilingual program was a component of the broader ELL services offered in the district. However, with the magnitude of this redesign, the ELL stakeholder team chose not to focus heavily on revisions to the Korean bilingual program. Instead, the ELL stakeholder team focused on analyzing ACCESS data for Korean-speaking students (as noted in Step 2) and making recommendations for differentiating instruction. As a result, the general education teachers felt supported and equipped with the instructional strategies to meet their students' educational needs.

Step 5 in the process focused on matching the students' needs to instructional standards. In Illinois, this included TBE and Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI; see Appendix B). The TBE program was for students who spoke Korean and were receiving bilingual education; TPI students received ELL services to varying extents based on their academic language levels, as determined by the Illinois State ACCESS test. The charge of the ELL stakeholder team was to examine the academic proficiency of the students and to determine how and what instruction should be accessible to the students. This step in the process was an eye-opening moment for the ELL stakeholder team because it saw the opportunity for students to be clustered differently than they had been in the past. The team saw options for instructional skills to be shared with teachers.

Step 6 in the process was selecting configurations of educational settings for the ELL students. This step actually identified the amount of ELL services and, when possible, the location of those services, such as in the general education setting, push-in, or with peers in a pull-out setting. The continuum of ELL services and types of configurations ranges: self-contained, resource, pull-out, push-in, late exit transitional, early exit transitional, dual language, and maintenance (Marler, 2009). The goal in this

step was to organize, allocate, and maximize resources (Marler, 2009). While attending Perfect Match, the ELL stakeholder team concluded that efficiencies could be made within rough drafts of ELL teacher schedules based on students' academic language scores.

Step 7 in the process involved crafting the design. The goal in this step was to operationalize the philosophical foundation (Marler, 2009). This included an integration of gathering and reviewing data, detailing teaching responsibilities, making language allocation decisions, and determining areas of instructional emphasis and selected configurations. It was intended that the ELL stakeholder team eventually work with the original design by Marler and input from the larger district committee and focus groups; however, at the time of the workshop, the larger committee did not exist, so the ELL stakeholder team conducted the work and made recommendations based on Wiley's school improvement goals.

***Part 3 (Days 5 and 6: Steps 8 and 9): addressing curricular and instructional implications.*** Step 8 in the process was to identify supports and challenges, so the team's charge was to recognize any barriers or successes before they might occur and impact stakeholders. This incorporated checking for congruency, consulting with other departments and building leaders, sharing the design as a preview, soliciting input for revision prior to implementation, creating sample schedules for teachers and students to identify potential barriers and supports needed, and, lastly, involving the larger district committee in the decision-making.

Step 9—the final step in the process—included alignment of the district plan with the state and federal requirements and other district initiatives over the course of a

comprehensive five-year plan. In this step, an emphasis was placed on planning for staff development to support the program design, securing resources, and aligning the district's five-year plan to the curriculum. While the Perfect Match facilitators recommended a five-year plan, Wiley's circumstances limited the ELL stakeholder team to a two-year plan instead.

**Wiley's ELL stakeholder team progression through the Perfect Match steps.**

The ELL stakeholder team brought Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) and Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) data from 2007 to 2009 to Days 1 and 2 of the Perfect Match workshop and dedicated two full days to reviewing and analyzing state standardized data; this led to fruitful discussions for the team. The ACCESS Test is an annual assessment to measure growth and identification for exiting ELL services. The ISAT test is an annual assessment used for all students. The presenters at Perfect Match provided the following format for comprehensive analysis:

1. Data Table—summarize the data as a district.
2. Graphic Representation—graph or highlight the data.
3. Observe, Discuss, and Document—note data patterns.
4. Hypothesis of Practice—pose hypotheses for data patterns observed.
5. Classroom Connections—jot down immediate ideas of classroom strengths to improve data patterns.

The team completed this analysis for each grade level (kindergarten through fifth-grade) and then created a list of common themes to identify areas for growth and student achievement. All grade-level data can be found in Appendix K.

One example of the type of work the ELL stakeholder team completed as a result of attending Perfect Match included a look at ELL students accessing bilingual programming (Transitional Bilingual Education, or TBE) and general ELL services (Transitional Program of Instruction, or TPI). Table 4 showcases the percentage of ELL students in kindergarten through fifth-grade eligible for TPI and TBE during the 2008-2009 school year. A review of the data in Table 4 provided the ELL stakeholder team with an overview of the population of ELLs based purely on the number of students who spoke Korean as their primary language (TBE) and the remainder of the students who fall into the (TPI) programming.

Table 4

*Percentage of ELL Students Eligible for TPI and TBE During the 2008-2009 School Year*

Grade	ELL Students		
	TPI	TBE	Total
Kindergarten	19%	16%	35%
First	19%	4%	23%
Second	13%	4%	17%
Third	11%	9%	20%
Fourth	4%	5%	9%
Fifth	4%	9%	13%

Students receiving TPI services were students whose primary language was one other than Korean; students receiving TBE services were students who spoke Korean and were receiving some of their academic instruction in Korean. Table 4 shows exactly how many students per grade level were receiving each of the different types of ELL services, TPI or TBE (see Appendix B), at Wiley during the 2008-2009 school year. This data was of particular significance when the team made decisions regarding allocation of services and



supports for students, and determined instructional emphasis (Step 5). The data was also critical for selecting configurations for educational settings (Step 6).

Another sample grade-level analysis exhibited the number of kindergarten students who performed at the various levels of English proficiency, Levels 1 through 6, during four different school years. The ACCESS Test, an annual assessment to measure growth and identification for exiting ELL services, was the data used by the ELL stakeholder team. On the ACCESS test, English language proficiency levels are based on the six levels according to the WIDA Consortium: a score of 1 indicates “entering,” 2 “beginning,” 3 “developing,” 4 “expanding,” 5 “bridging,” and 6 “reaching” (WIDA Consortium, n.d.). Table 5 displays this kindergarten data. Data from Grades 1 through 5 can be found in Appendix K.

Table 5

*Number of Kindergarteners Performing at Various Levels of English Proficiency Based on Yearly ACCESS Test*

School Year	WIDA English Proficiency Levels					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
2006-07	11	5	1	0	0	0
2007-08	8	7	3	0	0	0
2008-09	11	2	4	2	0	0
2008-09	6	6	8	4	0	0

The data in Table 5 represents each year independently from 2006 to 2009. The ACCESS data is the only standardized data available at the kindergarten grade-level; therefore, there is no additional comparison of standardized data used. Again, the analysis of data, such as the data presented in Table 5, was Step 1 in the nine-step process of redesigning a program for ELLs.

The ELL stakeholder team began the third step in the Perfect Match process for analyzing data: Observe, Discuss, and Document. Using the data from Table 5, the team noticed trends in the kindergarten students' English language proficiency levels and used this data to make recommendations for the two-year action plan for Wiley's ELL redesign. During the 2007-08 school year, a majority of students scored in Level 1 English language proficiency; Level 3 was the highest proficiency level in which any students scored. During the 2008-09 school year, 8 students scored in the Level 3 English proficiency level, while there 6 students scored at a Level 1 and 6 students scored at a Level 2 English proficiency level. During the 2009-10 school year, Level 4 was the highest proficiency level in which any students scored. The team reviewed and used this data to plan for future ELL services; specifically, clustering students in the general education classrooms. By clustering students based on their English proficiency levels, general education teachers were able to prepare and differentiate instruction tailored to the academic needs of the ELL students.

The fourth step in the Perfect Match process for analyzing data was to create a hypothesis of practice. The kindergarten data from the 2008-2009 school year led the ELL stakeholder team to the following hypotheses:

1. Since test results indicate that a majority of students are at Level 1, Wiley teachers need to differentiate instruction for newcomers and Level 1 students.
2. There might be an influx of students moving in from other geographic areas, resulting in a shift of demographics.
3. Students entering kindergarten at Wiley come in with various levels of schooling, access to curriculum, etc.

The fifth step in the Perfect Match process for analyzing data required the ELL stakeholder team to make connections for student learning. The actual remarks of the team from the Perfect Match session in February 2010 were:

1. Review core instruction to determine how much differentiation needs to occur for the high number of Level 1 students.
2. ELL teachers should provide materials, vocabulary, and reinforcement of instruction for general education teachers.

The ELL stakeholder team used this five-step process for analyzing each grade-level data. By coming to the workshop prepared with the data, as required by the Perfect Match facilitators, the team was able to work immediately and diligently at creating tables for each grade level (as exemplified in Table 5). Once the team worked through each grade-level's standardized data, kindergarten through Grade 5, the team members were able to draw conclusions, which led to curricular implications. Finally, the team saw how the information analyzed would impact the larger plan, a plan for redesign.

**Summary of beliefs of the ELL stakeholder team: An extensive review of the nine steps.** It was critical that participants at the Perfect Match workshop (a six-day workshop) were given structured time to focus on each of the nine steps of the ELL program redesign. After Wiley's ELL stakeholder team completed Part 1 (Days 1 and 2: Steps 1 and 2: gathering and analyzing data), the team was able to draw conclusions that assisted in strategic planning. The team then reported barriers that were impacting instruction for ELLs to the larger group of attendees. The identification of these barriers allowed me, the leader of Wiley's ELL stakeholder team, to establish a vision supporting

the need for restructuring the ELL program and services. The barriers that Wiley's ELL stakeholder team identified during the workshop were:

1. The ELL program does not take students' English Language Proficiency levels into consideration when assigning literacy instruction.
2. The ELL program relies heavily on ELL pull-out services.
3. The ELL infrastructure is not ideal for effective instruction.
4. The core reading curriculum does not meet the needs of ELLs.
5. The teachers do not differentiate instruction.
6. The teachers do not use appropriate formative assessments to guide instruction.
7. The administration needs to establish a professional development plan with accountability.
8. The ELL program lacks support for native language instruction.
9. There are low numbers of ELLs per English Language Proficiency group and grade level.

By providing various levels of support and programming for all of Wiley's students, educators could maximize student achievement. ELLs deserved the same access to high levels of learning as their peers. Although nine barriers were identified, it would have been overwhelming to address all nine at the same time. Therefore, workshop experts made the recommendation to identify the purpose and focus, and, in turn, a long-term plan. A clear purpose and focused efforts are indispensable to a successful change process in any organization (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 66). The long-term plan covered the course of five years, but the ELL stakeholder team designed a two-year plan for the

barriers that could be addressed with the current system, infrastructure, and resources available. This two-year plan included a systematic process to place students with appropriate ELL services during the first year and to provide professional development opportunities to the general education staff by and during the second year.

Participants at the Perfect Match workshop focused on Steps 3 through 9 of the ELL program redesign during the next two days, reviewing the application of data and selecting configurations. Perfect Match facilitators provided many templates that could be used through all of the nine steps (see Appendix J). After assigning teaching responsibilities and allocating time for ELL instruction based on students' English language proficiency levels, the ELL stakeholder team conversed about instructional emphasis for the ELL students. The data analyzed in Steps 1 and 2 led to a change in instructional emphasis for some students and, more importantly, led to changing the configurations of students. These configurations translated into the way students were grouped, or sectioned, at the beginning of the school year. The team decided to change the way ELL students were assigned to homerooms and the amount of services students received during the school year. This recommendation was based on the English language proficiency levels and academic language abilities of the ELLs.

On the afternoon of the second day, Wiley's ELL stakeholder team considered moving through the process of program redesign at a pace different than other school districts in attendance. Wiley's situation was unique. Although Perfect Match facilitators had initially recommended it, Wiley did not have an additional ELL program redesign committee at the school level. As a result, facilitators recommended that Wiley's team focus on what changes and revisions would be conducive to and support the

infrastructure of teaching staff, curricular resources, and classroom resources. This was a pivotal point for Wiley's team and for me as the leader. I needed to recognize the need to stop and prioritize our situation in order to make the most of the learning process. The team chose to spend its remaining time at the workshop strategizing and creating a two-year plan of implementation rather than a three- to five-year plan as initially recommended by the facilitators of Perfect Match. Wiley's team witnessed and experienced the need to exercise flexibility when attempting system change. As a leader, I anticipated obstacles that the team was likely to face if we continued to work on a long-range, three- to five-year plan in order to realize our aspirations (Wagner et al., p. 54, 2006). The focus of Wiley's school improvement plan for ELLs was to maximize student learning through program redesign. For the ELL stakeholder team, this meant prioritizing which revisions to the ELL program were realistic for the staff and students at Wiley: sectioning students differently and providing support for teachers through a professional development plan.

The last two, full days of the workshop addressed Steps 8 and 9, curricular and instructional implications. Using multiple templates and resources provided by the Perfect Match facilitators, the team discussed staff development, specifically who would be able to provide support and when. The team decided that attendance at workshops offered outside of District 300 and internal professional development offered to staff on a regular basis during the course of the next school year would be best. In addition, based on the reconfigurations of students (sectioning in general education homeroom classes), the team reallocated resources for staff. ELL teachers and bilingual teachers were scheduled according to the ELL needs of the students. For example, based on the cluster

of ELL students in a general education class and the subject-matter being taught at the time, an ELL teacher might be scheduled to team teach with a general education teacher, providing direct support of push-in services to the students.

At the conclusion of the six-day workshop, the ELL stakeholder team had drafted the two-year plan of implementation for ELL program redesign. Ideally, the drafted plan would have been brought back to a larger committee for review, but, at the time, a larger committee was nonexistent. Instead, the ELL stakeholder team shared the plan with Wiley's principal at one of the morning meetings. At this meeting, the team described the first year of the plan to include two realistic priorities that would serve students and staff well: clustering ELL students differently (based on data analysis) and creating a system for professional development for the general education teachers. After being briefed on the logistics, the principal supported the plan. The plan was then shared with the rest of the administrative team, the middle school principal, and the superintendent. Questions and discussion emerged and eventual support for the plan, including summer committee work to plan professional development, was granted.

### **Implementation of the Redesign**

The conceptualization phase took place during the 2009-10 school year. After garnering administrative support, the ELL stakeholder team presented the plan for revising how students were clustered during the January 2010 grade-level meetings. Based on the review of ELL student data and discussions during each grade-level meeting, consensus was built and the staff at Wiley agreed to move forward with a new, revised process for clustering ELLs.

**Building consensus.** At this point, the ELL stakeholder team had completed the last two days of the six-day Perfect Match workshop. The team had drafted a two-year action plan to propose to the administrators and superintendent; communicating the vision and restructuring ELL services at Wiley had begun to take its course.

The first step in sharing this two-year action plan included formal communication with the Board of Education and the staff at Wiley. The ELL stakeholder team prepared a PowerPoint presentation to summarize its efforts at Perfect Match. The presentation included an overview of the six-day Perfect Match process and, more importantly, the outcome as a result of attending the workshop. The presentation took place at a school board meeting in March of 2010 with the intent of keeping the board informed about planned changes to ELL programming. The ELL stakeholder team apprised the staff at Wiley by hosting information sessions during the district's March institute day. A complete presentation was shared with the Wiley staff later that month.

A representative from the Illinois Resource Center (IRC) spoke during two different half-day sessions on the district's March institute day to both elementary and middle school staff members. The target of these sessions was to inform staff members about ELLs and how ELLs acquire a second language. Plenty of resources were available to and reviewed by the staff. These resources included information about the WIDA standards, which the state of Illinois used as a guideline for ELL standards, as well as the "Can Do Descriptors" for prekindergarten through Grade 5. The Can Do Descriptors were a resource, in addition to the English language proficiency standards, to use in classrooms with ELLs (WIDA Consortium, n.d.). Teachers created the Can Do Descriptors for other teachers who work with ELLs throughout the consortium of 30



states in the United States (WIDA Consortium, n.d.); the descriptors are available for all grades, prekindergarten through Grade 12. Following the sessions, staff members completed evaluations indicating their response to the information presented by the speaker about ELLs. The responses were positive in that the sessions provided the staff with a shared knowledge about how ELLs acquire a second language and the implications second language acquisition has on students' educational experiences. Staff members cited that they would like more strategies and tools to help support ELLs in the classroom. "When a school functions as a PLC, staff members attempt to answer questions and resolve issues by building shared knowledge" (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010, p.22). For District 300, this particular professional development opportunity helped to build consensus amongst staff, in both the middle school and the elementary school, and ascertain the need for differentiation of instruction.

After the entire district had received a universal message about ELLs, Wiley's ELL stakeholder team shared the PowerPoint presentation that it had created for the school board with the rest of the staff at Wiley. The ELL stakeholder team members reiterated what they had learned during their attendance at Perfect Match with their grade-level team members during monthly problem-solving meetings. Grade-level teams began to understand why clustering ELL students based on their English language proficiency levels and their academic language abilities was essential. Each grade-level team brought its own classroom data to review in conjunction with the data analyzed at the Perfect Match sessions. Comparing both formative and summative data in this way in order to make instructional decisions was similar to the process used in a PLC. "A PLC is an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of

collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve” (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010, p.11). Staff members reinforced their understanding and reaffirmed the need to revise the clustering process used at Wiley.

Clustering ELL students in a new way required all grade-level teams to spend much more time on sectioning during the spring months of March, April, and May to prepare for the 2010-11 school year. Additional time for sectioning was not only needed for and attributed to the change in ELL clustering, but time was also needed to plan for students who displayed below-average achievement and required additional services. In general, grade-level teams used their monthly meeting time over the course of three months (a total of four meetings) and used additional after-school meeting time in order to complete the sectioning process.

**Finalizing plans.** The second year of the ELL plan as recommended by the ELL stakeholder team focused solely on the professional development opportunities for the general education staff. After the ELL stakeholder team sought approval from the superintendent for curriculum work during the summer months, the team worked for four, eight-hour days to organize and plan a series of monthly modules for the Wiley staff. The team used the “Summary of Findings” handout (Marler, 2009) from Perfect Match as a starting point in identifying what type of professional development the staff needed.

The ELL stakeholder team used three of the four full days approved by the superintendent to complete the planning for the Wiley Staff. After the team identified a list of topics to address, it organized the topics based on relevance and importance. In general, the team identified the need for all staff members to have a common language, to understand the ELL student and the four language domains (reading, writing, listening,

and speaking [WIDA Consortium, n.d.]), and to learn how to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of the students they served. The team also determined a lesson structure that was used for each module of professional development. The team agreed to use 90-minute modules that would allow for whole-group information gathering as well as independent and small-group application. The format chosen to address these styles of learning included 15 minutes for introduction and review, 30 minutes for addressing and using ELL materials provided by the Perfect Match workshop, 30 minutes for team collaboration, and 15 minutes for a conclusion and exit slip. The modules focused on assessment, teaching responsibilities, and differentiation of instruction for all subject areas.

**2010-11 school year.** The two-year ELL plan focused on providing professional development to staff during the 2010-11 school year. The ELL stakeholder team reviewed with staff members the purpose for the ELL professional development. The team reminded staff members of their involvement in the sectioning process last spring and their involvement with reviewing the ELL grade-level data during team meetings. Including the Wiley staff in the planning and decision-making process created a climate of shared responsibility. “Clear shared values, collectively reinforced, increase the likelihood of teacher success” (Louis, Kruse, & Marks, 1996, p.181).

After communicating and collaborating closely with the principal, the ELL stakeholder team secured one, 90-minute staff meeting per month during the course of the school year to present an ELL module for professional development. The stakeholder team spent three, full days in August 2010 planning for the modules and specifically identifying what and how the information learned from the Perfect Match workshops

would be delivered. A specific format was used for all modules to provide consistency and clarity for the audience (see Appendix L). Each module consisted of a topic relevant to ELLs, an interactive and engaging activity, and a reflection activity. The staff members were asked to complete an exit slip at the end of each module as a means to measure the effectiveness of the information provided and assist in planning for the next month (see Appendix E). The team intended to present eight modules over the course of the 2010-11 school year covering three topics: assessment, teaching responsibilities, and differentiation of instruction. However, the original plan for covering one topic per month was too fast-paced for staff based on exit slip feedback. The pace was modified to cover one topic over the course of two or three months, rather than one topic per month.

**Participant perceptions of the implementation of the ELL program redesign.**

As a researcher, I was interested in the staff's observations and perceptions of the complex change process that occurred during the ELL program redesign at Wiley. To review, the first year of this study focused on the conceptualization of the redesign and the second year focused on the implementation of the redesign. Therefore, I solicited feedback from the staff over the course of two years; I addressed this aspect of the research study in my second research question. In order to capture the perspectives of staff with regard to the redesign of the ELL program, I conducted interviews on October 26, 2011. My intent in gathering this information was to evaluate the effectiveness at the end of the first year of implementation, the 2010-11 school year. Specifically, I was looking for staff members' reflections about the process and about the results of clustering students differently. Also, I was looking to gain feedback about the professional development opportunities that had been offered to staff members to assist in

supporting ELL students. I conducted two sets of interviews on the same day to gather feedback and perceptions regarding the process of the two-year redesign, one with the ELL stakeholder team and one with the principal of Wiley (see Appendix H). Table 6 lists the participants in the ELL stakeholder team interview (see Appendix G).

Table 6

*Years of Experience of the ELL Stakeholder Team*

Staff Member Title	Years of Teaching Experience	Years in District 300
ELL Teacher	9	3
ELL Teacher	6	1
Bilingual Teacher	7	7
School Psychologist	3	3
Literacy Specialist	9	3

This section contains the results of the analysis of the group interview. Eight thematic categories emerged, representing the views and perceptions of five participants on the ELL stakeholder team. I chose to use both holistic coding (Dey, 1993) and magnitude coding (Saldaña, 2009) for the interviews of the ELL stakeholder team members and staff members at Wiley. I used the Likert scale for a majority of the post-redesign survey questions. The magnitude coding was beneficial as I was able to sense commonalities based on the strength of the indication the staff member responded relative to the question. I chose holistic coding because, as Saldaña (2009) recommends, “holistic coding is appropriate for beginning qualitative researchers learning how to code data and studies with a wide variety of data forms (e.g., interview transcripts, field notes, journals, documents, diaries, correspondence, artifacts, and video).” I also chose holistic coding to help grasp basic themes or issues in the data by absorbing them as a whole rather than by analyzing them line by line (Dey, 1993, p. 104). By analyzing the

common themes and frequency of topics brought up during the group interview, I was able to draw conclusions and determine the effectiveness of the team's work during the two years that the program was conceptualized and redesigned. These themes would also help determine future needs if the action plan were to be extended beyond the two-year plan.

**Participant perceptions of the Perfect Match workshop.** During the ELL stakeholder team interview on October 26, 2011, most of the participants identified learning as a positive result of attending the Perfect Match workshop (see Appendix G), Nancy stated, "Coming from someone who doesn't know a lot about [ELLs], I was starting to learn more, so [that] I have that in the back of my mind. It gave us an opportunity and time that forced us to look at the data, since there just isn't enough time." During the interview, other participants appreciated the opportunity for collaboration, access to resources and best practice, and improved decision-making skills. Three participants mentioned that they learned from research and respected experts in the field about how ELLs learn. Most importantly, participants reported that they valued the legal context, and the tools and resources that were used during the six-day workshop. During the interview, each participant answered questions through his or her own lens, so answers varied based on areas of expertise.

Participants identified two negative aspects of the Perfect Match workshop: the different situations of the schools and the lack of sustainability plans. During the group interview, Karen explained, "Our district and our school was different from the majority of the other participants. Our services and classrooms compared to the other schools that attended." Regarding the lack of sustainability plans, Lisa said, "I think we learned about

all these awesome things to do, but then we didn't have the personnel to actually make the teachers do it.”

Regarding changes to improve the workshop, two participants noted the importance of larger stakeholder participation. Karen argued, “The real purpose of Perfect Match needs a commitment from the district to go through the five years, [otherwise] you're really not going to see the kind of systems change it was designed to do.” Karen was reflecting on the fact that the ELL stakeholder team was only able to implement two years of what should have been a five-year plan; therefore, one would not see as much change in the short, two-year timeframe.

**Experiences on the planning of professional development.** Two participants cited improved understanding of ELL regarding the experiences on the planning of professional development. Nancy said:

It cleared up a lot of misconceptions up about ELLs and the staff understood what we were doing, why we were doing it, just working out some of the things they were confused about. I thought it was good that we presented the rationale for program redesign did it for the Board because it opened up their eyes in terms of our ELL population and why it's important.

Other participants cited feeling overwhelmed by the fast-paced nature of the planning stage. If the ELL stakeholder team were to continue with the efforts of implementing the two-year program redesign, it recommended looking more deeply into the planning of modules slowing the pace of information presented to staff.

**Effect of the change on protocol.** When the ELL stakeholder team members were asked how the change in the protocol used for sectioning students affected them,

two participants noted how difficult the management of change was. Nancy recounted, “It was still very messy and difficult because there are so many students. It was hard to cluster.” Other participants noted changes in priority, awareness of proficiency, and improvement in communication.

**Aspects of co-teaching.** Participants were asked about the positive and negative aspects of co-teaching. Two participants believed that co-teaching could improve the understanding of students. Diane explained, “I think it’s nice to directly see what goes on in the classroom, gives you a better idea of how you can support the students.” Another participant cited improved learning to be a positive aspect of co-teaching.

Regarding the negative aspects of co-teaching, two participants cited the lack of model or expert participation, and another two participants noted the lack of uniformity in co-teaching. Speaking about both, Diane said, “We don’t have anyone who is an expert co-teacher, so that has its own limitations; different teachers may have their own ideas of what co-teaching looks like.”

Lastly, the ELL stakeholder team was asked to comment about peers attending additional professional development opportunities provided outside of District 300. As a result of the teaching staff attending workshops offsite, two participants observed that teachers were eager to learn. Nancy shared, “The ones that chose to attend are more apt to want to learn about ELLs and use what they’ve learned into their classrooms.” Another member stated that she was impressed with the interest of an entire grade level that attended a particular workshop together. As a leader, I was very proud of the staff’s recognition of the need for targeted professional development and, most importantly, the time the staff sacrificed to attend the workshop.



## **Interview with the School Principal**

**Description of the participant.** The principal I interviewed on October 26, 2011 had served as principal at Wiley for 18 years and had a total of 25 years of administrative experience (see Appendix H). It was determined prior to this research study that I, rather than the principal, would be the administrator leading the ELL stakeholder team throughout this process. This delegation of duties would share the leadership responsibilities across other District 300 initiatives occurring at the time. Therefore, the principal and I agreed that regular, ongoing communication about the process would be paramount for feedback and direction to the Wiley staff.

The principal wanted to be an informed leader, knowledgeable about ELL and able to provide support to teachers. The principal noted the importance of working collaboratively with the stakeholder team, but, because she was not leading the team, it was difficult at times to be in close proximity to the program redesign. During the interview, she stated that she would lead the stakeholder team in the future. In doing so, she would be closer to the change and more supportive of the team, as well as her whole staff. The principal also stated that “any kind of change is frightening for anyone” and articulated that changing the past mindset and practices of teachers might be a barrier to the paradigm shift. To address this barrier, the principal suggested financial resources to purchase materials, flexible scheduling, and professional development opportunities for staff in order to help teachers cope with the paradigm shift.

The principal stressed the importance of planning professional development modules. Teachers were offered release time during the school year to attend these modules and were compensated with a curriculum rate of pay. The principal did state that

the district was fortunate to have the means and resources to make professional development a priority for supporting instruction.

So as not to overwhelm staff, the required number of monthly modules was reduced. The principal supported this decision: “We would rather do a few things substantively than many things peripherally. As a result, the staff is assessed in an ongoing basis to identify their needs to implement the modules.”

### **Staff Survey**

I administered a staff survey that consisted of eight questions in October of 2011 (see Appendix F). The ELL stakeholder team created this survey to gauge staff members’ perceptions about professional development opportunities provided and resource supports offered during the first year of ELL redesign implementation. I chose to use a Likert scale for seven of the questions in order to measure the magnitude of staff members’ perceptions. Magnitude coding consists of and adds a supplemental alphanumeric or symbolic code, or subcode, to an existing coded datum or category to indicate its intensity, frequency, direction, presence, or evaluative content (Saldaña, 2009). Magnitude codes can be qualitative, quantitative, and/or nominal indicators to enhance description (Saldaña, 2009). The last question was an open-ended question allowing staff to provide feedback or leave any additional comments that were not necessarily addressed in the survey. Surveys were given to 52 staff members (there had been 54 staff members during the two years of this study; however, two staff members had resigned by the time the survey was delivered).

## Survey Profile

Thirty-five percent of the teaching staff participated in the Post-Redesign Survey. The Post-Redesign Survey sampled 52 participants, while 18 had completed it (see Appendix C). The sample was divided into four groups: (a) general education teachers, (b) special education teachers, (c) related service teachers, and (d) related arts teachers. Table 7 illustrates the breakdown of the four groups of teachers who participated in the survey, and the number of teachers and amount of years of teaching experience per group. The survey participants were a fair representation of the entire teaching staff at Wiley.

Table 7

### *Survey Profile of Staff*

Staff Position	Years of Teaching Experience			
	0-5	6-11	12-17	18-23
General Education Teachers	1	8	0	2
Special Education Teachers	1	1	0	0
Related Services Teachers	1	1	1	0
Related Arts Teachers	0	0	0	2
Total	3	10	1	4

**General responses.** The qualitative section of the Post-Redesign Survey (see Appendix F), given to all Wiley staff in the fall of 2011, was designed to elicit feedback from staff with regard to clustering students, co-teaching experiences, and professional development opportunities. These three components were a result of the two-year action plan and were intended to build capacity for staff.

Regarding the perception to the extent that students were placed appropriately in the new ELL program (in general education classrooms based on academic proficiency),

one participant very much agreed with the placement, four participants somewhat agreed and four participants agreed. Only one participant did not agree at all with the placement of students, while eight participants found it not applicable.

Regarding the perception to the extent that the professional development modules created by the ELL stakeholder team made a difference in classroom instruction, nine participants somewhat agreed that professional development made a difference, and six participants strongly agreed that professional development made a difference. Only one participant did not agree that professional development was helpful; two participants found it not applicable.

Regarding the perception to the extent that co-teaching is valuable to ELL students, two participants very much agreed with the value of co-teaching, and only one somewhat agreed with the value of co-teaching. Only one participant did not agree at all with the value of co-teaching ELL students. All of the participants agreed that this workshop was valuable, but to different extents. Three participants somewhat agreed with how valuable the workshop was, and two agreed that the workshop was valuable. Three participants strongly agreed that the workshop was valuable.

#### **Responses to clustering, co-teaching, and professional development.**

Regarding perceptions on the positive aspects of clustering students, most of the general education teachers believed that clustering provided students with an environment to learn from each other and support one another. One participant said, “Through their similarities and differences they gained a wealth of knowledge from one another and helped each other grasp concepts in ways only they could.”

With regard to the challenges of clustering students, most of the general education teachers cited the difficulty of differentiating the lessons based on the competency levels of the students. Meeting the different language needs of students was difficult for some of the general education teachers. One participant wrote, “Many students with limited English, difficult to constantly differentiate at so many levels, a huge discrepancy between peers [*sic*].” This participant continued to provide examples of the multiple academic levels of ELL students she had in class and the amount of time she spent planning her differentiated instruction in order to meet the needs of her students. Other challenges cited by the participants were planning of assessments and scheduling difficulties.

Regarding the perceived positive outcomes of professional development, five general education teachers cited brainstorming of ideas as a positive outcome. One general education teacher said, “I really liked when the ELL and bilingual teachers would share ways in which they taught certain concepts. I was able to incorporate some of them in my classroom.” Two general education teachers and one special education teacher suggested that gaining insight into ELL was one of the positive outcomes of attending professional development. One participant wrote, “Working closely with the ELL and bilingual teachers also gave me a better understanding and insight into the needs of these learners. Many of these activities and ideas that I have learned are applicable to all learners.”

Regarding the perceived negative outcomes of professional development, most of the participants experienced no negative outcomes. Some of the negative outcomes that

were cited by participants included the formation of cliques, confusion, and not having enough time to implement the ideas learned from professional development.

Regarding the perceived positive aspects of co-teaching, three participants focused on the additional support that became available as a result of the presence of a co-teacher. One participant wrote, “It was nice to have the support of the other teachers in the classroom for the ELL students. Students can stay with their peers and do projects with the class.” Co-teaching also provided an opportunity for collaboration between teachers. Another staff member wrote, “It’s always nice to have another person’s perspective and expertise to bounce ideas off of.” In all, participants valued the additional expertise and resources gained by having the additional support of a co-teacher.

Regarding the perceived negative aspects of co-teaching, two general education teachers reported that some co-teachers were not proactive, meaning that some teachers were not actively participating in the teaching and were relying more on the other teacher. One participant said, “General ed plans everything while the ELL teacher would just come in and sit in the back, sometimes watch a lesson being taught without saying anything or interacting.”

## **Summary**

This two-part study was based on the qualitative measurement of various document reviews, surveys, and interviews. These data allowed me to gain perspective by extracting information from existing academic data and documents, surveying a whole group, and interviewing a small group and an individual. I reviewed student data and documents relating to ELL services during the first year of the study. These were essential components of the nine-step process described earlier in this chapter. During the

second year of the study, the interview with the ELL stakeholder team, interview with the principal, and concluding survey given to all certified staff provided perspective. At the conclusion of the two-year study, I conducted two interview sessions—one with the ELL stakeholder team and one with the principal of Wiley.

This chapter described the process of redesign and showed the analysis of data collected as a result. It was important that I describe the conceptualization stage and the leadership opportunities that led me to the decisions that I made in the process. I learned that the process of building consensus during the conceptualization phase and setting up the systems to provide the professional development (the implementation phase) would not have been possible without the continuous commitment of the ELL stakeholder team and principal. Without the ongoing communication and meetings to plan, the work would not have been successful. “When people gather together to...commit themselves to ideas, their relationships change—they have made promises to each other and are likely to feel morally obliged to keep their promises” (Sergiovanni, 2005, p. 32). Finally, I have been able to see the firsthand effects of managing complex change by virtue of this study. *The Managing Complex Change Model* (Knoster et al., 2000) is based on the idea that five components (vision, skills, incentives, resources, and an action plan) must be present in order for complex change to occur. Based on the feedback from staff surveys and interviews, certain factors necessary for complex change were absent. Staff reported that there was a lack in time spent creating the vision and not having enough resources, such as ELL teacher push-in support and curricular materials. The Wiley staff articulated the impact these absences had on the progress of the two-year ELL redesign plan, and I was able to determine future implications and suggest revisions. In this chapter, I referenced

the negative aspects and feedback from a Post Redesign Survey and interviews with the principal and ELL stakeholder team. The final chapter will explain how I would address the absence of these components in the future in order to be more successful in leading a staff through managing complex change.



## CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

### Overview

Over the course of the past 10 years, the ELL program at Wiley<sup>4</sup> was expanded to meet an increase in ELL students and the expectations of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 ([NCLB] 2002), which required that all children, including ELLs, reach high academic standards by demonstrating proficiency in English language arts and mathematics by 2014 (Abedi & Dietal, 2004). This chapter provides an overview of my entire study, identifies the problem, and outlines the results of my staff interviews and surveys. Next, I provide practical suggestions for addressing the issues identified in this research study. The findings in this study led me to identify three specific areas for further development:

- Examine two to three comparable elementary schools that also participated in the Perfect Match workshop during the time of this study, implemented their district's action plans, and led change processes regarding ELL services.
- Review at least two years of longitudinal data of the reading proficiency levels of Wiley ELL students during the time of this study of (2009-2011) to see if there is a relationship between the new clustering process that went into effect during the 2009 school year and the potential effect on student reading growth.
- Research other districts comparable to District 300 that experienced similar demographic changes within their populations to see if and how the increase of ELL students had impacted the overall educational services for students,

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<sup>4</sup> A pseudonym. All names and identifying characteristics have been changed to protect participants.

and how other leaders who participated in Perfect Match during this study led the process of program redesign in their elementary buildings.

### **Summary of the Study**

Wiley experienced a gradual increase in the number of ELL students enrolled from 2005 to 2010. Planning for any ELL program requires careful consideration, but four factors made planning for Wiley's ELL students a challenge: (a) the relatively rapid increase in the number of students needing ELL services, (b) growing teacher concern for ELLs performing in the core academic areas, (c) greater emphasis on improving level of English proficiency and overall academic performance for placement purposes in the ELL program and in the regular education class, and (d) changes in exit criteria for ELL students made by the state of Illinois in January 2010 . These four factors, thoroughly explained in detail in Chapter One, necessitated a redesign of the Wiley ELL program. To address the various issues associated with an ever-increasing number of ELL students enrolling at Wiley, I conceptualized and implemented a program redesign over the course of two years (2009-2011). I wanted to study this process and my related work through the following inquiry question:

1. What was the nature of the complex change process staff and I observed and experienced as I led a two year program redesign for ELLs at the elementary level?

To answer this question, I gathered a team of six staff members, known as the ELL stakeholder team, to review and assist with this complex change process. The ELL stakeholder team included three ELL teachers, a literacy specialist, a school psychologist, and me, an administrator. The process for reviewing and analyzing data for this study

occurred throughout the 2009-2010 school year. The ELL stakeholder team attended Perfect Match, a series of six full-day workshops designed by Barbara Marler, an education specialist from the Illinois Resource Center in Arlington Heights, Illinois. The workshops were divided into two daylong sessions offered in the fall, winter, and early spring of the 2009-2010 school year. Overall, the workshops focused on a nine-step process of program design, specifically in the areas of program delivery and services, curriculum, and assessment. In addition, the workshop addressed historical and legislative foundations related to ELLs. The intent of this effort was for the district to revise its then-current program by applying the knowledge and work completed during the workshops. The ELL stakeholder team and process are thoroughly described in Chapter Four. The qualitative measurement for this study included document review, surveys, and interviews. These data allowed me to gain perspective by extracting information from existing academic data and documents, surveying whole group, and interviewing the ELL stakeholder team members and the principal of Wiley. Student data and documents relating to ELL services were reviewed during the first year of the study, while interviews and surveys were used during the second year of the study.

The literature reviewed in this study contained two major sections: literature and the law on ELL education, and literature on change leadership. Both areas of literature contributed directly to the research in this study and presented the Wiley staff with a common understanding and foundation of information for ELL instruction in schools. The legal portion addressed the educational rights and instructional guidelines for ELLs, and the educational institutions that provide those services the students. The literature concerning change leadership was a lens through which to examine the need for a shared

vision within the school. “At both school and district levels, administrative tasks essential to teachers’ learning and learning communities include building a shared vision and common language about practice” (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006, p. 80). Chapter Two provides a contextual understanding of the various components affecting ELL instruction today.

Two federal cases have served as the backbone to the protections and rights of ELLs. The Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974 includes definitions of what constitutes denial of equal educational opportunity. Among those definitions is “failure of an educational agency to take appropriate actions to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by students in an instructional program” (EEOA, 1974, § 1203[f]). The EEOA requires schools to “take affirmative steps” to overcome limited English-speaking students’ language barriers in order to allow them to participate equally in the educational program as stipulated in the opinion filed for *Lau v. Nichols* (1974, § 568). The core of the plaintiff’s complaint in *Lau v. Nichols* was that non-English-speaking students did not receive a meaningful education when they were taught in a language they did not understand (Sugarman & Widess, 1974). Another case, *Casteñeda v. Pickard* (1981), resulted in further compliance standards issued by the Office of Civil Rights. This case addressed the matter of adequacy of district services. *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) and *Casteñeda v. Pickard* (1981) have had a direct impact on the ELL services offered at Wiley. Both cases resulted in specific compliance requirements being established for all public schools to provide ELL services. Federal legislation has also had an impact on the expected academic performance of ELLs. NCLB (2002)

required that all children, including ELLs, reach high standards by demonstrating proficiency in English language arts and mathematics by 2014 (Abedi & Dietal, 2004).

The literature regarding change leadership included the use of the framework documented in *Managing Complex Change* (Lippitt, n.d.). Knoster, T., Villa, R., & Thousand, J. (2000) created an adaptation of this model. Knoster et al.'s adaptation, the Managing Complex Change Model (see Appendix C), was used as a structure and guide for the redesign of Wiley's ELL program. The ELL stakeholder team used all five areas of the model—vision, skills, incentives, resources, and action plan—for initial planning and conceptualization of this study, and the actual redesign. According to Knoster et al. (2000), the basis of the Managing Complex Change Model supports the idea that if any one of these five factors is absent, complex change cannot occur.

The research question in study included events that occurred during the 2009-2010 school year, the conceptualization phase. It was during this school year that I identified the need to learn more about options for ELL program redesign. Six staff members, including me, attended a series of six full-day workshops hosted by the Illinois Resource Center in Arlington Heights, Illinois, called Perfect Match. After attending these interactive, collaborative, and productive team workshops, the ELL stakeholder team made recommendations for the redesign of ELL services and supports to the staff at Wiley.

The implementation phase of this study and events that addressed the research question included data gathered and analyzed as a result of a group interview with the ELL stakeholder team and an individual interview with the principal of Wiley in 2011. These interviews allowed me to gain the perspectives of staff with regard to the redesign

of the ELL program and evaluate the effectiveness of the year of implementation. Specifically, I was looking for staff reflections about the process and results of clustering the students differently. In addition, I was looking to gain feedback about the professional development opportunities offered to staff in order to support the ELL students.

A staff survey, the Post Redesign Survey (Appendix F), consisted of eight questions regarding the professional development opportunities and resources provided during and after the first year of implementation of the ELL redesign. I chose to use a Likert scale for seven of the questions in order to measure the magnitude of the staff members' perceptions. Magnitude coding consists of and adds a supplemental alphanumeric or symbolic code, or subcode, to an existing coded datum or category to indicate its intensity, frequency, direction, presence, or evaluative content (Saldaña, 2009). I administered this survey to 52 staff members. (There had been 54 staff members during the two years of this study; however, two staff members had resigned by the time the survey was delivered.) Eighteen participants comprised the sample for the Post Redesign Survey. I divided the sample into four groups: (a) general education teachers, (b) special education teachers, (c) related service teachers, and (d) related arts teachers.

I conducted two interviews during the 2011-2012 school year; these interviews were conducted on the same day. I first interviewed the members of the ELL stakeholder team with the purpose of gaining their feedback and their perceptions of the process during the two years of redesign. My second interview was a one-on-one discussion with the principal of Wiley; I intended to gain the perspective and perception of the principal as to the process that occurred over the past two years. After interviewing the five members of the ELL stakeholder team, eight thematic categories emerged. I chose to use

both holistic coding (Dey, 1993) and magnitude coding (Saldaña, 2009) for the interviews and surveys of the ELL stakeholder team and staff at Wiley.

### **Evaluation of Findings**

According to the Managing Complex Change Model created by Knoster et al. (2000), the five components necessary for change are: vision, skills, incentives, resources, and an action plan. If any of the five components are missing, staff may not respond to change and may feel one or many kinds of effects. For instance, if there are no clear incentives during complex change, participants may be resistant to the efforts of the change process. This study specifically addressed the process and perceptions of staff related to three of the five components necessary for complex change: resources, incentives, and skills. I purposely chose to focus on those three components when soliciting feedback from staff as the components naturally aligned with specific goals outlined in the 2 year action plan created by the ELL stakeholder team. Because resources were limited in ELL materials and ELL teacher support, participants felt frustrated. Staff members reported in both the ELL stakeholder team interview and the Post Redesign Survey that they wished there were more ELL teacher support pushing into the general education classroom to support ELLs. This model of “push in” support was one of the configurations presented earlier during chapter 3. In this case study, there was not an equitable distribution among all five components, specifically the vision and action plan due to budget and time constraints.

## **Themes: Values and Benefits Staff Reported**

**ELL stakeholder team responses.** The responses from the ELL stakeholder team related to both questions of this research study. Staff members felt that they had grown professionally by learning new information about the theoretical frameworks of ELLs. The basis from which the ELL stakeholder team designed instruction used in the professional development modules related to the four major components of the prism model that inform language acquisition—sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive processes (Thomas & Collier, 1997). This model is called a prism because the model has many dimensions, and the four major components are interdependent and complex. Staff members also felt that they had grown professionally by learning about the legislative influences that shaped ELL services for students. The ELL stakeholder team spent a lot of time during the consensus-building stage to provide the Wiley staff with background information related to legislation that District 300 must follow. “NCLB increased awareness of the academic needs and achievement of ELLs, because schools, districts, and states were now held accountable for teaching English and content knowledge to this special and heterogeneous group of learners. ELLs presented unique challenges to educators because of the central role played by academic language proficiency in the acquisition and assessment of content-area knowledge”(Francis et al., 2006, p.1). Regarding the experiences planning the modules of professional development, two participants cited an improved understanding of ELLs.

**Principal responses.** The principal reported that her primary role in this process had been to support the ELL stakeholder team. The common theme that emerged from the principal’s responses revolved around the paradigm shift that staff was experiencing



and her role as a leader. The principal supported the teachers by purchasing materials, developing more flexible schedules, and making professional development opportunities available. These supports aligned with key components of the Managing Complex Change Model (Knoster et al., 2000). The principal was involved with the planning of professional development modules only at a peripheral level, but I kept her abreast of our work and pace with staff. The principal was extremely supportive when the ELL stakeholder team decided, based on feedback from staff, to reduce the amount of modules it presented to the Wiley staff during the 2011-2012 year. The principal referenced past experiences in which she was able to keep her staff moving forward by being a good listener and responding to the needs of the staff. According to the interview with the principal, being responsive was a critical leadership strategy that worked well for the Wiley staff. The principal was sensitive and cognizant of the staff's threshold for change. In this case, the principal was able to "develop this deeper feel for the change process by accumulating insights and wisdom across situations and time" (Fullan, 2007, p. 180).

**General education teaching staff responses.** The staff reported positive outcomes with regard to three areas: clustering students, perceived outcomes of professional development, and aspects of co-teaching. In general, staff reported positive feedback about the new process that was used for clustering ELL students according to their academic proficiency levels. Staff indicated that the climate of the classroom allowed students to learn from and support each other. One teacher said, "Through their similarities and differences, [students] gained a wealth of knowledge from one another and helped each other grasp concepts in ways only they could." Based on the reports from staff, students appeared to be more engaged during instruction.

According to staff, clustering ELL students based on similar English proficiency levels and academic abilities allowed teachers to differentiate instruction to the students' academic needs. These groupings were based on Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for ELLs (ACCESS) scores, which were based on World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards. "WIDA levels describe the spectrum of a learner's progression from knowing little to no English to acquiring the English skills necessary to be successful in an English-only mainstream classroom without extra support", (WIDA Consortium, n.d.). Staff also reported that the professional development opportunities, whether offered through monthly modules created by the ELL stakeholder team or through workshops hosted by the Illinois Resource Center (IRC) were very beneficial for most participants.

In terms of the feedback regarding co-teaching, staff saw the value of receiving support from the ELL teacher, collaborating and planning with another colleague, learning from one another, and sharing materials and resources that support ELL students. One teacher stated, "It's always nice to have another person's perspective and expertise to bounce ideas off of."

### **Sustainability of Program Redesign—ELL Stakeholder Team Perceptions**

The ELL stakeholder team was concerned about sustainability of the program for various reasons, but primarily because of the leadership component. When the Post Redesign Survey was administered in the fall of 2011, after the program redesign and implementation period, I was no longer working for the district, and there was no acting leader for the program. Only certain components of the two-year action plan had been addressed and accomplished; these components included resources for all teachers,

curricular materials, ideas for differentiating, co-teaching opportunities, and professional development opportunities. Since my departure came at the end of the 2011 school year and at the end of the implementation year, the ELL stakeholder team perceived that there was not going to be a leader to sustain the efforts of the two-year action plan. During the interview with the ELL stakeholder team to address the comment about not having a leader to sustain the efforts, I asked about the continuation of the 2 year Action Plan as prior to my departure with the school district, because I had collaborated with my successor specifically about next steps and sustaining the work of the ELL stakeholder team and staff at Wiley. In addition, I worked closely with the principal to ensure there would be monthly staff meeting time dedicated for ELL professional development associated with the two-year action plan. Sustainable leadership develops and does not deplete material and human resources (Hargreaves, 2007, p. 445). As a leader, I reinforced that all the work of the ELL stakeholder team and opportunities for learning and professional development of Wiley staff had made a difference and perhaps there needed to be direct conversations and planning with the current director of student services and the principal to sustain the efforts already made.

During the interview on October 26, 2011, the ELL stakeholder team recommended the formation of a larger committee, with consensus and involvement of the rest of the Wiley staff. This aligned with the Perfect Match facilitators' recommendation to use the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process with integrity. Integrity, in this context, refers to a teaming process used to have meaningful conversation regarding what staff wants students to learn, when students should have learned it, what staff will do if students have not learned it, and, finally, what staff will do

if students have already learned it. Prior to answering these questions, the team must identify what standards and learning targets are expected of the students, what formative and summative assessments will be used to determine the level of learning, and, lastly, what interventions and supports will provide additional assistance or enrichment activities. Perfect Match facilitators recommended deliberate and frequent communication between the team attending the workshop and a larger committee. A larger committee never came to fruition at Wiley, though, due to staff members' obligation to work on other school initiatives. Additional committee work would have required staff to volunteer time beyond these obligations. In this study, there was no larger committee to survey staff needs and identify related professional development opportunities, so the ELL stakeholder team was solely responsible.

Regarding the modules used for professional development, the ELL stakeholder team suggested slowing the pace and amount of content presented to the teachers. With regard to the protocol used for sectioning, two participants noted how difficult the management of change was for the staff. Prior to the new protocol used for sectioning, the staff had been used to placing ELL students arbitrarily. Oftentimes, students were placed with a buddy who spoke the same language while staff ensured that there was a mix of boys and girls to balance the general education class. These components such as skills from professional development opportunities and resources related to the new protocol for student sectioning were the fundamental elements that contribute to *Managing Complex Change* (Knoster et al., 2000; see Appendix C). With regard to co-teaching, participants noted positive outcomes in understanding ELL students; however, many of the teachers felt that they needed more expertise in co-teaching.

Lastly, with regard to the feedback about other professional development opportunities, the ELL stakeholder team noted that the teachers who attended various workshops offered by the IRC were eager to learn and apply what they had learned. As a matter of fact, those staff shared what they had learned with the entire staff during the ELL stakeholder team's module presentations. On another note, the ELL stakeholder team was quite impressed with a grade-level team that had attended a one-day workshop offered by the IRC. The grade-level team had worked with an ELL teacher to identify the professional development opportunity that would best equip the teachers to support reading for the ELLs in their classrooms. It was evident to the ELL stakeholder team that this particular grade-level was truly vested in learning more about how to differentiate instruction and apply evidence-based reading strategies in class.

**General education teaching staff responses.** Participants identified negative aspects for three components of the two-year action plan put into place during the 2010-2011 school year: clustering students based on ELL's academic proficiency level, professional development offerings for staff, and co-teaching opportunities. With regard to the clustering of ELL students, staff members felt that differentiating for all English proficiency levels made it very difficult to meet the needs of all of their students. This response contradicted with staff members' previous assertion that they were able to differentiate instruction better due to the revised process of clustering students according to academic and English proficiency levels. With regard to professional development, some of the participants cited the formation of cliques, confusion, and not having enough time to implement the ideas learned from professional development. Staff reported that some of the co-teaching situations were one-sided, as in one teacher took on more

responsibility during instruction, and that there was not a true collaboration and sharing of teaching. Other feedback included no formal training for co-teaching and no time for planning with the co-teacher.

### **Implications of Findings**

“A clear vision and focused efforts are indispensable to a successful change process in any organization” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 66). Two areas for further growth emerged as a result of this study: create a culture for collaborative teaming, and secure time and resources for the implementation of a three- to five-year action plan.

**Preferred teaming structure.** If I were to revise this process to make it stronger, I would have spent more time building the staff’s consensus on the need for redesign. Secondly, I would have used a preferred teaming structure, such as a smaller planning type of a committee and a larger building level committee to support the PLC process. For my case study, this would have involved spending more time working with staff and including all staff in reaching consensus with the vision of the program redesign. For instance, prior to attending the Perfect Match workshop, the ELL stakeholder team explained to the Wiley staff the purpose of the program redesign that the team embarked on during the course of the 2010-2011 school year. I felt confident that we had provided the staff with the mission of our work, however, there certainly could have been more time for staff to process the information. The mission pillar of the PLC process asks the question, “Why do we exist?” (DuFour et al., 2010, p. 30). The ELL stakeholder team clearly identified the purpose of the plan for implementing a program redesign and shared the ELL student data gathered and analyzed during Perfect Match. Teachers felt a sense of urgency to improve all ELLs’ learning (Wagner et al., p. 28, 2006). The student data

showed clear evidence that the “then” current clusters of ELL students with minimal commonalities in terms of academic abilities and English proficiency scores were placed in homerooms without an emphasis on the students’ academic abilities and English proficiency scores.

By grouping students with similar academic abilities and English proficiencies, staff realized that a teacher could differentiate instruction for a smaller range of levels rather than the wider range that currently existed in most classrooms. After the Wiley staff had agreed with the ELL stakeholder team and provided feedback indicating that staff was ready for an ELL program redesign, I should have spent more time systematically creating the opportunity to include additional staff who would have served as an at-large committee for the program redesign. This larger committee would have helped create the vision and, in retrospect, I would have seen more consensus-building for the initiative and more teacher leaders. Instead, it was our small ELL stakeholder team that spent a lot of time, energy, and effort to create and sustain the redesign. It was clearly too much of an undertaking for the six member ELL stakeholder team to manage throughout the two-year process without an additional larger team to assist in the implementation of the action plan. In order to include more staff and build capacity amongst teachers, I should have set a yearlong master schedule for committee meetings and smaller ELL stakeholder team meetings. Then, I should have been clear in soliciting staff interested in serving on the larger committee by communicating the purpose and expectations related to the redesign action plan to be completed by the end of the school year.

Staff might have expressed interest in being selected to participate on an at-large committee by completing an application designed by the ELL stakeholder team. With this tool, and especially if there were a high number of staff members interested and limited seats on the committee, the ELL stakeholder team could have ensured a balanced representation of staff and expertise. There are many ways to identify and choose staff for committee work, but the most successful committees are those that have a purpose and vision, and clear targets and timelines. Addressing the questions of, “Why do we exist? What must our school become to accomplish our purpose? How will we mark our progress?” increases the likelihood that all subsequent work will have the benefit of firm underpinnings (DuFour et al., 2010, p. 30).

**Secure time and resources for full implementation.** The second area of improvement would have been to secure the time and resources for the implementation of a three- to five-year action plan. At the time of this study, the administrative team knew that researching program redesign was a need; however, it also knew that I would not be able to carry out the full scope of the PLC process (as identified by the Perfect Match facilitators) due to other, concurrent district initiatives and staff commitments. Foreseeing those shortcomings, I was still confident that the smaller ELL stakeholder team would be sufficient and that we would successfully tackle this grand endeavor. Unfortunately, I learned along the way that it was unfair to ask the ELL stakeholder team to devote such a large time commitment to the initiative. In retrospect, I was driven by the need to improve our ELL service delivery with evidenced-based resources and strategies. I should have spent more time researching all aspects of the full implementation of the PLC process recommended by the Perfect Match team and what a three- to five-year



action plan would have involved. Researching the scope of the process would have helped me to determine if timing was right to move forward with a program redesign in light of the district's strategic plan, resources, and commitment.

At the time of the study, staff members were already serving on other committees supporting other district initiatives. I had a choice: either move forward with the small ELL stakeholder team of six staff members and see how far we could institute the change described in our three- to five-year action plan as a result of attending the six-day Perfect Match workshop, or not act on the action plan at all. The ELL stakeholder team, principal, superintendent, and I agreed that we should move forward with the implementation of the three- to five-year plan. That three- to five-year action plan became a two-year action plan due to the limitations of time, resources, and commitment. Staff surveys and feedback from interviews indicated that staff benefitted from the work of the ELL stakeholder team but desired additional time for collaboration, and more time and options for professional development regarding ELLs.

If I were to go through this process again, I would elicit more specific input from staff with regard to training and be more strategic in scheduling it. I would delineate between formal and informal types of professional development. For example, a formal type of professional development would include an ELL course, like many of the first-grade teachers at Wiley had taken during the second year of this study. Informal opportunities would include time built into the teachers' schedules for co-teaching planning time and attending a one- or two-day workshop on ELL instruction. In addition, I would create opportunities at staff meetings or build collaboration time into monthly meetings for teachers to share what they were learning about teaming and ELL students.

We were able to schedule collaborative sharing during the monthly modules of professional development offered by our ELL stakeholder team; however, a high number of staff members responded in the surveys that they wish they had even more time to share.

**Refining the process.** By addressing the two aforementioned areas for growth and improvement related to program redesign, the outcome of this study could have changed drastically. Specifically, if I had spent more time with staff to help lead the vision and focus of the redesign, and if I had offered more time for collaboration, the outcomes of the program redesign could have gone from “good” to “great” (Collins, 2001). Collins (2001) wrote about the differences between “good” and “great” companies, specifically highlighting the need for a co-created vision and a collaborative structure. In essence, Collins identified companies that made the leap from good results to great results and sustained those results for at least fifteen years; he then compared the great companies to companies that failed to make the leap. Collins discovered several essential and distinguishing factors. One of the distinguishing factors Collins referred to was the “First Who...Then What,” which, in short, translates into getting the right people on the bus and in the right seats (Collins, 2001, p. 3). In this case study, I should have included the larger committee as an attempt to get the right people on the bus, and the principal “in the right seat” as the leader of the larger committee.

Collins also distinguished great companies from good ones by their leadership. Collins (2001) described “the good-to-great leaders” as “self-effacing, quiet, reserved, even shy...a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will” (p. 12). I believe that our process and program redesign could have been great with the full three to

five years of implementation and by fully utilizing the PLC process as originally designed. Very effective schools and districts consistently have high degrees of purpose and focus, engagement, and collaboration, particularly around learning, teaching, and instructional leadership (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 74).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

For future research regarding the ELL program redesign at Wiley, I recommend examining two to three other elementary schools that participated in the Perfect Match workshop between 2009 and 2011 of this study and implemented a revised action plan as a result. Of particular interest are elementary schools comparable in demographic nature that also experienced a change in the delivery of ELL services, and the way in which their administrators led the redesign. Examining original ELL services and delivery models, districts' redesigned action plans, and the process by which schools implemented their program redesigns would be of great value to school leaders. I am curious as to whether other schools used the PLC process as recommended by the Perfect Match facilitators; I wonder if other schools used the small committee and larger school committee as they moved forward with their program redesigns. I am also curious as to how successful schools were in accomplishing their action plans.

For future research regarding the ELL program redesign at Wiley, I also recommend reviewing at least two years of longitudinal data of reading proficiency levels of Wiley ELL students during the time of this study (2009 to 2011). This research would allow for a comparison of 2010 and 2011 student ACCESS scores, which measure the rate of English proficiency growth in reading. The purpose in looking at this longitudinal data would be to analyze the relationship between the new clustering process that went

into effect during the 2009 school year and the potential effect on student reading growth. For example, to accomplish this analysis, a cohort of ELL students in first-, second-, and third-grade would be selected during the 2009 school year. Then, ACCESS scores for these students would be examined from the 2010 and 2011 school years for individual reading growth.

Lastly, it would be beneficial to examine elementary schools that have had a steady or even rapid increase in ELL students, similar to Wiley, and how those increases in ELL students have impacted the overall educational services provided by the schools. Specifically, I would recommend comparing changes in personnel, the percentage of ELLs in homerooms, and general education teacher supports and professional development regarding differentiation of instruction for ELL students.

## **Summary**

### **Statement of the Purpose**

From 2005 to 2010, Wiley experienced an 86% increase in the number of students eligible for ELL services. At the same time, the number of different languages spoken more than doubled, with nine different languages spoken in 2005 and 21 spoken in 2010. Four factors made planning for ELL students a challenge: (a) the relatively rapid increase in the number of students needing ELL services, (b) growing teacher concern for ELLs performing in the core academic areas, (c) greater emphasis on improving level of English proficiency and overall academic performance for placement purposes in the ELL program and in the regular education class, and (d) the changes in exit criteria for ELL students made by the state of Illinois in January 2010. As a result of these four challenges, I conceptualized and implemented a program redesign over the course of two

years (2009 to 2011). I wanted to study this process and my work related to it through the following inquiry question:

1. What was the nature of the complex change process staff and I observed and experienced as I led a two year program redesign for ELLs at the elementary level?

To answer this question, I gathered a team of staff members, called the ELL stakeholder team, to review and assist with this complex change process. The intent of this effort was for the district to revise its then-current program by applying the knowledge and work completed during workshops attended by the ELL stakeholder team. (The ELL stakeholder team and process are thoroughly described in Chapter Four.) The qualitative measurement for this study included document review, surveys, and interviews; these data allowed me to gain perspective by extracting information from existing academic data and documents, surveying whole group, and interviewing the ELL stakeholder team and the principal of Wiley. Student data and documents related to ELL services were reviewed during the first year of the study, while interviews and surveys were conducted during the second year of the study.

### **Overview of Findings**

I used information from staff surveys, ELL stakeholder team member interviews, and review of documents and artifacts to provide data for analysis. The documents and artifacts provided guidance during the first year of conceptualization as the ELL stakeholder team learned about and planned for the redesign. During the second year, also known as the year of implementation, the staff surveys, ELL stakeholder team interviews, and principal interview provided direction and feedback for improving the

way in which ELL services were offered to students and professional development opportunities to staff.

As I reflect over the course of these four years including the time I began this study until now; there had been two occasions on which there had been changes to the exit criteria for ELL students in Illinois. At the start of this study in 2009, Illinois set the exit criteria such that effective January, 2010, a student must obtain a 4.2 minimum score on reading and writing proficiency and a 4.8 composite score on the ACCESS. Since then, changes in exit criteria occurred again for ELL students in Illinois,

Effective January 1, 2014, a student must obtain an overall composite proficiency level of 5.0 as well as a reading proficiency level of 4.2 and a writing proficiency level of 4.2 on the ACCESS for ELLs to be considered English language proficient. (ISBE, 2014, para. 1)

These two instances of exit criteria changes illuminate the leadership challenges in planning for program redesign. With the exit criteria changing twice in these four years, it shows that even at the state level, Illinois seemed to be in conflict with itself with the criteria for identifying the students eligible for ELL services. As a leader, I would recommend to others to be conscious and cautious of the uncontrollable variables such as the changing exit criteria for ELLs. As a leader, I remind myself that there will always be factors and variables of which I have no control, for example, the Illinois state exit criteria for ELL changes. However, by establishing a strong ELL program in place as a result of the program redesign, there should be minimal impact for staff and students of the change in exit criteria for ELLs.

Based on my experiences and findings during this study, I recommend two areas of further growth pertaining to leadership development: spending more time creating a culture for collaborative teaming, and securing time and resources for the implementation of a three- to five-year action plan. During this study, staff members indicated on surveys that they saw the value in the information about ELLs presented during professional development modules but wanted more time to collaborate with their colleagues. If I had the chance to enhance this study, I would spend more time with staff to lead the vision and focus of the redesign, and I would offer more time for collaboration through a different teaming structure.

### **Conclusions**

The self-reflection that resulted after conducting and writing this research study put into perspective the skills and time commitment required to be an instructional leader. This process, particularly writing about it chapter by chapter, allowed me to dig deep into the day-to-day actions that contribute to a program redesign. Every step and decision made impacted the ELL stakeholder team's actions, whether it was regarding the document review necessary for planning the redesign, or the administering of informal surveys to help guide the direction for professional development and resources for staff. I learned that leadership skills are inherently necessary when planning for change, and during this study, I became keenly aware of my own strengths and weaknesses as a leader. Areas of leadership that should have been strengthened related to creating a culture of collaboration for staff and scheduling for additional time to fully implement a three- to five-year redesign plan. In the future, in order to foster a culture of collaboration, I would ensure that an infrastructure is set up to support the time needed

for committee work and professional development. The committee team structure would have been effective at Wiley because it would have allowed the ELL stakeholder team to function with the larger ELL committee (representing the rest of the Wiley staff). In the future, I would also be sure to plan appropriately with regard to a lengthy action plan (as in the three- to five-year plan at Wiley) by speaking and planning with my administrative team about the timing of the process, and how it will align with the district's strategic plan. It is imperative that time, resources, and staff involvement necessary for a three- to five-year implementation are fully supported by all stakeholders involved, especially the district's administration and staff.



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Appendix A: Wiley District 300 ELL Population Data

ACADEMIC YEAR 2005-06

Primary language	Grade						Total students
	K	1	2	3	4	5	
Amharic	1				1		2
Bulgarian					1		1
Chinese					1		1
Croatian	1						1
Korean	8	6	6	4	6	7	37
Lithuanian				1		1	2
Persian						1	1
Polish	1	1					2
Spanish	3	2	2	2		1	10
Total students							57

ACADEMIC YEAR 2006-07

Primary language	Grade						Total students
	K	1	2	3	4	5	
Amharic	1				1		2
Hebrew						1	1
Japanese			1			1	2
Korean	7	5	5	8	5	6	36
Malyayum						1	1
Polish	2	1		1			4
Russian	1					2	3
Serbian	1						1
Turkish	1						1
Ukrainian		1					1
Urdu					1		1
Total students							66

ACADEMIC YEAR 2007-08

Primary language	Grade						Total students
	K	1	2	3	4	5	
Arabic	1	1		1	1		4
Chinese	1						1
Farsi	1						1
French	1			1			1
Japanese			2				2
Korean	7	8	7	8	9	9	48
Polish	3		1		1		5
Romanian	1				1		2
Russian	2	2	1	1	1		7
Serbian		1		1			2
Ukrainian				1			1
Total students							88

ACADEMIC YEAR 2008-09

Primary language	Grade						Total students
	K	1	2	3	4	5	
Arabic			1	1		1	3
Azeri	1	1					2
Bulgarian			1				1
Chinese			1				1
Farsi			1				1
Filipino		1					1
Japanese	2	1			1	2	6
Korean	7	7	4	7	6	8	39
Polish			3				3
Romanian			2				2
Russian	2	2	2	3		1	10
Serbian	1	1		1		1	4
Spanish	5	6	2	2	2		17
Ukrainian	1						1
Urdu				1			1
Total students							92

ACADEMIC YEAR 2009-10

Primary language	Grade						Total students
	K	1	2	3	4	5	
Arabic	1	1	2	2			6
Assyrian	1						1
Azeri		1					1
Bulgarian			1				1
Chinese	2		1				3
Farsi	1		1				2
Filipino		1					1
Gujarati					1		1
Italian			1				1
Japanese		1			1		2
Korean	6	6	5	11	7	8	41
Mongolian	2						2
Polish		2	3			2	7
Portuguese	1	1					2
Romanian	1		1				2
Russian	2	4	3	4			12
Serbian		1					1
Spanish	2	6	2	3	3		17
Tamil		1					1
Ukrainian	1			1			2
Urdu	1			1			2
Total students							106

## Appendix B: Definition Of Terms

ELL- English Language Learners. All children in grades pre-K through 12 who were not born in the United States, whose native tongue is a language other than English, and who are incapable of performing ordinary classwork in English; and all children in grades pre-K through 12 who were born in the United States of parents possessing no or limited English-speaking ability and who are incapable of performing ordinary classwork in English. (105 ILCS 5/14C-2) (from Ch. 122, par. 14C-2)

ACCESS Test- The ACCESS Test is divided into six domains encompassing listening, reading, reading comprehension, writing, oral proficiency, and speaking. ACCESS for ELLs stands for *Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners*. It is a large-scale test that first and foremost addresses the English language development standards that form the core of the WIDA Consortium's approach to instructing and testing English language learners.

WIDA Consortium- World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment is a non-profit cooperative of thirty states working together to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind for English Language Learners (ELLs).

AMAO- Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO's). AMAO's are set by the State of Illinois. States and their sub-grantees are accountable for meeting Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs). Schools receiving Title III funds are required to meet the standards set by the state. AMAOs measure Limited English Proficient students' development and attainment of English proficiency and academic achievement.

MAP- Measure of Academic Progress. A local assessment tool that is commonly used in the northern suburban region in Illinois. MAP assessments are adaptive achievement tests in Mathematics, Reading, Language Usage, and Science that are taken on a computer. MAP is available for students grades 2-8.

ISAT- Illinois State Achievement Test (ISAT). State standardized test which measures achievement according to the Illinois State Standards for all students in Illinois grades 3-8. Subject areas tested include Reading, writing, math, and science. The administration of subject tests vary per grade level. Grading is reported in four categories: Academic Warning, Below Standards, Meets Standards, Exceeds Standards.

TPI- Transitional Program of Instruction. A part-time program which consists of components of a full-time program that are selected for students based upon an assessment of the students' educational needs. The part-time program shall provide daily instruction in English and in the students' native language as determined by the students' needs.

TBE- Transitional Bilingual Education means a full-time or part-time program of instruction. Full time program of instruction includes (1) in all those courses or subjects which a child is required by law to receive and which are required by the child's school district which shall be given in the native language of the children of limited English-speaking ability who are enrolled in the program and also in English, (2) in the reading and writing of the native language of the children of limited English-speaking ability who are enrolled in the program and in the oral comprehension, speaking, reading and writing of English, and (3) in the history and culture of the country, territory or geographic area which is the native land of the parents of children of limited

English-speaking ability who are enrolled in the program and in the history and culture of the United States. (Source: P.A. 95-793, eff. 1-1-09.) A part-time program shall consist of components of a full-time program that are selected for a particular student based upon an assessment of the student's educational needs. Each student's part-time program shall provide daily instruction in English and in the student's native language as determined by the student's needs.

Safe Harbor- Method for making AYP if subgroups do not meet performance targets. It involves reducing the percentage of students scoring at Non-Proficient by at least 10% for each and every subgroup that did not meet performance targets.

Self contained- Instruction is provided by the ELL teacher in a setting that is separate of the general education environment. Homogeneous groupings are created of same language if a high number of students exist. If multiple languages exist, then a self-contained configuration exists for all English language learners and is taught by an ELL teacher who takes language needs into account.

Resource- A level of support for ELL students. Students have a homeroom with the ELL or bilingual teacher; student attends general education class for subject areas.

Pull-out- The ELL teacher provides ELL services in a setting separate of the educational environment. ELL students are pulled from the general education room and works with the student in a separate location for previewing concepts and works on oral language.

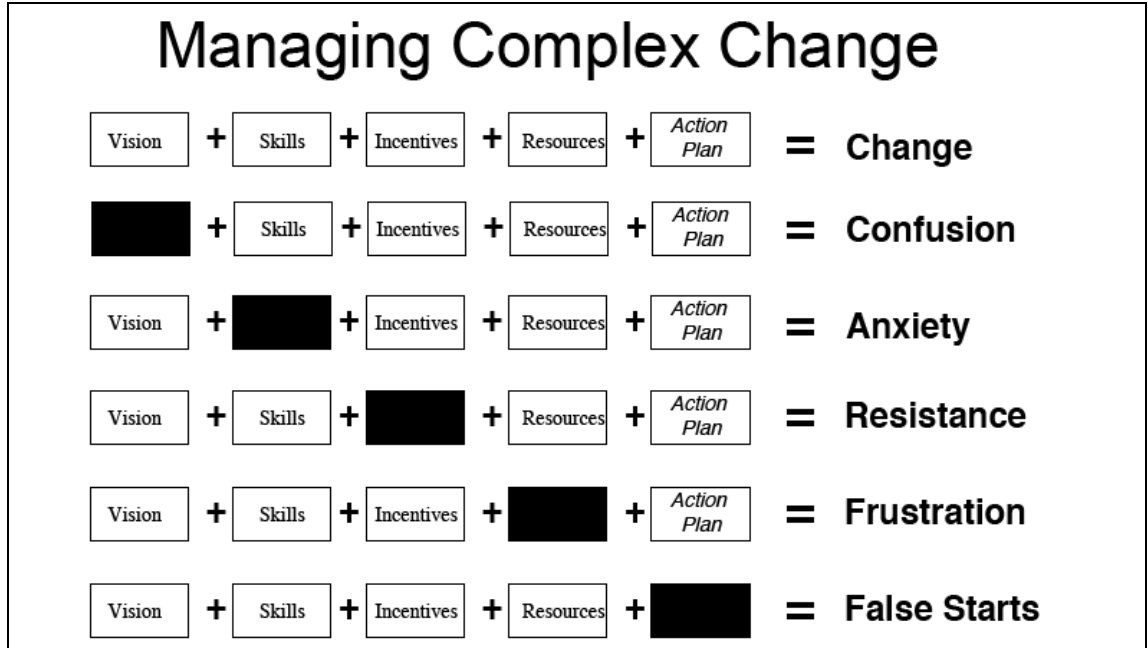
Push-in- The ELL teacher provides ELL services in the general educational environment and provides translation or clarification occurs to help student survive. Delivery of instruction does include co-teaching or team teaching when the general education and ELL teacher deliver the instruction together.



Late exit transitional- Students are in the ELL program for at least 5 years. Each student whose score on the English language proficiency assessment is identified as “proficient” may be considered eligible to exit the program of transitional or bilingual education services. Students who remain in an ELL program until they acquire a score between a 4.8 to 6.0 on the ACCESS Test would be considered a late exit transitional.

Early exit transitional- Students are in the ELL program for at least 3 years. Illinois law states students can not exit within 3 years of service. (School Code [105 ILCS 5/14C-3]). Kindergarten doesn’t count as one of the years. Year 1 is first grade. Each student whose score on the English language proficiency assessment is identified as “proficient” may be considered eligible to exit the program of transitional or bilingual education services. Students who remain in an ELL program until they acquire a minimum composite score of 4.8 on the ACCESS Test would be considered an early exit transitional.

## Appendix C: Managing Complex Change



Adapted from “A Framework for Thinking about Systems Change,” by T. Knoster, R. Villa, & J. Thousand, 2000, in R. Villa & J. Thousand (Eds.), *Restructuring for Caring and Effective Education: Piecing the Puzzle Together*, p. 97. Copyright 2000 by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

### Appendix D: Predesign Survey

Using the Likert-type scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = not at all, 2 = somewhat, 3 = neutral, 4 = pretty much, and 5 = very much, please answer the following questions by selecting the corresponding option.

Question	1	2	3	4	5
1. How informative do you believe the Perfect Match presentation was at the March staff meeting?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Do have a good understanding of the sectioning/clustering process/purpose for ELL/bilingual students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. With regard to March 1 Institute Day, to what extent did you learn about meeting the needs of ELLs from the presentation by the Illinois Resource Center?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. How well prepared do you feel to use the can-do descriptors in your classroom?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

---

Please provide comments or ask questions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix E: Reflection Sheet

I learned \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I will use this \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I still wonder about \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Using a scale of 1 to 5, please rate this module of professional development by circling your choice:

1 = not at all, 2 = somewhat, 3 = neutral, 4 = pretty much, 5 = very much

Additional comments for improvement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: Post-Redesign Survey

This survey is intended for all staff. Some questions pertain solely to classroom teachers who have had clusters of ELL or bilingual students. The intent of this survey is to gather feedback on the first year of implementation of ELL program redesign, the focus of which was sectioning of ELL and bilingual students, and supporting staff through professional development modules offered onsite at Wiley, coteaching opportunities, and attending ELL workshops through the Illinois Resource Center. If a question does not pertain directly to your situation, please skip that question and continue to the next question until you have completed the survey. Your feedback about the Monday afternoon professional development modules, your participation while coteaching, and your opinions about attending workshops offered by the Illinois Resource Center is important to the future design of this program.

1. Please identify your position as a staff member during the 2010-11 school year by placing an X next to the appropriate position:

General education classroom teacher

Related arts teacher

Special education teacher

Related service staff

2. How many years of teaching experience do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Indicate what type of cluster you had in your class during the 2010-11 school year.

ELL  Bilingual  Young scholars  No cluster

Not a homeroom teacher

4. After having one school year of either ELL or bilingual clusters of students in your classroom, to what extent do you believe these students were placed appropriately as a group? Please circle your response from these options:

Not applicable      Not at all      Somewhat      Agree      A lot      Very much

a. What were the positive aspects of having this cluster of students in your class?

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b. What were the challenges you encountered by having this cluster in your class? \_\_\_\_\_

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c. If you answered "not at all," please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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5. With regard to ELL modules presented throughout the 2010-11 school year on Monday afternoons, to what extent do you believe this level of professional development made a difference in the teaching that occurred in your classroom for the ELL/bilingual students? Please circle your response from these options:

Not at all      Somewhat      Agree      A lot      Very much

a. List some examples of positive outcomes you experienced. \_\_\_\_\_

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b. List some examples of negative outcomes you experienced. \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Coteaching was one component identified by the ELL stakeholder group as being a benefit for ELLs in the general education setting as part of the program redesign. Based on scheduling and discussion/agreement with the grade-level teams, the ELL staff chose certain grade-level teams to support by coteaching. If you were a staff member who cotaught with an ELL teacher during the 2010-11 school year, to what extent did you find coteaching a value for the ELL students in your classroom? Please circle your response from these options:

Not applicable    Not at all    Somewhat    Agree    A lot    Very much

a. Describe the advantages you experienced when coteaching. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

b. Describe any disadvantages you experienced when coteaching. \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Staff members were given opportunities throughout the year to attend ELL workshops offered by the Illinois Resource Center. If you were you a staff member who attended one of these workshops, please indicate to what extent you found attending the workshop(s) valuable to you and your teaching. Please circle your response from these options:

Did not attend    Not at all    Somewhat    Agree    A Lot    Very Much

8. Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. If you would like to have any follow-up information regarding the content of this survey, please provide your name and contact information. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix G: ELL Stakeholder Interview Questions

1. What is your title, role, and how many years have you been teaching or working at Wiley?
2. Describe your general experience during the first year of this process in attending the six full-day workshops of The Perfect Match.
  - a. What were some positive aspects of attending The Perfect Match?
  - b. What were some challenges you faced as a result of attending The Perfect Match?
  - c. What would you do differently or recommend for others if you could go back in time and begin this process of attending The Perfect Match again?
3. The second year of the 3-year ELL program redesign plan involved planning and preparing professional development modules for all certified staff. Describe your experiences with that phase of the process, beginning with the PowerPoint presentation used to inform the board of education and all certified staff at Wiley to the creation of the ELL modules.
4. Describe how the change in the protocol used for sectioning students (Spring 2010) affected you.
5. Describe any positive aspects related to the coteaching opportunities you experienced.
6. Describe any negative aspects related to the coteaching opportunities you experienced.
7. Regarding the professional development opportunities offered by the Illinois Resource Center, tell me about your experiences encouraging certified staff to attend and their feedback after attending.

## Appendix H: Principal Interview Questions

1. How many years have you been a principal/administrator?
2. How many of those years as a principal/administrator have been at Wiley?
3. Describe your role as a principal/administrator during the process the ELL stakeholder group participated during the series of the 6 day workshop called The Perfect Match from fall of 2009-spring of 2010?
4. The power point presentation in March, 2010 summarized the findings of the work compiled by the ELL Stakeholder Group. The presentation of student data and academic performance proved to be a powerful tool for staff to see. The result of reviewing the data demonstrated a need for a system level change in the overall protocol for sectioning all students. Describe your role and efforts in leading that paradigm shift for staff.
5. Describe the barriers you identified as you and the researcher lead this paradigm shift.
6. Describe some of the resources and incentives identified either by the ELL Stakeholder group and/or you provided as a leader to help staff accept this paradigm shift.
7. During the summer of 2010, the ELL Stakeholder Group prepared their next steps of planning professional development modules for staff. What district resources, time, and staff was needed to plan for these modules of professional development?
8. The ELL Stakeholder Group originally designed 8 modules and planned to present 1 module per month over the course of the 2010-11 school year. After the ELL

Stakeholder group received feedback from staff through the “reflection sheet” post module and elicited informal feedback from you and their colleagues; it was evident that the ELL Stakeholder Group needed to scale back the amount of presentations offered to staff. Describe from a leader’s perspective how beneficial the decision to scale back was and the impact it had on your staff.

Appendix I: ELL Program Two-Year Action Plan

Year 1: 2009-10				
Components	What	Who	How	When
Infrastructure	Protected time (K-5) First grade ELLs to receive pull-out ELL for 45 minutes (backs up with literacy block), based on reviewed kindergarten data.	All certified teachers and ELL staff	PowerPoint presentation of Perfect Match Committee work for all Wiley certified staff (K-5) and board members at Spring 2010 board meeting. Discussions with first grade team.	Preliminary discussions with grade-level teams beginning with ELL staff in February. Spring discussions at Monday, March 8, and monthly problem-solving meetings. Overall plan of implementation to begin with professional development in the fall 2010.
Scheduling	Specials scheduled based on gen. ed. classes in which ELL students are grouped Grade-level team common schedule of content areas	Specials teachers and ELL staff work together to identify scheduling options Grade-level teams work to have common schedules	Collaborate with principal and specials teachers to create master schedule for dedicated grade-level special class common times	Spring 2010 problem-solving meetings, additional time

Year 1: 2009-10				
Components	What	Who	How	When
Clustering	Reduction of classes to cluster Incentive for teachers: CLIMBS training, receive additional ELL resources/ support for gen. ed. room	Grade levels work with ELL team to cluster	Problem-solving discussions to plan	Spring/Summer 2010
Professional development	Monthly PD at Monday meetings Problem-solving meetings, ELL staff continue to provide PD	1st-grade teachers who have ELL clusters All k-5 certified teachers	Planning for what the Wiley staff needs: ideas for PD based on staff asking directly for PD and analysis of data identified by ELL stakeholder team during Perfect Match	Summer2010: Framework and content for 8 modules determined. Fall 2010: 8 modules reduced to 4 based on staff needs.
Resources	ELL resources for gen. ed. classroom	ELL teachers identify ELL materials for gen. ed. rooms	ELL teachers support gen. ed. staff with sharing materials and tools already owned.	Meeting with gen. ed. teachers on own time before/ after school or at planned time.
Curriculum	N/A at this time.	ELL teachers continue to	Sharing of materials	Meeting with gen. ed. teachers on

Year 1: 2009-10				
Components	What	Who	How	When
	Reviewing research-based strategies identified in Perfect Match sessions.	use materials they currently have and share with gen. ed. staff.	currently owned.	own time before/ after school or at planned time.
Assessment	Research use of Rigby assessment for benchmark (3/year) by ELL teachers.	ELL teachers	Not yet determined.	Not yet determined.
Funding	Propose for Title III budget when needed.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable.
Community (parents)	Offer ELL parents' night and continue BPAC	ELL teachers, administrator, and parents.	Planning by ELL staff and administrator	Spring 2010- Summer 2010

Year 2: 2010-11				
Components	What	Who	How	When
Infrastructure	Protected time (K-5) for professional learning communities per grade level, 1/week.	All certified teachers and ELL staff	20 minutes/ for grade levels to meet and discuss all students. ELLs are included in team discussion.	Support for grade-level teams by offering professional development in Fall 2010.
Scheduling	Master schedule revised so most grade levels (all but one) had common planning time during school day. All grade-level teams required to meet weekly as a professional learning community to review universal data of all students in that grade level.	All grade-level teams	Weekly	Days of the week determined by a revision of the master schedule.

Year 2: 2010-11				
Components	What	Who	How	When
Clustering	ELL students were clustered based on Thomas & Collier's (2002) four components of the prism model (academic, sociocultural, cognitive, and English proficiency levels).	All grade-level teams determined at monthly problem-solving meetings.	Work began in February, continued through May.	1/month for 1 hour at a time. Additional time was used during the Monday afternoon staff meetings if teams needed additional time.
Professional Development	Originally 8 modules designed to include topics: 4 consensus building, understanding ELLs, acquisition of language, understanding data, using data for instruction, research-based strategies and tools.	All certified teachers	1/month during afterschool staff meetings.	Monday afternoon during staff meetings. 1-hour timeframe.



Year 2: 2010-11				
Components	What	Who	How	When
Resources	Binders with handouts and teacher-made materials, based on templates provided in Perfect Match workshop.	Created by ELL stakeholder team during Summer 2009-10 and prepared throughout the 2010-11 school year, based on monthly meetings to prepare for modules.	Title III funds to purchase binders and dividers.	Not applicable
Curriculum	Research-based strategies and instructional tools	ELL teachers continue to use the materials they currently have and share with gen. ed. staff.	Sharing of materials currently owned.	Meeting with gen. ed. teachers on own time before/after school or at planned time.
Assessment	Begin to use Rigby assessment for benchmark (3/year)	ELL teachers	Assess students during benchmarking of all students in the school.	Fall, winter, spring
Funding	Title III funds	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Community (parents)	Communication with parents during ELL parents' nights and quarterly parent meetings.	ELL staff, administrator, ELL students' parents.	Planning by ELL staff and administrator	Fall and spring

## Appendix J: Program Design for ELLs—A 9-Step Process

1. Collecting data
  - a. Goal: to obtain an accurate picture of what was, what is, and what should be
  - b. Type of data: district assessment data, demographics, legislation, judicial precedent, research, Illinois English Language Proficiency
2. Reviewing data
  - a. Goal: to establish a philosophical foundation and widespread ownership
  - b. Type of data: see collected data
  - c. Formats: one advisory group or leadership team with stakeholder representation and larger district committee
3. Detailing teaching responsibilities
  - a. Goal: to articulate and communicate responsibilities for instruction (this includes planning time for ELL teachers to differentiate proficiency levels of ELLs, subs for ELL teachers, parties in gen. ed. room should not take precedence of ELL services)
  - b. Type: expertise of TBE/TPI and general education staff
  - c. Format: advisory group or leadership team with stakeholder representation and larger district committee
  - d. Templates
    - i. Instructional activities brainstorming sheet (p. 3A)
    - ii. Teaching responsibilities *T* chart (p. 3B).
    - iii. Progress of responsibilities line graph (p. 3C), and
    - iv. Progress of responsibilities percentage Chart (p. 3D)

4. Allocating language (for TBE programs) makes program consistent, coordinated, and comprehensive
  - a. Goal: to establish programmatic, structured, and deliberate decisions about language use (L1 and L2) in instruction
  - b. Formats: leadership team with input from larger district committee; must reflect bilingual expertise
  - c. Types: transitional, maintenance, and dual language programs
  - d. Charts 4B, 4C, and 4D
    - i. Across the district
    - ii. Across buildings
    - iii. Across grade levels
    - iv. Tied to students' English Language proficiency levels and the Illinois English Language Proficiency Standards
    - v. Tied to the students' native language proficiency levels and the Illinois' English Language Proficiency Standards
5. Determining instructional emphasis
  - a. Goal: to tie into students' needs and instructional standards
  - b. Types: in Illinois, TBE and TPI
  - c. Sources: Thomas and Collier (1997), Miramontes, Nadeau, and Commins (1997), and the Education Alliance at Brown University (2003)
6. Selecting configurations
  - a. Goal: to organize, allocate, and maximize resources

- b. Types: self-contained, resource, pull-out, push-in (really a special education configuration), late exit transitional, early exit transitional, dual language, or maintenance
7. Crafting the design
- a. Goal: to operationalize the philosophical foundation
  - b. An integration of gathered and reviewed data, detailed teaching responsibilities, language allocation decisions, determined areas of instructional emphasis, and selected configurations
  - c. Formats: leadership team working with input from the larger district committee and focus groups
8. Identifying supports and challenges
- a. Goal- to identify likely problems and successes before they occur and impact stakeholders
    - i. Check for congruency.
    - ii. Consult with other departments/building leaders.
    - iii. Send focus groups out to share design and invite critique before implementation.
    - iv. Create mock schedules for teachers, groups of students and individual students to identify obstacles and supports.
  - b. Format- leadership team, larger district committee, and focus groups.
9. Next steps
- a. Must be tied to
    - i. program design,

- ii. state-consolidated application,
  - iii. state standards, and
  - iv. other district initiatives over a period of 5 years.
- b. Must take into account the standards established by the NSDC for adult learning
  - A. Staff development plan
- c. Must be tied to
  - i. program design,
  - ii. state-consolidated application,
  - iii. state standards, and
  - iv. other district initiatives over a period of 5 years.
- d. Must take into account the standards established by the NSDC for adult learning
  - B. Secured resources
- e. Appropriately certified staff
- f. Instructional materials (L1 and L2)
- g. Supplemental materials (L1 and L2)
- h. Stakeholder support
- i. Leadership buy-in and expertise
- j. Physical space
- k. Appropriate supplemental services
- l. Appropriate logistical needs
  - C. Aligned curriculum
- m. Gather Illinois Standards: English Language Proficiency, Spanish native language arts, and content areas

- n. Gather district curriculum goals and objectives
- o. Convene a curriculum writing group that is representative of the detailed teaching responsibilities for the instruction of ELLs
- p. Begin the design process

Appendix K: Perfect Match Standardized Data Analysis

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
ACCESS scores: Kindergarten						
2006-07	11	5	1	0	0	0
2007-08	8	7	3	0	0	0
2008-09	11	2	4	2	0	0
(Model)						
2008-09	6	6	8	4	0	0
(Model + oral screener)						
ACCESS scores: First grade						
2006-07	0	2	8	0	0	0
2007-08	1	6	6	4	0	0
2008-09	12	2	4	4	0	0
ACCESS scores: Second grade						
2006-07	0	2	4	0	0	0
2007-08	0	3	10	0	1	0
2008-09	1	4	4	7	0	0
ACCESS scores: Third grade						
2006-07	0	1	4	3	1	0
2007-08	1	0	4	6	0	0
2008-09	1	0	6	11	0	0

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Third-grade ISAT reading						
	ELL	Non-ELL	AMAO			
2006-07	86%	93%	met			
2007-08	42.80%	93%	met			
2008-09	0%	87%	met			
ACCESS scores: Fourth grade						
2006-07	0	0	6	3	0	0
2007-08	0	2	6	2	0	0
2008-09	1	4	2	3	0	0
Fourth-grade ISAT reading						
	ELL	Non-ELL	AMAO			
2006-07	78%	91%	met			
(Image)						
2007-08	33%	97%	met			
2008-09	63%	95%	met			
ACCESS scores: Fifth grade						
2006-07	0	0	3	3	1	0
2007-08	1	1	6	2	0	0
2008-09	0	3	4	2	1	0



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Fifth-grade ISAT reading

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	ELL	Non-ELL	AMAO
2006-07	86%	90%	met
(Image)			
2007-08	33%	98%	met
2008-09	83%	99%	met

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Appendix L: Sample Module

Module 1 Continued:

October 18, 2010

*Academic Language*

Materials:

Teacher Report

“Can Do Descriptors”

“Three-Two-One” Worksheet

Academic Language “At a glance” sheet

Grade Level Text Books

Reflection Sheet

*Introduction/review* from September 13th, 2010

Warm up Activity

*Presentation*

Webcast

Mini Lesson

*Team collaboration/application*

Grade Level text book activity

*Reflection*

Turn in exit slip